

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 13 September 1983

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

KOREAN AIRLINER: DESTRUCTION BY SOVIET UNION

Condolence Motion

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [2.17 p.m.]: I move, without notice, the following condolence motion—

That this House expresses its deep concern at the Soviet Union's action in shooting down a Korean civilian airliner, and extends its sympathy to the bereaved families.

Mr Speaker, as you will notice, the motion says nothing about attaching blame to any of the parties involved in what is a deplorable and extremely regrettable tragedy. This is so because the Government does not feel it is a responsibility of this place to express opinions about those matters. At the same time, I do not think anyone who sits in this Chamber would believe that what occurred was less than deplorable and less than a major tragedy in terms of the human life lost.

We seek to appropriately place on record the concern felt by all Western Australians at this major tragedy, and we say that there simply can be no excuse for the shooting down of a civilian airliner with the loss of 269 lives in the way that this airliner was shot down and these lives were lost.

A responsibility rests with all those parties and nations involved in this deplorable tragedy to work hard towards ensuring it is not repeated. It is particularly true to say that the national Government has made this country's position perfectly clear, and this Government stands beside the national Government in saying that the position adopted and the public stance taken are ones that we think are appropriate to this tragedy. I urge all members of the House to support this condolence motion.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [2.19 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Premier expressing concern at the shooting down by the USSR of the Korean civilian airliner, and I express our condolence to the families concerned.

This tragedy represents one of the most disgraceful incidents that has occurred in the world, at least during my lifetime. When innocent people are shot down out of the air in the way that these

people were and in the circumstances as they appear to have been, it is something which causes us to feel a great deal of shame for those involved. The fact that the United States and Japan were able to keep in touch with the plane by way of vocal contact and other methods indicates that the plane that shot down the Boeing should have known exactly what it was and that it was carrying innocent people.

I travelled over that particular route last year, as probably did the Premier when he went to Japan. When we realise this could happen to innocent people, irrespective of from which country they come, we understand that it is something that does not help goodwill in the world and that it is certainly the sort of incident that could flare up into international warfare at a very quick rate.

On behalf of the Opposition, I support the Premier's comments about the shooting down of the plane and join him in offering condolences to the families involved from the various countries.

The SPEAKER: To show support of this motion, would honourable members stand in silence for a minute?

Question passed, members standing.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

ANIMALS: DOG ACT

Review: Petition

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.22 p.m.]: I present a petition from one resident of Cottesloe praying that the recommendations of the Dog Act review committee be rejected. I am assured that, although the petition is from only one person, it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 20.)

ANIMALS: DOG ACT

Review: Petition

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch) [2.24 p.m.]: I present a petition on behalf of 105 constituents of the electorate of Murdoch, a petition in terms similar to those in the petition presented by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. 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. 21.)

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE: PILBARA

Standing Orders Suspension

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [2.25 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended to enable me to move the following motion—

This House expresses its grave concern that the interests of Western Australia as a whole are increasingly at risk by reason of prolonged industrial confrontation in the Pilbara, with a likely loss of markets for Western Australian iron ore and a consequential serious diminution of employment prospects in Western Australia.

This House calls on the Government to take urgent and active measures to bring the industrial conflict to an end, including—

- (1) publicly oppose the unjustified claims for a reduced working week within the iron ore industry;
- (2) support for the Western Australian Industrial Commission in seeking to uphold its authority and to give effect to its orders for a return to work;
- (3) the Government to use its influence with Western Australian unionists, the Trades and Labor Council, and the industry to bring pressure to bear on striking workmen to return to work and in particular to provide information so that striking unionists will understand that their action is putting in jeopardy their own futures and the security of their own employment;
- (4) consultations with industry representatives as to the best possible measures to minimise the damaging effects of this additional undermining of Western Australian iron ore producers as reliable suppliers.

Mr Speaker, do you want me to proceed now?

The SPEAKER: You can proceed only with the reasons you have for moving that Standing Orders be suspended.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have moved this motion as a result of the serious concern we must all have for the industrial problems being experienced in the Pilbara. The Government and the Opposition

ought to work together to solve this industrial dispute, which will affect Western Australia adversely in the long term. We should join together to indicate our concern and what should be done about this problem.

Mr Speaker, you have indicated that I should not proceed with the detail of the matter, and I am sure the Government does not wish me to continue at this stage.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [2.27 p.m.]: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition wrote to me about this matter. The Government is prepared to agree to the suspension of Standing Orders so that this matter can be debated, but I will take this opportunity to make a couple of comments relating to these kinds of matters. It was agreed that there be three speakers from each side for 20 minutes each, but no provision was made for a speaker from the National Party. I am concerned that, traditionally, the National Party in this place has not been catered for in any way. The Government has agreed that one of its speaking times can be taken by the National Party, and in future we will consider seriously whether we should agree that an extra spot be made available for the National Party from the time of either the Opposition or the Government. We must give proper regard to that question.

Mr Blaikie: Are you prepared to ensure they are recognised and that they have the official status that other parties have, and will you move accordingly?

Mr TONKIN: I am not suggesting that Standing Orders be changed to permit that a party with two members be fully recognised as a political party. The point I am making is that they are members of Parliament whether or not they belong to an official party. The fact is that when I discussed this briefly with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and I hope I am not misquoting him, he did not regard them as part of the official Opposition. I cannot say that it is bad luck for them because it is important that in any political system allowances be made for any minority group. We will ensure that the National Party has a chance to speak as is its right, and the Government has decided to forgo one of its speakers in order that a member from the National Party might have a chance to speak.

Mr Hassell: You will appreciate that I am not making any comment about the National Party, just that the Opposition cannot represent its position.

Mr TONKIN: I believe I have not misrepresented the position of the Opposition. The

situation is in accordance with Standing Orders and, at the end of time allowed, permission will be sought to withdraw the motion. The Government is prepared to agree to the suspension of Standing Orders so we do not prevent debate on matters of importance.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [2.31 p.m.]: I thank the Government for its consideration in allowing a spot in the proceedings for the National Party. I agree with the Leader of the House that Standing Orders should be altered in order to make provision for crossbench parties to take part in this type of debate. I would like to correct the interjection made by the member for Vasse. I believe we are officially recognised as a party and that he is referring to the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal which has nothing to do with this House. The National Party is just as much a political party as is the Liberal Party or the Labor Party.

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) [2.32 p.m.]: I speak briefly on the comment made by the member for Stirling. The fact is that you, Mr Speaker, recognise no political party in this place, but you recognise Her Majesty's Government and the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition and members. Therefore, the member for Stirling is incorrect in his assertion that political parties are recognised by the Parliament.

Mr Stephens: I said we were just as much an official party as is the Liberal Party or the Labor Party. In that, I am correct.

MR THOMPSON: I am saying no political parties are recognised by the Chair.

The other point I want to make is that someone seems to have anticipated what you, Mr Speaker, might do because it is your prerogative to determine the conditions under which a debate will be held, if a debate occurs, and you might well, in your wisdom, determine there will be six speakers from each side of the House. However, it seems to me that a dickybird whispered in your ear.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! Before I put the motion, I must remind the House that it requires an absolute majority and, if there is a dissentient voice, I will call for a division.

Question put and passed.

Motion

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [2.34 p.m.]: I move—

This House expresses its grave concern that the interests of Western Australia as a whole are increasingly at risk by reason of prolonged industrial confrontation in the Pilbara, with a likely loss of markets for Western Australian iron ore and a conse-

quential serious diminution of employment prospects in Western Australia.

This House calls on the Government to take urgent and active measures to bring the industrial conflict to an end, including—

- (1) publicly oppose the unjustified claims for a reduced working week within the iron ore industry;
- (2) support for the Western Australian Industrial Commission in seeking to uphold its authority and to give effect to its orders for a return to work;
- (3) the Government to use its influence with Western Australian unionists, the Trades and Labor Council, and the industry to bring pressure to bear on striking workmen to return to work and in particular to provide information so that striking unionists will understand that their action is putting in jeopardy their own futures and the security of their own employment;
- (4) consultations with industry representatives as to the best possible measures to minimise the damaging effects of this additional undermining of Western Australian iron ore producers as reliable suppliers.

I thank the Government for agreeing to this urgent motion and I indicate clearly that members on this side of the House certainly have no objections to, but welcome, the National Party's participation. I believe that as many members as possible should be given an opportunity to indicate their views on such an issue which is vital to this State.

The Leader of the House, when commenting in relation to the pairs of the National Party, said that it had not been granted those pairs. I hope that in the future the Government does grant the necessary pairs to the National Party if and when required.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! There seems to be some doubt as to your time limit. My understanding is that you have 20 minutes.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is correct. I gave an undertaking that we would have three speakers from this side of the House and that each one would speak for 20 minutes.

I moved this urgent motion because of the extreme concern the Opposition has for the future of one of the most important industries in this State and because that industry could be placed in jeopardy by actions being taken by union leaders in the Pilbara where we have seen not only the poss-

ible loss of jobs, but also the possible loss of income to this State and to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Action is required by the Government in connection with this issue because of the dire consequences it could have on Western Australia. Already Japan has indicated its concern on a number of occasions regarding industrial action in the Pilbara. As recently as the last two days, we have had information from the Japanese that they are concerned about these actions and about the future of the industry in this State.

Nine iron ore ships have been diverted from Western Australia to one of our competitors—Brazil—to pick up ore because that country is regarded as being a more reliable supplier. The possibility of Western Australia's retaining its share of the market is diminishing.

I spoke to representatives of the Japanese steel mills last year and they made it clear to me that they are anxious to trade with Western Australia and to continue to give us orders for 48 per cent of their iron ore purchases, but they needed assurance on two issues. Firstly, they requested a competitive price and, secondly, they requested responsible industrial relations whereby they could rely on deliveries of iron ore.

I make reference to the 95-day Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. strike in 1979. It cost this State \$95 million—\$1 million per day—and it also cost people their wages which amounted to \$7 830 000 and the cost to the Consolidated Revenue Fund was \$4 million. I know that the Premier and his deputy would be concerned about this because, when preparing the Budget, they take into consideration royalties obtained from iron ore and other mining industries. Last year, approximately \$88 million was paid in royalties. It is a substantial amount and is important as far as budgeting is concerned. It is not only important that we have a reliable income to the Treasury, but it is also most important that we have reliable supplies for overseas customers and, frankly, if we do not provide reliability of supply to our consumers, they will deal with other countries.

Korea was taking iron ore from us at the time of the 95-day Hamersley Iron strike, and it had sufficient ore to last for 40 days, but, when our strike went on for 95 days, the Korean mills lost the continuity of supply and had to put off workers, something they do not like doing. They then took orders away from Western Australia and placed them with other countries. I believe that to this day we have not recovered those particular orders, unless the Deputy Premier is able

to tell me we have done so in the last month or two.

This strike comes at a most difficult time, when ores are available in other parts of the world, particularly in Brazil. Japan is concerned about reliability of supplies and has indicated it is diverting its ships to other places.

Iron ore brings in 44 per cent of Western Australia's total income from mining operations. In 1981-82 it comprised 28.2 per cent of this State's exports—a substantial amount. That figure is double the amount brought in by wool or wheat for the same year. It gives an indication of the importance of the iron ore industry. Iron ore made up 28.2 per cent of our total export income while other minerals brought in 31.4 per cent. Last year alone, sales of iron ore realised \$1 325 million—a substantial amount.

A further indicator of the importance of the industry to Western Australia can be found in the figures for metals such as aluminium, which brought in \$595 million, almost one-third of the amount raised by sales of iron ore. Nickel brought in \$327 million; again it is a substantial amount, but only about 20 per cent of the iron ore figure. We consider goldmining a major and important industry, but it brought in only \$176 million.

Iron ore and other minerals make an enormous contribution to this State. The capital investment by the companies involved in the iron ore industry is in excess of \$3 billion. This industry has brought towns, railway lines, and ports to the Pilbara, and about 45 000 people to that area. I give these details to indicate the tremendous importance of this industry and the likely effect on this State if this strike continues. Iron ore is a major contributor to economic growth and prosperity in Western Australia, and the Labor Party has indicated very clearly that it supports that view.

The Government must give a lead to those in the Pilbara and indicate what must be done. In this respect I assure the Government of the Opposition's support, because we believe this is an issue vital to the future of this State.

I want to refer now to *The West Australian* of 2 September in which it is stated that the Government has a white paper to safeguard the State's export position and develop new mines in the Pilbara. The Government has promised to work closely with unions to strengthen the iron ore industry, but today the future of that industry is in jeopardy as a result of shameful strike action taken, I believe, unnecessarily. The unions have indicated clearly that the umpire's decision means nothing to them. I sympathise with the Govern-

ment on this point. It is a sorry day for us all when unions disregard totally the Industrial Commission when they want to, and use it when they want to. Union leaders in Western Australia, particularly those in the Pilbara, are leading their workers to the dole queue and Western Australia to the poorhouse. We can ill-afford to lose the income from the iron ore industry.

Union leaders must be made to realise that a recession not only causes job problems, but also affects the capacity of industry to finance the flights of fancy of those union leaders. Recently, Jack Marks referred to the strike's being justified in view of the massive profits made by the companies involved. I want to refer to some figures in connection with Hamersley Iron to indicate that in terms of capital outlay, the profit is not as massive, as some union leaders believe. Hamersley Iron's return on shareholders' funds—that is, operating profit expressed as a percentage of issued capital and reserves—was 4.4 per cent for the year ended 31 December 1982, and 2.3 per cent for the year ended 31 December 1981, the average for the two years being 3.35 per cent. I ask members: How much of their money would they want to invest in an industry which returned 3.35 per cent annually over a two-year period? In my opinion, that is not a massive profit. I believe companies such as Hamersley Iron are playing their part in trying to help improve this State, not only in terms of income, but also in relation to the work force generally.

During the last six months, the companies have received a benefit from the devaluation of the Australian dollar. Since the devaluation, however, a further burden has been placed on them as a result of a substantial reduction in the price of iron ore which will probably reduce their income and profit for the next year.

Mr Marks' comments are in sharp contrast to those of the Prime Minister yesterday when he said that unions must recognise the implications of their actions and balance self-interest of particular groups against the interests of all workers. We are asking unions to do just that in this motion. We believe the interests of all workers and of the people of this State are at risk. The major contracts of companies such as Hamersley Iron and Mt. Newman Mining Co. Pty. Ltd. also are at risk.

Let us look at the Mt. Newman Mining strike which has been going for eight weeks. The strike relates to apprentice employment, and, in particular, to three electrical apprentices. Union members defied an order by the Industrial Commission to return to work by 3 August. Why should

unions have access to an Industrial Commission when, on the one hand, they agree with it when it suits them, and, on the other hand, they turn their backs on it when they so desire? In the Mt. Newman Mining case, the unions decided to take no notice of the commission and to turn away from it. In the Hamersley Iron strike, 1 400 people were stood down on 1 September after three weeks of walk-offs in connection with a claim for a 35-hour week. All members are aware that this Government, members of the Opposition, and the Federal Government have rejected a 35-hour week at this stage. The Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr Dans) stated clearly that, as far as he was concerned, a 38-hour week was not on at this stage.

Union members at Hamersley Iron have engaged in industrial action since the end of July. They have been before the commission and, despite the commission's directive to them to cease industrial action, they have taken no notice and have indicated that attitude quite clearly. Hamersley Iron would be in breach of the wages freeze agreement if it were to agree to the 35-hour week sought by the unions. The company therefore is unable to agree to that proposal.

People think the Japanese steel mills are in a fairly good position. That was true in the past, but last year the mills lost \$2 761 million—a substantial amount.

This particular year the mills are looking to a profit of \$600 million—less than 25 per cent of the loss for the previous year. However, this will not be achieved unless supply is reliable and the goods can be obtained at suitable prices. We should be trying to impress these overseas people so that we can retain our share of the market. We needed to indicate this to the Japanese while they were here a week or so ago. It seemed that the Government did not care very much whether they were here, and whether they would get supplies next month. That is what the Japanese have been shown of recent times.

One need look only at Brazil, which has put several billion dollars into its iron ore production, to realise that we must protect our industry. In 1987, Brazil will produce 35 million tonnes a year from the Carajas, an area which has better iron ore than most of the iron ore in this State. If the Japanese can acquire reliable cheap supplies from Brazil, they will not worry very much about Western Australia.

I would like to return to the Labor Party's election promise. It stated that its objects were to achieve full employment with paramount co-operation between employers and unions, and to

reduce confrontation. There must be goodwill on all sides to avoid confrontation. We do not see the unions in the Pilbara showing that goodwill at this stage. The unions are turning their backs on the Industrial Commission, and, if they continue to disregard the commission in this way, there will be no point in their appearing before it.

Recently, nine unions were called before the commission to show why they should not be deregistered. Mr Meecham, a representative of the Trades and Labor Council, asked why the unions should be challenged in this way, and it is interesting to hear what Chief Commissioner Kelly had to say to Mr Meecham. He said, "Do you think it would be preferable for the unions to remain registered and only come to the commission when they liked to, take industrial action when they liked to, and obey the Industrial Commission when they liked to?" It is very clear what the unions should do.

The Government now has an industrial adviser (Mr Butler) who is paid \$34 000-plus a year. He is a special adviser on industrial relations and among his duties is that of "Ministerial Officer, Special Services in Industrial Relations". The duty statement relating to this position reads as follows—

Liaising with representatives of industry and Government, employer and employee organisations, in matters relating to industrial relations—

If that is not enough, the statement continues—

—deputising for the Premier in formal discussions and consultations on industrial matters as required.

I suggest that, with that sort of information, we should be endeavouring to get the unions back to work, and if that cannot be achieved, we should start working on the work force in the Pilbara.

I request the Government to take action, and I believe we should be constructive in our criticism. I am not criticising the Government; I am criticising the unions. However, I am asking the Government to take some action, and I believe it should be along the following lines—

- (1) The Government should launch an immediate publicity campaign using the local media and household letter drops to explain to all residents the damage being caused by the strike. The explanation should include the effect on the iron ore industry, on associated industries, on the economic and social life of the Pilbara, and on Australia's international reputation. The campaign should seek also to stimulate immedi-

ately strong community pressure on the strikers to return to work before more damage is done.

I believe we can rely to a great extent on the women of the Pilbara to assist us in this regard. To continue—

- (2) The Government should make very widely known and clearly understood its own disapproval of the strike. It is not possible under circumstances like this to be neutral. The Government's silence to date has strengthened the position of those who want the strike to continue. It has given no help to those who want to return to work.
- (3) The Government should announce immediately that it will support the right of workers to make their own decision about joining a union. No workers should be forced with any sort of pressure—legal or otherwise—to join a union movement which can lead them into such destructive behaviour. A declaration of this nature from the Labor Government would be a significant blow for the freedom of the individual workers.
- (4) The Government should recognise and publicly declare that awards and other industrial agreements should be two-sided contracts in which workers are answerable for their side of the bargain, just as employers are now.

Cut-throat tactics such as those being used now at Mt. Newman Mining and Hamersley Iron have no place in the civilised and national industrial relations of this country.

I hope that the Government will agree to the motion I have put forward and that it will play its part in trying to make the people in the Pilbara realise the difficulties involved and the damage they can do to this country in the long term. I hope we can get the unions to reverse the decisions they have made not to abide by the rulings of the Industrial Commission.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [2.56 p.m.]: Put simply, the pre-election policy of the Labor Party in relation to industrial matters could be summed up by its belief that it would do a better job than we could do. Specifically in relation to the iron ore industry, the Government established the goal of having 60 per cent of the Japanese iron ore market by 1990. It indicated that it would achieve that goal by ensuring better relations between the companies, the customers, and the workers in the industry. Indeed, this was very

clearly spelt out on 15 October last year when the then member for Yilgarn-Dundas (Mr Grill) issued a statement about the iron ore industry. He said—

—a need for the Government to take a leading role. The producers were losing their competitive edge and the Labor Party would seek an agreement from the unions to avoid strikes.

That statement was well written up in *The Australian Financial Review*, and the key point in the considerable coverage it was given was contained in the following quote—

—the Labor Party will seek agreement from the unions to avoid strikes, and will endeavour, through equity from Japanese interests in the iron ore industry, to check the sharp fall in exports.

When the Government is put to the test, the reality falls far short of the promises made. After several weeks—eight weeks in the case of the dispute at Mt. Newman Mining—the Government has shown clearly that it is not prepared to intervene. It is not prepared to stand up against the unions. Even the Federal Minister has shown that he is prepared to intervene and he issued a statement which criticised the unions. However, nothing like this was forthcoming from the State Government. Indeed, when the State Minister for Industrial Relations was asked why he did not intervene, he simply stated, “We are against the 35-hour week, but we will do no more.”

Hamersley Iron has said today that the strike is costing the company \$1 million a day. The Government is losing money through payroll tax as well as potentially very large sums by way of lost royalty revenue. However, the Government does not seem to be worrying about that. Certainly there has been no public response from the Government about any concern at the loss of revenue.

People who are not being paid wages are not spending money. From the information I have been able to obtain, there are very severe commercial and personal strains in the Pilbara and yet the Government does not seem worried at all, or it is not displaying its worry. Certainly it is not displaying its worry to the customer from whom it is seeking 60 per cent of its trade by 1990.

That is today's picture, but far greater cost will be borne by the State in the future. The Government has shown itself not to be interested, and not to be wanting to become involved. The Government says it intends to attract industry and investments—and I am talking not just of little companies or small service industries, but also of

big high-risk, major, capital-intensive industries, and value-added processing type industries—but it is not prepared to stand up in defence of its employers the first time it is put to the test. It is not prepared to stand against the union leaders. It is not prepared to put the pressure on people who, against the wishes of this Government, the Federal Government, and the community, are seeking a 35-hour week in an industry which cannot afford it.

On 22 March, the member for Pilbara spoke in this House about what she expected from the Government so far as her electorate was concerned. She welcomed the election of a Government of great promise for that electorate. I wonder what she thinks now. What can she say to the unemployed workers in the Pilbara who want to work, but who are prevented from working because the Government will not intervene? How is she coping with the housewives up there who are living on whatever union handouts and dole payments they are able to obtain? Last week union representatives moved into the south-west, trying to obtain donations from unionists to the welfare of people in the Pilbara. What sort of situation is that?

I wonder what the member for Pilbara thinks of the situation in which the Premier insulted the customers in Japan. He went up there, and whatever productive efforts he might have made were largely undone, as the media and the subsequent commentators reported, when he made a statement like the one he made on “Sattler File” on 9 May. He was asked how he was getting on, and the Premier said, “I would hate to be hanging by my thumbs while waiting for them to smile”. What sort of way is that to treat the customers which the Government has identified as being those which it wishes to purchase 60 per cent of the product from the Pilbara by 1990?

At times in the past, the present Government was quick to criticise Western Australia's dependence on the Japanese; and in that it was probably quite right. Efforts were being made, as they should have been made, and as they are still being made, to diversify the customers for our range of raw materials. Notwithstanding that, the Government's ambition remains the supply of 60 per cent of the Japanese market by 1990; yet the Premier insults the Japanese. Indeed, in an interview on 20 May, the Premier said that he was not concerned with damaging Australia's case.

Let us consider the situation of the Minister responsible for the industry—the Deputy Premier. I might have missed it, but I have not been able to find any public statement indicating the position

he has taken as far as this industrial action is concerned.

Mr MacKinnon: Gone to ground!

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister is responsible for the industry. It is no good his saying that it is another Minister's area—that it is industrial relations. Certainly the mechanical aspects of industrial disputes fall within the ambit of the Minister for Industrial Relations; but this is an industry which is responsible to the Deputy Premier. Unless I am mistaken, he has made no public statement in defence of the industry.

When I spoke to people in Japan yesterday, I was not made aware of any contact the Deputy Premier had with the customers in order to try to cool them down in the rescheduling of shipping rosters. To the best of the information I was able to obtain here and in Japan during my phone calls yesterday, the Deputy Premier has done nothing to facilitate the cessation of the industrial dispute and to try to establish the position the Government would like; that is, no 35-hour week, and up to 60 per cent of the Japanese trade by 1990.

That position is no closer now than it was when the Government was elected. At that time, I admit that there was certainly a way to go, with the economic downturn and the less-than-contractual amounts being taken. However, we have now slipped further behind and the reputation of the State has been tarnished. It is no good the Deputy Premier's saying that not one Japanese blast furnace has stopped because of disruption of shipping from Australia. That may have been true in the past; but never in the past did we have the situation in which both major companies had concurrent disputes for this length of time.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, the two major disputes in recent years—Hamersley Iron in 1979 and Mt. Newman Mining in 1980—were not concurrent. By the rescheduling of vessels, it was possible for the Japanese steel industry to maintain the blending of ores required for blast furnace or sinter feed. The industry is not able to do that at present with the same degree of flexibility because, whether or not the Deputy Premier admits it, we are in what is virtually a buyer's market in the conditions prevailing. The joint steel mills cannot be guaranteed that by the time a vessel leaves Japan and arrives in the Pilbara, the strike will be over and the ship will be able to take on a load of ore.

The information given to me from Japan yesterday is that this is the situation. My inquiries were made in order that I might discover whether the stories being written and the comments being made were valid, or whether they were the result

of scaremongering. In all fairness, I must say that, as the Deputy Premier will be well aware, a fair amount of scaremongering goes on. However, this information is absolutely correct and the stories are valid. The Japanese companies are not prepared to take the risk.

In 1979-80, we provided not quite 60 per cent of the iron ore trade to Korea. Because of the prolonged strike in the Pilbara at that time, and because the Korean steel industry was smaller than the Japanese one, and it had only one major integrated steelworks and was not able to have the flexibility that the Japanese mills have, we lost a significant portion of that trade. We now have something like only 40 to 42 per cent of the trade, simply because the industrial trouble in the Pilbara forced the Korean producers to buy on the spot market. In order that they might have secure supplies of the quality they required in the future, the Korean producers chose to enter into other arrangements and, as a result, we lost the opportunity to supply several million tonnes of ore.

If the Government is serious about its ambitions for economic development in this State, and about attracting new industries beyond the iron ore industry, it should show how dinkum it is. The test of whether the Government is dinkum is what it does in relation to the iron ore industry now and the other efforts it makes to attract major capital-intensive industries associated with our raw materials.

Quite clearly, the Government has been shown to be wanting. Its own Federal colleagues have found it to be wanting. When Mr Willis can chastise the unions because of what the local boys want, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, one can only wonder what Mr Butler, the State President of the ALP, has been doing in his role as adviser to the Premier in this matter.

Mr I. F. Taylor: He has been saving the State money.

Mr Hassell: He has saved a lot of money in relation to this matter, hasn't he?

Mr PETER JONES: In supporting this motion, I indicate it is designed to draw attention to the fact that we care about this industry; we care about what is happening in the Pilbara. That attitude is not expressed in relation only to today's situation, but also to the potential, as expressed by the Labor Party, of the Pilbara which is being threatened by the Government's present inactivity.

The Premier was big and brave when he went to Japan and spoke to the representatives there. It is very easy for him to be big and brave and to insult the customers. It is very easy for him to

make promises here, but it is left to the unemployed workers of the Pilbara, the young people who cannot get jobs, or the company which wants to invest funds and decides not to invest in Western Australia, to ponder the wisdom of the Premier's insults in Japan, and the present inactivity of the Government.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [3.12 p.m.]: Let me take up the last point raised by the member for Narrogin before I begin my remarks. The member stated twice that I insulted customers in Japan. I am not sure whether he is being deliberately provocative or being insulting himself, but the truth is I did not insult the customers in Japan. Every report written following my visit to Japan indicated it was appreciated very much and was seen as a pleasant change from the situation which obtained under the previous Government in which people were never sure where they stood or what was being told to them.

Mr O'Connor: I do not concur with that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In 1979, when this Opposition was in Government, it had an opportunity to demonstrate its industrial relations prowess, because, at that time, 2 300 workers were involved in a major stoppage which lasted 10 weeks.

Mr O'Connor: Wasn't it 95 days? Are you referring to the Hamersley Iron strike?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I understand the strike commenced on 24 May 1979, and lasted for some 10 weeks. At that time, the then Government postured and achieved absolutely nothing. Nothing was achieved by the then Government, now in Opposition, in its attempts to implement the same sorts of tactics that it would see implemented in respect of the current dispute.

At that time, we said that the Government was motivated mainly by politics and that it wanted to wring from that industrial situation every bit of political advantage possible. Whether or not that was true, it was proved that the line of action adopted by the then Government resulted in influencing the stoppage not one whit and the worn-out and tired methods imposed by the then Government were shown to be completely ineffective.

In a report in *The Australian Financial Review* at that time, it was made perfectly clear that the Government's attitude was unreasonable and was not conducive to a settlement of the dispute. Referring to the stoppage, the following paragraphs appeared in that report—

This serious situation has been seized on by Western Australia's Premier, Sir Charles

Court, as right for tough threats against the unions involved.

Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, has been limbering up his stick-wielding arm in the background. Before these politicians embark upon a display of machismo which could only be inflammatory, we would ask whether this situation isn't so serious as to warrant a new search for a better way.

We simply say to the Opposition that that report is true now and the threats, intimidation, and unreasonable attitude adopted by the then Premier in respect of that dispute, firstly, achieved nothing and, secondly, were inflammatory and did not assist the search for a settlement of the dispute.

Mr O'Connor: Do you think we should sit back and do nothing at the moment with a strike on?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not saying nothing should be done, and I am about to say what we have done in respect of this dispute. The time has long past for right-thinking politicians to believe that they can obtain political advantage from industrial disruption. Firstly, such an attitude is unfashionable and, secondly, and much worse, it is ineffective in the search for a true and worthwhile settlement of a dispute.

As far as this dispute is concerned, let me state for about the eighth or ninth time on the public record that the Government opposes the claim for a shorter working week which claim is being pursued by these unions. We have said that publicly on no fewer than, in my case, nine or 10 occasions, and I have seen it reported in the Press, as stated by the Minister for Industrial Relations, on at least two occasions.

So let it be perfectly clear in everybody's minds: We do not support the present claim for a shorter working week, which claim is being mounted by some of the unions in the Pilbara.

In addition, we say the claim is outside the accord which has been reached between the unions represented by the ACTU and the Federal Government. We believe that accord is the single, substantial basis on which we may be approaching some reasonable method, firstly, of wage fixation and, secondly, of the settlement of industrial disputes in this country.

Therefore, because we believe the accord is so important, we believe also that, being outside the accord, this claim is completely untenable. That has been said publicly and, as far as we are concerned, that remains the non-negotiable position of the Government. Not only has that been said publicly, but also on numerous occasions I have said that we do not support—indeed, we oppose—the application for shorter working hours.

We have said that directly to the unions and the companies involved.

We can make our position no clearer than that; and let me say also that, in respect of the claim for shorter working hours, it is true a difference of opinion exists between the companies involved in the dispute. It is all very well for members of the Opposition to say the Government should be supporting the companies, but which companies does the Opposition want us to support?

Mr O'Connor: What about supporting the commission?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I shall deal with the commission in a moment, but let me take the point raised by the Government and ask: Which companies does it want us to support?

Mr O'Connor: I did not suggest that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Narrogin said we should support the companies and the people in the Pilbara—I shall deal with those people in a moment—in addition to our supporting the commission. However, which companies do we support?

Do we support the two companies which opposed deregistration, or do we support the other companies which, I presume, are yet to indicate their attitudes? If we support the two companies which do not officially oppose deregistration, are we seen to be opposing the companies which do? The Opposition should be reasonable about the matter.

Mr Court: I would like to think you support all the companies and get those people back to work.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member does not seem to understand that the companies are taking different stances on a fundamental part of a complex dispute.

Mr Court: There are two companies in dispute; the other two are not in dispute.

Mr MacKinnon: And both of them are not in dispute over hours, either; one is in dispute on a different issue altogether.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I understand the key point of the Opposition's predicted action is the deregistration of the unions involved.

In 1979, as part of its strategy, the Government intervened in the deregistration case. I presume the predicted course of action advocated by the Opposition touches on the requested deregistration, upon the application of an industrial commissioner, of the unions involved in the dispute.

I am simply pointing out to the Opposition that that question is not one which is embraced unani-

mously by the companies involved in the iron ore industry in the Pilbara. It is simply not sufficient to say that there is a black and white case that sees the companies on one side of the picture on every issue and the unions on the other side of the picture on those same issues. That is the first thing.

The second thing is this: After stating our position on shorter working hours and this claim for shorter hours, we have the question I have been leading to of the deregistration of the unions. It was not stated by Opposition speakers, but I presume the implication is—perhaps I am wrong—that they believe we should be intervening in deregistration procedures. It was not said, but I presume that was the implication.

Mr MacKinnon: You presume wrong. Have you read the motion?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If I presume wrong—

Mr MacKinnon: Your understanding of English is rather appalling.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If I presume wrong, as the member for Murdoch now indicates, and it is not the Opposition's position that we should intervene in deregistration proceedings, I can do no more than members opposite could do in this position, because we are not intervening, either. The non-intervention of the Government in the deregistration application is the right course it should follow. It is a course that denies to the unions the support they would seek in their position in the deregistration proceedings. It is a course which says to the companies, split as they are on the deregistration matter, that we are not taking sides with them, either, on this matter.

What in effect we are saying is that it is the job of the Industrial Commission to bring down its decision on the deregistration application, unfettered by any Opposition or Government involvement in its consideration of that issue. That is entirely consistent with what we have said in Opposition and in Government: There is no place for politics in the deliberations of the Industrial Commission. We have said that consistently, and that consistent position is reflected by our attitude on this matter. Let us see the substance of the Government's position in this case.

We have firstly stated publicly that we do not support the call for a shorter working week by those unions that are in dispute in the Pilbara. Secondly, we have adopted the position which from the interjection by the member for Murdoch is also the position of the Opposition: We do not intervene in deregistration proceedings. So in substance I do not know what else we would be ex-

pected to do in these two particulars of the matter.

Now let me deal with some of the other points raised by Opposition speakers. Of course, we accept that this is a very serious dispute and that its continuance is not assisting the industry, the Pilbara, the people who live in the Pilbara, or the persistence of markets for iron ore, on which we depend very heavily—

Mr O'Connor: Or the Budget.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —for the prosperity generally of the State and for revenue into the Budget. It is not extremely agile of the Opposition for it to see these things. However, the Opposition with its motion today has noted one thing without knowing that it has noted it; that is, times have changed.

We are not about to adopt the same sort of strategy as was adopted, for different reasons, with a startling lack of success by the Opposition when in Government. Members opposite should look at their own industrial record. Their record as a Government is the worst record in industrial relations in terms of stoppages of any Government in this country, and I will tell members why. The reason is plain: The Opposition pursued in a harsh and aggressive manner, for political advantage, policies designed to settle nothing. They were deliberately designed not to settle anything, because in their settlement evaporated the political advantage members opposite sought in Government.

There is a parallel in the 1979 dispute about which the Opposition now would seek to say in the matter of this dispute that we should wring our hands, but about which the Opposition failed miserably when in Government to settle anything whatsoever.

Mr O'Connor: You have failed miserably. I have just made suggestions which you might be prepared to carry out in the interests of these matters.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition has suggested that we adopt the techniques and strategies it adopted with the 10-week strike in the Pilbara in 1979, the sort of tactics that failed to work. The member for Narrogin has explained the cost, in terms of export markets, of that failure of the Opposition when it was in Government. Yet today the Opposition pretends to tell us that we should do the same things again, that we should attempt to distribute pamphlets to people to set people against each other, and that we should somehow or other stop people from seeking donations in the south-west to support people on strike in the north-west. The Opposition suggests that somehow or other all that needs to be done in

an industrial relations dispute is to take a big stick to one side of the equation and beat it into submission. That has not worked in the past. Surely the Opposition does not want us to embark upon similar sorts of policies, which presumably have not changed in their effect, only to see them fail on this occasion.

Mr O'Connor: We have made other suggestions, to which I hope you listened and which you might implement in the interests of the work force in the Pilbara and in the interests of the people of this State.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The suggestions included fighting to reassure people who want to work in the Pilbara that we stand on their side.

Mr O'Connor: What is wrong with that?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr Bryce: It is the same old line.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not think we have advocated that people should not work when they want to work. The Opposition's suggestion smacks of an attempt to set within the work force in the Pilbara one block of people off against another. That does not work.

Mr Court: You say you have special liaison with the unions, but have you or any of your Ministers gone up there to discuss the problem with them?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I understand that at least two Ministers have been to the Pilbara to discuss various aspects of the dispute with those people on the shop floor.

Mr Court: Which Ministers?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I understand Mr Dowding and Mr Dans have been to the Pilbara and have discussed the matter. I discussed some aspects of the burgeoning problem when I visited Karratha some weeks ago.

Mr Court: With what results?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is really childish and premature for the member for Nedlands to try consistently, with the approach that is taken to industrial relations by the Opposition now and when it was in Government, to think that it is simply a matter of our doing this to cause this result or hitting this head here to cause submission there. That did not work for the Opposition when in Government for nine years. For nine years we had this antagonistic, harsh, aggressive, and unintelligent approach to industrial relations, and it did not work.

In the remaining time left to me, I will tell members what we are going to do.

Mr McNee: We have been long enough waiting for it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The new member must learn that I do not wait upon his convenience.

Mr McNee: I am very pleased about that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am also very pleased about it because I would not want the member to think that I contribute to a debate according to his timetable.

What we intend to do amounts to the single most far-reaching change in industrial relations in this State's history. We intend completely to rewrite the Industrial Arbitration Act. In that rewriting we will be changing the emphasis on industrial relations; we will be changing the emphasis of the search for the settlement of disputation completely from that which was the emphasis sought by the previous Government in, firstly, its 1979 Act and secondly, its 1982 amendments. We will insert conciliation as a centrepiece in the industrial relations machinery of this State, with the realistic ability for industrial commissioners to conciliate in a relaxed and intelligent manner—

Mr Hassell: What about when the parties to a dispute refuse—

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —to seek, Mr Speaker—

Mr Hassell: —as now, with no penalties.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —settlement on a basis that is a mutually agreed compromise, a basis that can expect the persistence of the settlement. I note the interjections, which mirror perfectly the Opposition's lack of comprehension in respect of industrial relations. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition starts off straightaway with, "What happens when the parties to a dispute cannot agree?", but, having started off at that point, he immediately predicts the end point of the whole argument.

Mr Hassell: It does happen occasionally!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is the very reason the industrial relations situation in this State as enacted by the previous Government, the now Opposition, makes no room whatsoever for any realistic conciliation. There is no such thing as conciliation under the present law, simply because the attitude expressed by the Opposition was the origin of the law.

Mr Hassell: What nonsense.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [3.32 p.m.]: There is no question that Australia's economic position is serious. Our balance of payments position is difficult and unemployment has risen to an alarming level and is becoming worse. If we are to believe some of the reports in the Press over the last 12 months, we would think that Australia is

running the risk of becoming the poor nation of Asia, notwithstanding our rich natural resources. One of the factors that has brought us to this position—I emphasise that it is only one of the factors—is our poor performance in the industrial relations area. It is high time we adopted a more bipartisan approach in this area.

The motion before the House highlights the fact that our industrial relations policies have been a failure.

Mr Brian Burke: Hear, hear!

Mr STEPHENS: It is unfortunate that when an industrial dispute of any magnitude arises, it is felt necessary that the Parliament be involved. When a serious court case is heard, we do not hear a cry for the involvement of the Parliament, but the cry for its involvement in industrial disputes indicates that the machinery set up by the Parliament to handle such disputes is defective. We should have a situation whereby industrial disputes can be handled and resolved without the involvement of the Parliament except on the rare occasion of an exceedingly serious dispute. Our involvement should be minimised, and this motion indicates the failure of the machinery the Parliament has set up to handle industrial disputes.

For many years, the National Party has subscribed to the proposition that we appoint a full-scale Royal Commission to review all aspects of industrial relations, including labour and management, apprenticeship training, etc. All these types of things should be thoroughly investigated as the first step towards the establishment of a blueprint for a new approach to industrial relations. The approach we have now was built up on an *ad hoc* basis over a number of years. We are in such a serious situation that we need to start now to obtain detailed knowledge of all aspects of industrial relations problems.

I was particularly pleased to hear the Premier indicate that the Government will rewrite the Industrial Arbitration Act. I had hoped that allowance would be made for public inquiry and debate on this issue before the Government went ahead with appropriate legislation. It is interesting from our point of view that in the past both the previous Prime Minister (Mr Fraser), and a Premier of this State (Sir Charles Court) indicated the need for a full review of industrial relations problems. It is significant also that no such review has taken place. Was this matter placed in the too-hard basket, or was it the preference that this matter remain in the boiling pot so that it could be used for political advantage? I do not know the answer, but I would like to know. Certainly no inquiry or review has taken place, notwithstanding

that at different times that Prime Minister and that Premier indicated the need for such a review.

The first action this Parliament should take on industrial relations is a review of all the aspects of industrial relations problems, and then it should legislate in a manner which would not require continual parliamentary involvement and, therefore, give one party or another the opportunity to make political capital out of matters which seriously affect the Australian economy.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch) [3.37 p.m.]: I rise to support this motion, and express on behalf of the Opposition the points about which we are concerned. It distressed me to sit here and listen to the Premier addressing what is, to us in the Opposition, the most serious issue to have arisen in this State since the recent State election. The Premier did not give us even one glimmer of hope that the Government would do anything about the industrial dispute that is crippling the Pilbara and has the potential to cause long-term and severe damage to this State.

I refer the Premier to articles in the weekend papers. He may not have seen them; probably he was too busy catching trout. It was reported that the Japanese steel mills were diverting iron ore carriers from the Pilbara to Brazil. I refer to the *Sunday Independent* and *The Weekend Australian*, and, in particular, to the latter in which Alan Goodall, that newspaper's journalist in Tokyo, reports directly on statements made by Japanese iron ore executives. The article states—

"It's simple," one Nippon Steel Corporation manager said. "We cannot afford a shutdown. We just reroute ships to pick up iron in whatever country is loading."

In light of that fact, and in light of the fact that, on a visit to Western Australia, the head of Nippon Steel (Mr Saito), saw the industry at a standstill, what did the Premier say? What did he say following this report? It was made of a statement by Mr Ian Burston, the Western Australian manager of Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd.—

Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. one of the country's biggest iron ore producers, yesterday expressed concern that it could lose multi-million-dollar contracts as a result of a 35-hour week dispute at its mines in Western Australia.

We have claims by the unions involved in the Mt. Newman dispute over apprenticeships that, as soon as that dispute is over, they will go straight into the 35-hour-week dispute. We might have a dispute solved on one day, but the next day another will commence. In light of all those things, we heard the Premier speak for 10 minutes

about his disdain for the previous Government in its handling of industrial relations issues. He spoke of our actions in the nine years we were in office. He then took another 10 minutes to tell us what his Government will do to solve the dispute, and all it will do is rewrite the Industrial Arbitration Act.

I have a message for the Premier. He must remember that he is no longer in Opposition, as we are no longer in Government. He is now in Government, and it was he and his colleagues who made promises to the people of this State prior to the election. It was he who gave the commitment that we would have industrial peace in this State. It was he and his party which said there would be peace in the Pilbara, and now it is he and his Government which must come up with solutions. It is no good his standing idly by and watching the Pilbara destroy itself and saying, "We do not want to become involved". In other words, the Government is saying it does not have the guts to take a stand. Action must be taken.

I want to comment on four points raised by the Premier. He said words to this effect: "We have not advocated that we, the Government, will intervene to stop those people who want to work". I inform the Premier, the Deputy Premier, and members of the Government that as far as this dispute is concerned the AWU wants to get back to work as quickly as possible—today. However, their union colleagues will not allow them to do so. What will the Premier do on behalf of the AWU and those people who want to return to work today? Nothing! The Premier wants to rewrite the Industrial Arbitration Act, but, by the time he does that, there will be no industry left to write it for. The Premier has said he will rewrite it, but, in the meantime, he will try to catch a trout and promote a tourist industry which is already flourishing. While Brian fiddles, the iron ore industry burns.

The Premier criticised the former Government's actions in 1979, but he did not indicate what his Government would do. He said that it was the job of the commission to bring down its decision, free of political interference.

What has the Minister for Industrial Relations done? He has criticised the actions of the Industrial Commission in this State and, in the Opposition's view, that criticism does not indicate that the Industrial Commission is free of politics. It could be the Premier's view, but it is not the Opposition's.

The Premier appears to be oblivious of the fact that hardship is being caused to workers and the industry in the Pilbara at the present time, or he

must be naive. It is not only the cost of that strike to the people in the Pilbara which is of concern to us in Opposition; we are also concerned for the people in the Pilbara, as well as all those people in this State who rely heavily on the spin-off from the iron ore industry; that is, the service industries in the metropolitan area and the Pilbara. Small businesses which rely on the spending of the workers and associated companies, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, are struggling for survival.

Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd., to which company we are referring, received a six per cent return on its invested funds last year. I guarantee that not one member of the Government or of those unions in the Pilbara has money invested today at such a rate. The Premier appears to be oblivious to or is not worrying about the fact that his Government is losing money through payroll tax, port charges, and royalties. He does not want to get involved and is not game to take a stand.

We in Opposition are also concerned about the attack that both this Government and the union movement have made on the industrial arbitration system. While the Premier and members of the Government would claim to be supporters of that system, I would like to quote from several articles which would give the lie to that claim. Firstly, I quote from *The West Australian* of 20 August and a statement made by Bill Barr, the Secretary of the AWU, regarding the Industrial Commission's moves for deregistration. It reads as follows—

"If they think they can intimidate us by threatening deregistration, then that is a very foolish attitude," Mr Barr said.

That is a statement made by a union, the largest union in this State, about the decision of the umpire. The decision of the umpire was to ask the union for the reasons it should not be deregistered and the union came out with this inflammatory remark. The same article quoted remarks by Mr Dans, the Minister for Industrial Relations. They read as follows—

"I am not very happy personally with what seems to be a hasty rush into deregistration."

If that is not an attack by the Government and the Minister in the Government responsible for industrial relations, on the Industrial Commission, what is? The Government is clearly coming down on the side of the union movement before it has had time to examine the reasons the commission made such a request.

I refer to a further article on 6 September which has been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, and in which Mr Kelly said the fol-

lowing to Mr Rob Meecham who was appearing on behalf of the union movement—

"Do you think it would be preferable for them to remain registered and only come to the commission when they like, and to take industrial action when they like and only to obey orders of the commission when they like?"

Mr Hassell: That is a conciliation process, is it?

Mr MacKINNON: That was a statement made by Judge Kelly, the Chief Commissioner. It is a statement of which I think this Government and the union movement should take heed. I am not trying to use a mallet or a hammer—a word the Premier is so fond of using—by indicating that the Government should do this or that. What we are saying is that the Government should listen carefully to the Industrial Commission and should not take political action to interfere with that process.

I refer to the promises made by this Government prior to the election, and, subsequent to the election, its actions concerning industrial relations. In the ALP's election policy, the following statement was made regarding industrial relations—

Simply, the next ALP Government in W.A. will do a better job than the current government, without the confrontation.

It continued—

Therefore the next State Labor Government proposes to change industrial law and planning to ensure that: co-operation between government, employers and unions replaces confrontation.

It is a very laudable aim and one that I hope will come to fruition, but what do we see in this dispute? We see very little action and very little sympathy by the Government for, perhaps, the most important sector of non-rural industry in this State. What action have we seen? We have seen the appointment of Mr McGinty to advise Mr Dans, the appointment of Mr Butler, the State President of the ALP, to advise the Premier, and the appointment of Mr Thomas to advise Mr Parker. What has happened as a consequence of those appointments? What we have seen is that when the workers employed by the MMT entered a dispute, immediate action was taken to overrule the Industrial Commission. Workers employed by the Perth City Council entered into a dispute, and what did the three wise men from the union movement advise the Government, and what did the Government do? It made a foolish offer in order to get the Perth City Council off the hook. In this action, luckily, the Government itself got off the hook. The advisers flew to the south to try

to settle the FEDFU dispute with the SEC, and granted wage increases. It is easy to see what the result has been following the appointment of these advisers.

Under section 13(2) of the wages freeze legislation, approximately 50 to 60 increases have been granted outside the normal over-award process. The unions have been granted extra increases as a result of advice this Government received from its so-called advisers. Will the Government come clean and tell the people of this State exactly how much the Government's actions are costing them?

Not a word about all this; not a word from a Government that was going to be so conciliatory. Silence reigns supreme! The Premier said his Government will rewrite the Industrial Arbitration Act as though that by itself will be the panacea for all the problems in this area.

It distresses me that this dispute will have a serious impact on the future of the iron ore industry. As the two previous speakers for the Opposition have pointed out, competition exists in a real sense from Brazil and other areas. Anyone who has an understanding of business will know that at times of increased competition one must keep one's suppliers happy. It is clear that we ought to be doing that, but in the Pilbara a strike is putting the future of the industry at stake.

Let us go back and see what action this Government has taken to overcome the problem. What have responsible people in the media been saying?

Mr Bryce: It is the media that counts, is it?

Mr MacKINNON: No.

Mr Bryce: Is that the purpose of this exercise?

Mr MacKINNON: No.

I went back to 6 August to determine what has been reported in the media in relation to action taken by this Government. It is reasonably interesting to note that there has been very little activity, if any, by the Government. The dispute had been going eight days before the Minister for Industrial Relations had a word to say. All he said was that he would meet leaders of all unions involved in the campaign "next week". That appeared in *The Sunday Times* of 14 August. On 15 August, Mr Dans was reported as saying the Government opposed a 38-hour week. We knew that before then, so I do not know what it had to do with the dispute.

On 3 September, almost a month after the dispute began, the Premier had something to say. He finally saw the dispute had arisen and that he had to do something about it. A report in *The West-*

ern Mail refers to a telex message sent by Mt. Newman Mining to its customers. *The Western Mail* report stated—

Premier Brian Burke said yesterday he was aware of Mt. Newman's message to its customers.

The Government was working on a considered response because of the impact a hasty reaction would have on the industry's prospects.

The Premier, faced with a dispute that had been running for five weeks, reacted by saying that he would write a considered response; he would send a telex. He took no action whatever. Nothing was done on behalf of the people of this State who have relied on this Government to save the day. It will not save the day; it will stand idly by and see the militant unions of the Pilbara destroy an industry.

Let us turn now to 1 September when the Deputy Premier stepped into the action. Hooray, hooray! Where had he been? He had been strangely silent. It was reported in the media that the State Government had decided to prepare an overall strategy plan for the development of the Pilbara iron ore industry. Fantastic! The Government proposes an overall strategy plan while the Pilbara is in chaos. The Pilbara is not functioning and all the Deputy Premier can do is behave like the boy who stood on the burning deck, and say, "We will have a plan to save the ship. We will spend a few months designing a fire policy while the ship is sinking". It is too late!

On 5 September, the Premier made an amazing statement. It was reported as follows—

The Premier of Western Australia, Mr Brian Burke, has also made his point of view firmly known to the Japanese—that despite past industrial troubles the iron ore industry has always delivered to the Japanese steel industry and Australia was a stable and highly competitive supplier.

One would hardly think so at the moment. It is not Australians who are concerned about this dispute. We in Western Australia are not diverting bulk carriers to Brazil; it is the Japanese customers who are doing so. If you were a customer, Mr Speaker, who wanted someone to deliver goods, or you went to a shop to get an article, found the shop was closed, and had to go a further two miles down the road, you would think twice about going to the first shop on the next occasion you wanted an article. The Japanese will do so in relation to Pilbara iron ore. For the Premier to say the Government will rewrite the

Industrial Arbitration Act is a shameful admission that the Government has no answers.

The root cause of this dispute in the Pilbara is the fact the union elections are around the corner. Union secretaries and officials are jealously guarding their positions. They know their jobs will be on the line if they are not seen to be doing something. If that is a fact, and I believe it to be so, why is this Government with its highly paid union advisers not doing something about it? Why is it letting union officials ride rough-shod over the people of this State? Why is it allowing these few select people the right to jeopardise an industry which means so much to every Western Australian now, and I hope, well into the future? Unless this Government does something, the industry will be irreparably harmed, and this Government will have that responsibility resting squarely on its shoulders for evermore.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Premier) [3.56 p.m.]: Members opposite would concede to members of the Government that their hypocrisy knows no end. It is simply extraordinary that they should come to this place after being out of office for only five months, with an astonishingly bad industrial record, and profess to be concerned about what is happening in the Pilbara.

Mr O'Connor: Are you not concerned?

Mr BRYCE: Very concerned.

Mr O'Connor: Then why don't you say so?

Mr BRYCE: For 20 of the last 23 years, members opposite and their colleagues presided over the destiny of this State. If any deeply imbedded problem or any genuine basis for real concern exists, I ask at whose feet do we lay the responsibility? Members opposite have been responsible for setting the standards and the ground rules for 20 of the last 23 years. They know that from time to time, when it suited them they have revelled like political opportunists extraordinaire, to provoke and extend industrial disputation in the Pilbara. They, more than anybody else, must accept the lion's share of responsibility for what is happening in this critically important industry today.

I remind the member for Murdoch, as he is about to leave the Chamber, that he sent a blush to the face of the member for Narrogin a few moments ago when he referred to the study being done on the future of the iron ore industry in this State. The member ought to check some of his facts. I remind the House that the previous Government decided to spend a sum of money—in the vicinity of \$100 000—to commission a firm of consultants to study the long-term viability, future, and structure of Western

Australia's iron ore industry. The essential components that were to be studied were shipping, new mines, infrastructure, and practically everything one could name except industrial relations.

Mr Peter Jones: Why should that have been in it?

Mr BRYCE: The former Minister asks why industrial relations should have been in the study. The industrial relations problem is the most critically important problem affecting the productivity of the Pilbara. The previous Government decided to look into all those matters, physical and financial, and just forgot the biggest single problem faced in that district which, is, of course, a human problem.

Mr Peter Jones: You don't expect us to believe that, do you?

Mr BRYCE: I can show members that the consultants' response to the previous Government's request for guidance in respect of long-term planning for the future of this industry, ignored effectively—although not totally—industrial relations. So it is not fair for the previous Minister to say that it ill-behoves me, as Minister for Economic Development and Technology, to shift responsibility to the Minister for Industrial Relations.

Mr Peter Jones: I was agreeing with you; you misunderstood. I said it sure is in his area, and we are criticising him for not doing anything; but you are the Minister responsible for the well-being of the industry.

Mr BRYCE: Of course the Minister for Industrial Relations has done a great deal, unlike the member opposite and his predecessor, but what he has done cannot necessarily be measured in column inches and headlines.

Mr MacKinnon: Or by results!

Mr BRYCE: In its first six months in office, this Government did far more than the previous Government did in any six months.

Mr O'Connor: That is not so, because this is the worst six months' performance ever.

Mr BRYCE: The reality is that members opposite would shrink from such a comparison exercise because they know—

Mr Peter Jones: Your Minister will not give us the figures. He says they are not available.

Mr BRYCE: Are not the figures available?

Mr Peter Jones: He answered the question by saying they are not available.

Mr BRYCE: The Opposition has the facilities available to dig out the figures.

Mr Peter Jones: He said the figures were not available.

Mr O'Connor: That would be the normal response from that side.

Mr BRYCE: I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that, if he is serious about this matter, he should employ the talents of some of his researchers to obtain this information at the national level.

Mr O'Connor: What researchers? I have one.

Mr BRYCE: That is perfectly adequate, according to the Leader of the Opposition when he was in Government.

Mr O'Connor: I have not put on 50 to 100 people and expended taxpayers' money in that area.

Mr BRYCE: As I said in the earlier debate, I do not intend to list the 40 or 50 key Liberal Party candidates and apparatchiki who are in this position. I am trying to respond to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. At the appropriate time, I will refer to the other matter.

Mr Hassell: Give us the list. We are waiting to hear it.

Mr BRYCE: In response to some of the comments made in this debate by the member for Narrogin, I suggest to him that it is just not true to allege that we are not concerned.

Mr Peter Jones: You have not demonstrated concern.

Mr BRYCE: Apparently, according to the member for Narrogin, we are expected to be jumping up and down, and, especially in headlines, to demonstrate our concern.

Mr Peter Jones: The people in the Pilbara—

Mr MacKinnon: The people in Japan do not know you are concerned.

Mr BRYCE: The Japanese visited this State just a few weeks ago.

Mr Laurance: To our shame!

Mr BRYCE: We had an opportunity to discuss this matter with them in the Premier's office and subsequently on less formal occasions. We had no hesitation in pointing out to the Japanese that this matter constitutes a serious problem. We concede that it constitutes a serious problem, but the problem will not be unscrambled in the space of a few months, given the fact that the guilty men who sit opposite created and manipulated the industrial atmosphere in this State for 20 of the last 23 years. Those men created that situation, and it will take time to rectify it.

Mr Hassell: While you play with words, orders will be lost.

Mr Court: You will start believing what you are saying soon.

Mr BRYCE: I can assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that, as a result of an enormous amount of work carried out by the Minister for Industrial Relations and his staff, before this session finishes, a proposed new Industrial Arbitration Act will be introduced.

Mr Hassell: To put unions above the law.

Mr BRYCE: It is intended to begin the task of restructuring—

Mr O'Connor: Anarchy!

Mr BRYCE: —the chaos and the anarchy that members opposite and their colleagues created.

Mr Hassell: To put unions above the law! We know your game—you have announced it.

Mr BRYCE: I know it came as a matter of grave concern to some of the frontbenchers sitting opposite—

Mr O'Connor: You are not concerned about the Pilbara today.

Mr BRYCE: —that our tactic, our *modus operandi*—

Mr Hassell: "Tactic" was the word.

Mr BRYCE: —was to consult industry. It was to establish the tripartite mechanism. Members opposite are concerned because we have decided to seek consensus about the Industrial Arbitration Act, and about the way the system should be changed.

Mr Hassell: Good point!

Mr BRYCE: The appropriate consultative mechanism has been working now for months. It involves representatives of Government, employers, and trade unions.

Mr O'Connor: We put forward a motion to try to co-operate with you in an area of great concern and you are just not concerned enough.

Mr BRYCE: There would be no-one on the floor of this Chamber, nor in the Press Gallery, who would consider for a minute that there is an iota of sincerity in the motion moved today.

Mr Hassell: Nonsense!

Mr BRYCE: This is because the Opposition spent 20 of the last 23 years having a ball at the expense of Western Australians in general, and the iron ore industry in particular.

Mr O'Connor: What a lot of nonsense.

Mr BRYCE: Opposition members went to the Pilbara and accused the people of being left-wing militants, fellow travellers, etc. All this mess was created through the statements of members opposite. They created the environment and the at-

mosphere, and they have the gall to come to this Chamber—

Mr Hassell: You are being so silly. You are not treating this debate with respect.

Mr BRYCE: —and make noises, but they are not concerned for one minute about the trouble they have caused.

Mr Court: You are running out of things to say. Why don't you make a personal attack on someone?

Mr BRYCE: Through you, Mr Speaker, I suggest to members opposite that once again their behaviour is par for the course. They are doing their little bit to damage the State's reputation. This morning on the ABC, and elsewhere in the media, we heard members of the Opposition decry the fact that Western Australia has become an unreliable supplier of iron ore.

Mr Court: Face reality!

Mr BRYCE: Every time members opposite crank up that record and use it, it is picked up and used against us around the world by people who have a vested interest in its use.

Mr Hassell: When this industry disappears, you will be still blaming someone else.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRYCE: When we have had long periods of industrial peace, as we have had from time to time—

Mr O'Connor: Yes, I suppose you are referring to the last six to eight weeks?

Mr BRYCE: —we have been told by people who wish to buy our iron ore that there is too much silica or alumina in it. There is always an excuse. The buyer pursues his vested interest at the expense of the seller.

Mr Peter Jones: We know that.

Mr BRYCE: I am suggesting to members sitting opposite that every time they crank up this hoary old political issue—

Mr O'Connor: One that you used!

Mr BRYCE: —they do Western Australia a grave disservice.

Mr Stephens: Can you tell me how many times the steel mills in Japan have been without iron ore because of strikes in the north-west?

Mr BRYCE: The reality is that the steel mills in Japan have never been looking for Western Australian iron ore when they needed it—

Mr Old: Because they have got it elsewhere.

Mr BRYCE: —for blending in the furnaces. Members opposite know that; yet on every con-

ceivable opportunity they cannot resist the temptation to jump in and stir the pot because unions and all sorts of other bodies suggest that they have an unbalanced responsibility for all of this trouble, provoking extended disputes, and doing so without acknowledging that they are damaging the very State that they have been sent here to represent.

Mr Peter Jones: I referred to that, because you have the situation where the two major suppliers are on strike at the same time for the first time. Is it a fact that you told the Japanese one of the causes was the union elections in the Pilbara?

Mr BRYCE: I do not believe I told them that.

Mr Peter Jones: So they were not told that?

Mr BRYCE: Somebody may have told them that; but I do not believe I did so.

I am sure, Sir, having seen the performance of members opposite who presented their argument to the Chair, you will have the same degree of contempt for it as I do.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 3 August.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.12 p.m.]: The Opposition opposes the Bill. It is firmly opposed to the proposals to restructure the Parliament and the electoral system, as set forth in the Bill, and I will state the reasons on behalf of the Opposition.

Firstly, I will set out what the Bill proposes. Broadly stated, it includes nine proposals to change the structure of the Legislative Council and the electoral system. It should be noted that the changes are directed to the Legislative Council, and some affect elections for the Assembly as much as elections for the Council.

The Government proposes to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Council from the present number of 34 to 22. No explanation has been given as to why the number 22 has been chosen as an appropriately reduced size for the Legislative Council, although some passing references have been made to the situation prevailing in South Australia where the Legislative Council consists of 22 members. It is of interest to note that while this appears to be the only justification put forward by the Government for its proposed reduction in the size of the Legislative Council in Western Australia, it has made no analogous proposal for a reduction in the size of the Legislative Assembly. If the Government

were to be consistent in following the South Australian model, the Government would propose that the Legislative Assembly be reduced from its present membership of 57 to a membership of 47.

The Bill includes measures directed to phasing in the reduction in membership of the Legislative Council over two elections, so that at the scheduled election in 1986, or at such earlier time as an election may be held, the number in the Legislative Council will be reduced to 28; and at the next following election, the reduction to 22 will be finalised. It is pointed out that while, under the present constitutional provisions, the elections for the Legislative Council would change the composition of that body in 1986 and 1989, other changes proposed by the Bill would mean that the composition of the Legislative Council would change when Legislative Assembly elections were held, and they may be held when granted by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Premier of the day. It may be that, were the Parliament to adopt the proposals contained in this Bill and they were approved at a referendum, the reduction of the Legislative Council from 34 members to 22 would take place long before 1989.

As a complementary measure, the Government is seeking to amend the Parliamentary Superannuation Act to provide pensions for the members of the Legislative Council who lose their seats as a result of the transition from a membership of 34 to a membership of 22.

The Government proposes that future Legislative Council elections may be held under a system of State-wide proportional representation based on a single electorate of the whole State of Western Australia. As I understand the Bill, the use of a system of proportional representation for determining the results of an election for the Legislative Council is to be entrenched in the Constitution of the State so that it cannot be altered in future without the approval of a referendum, after any proposed change is adopted by the Parliament.

However, more than one system of proportional representation is known, and the system proposed by the Bill, based on the present system of election of members of the Senate in the Commonwealth Parliament, is not to be entrenched in the Constitution; it may be changed in future by a simple enactment adopted by the Parliament, without a referendum.

Of course, the elections for the Legislative Council, which take place every three years concurrently with the elections for the Legislative Assembly, will be for half the membership of the Council, that is, 11 members.

The Bill proposes to alter the longstanding Australia-wide system of preferential voting by providing for partial optional preferential voting for elections for both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. In this respect, the Government's proposals are at variance with its policy document of January 1983 in which it made a simple commitment to optional preferential voting. As everyone in this Chamber knows, preferential voting requires that voters should express numerically and sequentially a preference for all candidates seeking election to any position. Optional preferential voting allows the voter to express a preference for one, or more, or all of the candidates.

The Bill proposes that in respect of elections for the Legislative Council, the voter must express a preference for at least 11 of the candidates although in elections for both the Council and the Assembly it will no longer be necessary for the voter to express his or her preference numerically, sequentially. Sequences of numbers with gaps in them will be permitted in the marking of a ballot paper.

The Bill provides for the filling of casual vacancies which occur in the Legislative Council when it is reconstituted. In respect of the members who, for the time being, continue to represent constituencies, the Bill seeks to preserve the present system under which by-elections of the constituency will be held when requisite. However, in relation to casual vacancies which occur for any reason in the Legislative Council of 22 members elected under the system of State-wide constituency proportional representation, the vacancies are to be filled, not by the voting public at a by-election but by the Parliament, under constitutional direction, requiring the appointment of a replacement member of the same political persuasion as the member being replaced.

Very significant changes of the law relating to the assessment of the validity of votes cast in an election are proposed. These will affect both the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.

The apparent aim of the Government is that every vote should be counted as valid if by any means, however inadequately executed, an "intention" can be gleaned from the ballot paper.

Two of the changes in particular require the closest consideration. Firstly, in the expression of preference it will no longer be requisite to use sequential numbers. Thus a voter may express an intention even though he has indicated the same preference for more than one candidate and even though there is a break in the order of preference indicated. Secondly, it is pointed out that the

secrecy of the ballot is no longer a paramount consideration under the provisions proposed by the Government.

Under section 139 of the Electoral Act as it stands, a ballot paper is informal if it has upon it any mark or writing which, in the opinion of the returning officer, will enable any person to identify the voter. This provision is, of course, central to the guarantee of the secrecy of the ballot. However, clause 76 of the Bill proposes that the provision referred to be removed from the Act.

At present, members of the Legislative Council hold their seats for a fixed term of six years regardless of the date upon which any election may be held for the Legislative Assembly. This in effect means that the Legislative Council is a House which has a fixed term. It cannot be dissolved prior to the expiration of the terms of service of its members in the same way that the Legislative Assembly can be dissolved by the Governor on the recommendation of the Premier of the day.

The Bill proposes that a new section 8 be inserted in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act to provide that the term of service of a member of the Legislative Council expires at the second termination of the Assembly after his election. It would no longer be possible to say that members of the Legislative Council have a six-year term, and the fixed term of the Legislative Council would be abolished by this provision.

It is of interest to note that the Labor Government, which as a Federal party has given strong support to the establishment of requirements in the Commonwealth Constitution for fixed-term Parliaments in Canberra, proposes in this Bill in relation to the Western Australian Constitution to ensure that the Government of the day obtains the power to call elections of both Houses of the Parliament at any time.

The Bill proposes that the President of the Legislative Council should for the first time have two votes on any measure before that House. This provision must stand as being almost without precedent in a parliamentary system such as we know it.

It is proposed to write into the Constitution that the President may vote on the second or third reading of any Bill as well as exercise a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes on the measure.

When one considers the vast number of words taken up in the second reading speech of the Minister on the subject of equality of voting strength and equality of value of voting, it is indeed amazing to observe a provision that, in a House of only 22 members, one of those members of Parliament

is to have two votes while all other members have only the one.

Mr Tonkin: No, he will not.

Mr HASSELL: Well, that is what the Minister's provision says. If that is not the case, what does it say?

Mr Tonkin: It provides that he can concur right at the very beginning, so there is no equality; but it does not say that, having concurred or having brought up the votes for equality, he can then make the casting vote.

Mr HASSELL: The provision the Minister seeks to write into the Act is that the President may vote on the second and third readings of any Bill. The provision already existing for a casting vote is preserved and, therefore, the President ends up having two votes while all other members of the Council have one.

Mr Tonkin: That is not so.

Mr HASSELL: It follows, therefore, that the value of the vote of his constituents will be twice that of all other members' constituents.

Mr Tonkin: I do not believe you are right.

Mr HASSELL: It is the Minister's Bill and I have had it examined and I have examined it myself.

Mr Tonkin: I know, but I say that is not so.

Mr HASSELL: The Bill proposes to entrench in the Constitution certain of the provisions being introduced by the legislation. The effect of this would be that those provisions could not be altered unless the change were approved both by Parliament and at a referendum of electors.

In this respect, it is noticed that one of the provisions to be entrenched is the maintenance of the Legislative Council as a House of 22 members, and that while the law will continue to provide that the membership of both Houses may not be reduced without a referendum, it will be possible to increase the number of members of the Legislative Assembly, but not the number of members of the Legislative Council, without the concurrence of the electors at a referendum.

It is quite extraordinary that the Government should allow this House to be increased without the control of a referendum, but does not propose the same provision in respect of the Legislative Council.

The Bill contains no fewer than 80 printed pages, and as can be expected there are other changes both direct and by implication to the constitutional structure and operations of the Parliament. Some of these will be dealt with by the Op-

position in Committee both in this House and in another place.

I refer now to the context of the Bill which must be considered within the broad context of the Government's proposals to bring about substantial changes to the Constitution of Western Australia. I know that, only this afternoon, we received notice of further Bills which, no doubt, are of significance.

Mr Tonkin: That provision is to establish the machinery for a referendum, if we have one.

Mr HASSELL: The House has already dealt with amendments to the Electoral Act, and the present Bill proposes further significant amendments to the same Act. The House has also dealt with an amendment to the Constitution Act, and, again, further significant changes are proposed.

There are three matters not dealt with in the Bill, but about which the Government is known to be interested and to be preparing legislative provisions. The three things not being dealt with are deadlock breaking mechanisms between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council—

Mr Tonkin: That is the subject of a separate Bill.

Mr HASSELL: —proposed reductions in the powers of the Legislative Council—

Mr Tonkin: We will get to that sometime.

Mr HASSELL: It is still part of the context of the legislation. The third matter relates to proposals for referendum procedures to be established by law for general application.

In its consideration of this legislation, the Opposition has not overlooked the broader context in which this Bill is placed, nor has it failed to draw the appropriate conclusions as to the real intentions of the Government.

The Labor Party is a long-time opponent of the Legislative Council and, indeed, for many years, in its official documents, policies, and platforms, the Labor Party proposed the abolition of the Legislative Council. More recently and, indeed, in recognition that politically it is unrealistic to expect that abolition of the Legislative Council will ever be acceptable to the Western Australian people, the Labor Party has modified its stance in Western Australia and seeks through this and other legislation to bring about structural and electoral changes—

Mr Gordon Hill: Recognising the will of the people.

Mr HASSELL: —which will ensure that the Legislative Council will never again be able to

stand in the way of the proposals of the majority party in the Legislative Assembly.

Notwithstanding the State Labor Party's modified stance, the overriding Federal platform still seeks abolition of the Legislative Council. I refer to the Australian Labor Party 1982 platform, the Constitution and Rules, as approved by the 35th National Conference in Canberra in 1982, and published by Mr R. F. McMullan, the National Secretary of the ALP. I quote the stated policy objective under the heading "Constitution and Legal", section 26, page 21, as follows—

The reform of State Upper Houses and, ultimately, their abolition.

Mr O'Connor: That is very clear.

Mr HASSELL: Labor is still committed to abolition. This legislation is a step along the way.

Mr Gordon Hill: Rubbish! Nonsense!

Mr HASSELL: Does the member deny those words are from the Federal platform of the ALP? I have just quoted them to him and I will quote them again. The Federal platform of the ALP, as approved in 1982, and published by Mr R. F. McMullan, is for the abolition of State upper Houses. I have given the section and page numbers.

Mr Gordon Hill: This is a State issue.

Mr HASSELL: Does the Federal or the State platform have precedence?

Mr Gordon Hill: This is a State issue.

Mr HASSELL: Which has precedence?

Mr Gordon Hill: This is a State issue.

Mr HASSELL: Under the ALP State constitution, the Federal platform of the ALP overrides that constitution, does it not?

Mr Gordon Hill: It is a State issue. You are talking about the Federal platform, but this is a State issue.

Mr HASSELL: I refer to the Federal platform because it has the ultimate power.

Several members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: I want members opposite to answer this question: Is it true that the Federal ALP platform has precedence over the State platform?

Mr Davies: It depends.

Mr HASSELL: What does it depend on?

Mr Tonkin: Conferences come and go.

Mr HASSELL: The Federal ALP platform has precedence over the State ALP constitutional provisions, and the objective under the ALP's Federal platform is the reform of the State upper Houses and, ultimately, their abolition. That is

the policy of the ALP. I repeat: Labor is still committed to the abolition of the Legislative Council, and this legislation is a step along the way.

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish! If there is reform, there will be less pressure for it to be abolished. The people who have spoken about abolition of the Council are those who know it has been undemocratically elected, and, because of that, your party has never lost an election in that House for the last 90 years, even though it may have lost Government.

Mr HASSELL: It is our conclusion that, when the various provisions of the legislation before us, the announced proposals of the Government, and its policy proposals are considered together, it will be obvious that the Government's plan is to reduce the power, prestige, effectiveness, and representative character of the Legislative Council, to leave it as a debating Chamber of little or no significance, able to be constitutionally bypassed whenever it stands in the way of the will of the Legislative Assembly. It would be an empty shell—not a House of Review.

Mr Gordon Hill: If you can make statements like that, we know that the rest of your speech will be absurd.

Government members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: We see this Bill as one step in a progression directed towards the abolition of the Legislative Council. One of the proposals of the Government is to provide that, where the Legislative Council rejects legislation, the Government can either have a double dissolution or refer the legislation to a referendum.

Mr Tonkin: That's right. The people will decide in either case.

Mr HASSELL: This is exactly my point: The Legislative Council will be able to be completely bypassed.

Mr Tonkin: Yes, by the people.

Mr HASSELL: It will become an empty shell; it will become irrelevant.

Mr Court: Do you think we should have a referendum on every issue?

Mr Tonkin: Yes, we could have one on whether you should be allowed to stay here.

Mr HASSELL: He is bright, is he not?

Mr Gordon Hill: Stony silence.

Mr HASSELL: There would have to be. Perhaps I can continue my remarks. The significance of this Bill is that, while it does not directly attack the powers of the Council, it lays before those other measures a basis upon which the Council

would undoubtedly come to be regarded as irrelevant.

I now state clearly and briefly our attitude in relation to the Legislative Council. We believe that the Legislative Council is an integral part of the structure of Parliament and of the division of power in our community.

In a free and democratic country the preservation of freedom depends upon many factors, but essentially it depends on the control of power. In this country, power is controlled by our commitment to the rule of law and by the division of power in a Federal system involving central, State, and local Governments. Power is also controlled by the essential processes of checks and balances within each area of government.

The Commonwealth is controlled by its Constitution, by the High Court's overview of the law, by the existence of the Senate, and by adherence to the rule of law as a cornerstone of political change and political control.

The State Parliaments are themselves controlled by Constitutions, the rule of law, the division of power between legislative, executive, and judicial functions, and the existence in most cases of upper Houses which act as Houses of Review, and as checks and balances in the exercise of power. Local government is controlled by the legislation under which it is created.

This structure of our constitutional systems preserves the effectiveness of the ultimate control of power—the people exercising control through the ballot box. If that control can be broken down by the action of one party in one House of Parliament without constitutional and legal limitation, without division of power, and without any check on power, it is hollow indeed.

The Legislative Council does and should act as a House of Review and as one of the essential elements of a structure the purpose of which is to control power and preserve it for the people.

Mr Davies: That is so much rubbish, and you know it—it really is. You only have to look at the record.

Mr HASSELL: At the same time, we believe that the power of the Legislative Council must be exercised responsibly and with restraint and that the Council must truly act as a House of Review. It is for this reason that we have supported the Labor Party in seeking to strengthen the review role of the Legislative Council and have recently proposed that the Legislative Council should upgrade its system of committees so that it may more effectively fulfil its functions.

Mr Davies: You had no option.

Mr HASSELL: Mr Speaker, I want to say clearly that it is completely wrong to suggest that the Legislative Council has not acted effectively while we have been in Government.

Government members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: The simple fact that the Council has not established a record of rejecting many pieces of our legislation does not mean that it was not operating. As every member of this House knows, and as every competent political scientist knows, the proceedings of Parliament are less than half the story of political power and political decisions.

Over the years, Legislative Council members of the Liberal and National Country Parties have fiercely and jealously guarded their separate rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

Mr I. F. Taylor: In the party room.

Mr HASSELL: If the member listens, I will tell him about it.

While we were in Government, the Legislative Council members of our parties met separately and decided separately their attitude in relation to many critical pieces of legislation, as is the case now. In our party room, they act very much as a House of Review.

Mr Davies: I do not think anyone believes you.

Mr HASSELL: The Legislative Council, as part of the Parliament, has an important role to play in the representation of people throughout the State. The reality is that the reduction in membership of the Legislative Council proposed by this Bill is a reduction of representation for the non-metropolitan areas of this State.

While the Government cries poor in the lead-up to the Budget and seeks to justify reduced non-metropolitan representation on the grounds of economy, it is at the same time quite without discipline in its wasteful expenditure of public moneys, including its commitment to a system of partisan political appointees as advisers on the Government payroll.

Western Australia needs a strong House of Review to control Governments of whatever colour and to give fair representation to people living in the country and developing areas of the State.

I believe the Government itself might well be surprised to discover the extent to which the people of Perth—not the country—are prepared to concede a weighted level of country representation, both in fairness and in recognition of the critical importance of Parliament's taking a broad perspective in considering the State-wide interests of Western Australia. It must be remembered that the very jobs this Government is committed

to defend and expand flow from the wealth generated in the non-metropolitan areas of this State.

I turn now to the form and substance of the Bill which comprises some 80 printed pages, and which proposes amendments to five Acts, four of which are essentially part of the Constitution of Western Australia. The Bills to be amended and the number of amendments in each case are as follows—

Constitution Act 1889-1980—four amendments;

Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899-1981—10 amendments;

Electoral Districts Act 1947-1981—10 amendments;

Electoral Act 1907-1982—65 amendments.

That is in addition to the bundle of amendments with which we already have dealt, and the notification given today of further amendments to the Electoral Act. I am surprised the Parliamentary Counsel can keep up with his own drafting.

Mr Tonkin: They are doing a brilliant job.

Mr HASSELL: I have no criticism to offer.

Mr Tonkin: I know; I am saying they are doing a marvellous job.

Mr HASSELL: I refer finally to the Salaries and Allowances Act 1975-1980, to which there are three amendments.

Many of the amendments are technically complicated and cross-referred to other amendments and other Acts. As anyone with a passing knowledge of constitutional law would know, the basic documents of a Constitution are subject to minute scrutiny and rigorous test in the many and varied activities of a parliamentary system.

I put on record the extraordinary response of the Minister handling the Bill to a request I made for some assistance in preparing for this debate. On 30 August, I wrote to the Minister in these terms—

Dear Minister

In preparation for the Debate which you have scheduled for Tuesday 13 September on the Acts Amendment (Constitution and Electoral) Bill 1983 I have, of course, been examining the Bill in some detail.

It is, as you know, a Bill of some 80 pages in length which amends five pieces of Legislation of the State, four of which are basic constitutional laws.

It is indeed a most complex Bill.

I would be most grateful if you could make available to me a copy of the document which I am sure you have had prepared setting forth in tabulated form the existing provisions of the Law, the proposed amendments and the existing provisions as amended.

Yours sincerely

Mr Tonkin: When did you give us that assistance when you were in Government? I never received assistance in nine years.

Mr HASSELL: That was a simple request. I asked for the tabulations of a very complex constitutional law. I wanted the column showing the existing law, the column showing the amendments, and the column showing the law as amended, as every Minister has prepared for him in relation to all Bills, especially those of significance.

Mr Tonkin: Did you give that to me when I was spokesman on electoral matters? Never!

Mr O'Connor: Did you ask for it?

Mr HASSELL: The member for Narrogin told the House he gave that sort of information to the Opposition, and the present Leader of the Opposition already has told the House he gave that information to members of the then Opposition.

Mr Mensaros: I also gave that sort of information. I have had them come to my office and I made it available to them as well as making officers of my department available.

Mr Tonkin: I was not allowed to speak to your officers. I was forbidden to speak to them. I had an appointment and Mr Shalders cancelled it half an hour before it was due to take place. The same occurred with Mr Grayden when he was Minister for Consumer Affairs.

Mr HASSELL: In addition, I can tell the House that I provided this information on occasions to the Opposition, without request.

Mr Tonkin: You never provided it to me.

Mr HASSELL: Four former Ministers have now told the Leader of the House what we did so when in Government. Let me give the House the reply I received from the Minister, who wrote on 2 September as follows—

Dear Mr Hassell,

Thank you for your letter of August 30th, 1983 in which you request my notes—

That is not what I requested. To continue—

—for the Acts Amendment (Constitutional and Electoral) Bill. I find it quite amazing that you seem to have discovered co-operation since also discovering Opposition.

Members opposite may well laugh at the Minister's letter.

Mr Tonkin: Come off it! Do not be so pompous. I handled amendments to these Acts when I was in Opposition and you never gave me the information although you were the Minister concerned.

Mr HASSELL: Here is an 80-page Bill amending four of the fundamental constitutional documents of this State and the Minister replies to a request for some very basic assistance—it amounted to a photocopy being made of what he already had—with a letter at which his own members laughed.

Mr I. F. Taylor: That is nonsense; we were laughing at you.

Mr HASSELL: It is indeed appropriate that members opposite should laugh at the performance of their Minister.

To continue with his reply—

Not once was I offered the notes by any Minister in your Government. In fact, I was often prevented from speaking to civil servants by your Ministers.

However, I believe that it would be in the best interests of the people and the Parliament, if there were to be greater co-operation between the Government and the Opposition.

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr HASSELL: Well may the Minister say, "Hear, hear!", but I still do not have the notes.

Mr Tonkin: Why didn't you provide them when you were the Minister?

Mr HASSELL: I have done all my preparation without the notes.

Mr Tonkin: Keep reading.

Mr HASSELL: To continue with the Minister's reply—

If there had been no previous history of refusal to co-operate by your Government, I would gladly accede to your request. I will be prepared to offer this kind of co-operation once it can be accepted that this is the norm and that Governments of all complexions will extend the same courtesy.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr HASSELL: To continue with the Minister's reply—

I will be interested to hear from you how that may be effected.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Speaker, I might say to you in all honesty that I did not have time in the period between 2

September and today—when this major Bill is being debated—to establish a complete change in the long-term relationships between Governments and Oppositions. I did not have time to restructure the whole system or to seek guarantees from every one of my colleagues that, when we are returned to Government, they will supply copies of notes on request. I just point to this as an example of the attitude that the Government is adopting to the Opposition in dealing with this legislation which the Government itself regards as of importance.

I come back to the issue at hand—the complications and the importance of this Bill in terms of its future use.

One recalls the famous comment at one of the last Australian Constitutional Conventions preceding the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia to the effect that section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse among the States, was a little bit of layman's language that nobody could possibly misunderstand. At least until recently, that was the section of the Commonwealth Constitution which generated many of the constitutional cases taken to the High Court of Australia.

Without in any way criticising the draftsman responsible for the Bill before the House—which bears every indication of thorough and dedicated workmanship—one could only guess at the enormity of the implications for the future conduct of the political system under such complicated and substantial change.

It is within this context that one reviews the action of the Minister who introduced the Bill. The Minister's speech can fairly be described as emotional. It was also, in my opinion, partisan in an extreme way. It conceded nothing to the wisdom, knowledge, or understanding of anyone who has lived in the past or present, other than the Minister and his advisers.

But leaving aside these judgments, the speech can be demonstrated to have been inaccurate, misleading, and incomplete. The first obligation of a Minister, in introducing a Bill to Parliament, is to explain its essential provisions. The Minister failed to do so and some of the most important provisions were not referred to in his speech. The full implications of some of the provisions were not set forth.

All in all, the speech was totally party political and lacked any attempt at objectivity or balance.

The other day the Premier of the State introduced a Bill of far less significance than that before this House, and presented with it an ex-

planatory memorandum. It is difficult to understand the failure of the Minister in presenting this Bill to provide the Parliament and the public with an explanatory memorandum prepared by the draftsman or some other qualified person within the governmental service.

It is apparent the Minister's speech, which one assumes was prepared by the Minister's political adviser on electoral matters (Mr Graham Hawkes) could have been considerably reduced and at the same time made more effective. The effort saved from the production of the emotional cavalcade could have been much better used in the presentation of an informative, objective, explanatory memorandum for the benefit of the Parliament and the public.

I refer to the present system. In the face of the vilification of the present Western Australian Constitution and its electoral system by the Minister who introduced the Bill now before the House, it is necessary to record—and I will do so as briefly as possible—the principal features of the present democratic system of Government in Western Australia.

Mr Tonkin: Undemocratic system.

Mr HASSELL: It may seem strange that there is a need for this to be done, but it seems to me that in a debate on legislation of this kind—which has been made so unbalanced by the approach adopted by the Minister—it is necessary to outline and to understand that which we all take for granted in our daily lives.

All the following essentially democratic elements are found within our constitutional system—

- (1) There is universal adult franchise, which gives to every person who is a citizen and over the age of 18 years, with but few exceptions, the right to vote for candidates for office.

Mr Burkett: But not an equal vote.

Mr HASSELL: To continue—

- (2) Western Australian elections take place regularly within prescribed time limits. As we all know, the term of each Parliament is three years. Members of the Legislative Assembly hold their seats without election for three years and members of the Legislative Council hold their seats without election for six years. The documents which comprise the Constitution of the State require that elections take place regularly.
- (3) Any group of people in our community is entitled to form a political party and

to endorse candidates for election to Parliament. Individuals are entitled to stand for election to Parliament.

- (4) Both Houses of the Parliament are elected. All the seats in both Houses of the Parliament can be contested periodically, and usually are.
- (5) Campaigns are conducted with reasonable fairness, and neither the law, violence, nor intimidation, bar the candidates from presenting their views and qualifications, or prevent the voters from learning and discussing them.
- (6) Votes are cast freely and secretly, and they are counted and reported honestly; and the candidates who receive the proportions required by law are duly installed in office until their terms expire and a new election is held.
- (7) The head of State is the Monarch. The powers of the Monarch are limited by constitutional law and practice, and are capable of further limitation by constitutional changes.
- (8) The parliamentary structure is preserved in a constitutional system and cannot be altered except by due process of law, and in respect of its essential elements, with the approval of the electorate at a referendum.

All these features of our governmental system are entirely and completely democratic, and will be found on study to satisfy the descriptive definitions of democracy contained in the textbooks of political and social science.

The so-called one-vote-one-value system which has been referred to repeatedly by the Minister, both in Parliament and outside, is not an essential ingredient of a parliamentary democracy. Although a one-vote-one-value system may, in some circumstances, be described accurately as democratic, the absence of such a system does not necessarily mean the alternative is not democratic. It is interesting to refer to the following words used by the Minister when he introduced this Bill—

... one-vote-one-value in a system where each electorate returns a member to Parliament is certainly democratic and would reflect the will of the people; but as we all know ... that system can produce artificially large majorities and leave the losers and small parties greatly underrepresented.

Mr Tonkin: That is the beauty of the PR system.

Mr HASSELL: To continue—

It is at least theoretically possible for a party to win 49 per cent of the votes and yet not gain a single seat ...

Mr Tonkin: Why don't you deal with this Bill? That is for single member constituencies.

Mr HASSELL: I do not know how the Minister has the gall to say it. I am quoting his speech on this Bill.

Mr Tonkin: What I am saying is that that is an argument in favour of PR.

Mr HASSELL: I left the Minister to structure his incredible speech the way he wanted to do so and I suggest I am entitled to structure my speech in the way I see fit.

Mr Tonkin: All I am saying is that that is an argument in favour of PR.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister has not heard what I am saying.

Mr O'Connor: Taking into account his statement, it appears he does not know what he said himself.

Mr Gordon Hill: That is a pretty inane comment.

Mr HASSELL: In respect of what I concluded the Minister was saying, he was completely right. If one contemplates a theoretical situation in which political affiliation was evenly spread through the population, and the population was evenly spread over the geographic area of the State, and then by means of a mathematical exercise every electorate was made equal in both area and population, the result of an election would be that every seat in the Parliament would be won by the party which gained 51 per cent of the vote. Such a result would be completely outside the ambit of our understanding of parliamentary democracy.

Historically and in practice, mathematical ideals are never met; electorates are never equal in size; political affiliation is not evenly distributed throughout the population; and votes are never of equal value, and yet the various systems are democratic.

Even the proportional representation system proposed in this Bill to apply to the Legislative Council does not produce that equality of voting value the Minister claims to hold so dear to his heart. The Labor policy document of January 1983, presented by the then Leader of the Opposition, and the then shadow Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, and titled *Parliamentary and Electoral Reform*, identifies the lack of equality of voting value in describing the out-

come of the proportional representation system proposed by this Bill as follows—

This will mean that a quota for election will be 8.34 of the vote. A party which won 50 per cent of the vote for the Legislative Council would get 6 out of the 11 Members elected. . . .

Under this system 50 per cent of the vote produces 54.55 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Council. Even the Minister's own system does not produce the result the Minister claims.

Mr Tonkin: Well, it does not produce perfection, but no system does.

Mr HASSELL: At least the Minister agrees with that.

I turn now to the justification for change. In our view, change to the constitutional structure of the State, and indeed of the nation, must be justified by those who propose change.

It is important to our community that there be continuity and stability in the basic structure of Government. It is also important that there be a large measure of community support for that structure.

We do not reject change. The Liberal and National Country Parties have often brought about change. Indeed, although the Minister does not concede the relevance of our part in the development of the Legislative Council, in fact it was the Liberal and National Country Parties which abolished the property franchise for the Legislative Council, introduced a universal adult franchise, and put on the same footing as those applicable to the Legislative Assembly the qualifications for voting for and membership of the Legislative Council.

Mr Jamieson: Under extreme pressure.

Mr HASSELL: As I understand the situation, the Liberal and National Country Parties had a majority in this House and in the Council. They, as a Government, proposed the change and they, as a party, put it through.

Mr Tonkin: Because we got 13 out of 30 seats and looked as if we would have a majority next time. You changed the rules. You are like the New York Yacht Club—you changed the rules as soon as you saw the possibility of defeat.

Mr Williams: Why don't you just sail away?

Mr Davies: You would be on a winner!

Mr HASSELL: I ask members: What change is now needed?

The Liberal and National Country Parties in Opposition have examined the issues and have considered the policy proposals presented by the

Australian Labor Party. We have identified a number of areas in which there is room for consideration of possible change. We have presented those ideas to the public. We are prepared to develop them further, in a rational way; but the legislation presented to Parliament by this Bill does not provide an opportunity to consider in a reasonable way those areas where common ground can be identified and those changes to our parliamentary system which could be seen as milestones in its development.

Nevertheless, for the sake of the record, I will repeat, some of those proposals put forward by the Leader of the Opposition on 13 July 1983 as areas of our parliamentary and electoral systems in which there is room for consideration of change.

Mr Tonkin: The Queensland gerrymander, for a start.

Mr HASSELL: It is interesting the Minister should say that, because the Premier dismissed our proposals and has done so again more recently in the latest edition of *Labor Voice* by saying that what was wrong with them was that they would cost the Labor Party seats.

Mr Tonkin: They are crooked! They predetermine electoral results. Have you no shame?

Mr HASSELL: We see the real concern of the Government in the whole issue of electoral change!

Mr Tonkin: We were talking about your changes.

Mr HASSELL: Some of the proposals put forward by the Government are in the process of becoming law with the support of the Opposition, and I cite the legislation to establish a joint enrolment procedure.

The Opposition proposed a package of measures for consideration—I emphasise it was a package—including—

- (1) Creation of a fourth electoral zone consisting of the regional urban areas of Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie-Boulder, with a quota of electors halfway between the quotas for the metropolitan region and the agricultural, mining, and pastoral region.
- (2) Provision for the double dissolution of both Houses followed by a general election if the Legislative Council were to reject or fail to pass within a specified period a Government's Budget legislation or a Supply Bill.
- (3) Electoral boundaries within—I stress the word "within"—the metropolitan re-

gion, the agricultural, mining and pastoral region, and the new regional urban centres to be drawn by the boundary commissioners, comprising the Chief Justice, Surveyor General, and electoral commissioner.

- (4) Appointment of an independent electoral commissioner.
- (5) The Legislative Council to strengthen its role as a House of Review by establishing a number of Standing Committees to operate during the life of a Parliament.

For all that the Minister might say in all his speeches, the fact remains that neither Parliaments nor parties control the drawing of electoral boundaries in the metropolitan region or the agricultural, mining, and pastoral region, in respect of either the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council.

These boundaries are drawn by the electoral commissioners who are the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General.

Mr Davies: After you have described what the metropolitan area shall be.

Mr HASSELL: Equally, it is true that at no time since World War II has any party which obtained a majority of votes from the electorate failed to be the party which formed the Government of the State.

Of course, there is always room for improvement in any system, but ours is not a bad record of justice and fairness in electoral matters. A complete outsider who heard the Minister's speech would think that we had lived in a totalitarian nation, instead of in the most free and democratic in the world.

Mr Bryce: Are you reading your speech? It ill-becomes you.

Mr HASSELL: I am saying all sorts of things.

Mr Davies: He is quoting from copious notes.

Mr Bryce: It just does not sound like you. It sounds as if somebody has written it for you.

Mr O'Connor: Do you think Mr Hawkes did it?

Mr HASSELL: If the Deputy Premier would like to identify someone who could write my speeches for me, I would be delighted.

Mr Brian Burke: So would we!

Mr HASSELL: I remind the Deputy Premier that, as he ought to know, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has one staff position which is a secretary, and he receives no research assistance

other than that generally available to the Opposition.

Mr Bryce: Who set those ground rules?

Mr HASSELL: If the Deputy Premier believes some gentle person is prepared to write my speeches, he is more optimistic about my position than I am.

Mr Brian Burke: In six months, we have been more generous to the Opposition than any Government was to us when we were in Opposition.

Mr O'Connor: I do not have any staff additional to that which you had.

Mr Brian Burke: You have one extra.

Mr O'Connor: No, not at all.

Mr Brian Burke: You have an electorate office assistant.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: A few weeks ago the Premier was talking about foisting an election upon us.

Mr Tonkin: Don't worry; it is still a possibility.

Mr Bryce: Let him find his place.

Mr HASSELL: I was saying that the boundaries are not drawn by Parliament or by political parties; they are drawn by the electoral commissioners.

Mr Tonkin: Which boundaries?

Mr HASSELL: The boundaries within the metropolitan region and within the agricultural, mining, and pastoral region.

Mr Tonkin: Once the crooked parameters have been set. Once you have made Kalamunda a rural seat.

Mr Bryce: A borough!

Mr HASSELL: I was also pointing out that, since World War II, no party which obtained a majority of votes from the electorate failed to be the party which formed the Government of the State.

I was then concluding that section of my speech by saying that, of course, there is always room for improvement in any system, but that ours is not a bad record of justice and fairness in electoral matters. When viewed objectively, the Minister's speech would lead one to the conclusion that we lived in a totalitarian State, whereas in fact we live in the most free and democratic country in the world.

I refer now to consultation and consensus. It was not very long ago in this House that the Premier and Deputy Premier were talking about consultation and consensus in industrial matters.

In respect of the Constitution of our nation, there is some attempt made for consensus to be reached between the major political groupings as to constitutional change.

Perhaps the desire for consensus springs only from a recognition of practicality, for few if any constitutional amendments have ever been adopted in the face of concerted opposition from one of the major political parties.

For a number of years, an Australian Constitutional Convention has existed, springing from an initiative of the then Victorian Liberal Government of Sir Henry Bolte. From time to time, the convention meets and attempts to thrash out agreement on constitutional changes. Indeed, it was at the last convention that the Premier of this State advocated that the Commonwealth Parliament should intervene to control the electoral system of this State. Be that as it may, the Australian Constitutional Conventions have not been altogether unsuccessful. Their work continues through Standing Committees and established processes of consultation.

Yet here in Western Australia we have before us proposals for constitutional and electoral change of major proportions, which the Government is presenting to Parliament for adoption, without any suggestion or attempt to find common ground or to debate the issues other than through the usual processes of parliamentary debate. The Government is treating this legislation in precisely the same way as it would treat a Bill to amend the onion marketing Act or the Dog Act.

Its approach now is quite different from that which it sought when aspiring to Government. In *The West Australian* newspaper of 9 February 1982, it was reported that the then State Opposition, now the Government, had proposed an electoral convention to be convened by the Chief Justice as the first step towards electoral reform in WA. The article says that the then leader of the Opposition (Mr Burke)—

...told the Press conference the aim of the Convention would be to try to find common ground between the parties on a 'desirable degree of Parliamentary and electoral reform'.

On 11 February 1982, in his weekly column published in *The West Australian*, Mr Burke had this to say—

Mr Bryce: Do you read those?

Mr HASSELL: Stop being childish.

Mr Bryce: Do you read those political columns?

Mr Carr: I didn't think anyone read them.

Mr HASSELL: I am sure no-one reads the Premier's.

Mr Pearce: We can point to one person who reads the Premier's. No-one reads the Leader of the Opposition's.

Mr O'Connor: No prize for second.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister for Education should do what his Leader told him, and keep quiet. It will get him out of a lot of trouble.

Mr Brian Burke: Afterwards, stay in and clean the dusters. You very nearly are insufferable.

Mr HASSELL: This is what the Premier had to say—

My proposal for an electoral convention, convened by the Chief Justice and consisting of representatives of the Government, the Opposition and the National Party, aims to try to achieve common ground on desirable reform.

Under my proposals the A.L.P. would not have a majority or even equal numbers at the Convention. We would be a minority.

Then we come to the Premier's forte, which is sincerity. I quote as follows—

This demonstrates the sincerity of our proposal.

Mr Tonkin: So you have noticed his sincerity, too.

Mr HASSELL: It is all part of the deal, the big media presentation.

Mr Brian Burke: You might be seeing something that other people do not, with your superior intellect and race.

Mr HASSELL: Where did the Premier get that from?

Mr Brian Burke: From you.

Mr Pearce: From your mother.

Mr Bryce: True liberals are born, not made; we know that.

Mr HASSELL: I am not trying to take this out of context, but the then Government rejected the proposal for an Australian Constitutional Convention. However we were not, of course, proposing substantial, indeed some may say radical, changes to the Legislative Council and to the electoral systems. The Labor Party, as the elected Government of the State, is now proposing such changes, and it may well ponder whether it does not have some obligation by some means or other to seek some measure of common agreement as to those changes which ought to be made.

The changes proposed by the Labor Party Government are changes for the worse. They will not improve the constitutional and electoral systems of the State, the quality of the representation of Western Australian people in Parliament, the accessibility of members of Parliament to their constituents, the representative nature of Parliament, or the sensitivity or responsiveness of Parliament to the electorate.

In relation to the Government's recently proposed amendments to the Electoral Act, the Opposition gave its support to the main provisions seeking to establish a joint enrolment procedure and a common Australia-wide qualification for enrolment. However we can see no merit in the Bill, and find no part of it worthy of our support.

Whether or not the Labor Party wants to concede the point, in practical terms the size of Western Australia is relevant to the accessibility of members of Parliament to their widely-scattered constituents, and to the quality of representation which those constituents can receive.

Although it may be that we have more members of Parliament in this State per head of population than the Australian average, or that of other States, we regard ourselves as a unique State; we have our own needs and our own problems, and we can devise our own solutions to those problems.

A reduction the size of the Legislative Council from 34 members to 22 and thus a reduction in the total number of members of the Parliament of Western Australia from 91 to 79, will not in our opinion improve the quality of representation, the effectiveness of Parliament, the accessibility of members to their constituents, or the accountability of the Executive to the Parliament.

The ALP itself has proposed to increase parliamentary scrutiny of the Executive, in particular through what it has described as a more effective system of parliamentary committees. In its policy document, the ALP proposed to continue the Legislative Council committee on Government agencies. The Legislative Council itself is now in the process of considering a more comprehensive system of parliamentary committees. It is right that it should do so, and, in doing so, it has our support.

A smaller Legislative Council will be less able to perform these functions.

There is a broader issue upon which I want to touch. Parliamentary scrutiny of the Executive is important. Of equal importance is the need for the elected representatives of the people to be effective in the Government of the State. In countries where there is lack of stability in the

governmental and political systems, it is the bureaucracy which takes over the role of decision-maker. To a lesser extent, the same will apply here. The Government has proposed that the 22 remaining members of the Legislative Council should have greater staff than members presently have, more office facilities, more telephone and postage allowances, and more access to travel entitlements. By some strange process of reasoning, the Government apparently believes that employed staff are better able to represent people than are elected members of Parliament.

Mr Laurance: That is similar to the ministerial adviser approach.

Mr Bryce: What is wrong with ministerial advisers?

Mr Laurance: They are taking the place of elected representatives.

Mr Bryce: Is that what regional administrators did, too?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: What this Bill does in effect is to increase the power of the bureaucracy in a time of ever-expanding Government at the expense of the power of elected representatives of the people.

There is no magic about the number 34, but equally there is no magic about the number 22. There is no particular basis upon which it can be said that we would be better off with 22 members rather than 34. Indeed, it is our belief that people would be less well represented in Parliament.

Members of the Labor Party appear to have little understanding of conditions which prevail far away from the metropolitan area. They seem to have forgotten that to travel from the north end of this State to the south end of this State requires an uninterrupted ride of over three hours' duration in a jet aeroplane, that in many places roads are still very bad, that telephone availability is limited or non-existent, and that the amenities which can be taken for granted here are simply not available in some areas.

The Government's claim that it will save a great deal of money by reducing the number of members of Parliament by 12 has been shown to be false. The Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated publicly that the cost of additional office, telephone, postage, and travel entitlements will more than offset the savings from reducing the number of members of Parliament.

In any event, the argument about cost and saving of money is a hollow one. The Government claimed that the saving is of the order of half a million dollars. I do not accept that the people of Western Australia are really committed to the

Government's proposed reductions because of this potential saving. If the Government gave its attention to demonstrated and documented areas of waste in the Government service, it could save many millions of dollars without carrying through this attack on the Parliament of this State.

Proportional representation based on a State-wide electorate would make parliamentarians remote from their electors and would remove them from direct contact and direct accountability.

The situation was neatly illustrated a few weeks ago when a group of parliamentarians from this side of the House visited a remote centre.

Mr Tonkin: You have already used that example on the radio. Use another example.

Mr Bryce: You speak much better than you read.

Mr Pearce: Much of a muchness.

Mr Bryce: You think he is equally bad?

Mr HASSELL: By arrangement, a meeting was held with the local authority. In the room were the members of the local authority together with their three local members, one from the Legislative Assembly and two from the Legislative Council.

Mr Tonkin: With our legislation, you could have 22 members from the Legislative Council, because they would all represent that area.

Mr HASSELL: The Legislative Assembly man has a very large electorate to serve, one which he can serve successfully only through a great deal of travel, including air travel. The Legislative Council members each have vast electorates to serve, requiring also that they travel a great deal. Nevertheless these three members between them are able to give good services to that small community and many others like it. They know the people, they visit the town, they are aware of the problems, and they are able to keep in touch.

Under this Bill and other proposals of the Government, two things would happen. Firstly, the Legislative Council members would no longer represent that town on a constituency basis. Certainly they would represent that town in a broad sense, on the same basis that they represented every other town in Western Australia, because, of course, their electorates would be the whole State. How often that town could expect to see them would be anyone's guess, but what is not guesswork is the fact that no longer would they be accountable to that town and its people or be in touch with that town or its people.

Secondly, if the Government were to carry through its proposals for a one-vote-one-value system in the Legislative Assembly, the lower

House member would have to service an area about two and a half times greater than that which he at present services.

In fact, in practice, these proposals would reduce the representation of that town and hundreds more like it by two-thirds. The reduction would be greater if the one-vote-one-value principle were applied to the lower House as well.

Leave to Continue Speech

I seek leave of the House to continue my speech at a later stage.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.02 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.

ELECTORAL: MUNDARING SEAT

Vacancy

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman): I wish to announce that on Monday, 5 September 1983, I authorised and directed the Clerk of Writs to issue a writ for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the Mundaring district following the decision made on 2 September by the Court of Disputed Returns to declare void the election held on 19 February 1983.

TEMPORARY REDUCTION OF REMUNERATION (SENIOR PUBLIC OFFICERS) BILL

Assent

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bill.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION AND ELECTORAL) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.18 p.m.]: Before the dinner suspension, I was explaining the example which I gave of a remote country town losing its representation—

Mr Tonkin: You mean gaining 22.

Mr HASSELL: —as a result of the introduction of a State-wide electorate and proportional representation in the upper House. I pointed out that, under this Bill and other pro-

posals of the Government, two things would happen. Firstly, the Legislative Council members no longer would represent that town on a constituency basis; secondly, if the Government were to carry through its proposals for a one-vote-one-value system in the Legislative Assembly, the lower House member would have to serve an area about 2½ times greater than that which he now serves. In effect, in practice, these proposals would reduce the representation of that town, and hundreds more like it, by two-thirds. The reduction would be greater if the one-vote-one-value principle were applied to the lower House as well.

At the stage we are tonight, debating a Bill to reduce the size of the Legislative Council in this Parliament, it is of interest to observe the announcement today of the recommendations of a joint party committee in the Federal Parliament for a substantial increase in the size of the Federal Parliament—an increase of membership of 36 in total, including two extra senators from each of the States. It appears, therefore, that, in sharp distinction to the attitude of the State Labor Government here, in the Federal sphere there is bipartisan support for an increase in the representation of people in the Federal Parliament. Reference was made by the Federal Labor Minister (Mr Beazley), when speaking on television tonight, to the increase in the size of the Ministry and the growth in population.

In regard to our own situation, and the particular reference that we are making to the Legislative Council, I make the point that no analogy can be made between the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth and the Legislative Council in the Parliament of Western Australia. In so far as there is an analogy, it is against the interests of the Minister who introduced the Bill now before the House. The Senate was established as an essential element of the Federal system of government embodied in the Commonwealth Constitution. Each of the States is represented equally in the Senate by 10 senators. It may be pointed out that the vote of a Tasmanian for a Senator is "worth" more than 11 times a New South Wales vote for a senator because Tasmania has about one-eleventh of the voting population of New South Wales and yet has the same number of senators in the Commonwealth Parliament.

If there were to be an analogy with the Senate, and the Minister has tried to draw such an analogy in some of his arguments, what the Minister would be proposing would be a division of Western Australia into different regions with equal numbers of Legislative Councillors to be

elected by proportional representation from each of those regions.

However, that is not what he has proposed. Instead the Government is proposing that the whole of this State should be represented as one electorate by 22 members of the Legislative Council.

Although it may not be immediately apparent, the reality is that this would represent two very large shifts of political power and perspective. Firstly, there would be a very large shift in power from the non-metropolitan areas of this State to the metropolitan area. Proportionately, the number of members of the Legislative Council from the non-metropolitan areas would be greatly reduced, and metropolitan interests would prevail. Secondly, there would be a major shift in power from electorates of people to political parties.

What would happen each three years would be that, in the period leading to an election, the political parties would endorse teams of candidates to stand for the Legislative Council.

Mr Tonkin: As happens in the Senate now.

Mr HASSELL: Just as they do now in the Senate.

Mr Tonkin: And just as they do in the present system in our State.

Mr HASSELL: That is not correct; they do not endorse teams of people.

Mr Tonkin: They endorse people.

Mr HASSELL: They endorse candidates on an electorate basis and in the Liberal Party, which is very democratically structured in respect of endorsement, the predominance of interest represented on selection committees is local interest.

Mr Tonkin: Why didn't you carry that over into the electoral system?

Mr HASSELL: I shall give members an example of a Legislative Assembly seat which involves a couple of branches of the party. Those branches would have a minimum of, perhaps, five delegates and a maximum of 12 delegates. If they were sizeable branches, they would have 12 delegates. Members can imagine a situation in a Legislative Assembly seat in which there are two large branches of the Liberal Party—a fairly large branch would have 200 or 300 members. On a selection committee each of those branches would be represented by 12 delegates, the State division based on the Federal seat would have four delegates, the State council would have four delegates, and the Young Liberal Movement would have one or two.

One can see from the simple mathematics of that situation that the selection committee of the Liberal Party would be dominated by the local

people and exactly the same situation occurs, but on a larger scale, in relation to the Legislative Council. When one endorses people for the Legislative Council seat of, say, Lower North Province, in a Liberal Party endorsement procedure, it is predominantly and very substantially the people who live in the area of that province who do the endorsing. However, that would not be the case under this system, and my point is very clear: There would be a major shift in power from electorates of people to political parties, because, as I said before, each three years in the period leading to an election the political parties would endorse teams of candidates to stand for the Legislative Council.

That team would be endorsed, in the case of the Liberal Party, by the State council of the party—in other words, by the central body—and local interests would meld in with the State-wide interests. My own guess would be that each of the major parties would endorse six, seven, or eight members of the team. There would be no local electorate endorsement committees and local people in the regional areas of the State would lose a great deal of their influence in selecting candidates who would become representatives in the Parliament.

In Western Australia, the population is approximately 1.4 million of whom approximately 960 000 live in the metropolitan region. The political reality is that candidates known and acceptable in the metropolitan region would have the greatest pull in attracting endorsement from the major political parties. No member of the Legislative Council could be said to represent effectively any non-metropolitan area of the State.

The Liberal Party and National Country Party are committed to preferential voting. We are opposed to optional preferential voting as we see that as simply a step along the path to first-past-the-post voting, which is the system long favoured by the Labor Party.

Mr Tonkin: The first-past-the-post system is not favoured by the Labor Party.

Mr HASSELL: Well, it used to be.

Mr Tonkin: It might have been once, but it has changed.

Mr HASSELL: The Labor attitude to first-past-the-post voting dramatically changed after the results of the British general election became known.

Mr Tonkin: There are very grave drawbacks to the first-past-the-post system and I make the point quite unequivocally that optional preferential voting is not meant to be a step towards first-past-the-post voting. Under our proposal, one

must at least vote for the number of members to be elected which is 11 and that is nowhere near the first-past-the-post system.

Mr HASSELL: That is optional preferential voting, but the same rules do not apply in the lower House. One has to vote for only one person there.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr HASSELL: Or one can vote for half the candidates or for all of them.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr HASSELL: It is true the Labor Party is a long-time advocate of first-past-the-post voting.

Mr Tonkin: I do not know that we were officially. Perhaps some members advocated it. Was it ever actually a policy?

Mr HASSELL: I believe it was.

Mr Tonkin: I don't think so.

Mr HASSELL: For a long time the Labor Party has professed to believe in a two-party system. In its days of greater integrity, the Labor Party used to direct its preferences on the basis that it supported a two-party system and, because it did so, it directed its preferences according to that long-term policy objective; but, as I say, that was in the days of greater integrity. These days the Labor Party is all over the shop in looking for whatever short-term political advantage it can obtain both generally and on a seat-by-seat basis.

For many years, both nationally and in Western Australia, the Liberal and National Country Parties have successfully governed as a coalition. We believe such a system is legitimate, and would be undermined by a first-past-the-post voting system or something which led to it. We all know that in reality this partial optional preferential voting system would substantially lead to first-past-the-post voting. We are therefore firmly opposed to any breaking down of the present system of preferential voting, of which breaking down the Government's proposal for partial optional preferential voting is an example.

The proposed system for filling casual vacancies in the reconstituted Legislative Council confirms the views I have already expressed about a shift of power from the electors to political parties. The Parliament itself, and not the people, would fill casual vacancies which would be filled by the nominees of political parties—people who have failed at the election to get elected—or people of the same political persuasion as those being replaced.

Mr Tonkin: That is respecting the people's wishes. We had to put that in because you drew up the convention in 1975.

Mr HASSELL: It is very interesting to note the Minister's comment.

Mr Tonkin: It is part of the Australian Constitution now, and your party supported it.

Mr HASSELL: It is part of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Mr Tonkin: That's right.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister is saying that it respects the people's wishes to require under the Constitution that a defeated candidate be put into this Parliament as a member. That is not so under the Constitution of the Commonwealth, under which a defeated candidate does not have to be selected in the case of casual vacancies. Is that not correct?

Mr Tonkin: But the fact of the matter is that all the people who voted, the 50 000 or whichever number it is, should have their wishes respected, and in that way they would get the same party representing them.

Mr HASSELL: I suggest to the Minister that this system contributes to a transfer of power from the people to political parties.

Mr Tonkin: What are you talking about? Twenty eight per cent of the people elected you to the Legislative Council. Those people were the only ones. The public were not consulted.

Mr HASSELL: What I have said is the thrust of my argument. While this system may be convenient, it is not desirable—it is not one which we can support.

The various provisions relating to the validity of votes will cause more problems than they will solve. One would have thought the Government would have some regard for the recent decision in the Court of Disputed Returns relating to the Mundaring electorate, by seeking to strengthen legislative provisions and such procedures relating to voting rather than to weaken them.

Mr Tonkin: The only reason the Court of Disputed Returns in relation to Mundaring took place was because of the way you shockingly ran the Electoral Department. You had starved it of funds and had allowed the rolls to get into a shocking state. As a consequence, we have had to have this new election ordered.

Mr HASSELL: I do not really mind the Minister's continuing these emotional outbursts because my time is not limited in this debate, though I was seeking to follow in a logical way the arguments I have put together. I can only say in response to the Minister that he has not read, does not understand, or is simply so blinded by prejudice that, in relation to the Mundaring election, he cannot understand the judgment of Mr Justice

Brinsden of the Supreme Court of Western Australia.

Mr Tonkin: Are you trying to say that in the two weeks since that decision came down we should have had legislation before this Parliament?

Mr HASSELL: I am not saying that.

Mr Tonkin: Well, don't be ridiculous.

Mr HASSELL: What I am saying is that the various provisions the Government has put forward in this legislation relating to the validity of votes will cause more problems than they will solve, and will likely contribute to problems such as those which occurred in Mundaring. How ridiculous it is that someone who marks his ballot paper with a "1", a "5", and a "6" should have that vote counted as valid, yet that does seem to me to be a consequence of the legislative provisions put forward by the Government. What the Government basically proposes in this legislation is that, provided someone can somehow read into a ballot paper an intention to vote for one person, that person will get the vote. If all the other markings on the ballot paper, including his name, are there, it does not make any difference whatever other nonsense is there so long as a "1" can be found in a square.

Mr Tonkin: It is, so long as the intention is clear, or don't you want to take notice of the intention of electors?

Mr HASSELL: If there is a ballot paper with, say, four boxes for a total of four candidates and the paper is marked "1", then there is a blank, a "6", and an "8", I do not think the intention is clear. The law at present says that the paper would not be sufficiently clear.

Mr Tonkin: I am not saying it is clear, either.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister's legislation would say it is clear.

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish! Are you talking about an Assembly election or a Council election?

Mr HASSELL: I am talking about an Assembly election; I said there were about four places to be filled.

Mr Tonkin: You are talking about optional preferential voting.

Mr HASSELL: I am talking about an election in which there are four candidates and the voter places a "1", a "6", and an "8", and leaves one space blank. As I read the Minister's legislation, such a vote would be regarded as valid.

Mr Tonkin: That is because there is only one vacancy to be filled and the elector voted "1".

Mr HASSELL: That is right. I really think it is ridiculous for such a vote to be regarded as valid.

Mr Tonkin: So you don't agree with optional preferential voting?

Mr HASSELL: I have already said we do not agree with that voting. A person who votes "1", "6", and "8", and leaves a blank either in the middle or at the end of the list would not seem to me to express any kind of intention at all. All he may express is that he is numerically illiterate.

Mr Tonkin: Except that he wants to give "1" to the bloke he wants to vote for.

Mr Laurance: It may be that he wants to give eight times his vote to another bloke.

Mr HASSELL: He may be indicating that he wants to give eight times his vote to someone else, which shows how illogical this provision is.

Mr Tonkin: You tried every way you could to prevent people from getting their names on the rolls and then, when they voted, you did everything you could to prevent their having their vote carried.

Mr HASSELL: Goodness me, the Minister does misrepresent things quite dishonestly.

Mr Tonkin: You have a shocking record, and the only reason an election is to be held again in Mundaring is the shocking way you operated the Electoral Department. You starved it of funds.

Mr HASSELL: The only reason for the re-election at Mundaring is that the judge declared the election at which the Labor Party candidate won by a narrow margin as absolutely void.

Mr Tonkin: One of the reasons for its being declared void was that you gave no training to electoral officers.

Mr O'Connor: It was because of shenanigans by electoral officers.

Mr Wilson: What did the judge say about that?

Mr O'Connor: What did he say?

Mr Wilson: He said there was no blame to be attached to anyone.

Mr Tonkin: He said there was no blame.

Mr O'Connor: I did not say any blame was attached to anyone.

Mr Tonkin: You said "shenanigans".

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is making a speech.

Mr HASSELL: I really think the Minister is making the point—

Mr Wilson: He is, and very well.

Mr HASSELL: —that these provisions will weaken the clarity of the requirements for valid voting.

Mr Tonkin: Clarity?

Mr HASSELL: They will weaken the clarity; they will lessen clarity. They will make ludicrous markings on a ballot paper a valid vote.

Mr Tonkin: It says that, if the intention is clear, the vote can be valid. Don't you want to accept the voter's intention if it is clear?

Mr HASSELL: It says that now.

Mr Tonkin: What's wrong with it?

Mr HASSELL: It is really quite extraordinary that the Government should propose to abolish the secret ballot, which will be the effect of the provision in the Bill that will remove the requirement that a vote which allows a voter to be identified should be regarded as informal. This is a very serious point, and no doubt will be discussed more during the Committee stage.

Mr Tonkin: It is ridiculous to say we are getting rid of the secret vote. If a person walks out of the ballot box, he can tell people how he voted.

The SPEAKER: Order! I made the observation some weeks ago that, during a second reading stage, the person making a speech should concentrate on making his speech, and if he wants to ask questions or have points answered, an appropriate time exists for that to be done, which is question time. If we had fewer interjections, which are highly disorderly, we might be able to get on with the speech.

Mr HASSELL: The Act contains the provision which says that if a ballot paper is marked in such a way that the voter can be identified, the vote is invalid. The Bill presented by the Minister proposes to repeal that provision, which would effectively remove the secrecy of the ballot. The very cornerstone of the secrecy of the ballot is that voters may not be identified with their ballot papers and with their voting intention.

Mr Tonkin: That is if they do not want to have anyone know, but I know how you vote and that does not mean the secret ballot has been abolished. You are happy for everyone to know.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister would not have the faintest idea of how I vote; he is only guessing. In the last election, I voted for Les Heinrich, the Labor candidate, because I felt so sorry for him!

I turn now to another point. The Legislative Council will become substantially unworkable. This Government, when in Opposition and now in presenting this legislation, has contemplated that no party will gain very often a clear majority in

the Legislative Council. A House of Parliament of 22 members would be very small.

Mr Tonkin: Isn't 90 years straight long enough for you?

Mr HASSELL: One of those members must be appointed as President, and he is to take a deliberative vote as well as a casting vote. It is likely that, on many occasions, the balance of power will be held by a minority party, a party not aligned to either of the major parties.

Mr Stephens: That would be to restore the parliamentary democracy, where the Parliament makes the decisions. That would be one of the benefits of the Bill.

Mr HASSELL: It would be without responsibility.

Mr Stephens: Every member is responsible to his electorate.

Mr HASSELL: I was talking the other evening with Australian Democrats and I asked, "What do you get when you vote for the Democrats?" They were a bit mystified so I said, "Do you know which way they will vote on a particular issue?" Half of them vote one way and half the other way, and their votes vary from issue to issue, from time to time, and from Parliament to Parliament. They stand up with their high ideals, and say how great is their integrity, how they have a conscience, and how none of the other political parties has a conscience. Yet we find that people do not know what they are getting from such parties. They vote for a party which resembles its how-to-vote card, which has one preference on one side, and one on the other side. That is how they exercise their votes; they have no responsibility for the consequences of their decisions either in Parliament or outside it.

Mr Stephens: Yes they have. You are twisting the truth; you know they do.

Mr HASSELL: I am not twisting the truth. I am talking about political reality which is that one of the benefits of a disciplined party system such as the one we have in Australia is that people generally know what they are getting when they vote. I admit that political integrity has taken a mighty hammering in the aftermath of the State and Federal elections this year. Leaving this year aside, I would say that, in general, Australian voters historically have had a pretty honest deal from their elected Governments on both sides because, in general, political parties have carried out the commitments they gave before the elections. I leave out this year because a change in direction has occurred and we see the Federal Government quite cold-bloodedly saying it will

make decisions on principle different from its commitments given prior to the election.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Quite wrong.

Mr Wilson: Just as Malcolm Fraser did.

Mr HASSELL: No, Malcolm Fraser did not do that. He carried out what he said he would do.

Mr Wilson: Absolute rubbish!

Mr Brian Burke: What about the tax cuts he gave before each election and took away after the election?

Mr HASSELL: How can the Premier talk about tax cuts?

Mr Brian Burke: You were saying Malcolm Fraser kept his word.

Mr HASSELL: He did, in general.

Mr Brian Burke: In general!

Mr HASSELL: I am making the point that, generally from both political parties, the Australian people have had a reasonable deal. I say that in the context that parties such as the Democrats do not fulfil any expectations from anyone. People do not know what they are getting; they buy a pig in a poke and vote for a party that claims to be a party of principle. Yet, when it comes to votes in Parliament, half its members vote one way and the other half vote another way.

I would be the first to defend the right, the duty, and the obligation of any parliamentarian to exercise his judgment independently, and on occasions he will not be able to live with the decisions of his party. I deplore the situation where members of Parliament are caucused in such a way that they cannot vary their vote on occasions, however inconvenient it might be for the Government should they do so. I do not think we would contribute to the stability of Government, to the strength of Government, or to people's knowing what they were going to get when they voted, by our deliberately creating a situation in which a House would be forever held in the balance by some minority party which never had to pick up the tabs for its promises.

Mr Stephens: Every member has a right to vote. Get to the facts instead of going on with this diatribe about people being dictated to.

Mr HASSELL: I know the member for Stirling and his colleague have an absolute hang-up about being dictated to. In the time they have sat on the crossbenches, they mostly have voted with the ALP. That is their choice; they are entitled to do so; but I do not think they have made one whit of contribution to government in this State.

Under the proposals relating to the Legislative Council, that House will become unworkable. The

President of the Council will become a partisan member of the House.

Mr Carr: As distinct from the situation now.

Mr HASSELL: It is distinct from the situation now.

Mr Tonkin: Don't be such a comedian. You have had 90 years of unbroken rule and you want to extend it.

Mr HASSELL: If the President is voting on every Bill and is seen to be voting with the Government or the Opposition of the day, he will become a totally committed party man. It may surprise the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and some other members of the Government to know the present President of the Council (Hon. Clive Griffiths) takes very seriously his responsibilities as an independent person with an obligation to neutrality and impartiality for the whole of the Legislative Council. In that approach, he follows the tradition of a number of his predecessors. He would not find that possible under the proposals in this Bill.

Mr Stephens: I have read the clause you referred to and I cannot understand how you got that interpretation.

Mr HASSELL: Perhaps it is wrong.

Mr Stephens: I thought you might be able to explain it.

Mr HASSELL: If it is wrong, we can explore that in Committee.

For this Bill to become law, it will require the approval of Parliament, and of the electors of the State at a referendum. The Parliament of this State consists of three parts—the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council, and the Governor as the representative of the Monarch. Unless this Bill receives the approval of all those parts, it does not receive the approval of Parliament.

We are opposed to the Bill for reasons which are substantial and legitimate. The Labor Government seeks to impose its view with no basis of consensus or common agreement.

Mr Tonkin: When did you try to seek consensus? You have been passing laws to suit yourselves for 90 years. Did you consult us last time you brought in a Bill?

Mr HASSELL: We will not give our support to this course of action, nor to those proposals in the Government's legislative package—this Bill and other measures, some before us and some to be presented—with which we do not agree. As I have made very clear, we oppose this Bill.

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [7.53 p.m.]: This Bill is very complex and amends several Acts, and

is possibly one of the most far-reaching electoral Bills brought to this House for some time. It not only has an impact on the Legislative Council, but also foreshadows moves, which the Government anticipates making at a later date, to alter the method of voting for the Legislative Assembly. It is of great importance to the electors of Western Australia and it is a Bill which should not be underestimated. It will change the whole constitution of the Legislative Council, given that it is passed and proclaimed.

The proposed reduction of the Legislative Council from 34 to 22 members and the introduction of the system of proportional representation represents a rabid departure from the Legislative Council as we know it today. The Legislative Council has served this State very well despite the protestations of the Government. In the event that this Bill is passed, the Government will find that proportional representation is totally unacceptable to country people who demand and deserve adequate representation in the Parliament. It seems to me that, under the system proposed by this Bill, there is very little likelihood of their obtaining such adequate representation.

In the manifesto put out by the Australian Labor Party prior to the election, one of the red herrings dragged across the electoral trail in the so-called electoral reform paper was item four which states—

An ALP Government would determine that the system of election for the eleven members who retire in each normally three-year period shall be a State-wide proportional representation list similar to that which applies in New South Wales and South Australia and within each State to the States' House in the Commonwealth Parliament—the Senate.

I submit that this is a blatant misrepresentation of the truth. I do not believe the systems in New South Wales and South Australia in any way equate with that of election of representatives to the Senate. Our founding fathers were very shrewd people who foresaw such things as we have before us tonight.

In an endeavour to safeguard the interest of the States, they made certain that representation of the States was equal and certainly while the method of election is proportional representation, it is not the same as the method applied in South Australia and New South Wales. The States in this case equate to provinces in Western Australia; in other words, the system proposed here is certainly a great departure from the system utilised in the Senate.

If true proportional representation applied to Senate voting and the vote was cast on an Australia-wide basis—and that is the analogy drawn in that scurrilous paper—the likely representation in the Senate would be New South Wales, 12; Victoria, nine; Queensland, five; South Australia, three; Western Australia, three; Tasmania, one; and, with a bit of luck, perhaps the Territories might get one. I say “with a bit of luck” because it is highly unlikely they would get one representative. I feel that is a pretty fair illustration of the problem this State would face if this Bill went through in its present form.

People in country areas have come to expect adequate representation in both Houses of Parliament in this State, and every electoral district represented by a member of the Legislative Assembly also has two Legislative Council members, not always of the same party. That is not necessarily a bad thing because it gives electors an option to consult another politician and get another opinion.

Mr Pearce: A second and third opinion, in fact.

Mr OLD: Yes, the Minister is quite right, and it is nice to know that he agrees with that system because obviously his colleagues do not.

Mr Pearce: Under our system, you get 22 second opinions.

Mr OLD: Yes, all from the metropolitan area. That would be a great help to country people!

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish!

Mr OLD: It is not rubbish and the Minister knows it.

Mr Tonkin: As far as our party is concerned.

Mr OLD: This is the first step in the move towards the Labor Party's espoused platform of the abolition of the Legislative Council. It is interesting to know what happened to that commitment. Despite what the Minister handling the Bill said by way of interjection during the last speech, it certainly has been the aim of the Labor Party to do away with the bicameral system. Perhaps when the Minister replies—and I assume he will—he will advise the House what has happened to that plank of the platform because it seems to have gone down the gurgler. What the Labor Party cannot achieve by direct action, it is now endeavouring to achieve by deception and stealth.

Mr Tonkin: Direct action? We are asking the people's opinion on this. What could be more democratic than our having a referendum? That is what we propose. You are scared of the people.

Mr OLD: The Government is putting a Bill through the House. If it were to ask the people first, there might be something in it.

Mr Tonkin: Don't be ridiculous. Sir Charles Court altered the Constitution and we have to follow that course. Let the people decide.

Mr OLD: Let the people decide—that is a great catchcry. Government by referendum—perhaps it is the only way we can get decent government from the people who sit on the other side.

Mr Tonkin: That was your Government that did that—you were in Government.

Mr OLD: We did not conduct government by referendum.

Mr Tonkin: You made it a requirement—you altered the legislation so that the Constitution had to be amended by referendum.

Mr Pearce: You are trying to stop a referendum.

Mr OLD: I am not trying to stop a referendum; I am trying to prevent the Labor Party from taking the first step towards the abolition of the bicameral system in this State.

Mr Tonkin: You won't have any abolition without the people deciding. You are afraid of the people.

Mr OLD: The obvious move is to go this way because there is no way that the ALP would be able to convince its dedicated Legislative Council members to vote themselves out of a job.

Mr Tonkin: Do you want to bet?

Mr OLD: I have never seen them do it yet.

Mr Pearce: Hang on a week.

Mr Tonkin: You will see what happens in the division.

Mr OLD: If they really think the matter out, they will vote against it.

In this Bill, we see the candy wrapped up in the package, and the candy is the pension for members who lose their seats. A pension will be granted to those members irrespective of their term of office, irrespective of the rules laid down under the superannuation Act, and irrespective of the rules applied by the Superannuation Board. This is one of the so-called savings we will be making.

Mr Tonkin: Because you have changed the rules after they have been elected, and that is only fair.

Mr OLD: So after the reduction in the number of members in the Legislative Council to 22, and after our waving a pension in the face of those not eligible for one, it will be a much easier step for them to vote themselves out of office than it would be without the pension provision. Does the Government realise that?

Mr Tonkin: You can make these points to the people if there is a referendum.

Mr OLD: I will. The Government speaks of a saving of \$500 000 by reducing the size of the Legislative Council. Again that is a straight deception because there is no way in the world that that sum of money will be saved. For a start, these pensions will be handed out.

An Opposition member: It has taken 50 years in Queensland to get rid of them, and they are still paying.

Mr OLD: The Government has offered the sop of two offices for each country member. What a sop to the country people. It offered also increased travelling allowances and increased staff. I do not think much of the \$500 000 will be left after all those little goodies are handed out to the few privileged people who will be in the Council.

How often will Legislative Council members, elected from the metropolitan area, be able to visit Jerramungup, Borden, Timbuctoo, or Morawa?

Mr Tonkin: Any party which neglects the country will be consigned to the dustbin.

Mr OLD: That is absolute rot—the Legislative Council members will be elected by the metropolitan area and the Minister knows it. These members will not service the country areas; there is no way in the world that they will.

Having had all these goodies handed out to the Legislative Councillors, how long will it be before the disgruntled members of the Legislative Assembly say, "We want the same conditions as have our counterparts in the Legislative Council"? It has been a convention in the Parliament for many years that members of both Houses are treated equally, and it will continue to be so.

So a statement about a saving of \$500 000 not only is mythical, but also is straightout misleading.

I punished myself by reading the second reading speech twice after having listened to it once. It was long on rhetoric and short on fact. It was plain boring, and it did not really touch on the Bill at all. Anything we have found out about this legislation has been as a result of our own painful research.

I found a couple of points in that second reading speech which are worthy of being quoted again.

Mr Tonkin: More than two are worthy of quoting I think.

Mr OLD: They would qualify the author for the *Guinness Book of Records* for the hypocrite-of-the-year award. After telling us, "The Legislat-

ive Council has never been democratically elected", the Minister went on to say—

It is the sincere wish of the Government to create an electoral system that is fair to all—

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr OLD: To continue—

—that is accepted by all, and that is above the machinations of party politics.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr OLD: From this Minister that is pure humbug.

Mr Pearce: That is a statesman-like utterance.

Mr OLD: Another quotation which is certainly worthy of repeating is the following—

Important constitutional changes were made in 1977 . . . Enrolment was to be made more difficult. In none of these changes to the electoral system has the Liberal or National Country Parties sought consultation with the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr OLD: Mr Speaker, I ask you, in all fairness: Did the Government seek consultation with the Liberal Party and the National Country Party when it was framing this diabolical legislation?

Mr Tonkin: Of course not, but we are not pretending that we did.

Mr OLD: But the Government is expecting it of us.

Mr Tonkin: No, I did not expect it. I was stating a fact, and that was in reply to the hypocrisy of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who suddenly said that he thought we should consult with the Opposition. You set the ground rules.

Mr OLD: The Minister said—

In none of these changes . . . has the Liberal or National Country Parties sought consultation with the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr OLD: Then why did not the Government consult with us when it was framing this rotten Bill?

The Minister mentions in defence of the move to largely disfranchise country people—and that is what it will do—that four of the Legislative Council provinces with the least number of electors have fewer electors in total than the province with the highest number of electors. That is a statement of fact, but my comment to that statement is: So what? Does not the Government pay any regard at all to remoteness?

Mr Tonkin: Yes, like Kalamunda, for example.

Mr OLD: Not Kalamunda for example.

Mr Tonkin: That is rural by your definition, and that shows the humbug you are talking.

Mr OLD: Like Leonora, for instance. The Government is not making any differentiation between Kalamunda and Murchison-Eyre, is it?

Mr Tonkin: No.

Mr OLD: Well that is all humbug and rot.

Mr Tonkin: No it is not—we are not pretending.

Mr OLD: Does the Minister realise some of the difficulties experienced in the agricultural and mining areas? Every time the Government of the day brings the price of petrol "down"—allowing it to go up by about 4c a litre—that impacts on country people.

Mr Pearce: Do you support a system that has 8 000 voters in Kalamunda and 15 000 voters in Kimberley?

Mr OLD: I certainly do, unashamedly I support the system as it stands, and I will continue to do so.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin: Well how can you talk about remoteness then?

Mr OLD: To make my point quite clear to the Minister for Education, I say I am implacably opposed to any of the measures put forward in this Bill, and quite unashamedly so. I urge members of this House, before they cast a vote on the second reading of this diabolical Bill, to give very serious consideration to the mess into which they will put this State if they pass it. I urge particularly the country members of the House to respect the electors they represent and not to be led by the nose by a team of political opportunists who are very critical of the antisocialist parties which they say have entrenched themselves into the Legislative Council.

Mr Tonkin: For 90 years!

Mr OLD: If the Australian Labor Party was good enough, it could win it.

Mr Tonkin: We won the last one and we got fewer seats than you. We got 53 per cent of the vote and fewer seats. Don't be ridiculous.

Mr OLD: The Minister might hear something different later.

Mr Tonkin: To win, we would have to have 90 per cent of the vote.

Mr OLD: This Bill would mean that the ALP had perpetual control of Government in this State, and I will do my best to see that does not

happen. It is interesting to note that after the mistake the electors made, many country members are sitting on the Government benches. I suggest to those people that they give very serious consideration to the ramifications of voting for this Bill. This is only one step in the first plan to emasculate the country voice by reducing our representation in the Legislative Council. We have heard much of this vaunted system of one-vote-one-value. Quite frankly, I thought we had one-vote-one-value.

[Laughter.]

Mr OLD: As I understand it, everyone over the age of 18 is entitled to and is obliged to enrol and vote.

Mr Gordon Hill: You obviously do not understand it—that is the point.

Mr OLD: I put it to country members on the Government benches that they should not think they will escape unscathed. It is a pity that they are taking so much interest in the Bill before the House—there are hardly any of them here!

Mr Gordon Hill interjected.

Mr OLD: I am talking about both Houses, as the Minister did when he introduced the Bill. I will tell the member what I am talking about.

Mr Pearce: You could not run a supermarket successfully.

Mr Tonkin: Don't you think he is a "Fabulous" member?

Mr OLD: I say to those Government members who represent country voters that, if they vote for this Bill they will certainly incur the displeasure of their electors. While that will not displease me in the short term, it will be a tragedy to the State in the long term. If the subsequent Bill were proceed with, the likely result in the Legislative Assembly would be an increase in metropolitan representation from 30 to 42 members, and a reduction in the non-metropolitan representation from 27 to 15 members. To give the House some idea of how serious that would be—and I believe the electors of this State are entitled to know and it is the duty of every country member to tell them—I indicate that it means that after allowing for four members for the regional centres of Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, and Kalgoorlie, apart from the metropolitan area, there would be 11 members for the rest of Western Australia—nine for the South-West Land Division and two for the north-west and Murchison-Eyre. If that is what the Australian Labor Party calls fair representation, I have yet to learn the meaning of the word "fair".

Again no account is taken of disadvantage, in terms of travel, communication, freight rates, or anything else, as a result of a person's living outside the metropolitan area.

Mr Tonkin: Kalamunda!

Mr OLD: That is the Minister's catchcry and he can keep going on about it as much as he likes, but it does not mean a thing to me.

We go from 19 to nine members in the South-West Land Division and the north-west and Murchison-Eyre—an area which members opposite always hold up as being disadvantaged—would go from four to two members. Perhaps that area will get a little more consideration.

Non-metropolitan members have a duty to get out and tell their electors exactly what is going on. They should tell their electors that this Government seeks to make the Legislative Council a true rubber stamp for this Chamber. In that case, perhaps we would be better off without it.

Mr Tonkin: It has been a rubber stamp for the last nine years.

Mr OLD: That has not been the case for the last nine years.

Mr Tonkin: How many Bills did you lose? It is a joke. It goes to sleep for nine years!

Mr OLD: It is a reflection of the quality of the legislation introduced by this side of the House when we were in Government that we did not lose Bills in the Legislative Council. If members opposite took a little more time in considering the types of Bills they introduced, they might have a better run in the other House.

The present constitution of the Council is 14 metropolitan members, 16 country members, and four north-west and remote areas members.

The member for Stirling, who represents a party which claims that it speaks for country people, put forward a motion which sought to reduce country representation by four, and to increase the level of representation in the metropolitan area by the same number. We would then have had 18 metropolitan representatives; 12 agricultural, mining, and pastoral representatives; and four representatives in the north-west and special areas. Members should take note of the fact that, under that system, the only areas to be disadvantaged would be the agricultural, mining, and pastoral regions. That is a very sad reflection on a party which purports to support country people.

I recall that, at the time the member for Stirling introduced his motion, the present Premier, the then Leader of the Opposition, said he would give qualified support to the motion; that is how good it was. He indicated the only quarrel he

had with it was that it did not go far enough. On this occasion, I say that the Government has probably gone too far.

What then is the likely outcome of the Government's proposal? In the first instance, we would go from 34 to 22 members in the Legislative Council. I repeat the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition: What is so magical about the figure of 22? Has it been chosen because South Australia in its "wisdom" decided on 22? Perhaps the ALP sees that number as giving it a very definite electoral advantage, despite the fact that representation in the non-metropolitan areas will be terribly thin on the ground. However, that does not worry the majority of members of the Opposition. Some of them will worry about it and it will worry them very greatly before this whole undesirable mess is finalised.

The proposed reduction in the number of Legislative Councillors from 34 to 22 comes after a period from 1899 during which the Legislative Council had 30 members. Between 1899 and today, the number of Legislative Councillors has increased by four to 34. Is that considered to be excessive?

Mr Bertram: Yes.

Mr OLD: In 1899, there were 30 members in the Legislative Council, and there are 34 today. Is that excessive?

Mr Tonkin: Yes, when they go to sleep all the time.

Mr Bertram: It is grossly excessive and a gross waste!

Mr OLD: That is not the case and, indeed, if it were, this Bill would have been introduced by the ALP many years ago when it was firmly entrenched as the Government in this House; but it did not introduce such a Bill, and, all of a sudden, 22 has become a very attractive number. Bearing in mind the fact that the ALP is so determined to undermine the strength of the Council, we realise that it must be looking for electoral advantage. Of course, that is what this is all about.

Given that in excess of 70 per cent of the population of Western Australia resides in the metropolitan area, and given that the metropolitan area is the power base of the Australian Labor Party—

Mr Bertram: And the Liberal Party.

Mr Tonkin: We represent more country people than you do.

Mr OLD: That is correct. However, that will not be the case for long if the ALP continues with this rot. Indeed, as far as I am concerned, that is the only thing in its favour.

There is little doubt that, in the main, the endorsed candidates for the Legislative Council will come from the metropolitan area, because that is where the voting power lies. Therefore, we will find that, despite the fact that it is supposed to be a democratic election, at least 70 per cent—probably more—of the members of the newly constituted Legislative Council will be metropolitan area members.

There is little doubt where their loyalties will lie, because within a maximum of six years they will be required to meet their electors again for an election. I refer to a maximum of six years, because this Bill also contains a provision for the abolition of the fixed term of the Legislative Council. It is proposed that the fixed term be replaced by two terms of the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Council currently enjoying a fixed term of six years—

Mr Tonkin: "Enjoying" is the right word!

Mr OLD: —is somewhat of a watchdog—

Mr Tonkin: Rather toothless over the last nine years.

Mr Bryce: How much watching did it do from 1974 to 1983?

Mr Gordon Hill: Watching its tail and going round and round in circles.

Mr OLD: —on the Legislative Assembly which under certain circumstances could take advantage of the opportunity to go to an early election were it not for the fact that the Legislative Council had a fixed term. By doing away with that fixed term, the Government will ensure that the Legislative Assembly will be able to manipulate elections as it wishes and take out the Legislative Council with it. We could see a spate of recklessly called elections where the Government of the day—

Mr Tonkin: Of course Governments love to go to elections! Your whole speech is illogical!

Mr OLD: At least my speech is understandable which is more than could be said for the Minister's. His was the most illogical speech through which I have ever had the misfortune to sit and, as I said, through which I have ever been masochistic enough to read again afterwards.

Several members interjected.

Mr OLD: The Legislative Council would then become a House without any independence.

Mr Bertram: That has been the case for the last 80 years.

Mr OLD: In fact, the Legislative Council would be pandering to Trades Hall and would not be serving the electors, because councillors would rely on the people there for re-endorsement.

Mr Gordon Hill: Isn't it time you people came up with some new arguments?

Mr OLD: In effect, elections would be held in the dining room of Parliament House rather than in the electorate, because it would be a matter of taking one's mentors to dinner in order to be re-endorsed for re-election.

Mr Bertram: I notice your friend Bjelke-Petersen has not done anything about re-establishing the upper House in Queensland.

Mr OLD: Well, he is good enough to hold the whole darned thing together and I go along with it.

Several members interjected.

Mr OLD: In the so-called second reading speech, the Minister referred to Governments of the day supporting the enrolment of electors based on their ownership of property. Of course, that provision no longer obtains and I believe its abolition was a good move. However, I do not think any account at all is taken of from where the wealth of this country comes and where its productivity lies.

Mr Tonkin: So Alan Bond should have 100 votes!

Mr Clarko: When he wins the America's Cup perhaps.

Mr OLD: He is mainly involved in a secondary and service industry. The only goods produced in this country are produced outside the metropolitan area and members opposite know that well. Goods are produced by the mining and agricultural industries and to give members some idea of the importance of those industries—the industries which would be denied equal representation in both Houses of Parliament in this State—I indicate the mining figures for 1981-82, which were the latest figures I could find.

Mr Tonkin: They don't drive motorcars or anything like that!

Mr OLD: The contribution of the mining industry to the economy of this State in 1981-82, based on the latest figures I was able to obtain, was \$2 370 million. In the same year, agriculture contributed \$1 855 million and in the following year \$2 150 million. Those are impressive figures and it is clear that those contributions help the Treasurer of this State to frame his Budget. What advantages do the people involved in those industries get under this Bill? They do not receive anything. Indeed, the reward they will receive for their efforts will be reduced representation in the Houses of Parliament. That is very poor reward for the people who are producing the wealth of this country.

Only last week I attended the Newdegate field day where there was a most successful and impressive display of machinery and ancillary goods. The field day was opened by the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr Evans: Very well too, wasn't it?

Mr OLD: Yes, that is a matter of opinion. The field day was opened by the Minister for Agriculture who stated very proudly that Western Australia had 10 per cent of the primary producers of Australia and produced 15 per cent of the agricultural wealth of the country. I applaud the Minister for referring to those achievements.

Mr Brycc: Where does all that productivity come from?

Mr OLD: The Minister said he was very proud of that situation, and I have no doubt he is.

Mr Pearce: He is the best Minister for Agriculture in recent history.

Mr OLD: He is certainly the best one in the last three months! How can the Minister condone the electoral insult being handed out to the people who are supporting him and the industry he purports to represent? I am quite sure that when this Bill came before Cabinet, the Minister for Agriculture spoke very solidly against it. I am quite sure he protected the interests of rural industries.

Mr Tonkin: Which Bill is this?

Mr OLD: The one we are debating now. On reflection, I am not quite so sure.

Mr Tonkin: Make up your mind!

Mr OLD: We saw the Minister for Agriculture cave in very quickly in relation to the Shannon River basin.

Mr Wilson: Perhaps you can reflect again.

Mr OLD: We have not heard the Minister raise his voice in protest about the Treasurer of the day trying to rob the people in the catchments areas of legitimate compensation in order to make up for his own fiscal ineptitude in framing a Budget. It is time the Minister for Agriculture started to realise that many of those people are in his electorate and that they will not be very pleased with the attitude or stance he has or has not taken.

We cannot underestimate the importance of agriculture in this State. As a rough guide, it has been estimated that, for every job in the farming industry, 1.5 to 2.5 jobs are generated in ancillary industries.

As a matter of fact, in the National Farmers Federation 1980 publication of *Farm Focus* it is claimed that approximately one million workers

throughout Australia are dependent upon the agricultural industry.

The estimate of the number of farm workers throughout Australia is 360 000, of whom Western Australia has 40 000. Taking the ratio of 1:2, this means 120 000 jobs in this State are directly dependent upon the agricultural industries; that is, some 21 per cent of the total jobs in this State. I understand that the total work force as at 30 April 1983 was 568 900.

It seems poor reward that an industry that props up this country so well should be so shabbily treated by this Bill. I totally oppose the measure.

MR GORDON HILL (Helena) [8.31 p.m.]: It is appropriate that I make a few comments on this important piece of legislation, especially given that last year—

Mr Blaikie interjected.

MR GORDON HILL: The empty vessel makes the loudest noise, especially the member for Vasse.

Mr Speaker, you will recall that last year, during my maiden speech, I was warned on three occasions for using what was described as intemperate language. I think it was fair and modest language which simply stated that the Government of the day was crooked and corrupt. I did not retract that view at a later stage of the year when I made similar comments and was suspended from the House.

Mr Pearce: The electorate confirmed your judgment.

MR GORDON HILL: Not only was that judgment confirmed on that occasion, but also I am sure it will be confirmed in a couple of weeks' time in Mundaring.

It is appropriate that I make these comments because, as I said before, this is an issue about which every democrat in Western Australia feels passionately, as I do.

Mr Old: You would not know the meaning of the word.

MR GORDON HILL: It is a first step by this Government in the democratisation of government in Western Australia. This Government has a mandate to do just that. We often hear noises from Opposition members saying that the Government does not have a mandate for this, but that it has not fulfilled its promises in some other area. The Opposition is selective in what mandates it believes the Government has.

Clearly on this issue the Government has a mandate, and an enormous one. Not only was this mandate expressed at the time of the general elec-

tion on 19 February, but also it was expressed in the March by-election the previous year for the seat of Swan, which I won.

I made the statement in my maiden speech that the electors of Swan had cast a deliberate vote in favour of electoral reform. In some areas of the electorate I received the biggest swing that has ever been received. In fact, in some boxes I achieved the biggest vote the Labor Party had ever achieved in those boxes, and they were in areas that we canvassed on the question of reform of the Legislative Council in particular and on electoral reform in general. At that time, the father of democracy in South Australia (Mr Don Dunstan) came to Western Australia to address a crowd.

Mr Clarke: Did he have his pink shorts?

Mr Bryce: Listen to the occupants of the rotten boroughs guffaw.

Mr McNee: How many jobs will you create? Talk about that instead of all this nonsense.

Mr GORDON HILL: When the sheep have stopped their bleating, perhaps they might learn something from what I have to say—if they are capable of understanding what is a perfectly logical statement.

Last year, during the course of the by-election, the present Premier of Western Australia addressed a very large crowd in the electorate of Swan. On more than one occasion this issue was canvassed. The electors of Swan—now Helena—supported the Opposition on this question.

Mr Speaker, you will recall that, during the course of the recent election campaign, the Labor Party put forward the proposition that it would reduce the size of the Legislative Council from 34 to 22 members and that its members would be elected by a system of proportional representation, the nearest thing we can get to one-vote-one-value; in fact it is one-vote-one-value. Members of the Opposition do not understand the meaning of that, and I will go into this a little later.

The electors were aware of the then Opposition's attitude to this question because it was canvassed by the Labor Party consistently during the election campaign. It was supported overwhelmingly by the electors on 19 February.

Mr Crane: It was not supported in my electorate.

Mr GORDON HILL: We have a mandate to proceed with this legislation. The actions of the Government are in accordance with most world authorities; they are in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of

1948; they are in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and they are in accordance with the popular opinion of the electorate of Western Australia. As has been said before, the United States Supreme Court has spoken in support of electoral reform and of one-vote-one-value. This is also accepted by the Constitution of the United States, and in America a system similar to that which we have in Western Australia would be illegal.

On the other hand, the conservative parties in Western Australia are out of step with world opinion and out of step with the electorate of Western Australia. If they pass this legislation, or if they defer it or reject it in the other place, they will demonstrate clearly that they are out of step with the popular opinion in Western Australia.

Mr Crane: Rubbish!

Mr Bertram: People are not so silly that you can continue to fool them.

Mr GORDON HILL: Did I hear the member for Moore speak intemperately?

Mr Crane: I said "Rubbish".

Mr GORDON HILL: In delivering his second reading speech, which was a very logical speech presented eloquently, the Minister made a number of statements and quoted a whole range of people from around the world, including Liberal Party leaders in Australia.

One person he did not quote is a person regarded by Liberal Party members and supporters in Australia as the father of Australia's Liberal Party. They revere him as being the greatest Prime Minister Australia has ever had. I refer to Sir Robert Gordon Menzies.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Who?

Mr GORDON HILL: I shall quote remarks he made about the Senate and its association with the House of Representatives. His remarks represent a general comment on upper Houses in Australia, and clearly can be related to the Legislative Council in Western Australia. This is what Bob Menzies said as reported in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* in 1968—

It would be a falsification of democracy if on any matter of Government policy approved by the House of Representatives the Senate could reverse the decision. If these propositions are right, as I am sure they are, a Senate Opposition whose party had just been completely defeated at a general election would be in command of the Government of the nation. This would be absurd as a denial of popular democracy.

I repeat: This would be absurd as a denial of popular democracy. Popular democracy is what the people oppose and, I presume, their colleagues in the Legislative Council, in the near future will be denying the people of Western Australia. Members opposite wish to deny the people an opportunity to make a decision on these matters.

Mr Crane: How old was he when he said that?

Mr GORDON HILL: Members opposite have said tonight that they wish to deny popular democracy to the people of this State.

That statement has been joined on more than one occasion by other Liberal Party leaders in Australia. One such statement which probably reflects the view of the Labor Party and all conservatives in Australia except those in WA is one made by another Federal Liberal leader (Mr Billy Snedden) on 20 March 1973, when he said in the House of Representatives—

Our purpose is to maintain as far as is practicable and fair the principles of one-vote-one-value. We wish to ensure that electoral legislation will reflect the opinion of the majority. If the electoral processes are manipulated to serve political interests of persons or parties, it would be a denial of democracy and a travesty of the electoral process.

As I said previously, many Liberal Party leaders throughout Australia have made similar comments. To his credit, the Liberal leader in Queensland has made similar statements recently. He has made electoral reform an issue in the Queensland State election to be held on 22 October. It seems that members opposite are suggesting that he is out of step and out of touch.

Mr Old: Of course he is.

Mr GORDON HILL: In fact, members opposite are out of step with other Liberal Party people in Australia. Members opposite are out on a limb. I suspect the bleatings from the member for Katanning-Roe coincide with those of Mr Bjelke-Petersen in Queensland. It certainly would not surprise me at all.

Mr Bryce: Votes for peanuts.

Mr GORDON HILL: We are talking about reflecting the interests of the majority. Both Billy Snedden and Bob Menzies have said that when talking about reflecting the interests of the majority. The Liberal Party and the conservatives in this State have to some extent done that on the question of referendums. The Opposition supports our view when it is applied to referendums. That is clear from the position of the Court Govern-

ment a few years ago when it decided that, in order to reduce the number of parliamentarians, a Government would have to go to the people with a referendum—not to increase the size of the Parliament, but only to reduce it. Members opposite say that that is perfectly acceptable. I remind members opposite that there is no weighting of votes in a referendum; a referendum is truly one-vote-one-value.

We are saying that, when this Bill is passed through the Legislative Council, we will go to a referendum to let the people decide on the matter. If members opposite think their system can be defended, if they think they can defend the status quo, they should try to defend it on the hustings. They should pass the Bill in the Legislative Council and let it go to a referendum. They should try to defend their system at that time. However, theirs is a crooked and corrupt system which cannot be defended.

Mr Crane: You like playing poker with a stacked deck.

Mr GORDON HILL: Some inane comments have been made by the Liberal Party since the last election and among the worst have been its comments on electoral reform. I was interested to read one remark made by the Leader of the Opposition, as reported in the 14 July edition of *The West Australian*, when he was commenting on the Opposition's proposal for a zonal weighting system for the Legislative Assembly. He said that before the proposals were adopted by the Liberal Party as policy, Liberal members would seek public views on them. Is the Opposition now saying it will consult the people of Western Australia before making policy? That certainly would be an interesting turn.

Therefore why does not the Opposition allow the public's views to be expressed on the ALP's and the Government's proposals to democratise the Legislative Council? Why is the Opposition willing to run away from that issue and say that it will seek opinions of electors when it comes to the zonal system of weighting of electorates? Yet, the Opposition is saying in this Chamber at least that it is not prepared to accept the decision of the people and it is not prepared to consult with the people by going to a referendum. Let it go to a referendum to let the people decide.

It is certainly an interesting turn of events, and it is inconsistent of the Opposition not to allow this Bill to pass through the Council and go to a referendum.

Mr Crane: Are you going to tell us the interesting points of this Bill?

Mr GORDON HILL: I think the member for Moore would find it interesting to listen to what his leader says.

On 16 July this year, the Leader of the Opposition said that our Premier's response to this so-called plan for a zonal system of election to the Legislative Assembly was twisting the proposal and trying to distort it in an effort to prevent informed public debate. The Government is suggesting that there is plenty of opportunity to have informed public debate, and the way to do this is to have it at the time of a referendum.

On the question of debate, it is worth looking at the comment made by one Liberal Party nonentity—one discredited member of the Liberal Party—when I challenged him to a public debate on this question. In one of our suburban newspapers he said—

The ALP is expressing one opinion to a relatively uninformed audience, and is trying to achieve an initial cheap and undeserved victory.

He went on to say—

In the campaign against the Legislative Council, the ALP are using the slogan "one-vote-one-value" but there is no accepted definition of this principle, and they have made no attempt to explain what the proposal really means.

For the edification of that member and other members opposite, I indicate that the proposal for a one-vote-one-value system simply means that each elector ought to have a vote and that each elector ought to have an equal vote. Each vote should be of roughly equal value. The member concerned made the comment that the Government was trying to stifle public discussion on this subject and was not prepared to allow open public debate. The Opposition's discredited leader, the former Premier of Western Australia, but now discredited and temporary Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Clarko: Who said he was discredited?

Mr GORDON HILL: He was discredited on 19 February; that is why the member is sitting over there.

Mr Clarko: How would you know? You think that you won the seat of Swan because of your skill. You won it because anyone with a monkey tag would win that seat in every election.

Mr GORDON HILL: The member for Karrinyup knows perfectly well that the people of Swan voted to support the Labor Party because of its policy and the discredited proposals put forward by the Liberal Party.

After challenging that member to a public debate, I said that if the member were concerned that the Labor Party was not prepared to debate this issue in an electorate and not prepared to get the public involved, let us keep the public informed and have a debate on it. I said I was prepared to organise the public debate. The member concerned came back with the following statement. He said—

Labor's fake reform campaign comes straight from the socialist left of the militant unions.

This is similar to the sort of nonsense we heard from the bleating member for Katanning-Roe—the friend of Bjelke Petersen—but we have come to accept that sort of diatribe from him. He continued—

In other words, the word "reform" is being used as a cover for yet another bid to destroy the solid democratic system we have, and put the bully boys in charge.

I suggested that we have a public debate in order that the people could decide whether the Liberal Party system is solid and democratic. The member ignored me; he did not want to be involved in a debate on this issue. Further on he said—

I'll cheerfully give Mr Hill all the debate he wants when Labor puts its so-called electoral reforms on the table in Parliament.

It is not possible to have such a debate unless it is public. I will tell members why in a moment. He suggested—

On what we've heard so far, the so-called reforms are simply a State version of a national plan that goes something like this:

The member mentioned that the Labor Party was concentrating control on the city that the Legislative Council is a House of Review, and that we are trying to destroy it.

He suggested that we were trying to carry this through, and centralise power in Canberra by abolishing the Senate. What nonsense! He did not try to defend the status quo at all. He talked about Hitler's Germany and suggested that we put our cards on the table and put the question to the voters of Western Australia. We have put our cards on the table and we have a chance to debate the subject in this Chamber, but we do not have the chance to debate it publicly in the electorates because the members of the Liberal Party will not do that—even the temporary leader of the Opposition will not debate it with the Premier and a backbench member, the member for West Province, Mr Oliver, will not debate it with me. I have issued that challenge to him, and I issue it again.

He has said that he will debate it with me when the legislation reaches the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I issue again that challenge for him to try to defend his system and suggest that we take the debate to the public.

In my view the Opposition is frightened of public opinion. The public spoke loud and clear on 19 February and on many other occasions. The clear indication is that the Opposition is frightened of public opinion. It is not prepared to let the people decide. An article in *The West Australian* newspaper stated that reform of the Legislative Council in this State will come about only with the support of the Liberal Party. Only if the Liberal and Country Parties want reform or want democracy in Western Australia can we have reform because this legislation requires its support in the Legislative Council. During the course of the election campaign it was stated in *The West Australian*, "The voice of the majority is stifled and democracy does not get a look in".

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: *The West Australian* newspaper has spoken; the leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland has spoken; a former Prime Minister of Australia (Mr Bob Menzies) has spoken in support of electoral reform. Leaders of the Liberal Party throughout Australia have supported the one-vote-one-value system. The Liberal Party in this State is clearly out of step with its counterparts in other States, and more importantly it is out of step with the views of the electors of Western Australia. It will be to that party's detriment, because it will find that if it continues to stay out of step on this issue, it will remain permanently in Opposition and I must say that I look forward to that.

We believe that the electors of Western Australia totally support this issue, even those people the Opposition purports to represent in the country. I know many Opposition members who purport to represent country electors. They live in the city and do not visit their electorates—so much for the representation of country voters.

The Leader of the National Country Party made a number of absurd statements about minority parties not having a say. He said that the Labor Party is concentrating its efforts on voting power in the metropolitan area. This would be to the detriment of the minority parties in Western Australia.

The fact is that the Leader of the National Country Party, who should be in the Chamber in order that he might at least absorb the facts but who is not interested, does not want to know the truth.

Mr O'Connor: That is an unfair statement. Your leader is not here and nor is the Minister who is handling the Bill.

Mr GORDON HILL: I note that the Leader of the Opposition has just entered the Chamber.

Mr O'Connor: I spend more time here than you do.

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: That is the lowest form of humour or wit!

The basic point of democracy is that the will of the people is reflected in the representation in the Parliament. That not only goes for the majority vote—meaning the majority of electors supporting one political party or that that majority will have a majority within the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council—but it means also that minority opinions are reflected in the Parliament. That will occur under the proposed system because it will take only 8-1/3 per cent of the vote to achieve a quota—about half the size of a quota for the Senate. As members know, we have minority representation in the Senate with parties such as the Australian Democrats and the National Party or the Country Party—I am not sure of the correct name because it is frequently changed. Minority parties have representation in the Senate and we propose a system that will have a quota of approximately half the size of that which applies in the Senate. Approximately 58 000 votes will be required in order to obtain a seat in the Legislative Council.

Mr Crane: No, we will not, because the Bill will not be passed.

Mr GORDON HILL: We will see about that.

Mr Brian Burke: That sums up the whole thing we are talking about.

Mr GORDON HILL: The Opposition is not interested in any democratic process, in allowing the people of Western Australia to have a say in their electoral system—is that what the Opposition is saying?

Mr Crane: They already have a say.

Mr GORDON HILL: They have a weighted vote, and the member for Moore knows that. At the next election we will wipe the smile from the face of the member for Moore. I will remind the electors of Moore of their member's comments tonight.

In a State-wide election large sections of votes can be scattered around the State and only 8-1/3 per cent of the votes are required in order to obtain a seat in the Legislative Council. I would suggest that this result could be achieved by the National Country Party.

At the 1983 Legislative Council election, the National Country Party obtained approximately 20 500 votes, and the National Party obtained about 20 300 votes. Those votes were obtained in only four provinces; so, over the entire State, those parties could easily obtain the necessary 8-1/3 per cent of the vote, or about 58 000 votes for a quota; indeed possibly, they would obtain two quotas. Everyone's vote will be of equal value; that is the nature of the system we are proposing tonight. That is the system under which we believe we should allow the people of Western Australia to vote. When the Legislative Council votes on this issue, that is what it should be considering: Whether it is big enough to take the matter to a referendum and allow the people to decide, and to attempt to defend the existing system—the status quo—in the electorate.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [9.01 p.m.]: I reject this proposition to emasculate the Legislative Council. Clearly, the legislation has only one fundamental purpose, which is to change the electoral system so as to give the Labor Party more political power. The aim of this Bill is to politically advantage the Labor Party and it is fundamentally important for everyone in Western Australia to realise that is its reason. There is no other reason for this legislation than to give more power to the Labor Party.

Mr Jamieson: Is there anything wrong with that?

Mr CLARKO: There is nothing wrong with a political party seeking to advantage itself as long as it does not use false argument. What is wrong with what has been coming from the Government benches in regard to this legislation, and what has appeared in the media, is the attempt by some people to assert that this is the only fair system we can have. I absolutely reject that proposition; anybody with an ounce of logic would question how we can say that a system which will provide proportional voting for the Legislative Council and a system based on single-member electorates for the lower House—which are diametrically opposed systems which will produce quite different results—in both cases will produce the best result. If the only fair and just system is the one-vote one-value system, as proposed for the Legislative Council, why is the Government not proposing that system for the Legislative Assembly?

It is amazing that the member for Helena should have the effrontery to talk about members being out of their seats when, only two minutes later, he is not in his seat.

I have never heard more nonsense than for the member for Helena to say that this Government

was elected with a mandate to put into effect its electoral reform package. That is patent nonsense. There would not be a single person who honestly would believe that. This Government was elected to provide jobs. It has taken away 1 000 jobs from the Civil Service, although I noted today that the Premier said his Government had created 865 jobs. The State is going downhill slowly under that system.

The Labor Party was elected to provide jobs and to improve the employment situation in this State, but what it has done is miniscule in the extreme and what gains have been achieved have been as a result of the wages freeze, which members opposite do not believe in, anyway.

Mr Bertram: We should get rid of the biggest QANGO of them all—the upper House.

Mr CLARKO: The member for Helena said that members of the Opposition did not know the meaning of the term "one-vote-one-value". Later, for his benefit, I will try very slowly to explain what it means. He also said as one of the fundamental elements of his speech that the principle of one-vote-one-value was in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that if such a principle were espoused by that declaration, we should embrace it.

When the legislation to provide for compulsory student unionism comes forward, I will be very interested to see how the member for Helena votes, because that principle is contrary to section 20(2) of the same declaration. We will see how consistent is the member for Helena on that occasion. I say now that he will vote for the legislation, despite the fact it is a direct contradiction of that declaration of human rights.

Mr Laurance: Surely he would not want to force anybody into an association.

Mr CLARKO: He also said—and he was quite wrong—that the principle was supported by Governments throughout the world. I would like the member to provide me with a list of the Governments throughout the world which employ proportional voting. Israel is one such country, but I ask the member for a list of other Governments.

Mr Gordon Hill: I am talking about one-vote-one-value.

Mr CLARKO: I will show the member quite clearly how we can have a system of one-vote-one-value which is not necessarily fair and which will not axiomatically produce a just result. I will give the example of an election which took place in Western Australia; the honourable member knows the occasion to which I refer.

In 1975, in the House of Representatives election, the Liberal Party in Western Australia gained 60 per cent of the vote and won nine out of 10 seats; the Labor Party received about 40 per cent of the vote, yet won only 10 per cent of the available seats. That was an election based on the one-vote-one-value system. So, what the honourable member is saying is nonsense.

Mr Bryce: That proves we are not trying to feather our nest. It contradicts your initial point. There is an absolute justness in the system.

Mr CLARKO: That is nonsense. All it proves is that we can have a one-vote-one-value system which in fact distorts the will of the people, which is what the member for Helena has been prattling on about. Everybody knows the theoretical argument that a party can win 49 per cent of the votes in every seat in the State, and not win any seats. That is possible in a mathematically exact one-vote-one-value system. I have given members the example. In 1975 and 1977, 40 per cent of the vote for Labor produced only 10 per cent of the seats in one case, and nine per cent of the seats in the other. That was a one-vote-one-value system which did not reflect the will of the people.

Mr Bryce: It did not produce an advantage for the Labor Party, either.

Mr CLARKO: That is the system the Government intends to use for the Legislative Assembly; yet, for its own nefarious reasons, it chooses to use a proportional system for the Legislative Council. What I am saying is that members opposite cannot stand on a democratic soapbox on this issue, because the examples I have given illustrate the complete fallacy of their position.

In the past the Labor Party advocated proportional voting. I must admit that more latterly in our period of Government, the member for Balcatta did introduce legislation supporting a proportional voting system. However, since I entered this Parliament in 1974, in the early years I never heard a single member of the Labor Party—parliamentary or otherwise—support proportional voting in this State.

The member for Helena referred to the South Australian system, and had the gall to hold up a former Labor leader as some sort of father of democracy. He was referring to the man who wore pink shorts into Parliament, and who now has his superannuation and is doing quite well in charge of tourism for the Victorian Labor Government. He is another of the representatives of the struggling working class. He is like the member for Fremantle, who is another member of the working class who attended a private school and is now trying to sink them.

Proportional voting is the core of this legislation. However, at the same time, we will have a diametrically opposed system in the Legislative Assembly.

Government members interjected.

Mr CLARKO: That is another example of the buffoon from Balga. He has been out of the Chamber for the last two hours and has only just chosen to come back. Why does he not use one of those "crying eyes" that he likes to use when somebody interjects on him? Let him have a little cry. He is as sterile as the top of his head.

What will be the result of this system for the Legislative Council? The intention is to reduce the number of councillors to 22. Without doubt, that will produce—

Mr Tonkin: Sterile as the top of what?

Mr CLARKO: —a sterile Parliament, a sterile Legislative Council, because what will almost certainly happen after the full Parliament has been elected after two terms is one of these four possible scenarios. I assume the independent parties—the National Country Party, and parties of that sort—will have no trouble obtaining the necessary 8-1/3 per cent and will win two seats.

I will give members four scenarios: The first is that the Legislative Council will end up with 12 Liberals, eight members of the Labor Party, and two members of minor parties. Secondly, the exact reverse could apply, where there were eight Liberals, 12 members of the Labor Party, and two members of the minor parties. Thirdly, and more likely, there would be 10 Liberals, 10 members of the Labor Party, and two members of the minor parties. Finally, there could be nine Liberals, 11 members of the Labor Party, and two members of the minor parties.

When the majority party elects a President, it will be left with a House in which it has a majority of between one and three. If it achieves the maximum electoral result, it will have a majority of three, but it would be more likely to be a majority of one or two members. Therefore, we would finish up most of the time with a hung Parliament, which is virtually what has happened in South Australia. In South Australia, the Liberals had 11 votes, and the Labor Party 10 votes. The Liberals decided to replace their President, and nominated Renfrey DeGaris to replace Arthur Whyte. However, Arthur Whyte decided to nominate for the position and the 10 Labor members voted for him; so, he is the President of the Legislative Council of South Australia and in my view, is a very fine man. That is the sort of situation members opposite propose to create in the Legislative Council, with this miserably low number of

22. Of course, the lower the number, the more likely it is to be an evenly divided House.

I note that the National Party must have exempted itself; its members are not here. The alternative to this situation is that control of this State will lie in their hands. So, two persons from the smallest party in the State in effect could control everything that happens. I assure members opposite that would be worse than 90 years of Liberal Government. Eventually, this Government will rue the day if it is successful in setting up a body based on these principles. I invite anybody, now or later, to suggest to me a break up in the membership of the Legislative Council different from the one I have described here tonight. I have given members a scenario in which the margin in favour of the major group in the Legislative Council would be so transitory, so small, so liable to any sort of whim of defection or illness, or merely of a member's being unable to get to the Parliament because of a transport failure or something of that nature, as to make the House almost unworkable. The majority party would be putting all its eggs into the baskets of one or two persons. That is what will be the fate of Western Australia, while it remains a bicameral system.

In addition, it is important to repeat what my Deputy Leader said; namely, that the Australian Labor Party platform on electoral matters states that when in Government, the party should first reform the State upper Houses and then chuck them out. This legislation is only a step in that direction.

Mr Bertram: What does your platform say on the matter?

Mr CLARKO: If the member for Balcatta can see through his smoke haze, he will realise that quite clearly, his party does not care at all about the Legislative Council.

Meanwhile, the Government is putting up this sort of dreadful thing.

Perhaps I have underestimated members opposite. Perhaps they are deliberately creating this 22-member House with the aim of its being deadlocked so that ultimately they can take steps to abolish it.

I have never heard more palpable nonsense than that of the member for Helena when he said that we should pass this legislation and let the people decide. We should *not* try to measure its value; we should not try to work out whether it is good, bad, or in between. We should not try to suggest changes to parts of it that may be inappropriate. We should simply sit here like rubber stamps and allow it to go to the people, for

them to decide. I have never heard anything sillier than that—from the member for Helena, anyway.

A great deal has been said about how this Bill is modelled on the Australian Senate system. The Australian Senate system is not all that marvellous, in my view. It tends to produce a situation in which the House is fairly evenly split between the two major parties, and it provides a birthday for the independents.

Mr Jamieson: Surely it is much better than the 33 : 3 that used to exist.

Mr CLARKO: The member for Welshpool would have the knowledge to correct me, but I think it was in 1942 or 1943 that the Senate had 36 members and an election was held for 18, but there was a by-election which meant 19 senators were actually elected; and if my memory serves me correctly, the Labor Party won all 19 seats. That became the genesis of the change.

Mr Jamieson: Evatt considered it was unfair that it should be loaded. He brought in this other system.

Mr CLARKO: Does the member for Welshpool not agree there have been problems in the Australian Senate because it has been evenly divided? The Democratic Labor Party was in there for quite a while, and at the moment the Australian Democrats hold the balance, although they do not seem to be able to take one line consistently. That is not a good situation. It does not enable the country to have clear-cut government if the Senate is in the hands of a minority.

Mr Jamieson: Of course, some people consider that everybody in Parliament should be an Independent; but heaven forbid that. I do not know how you would run a country like that.

Mr CLARKO: The Constitution of Australia requires the concurrence of a majority of voters and a majority of the States before it can be amended; so that is not one-vote-one-value. The core, the heart of the Australian political system—the Australian Constitution—is not changed on a system of one-vote-one-value. I do not believe psephologists from around the world would look at Australia and say that this is an undemocratic process.

For 30 years, the Government of Western Australia—maybe it is much longer than that, but David Black—

Mr O'Connor: The member for Helena has gone again.

Mr CLARKO: Gone again, has he? He was the chap who criticised our members for not being here. It is quite amazing.

Mr Bryce: David Black eventually was flushed out. On election night, he revealed his true objectivity. The fact is, he has no objectivity.

Mr CLARKO: The Deputy Premier did not think David Black was objective on election night?

Mr Bryce: Yes. He was flushed out properly—expressing his bitter disappointment at the election of the Government.

Mr CLARKO: I did not think he did.

Mr Bryce: Yes, he did—very effectively.

Mr CLARKO: I was sitting next to him, and I did not hear him express that opinion at all.

As the Deputy Premier is a former teacher, he will appreciate that the research department and the in-service education branch of the Education Department were in Havelock Street, side by side. One was in the big three-storey building built by the architects who built Dumas House; and next door to it was the very old house where the curriculum branch was established. I was in the research department for a while; and I used to go into the other office, and we used to have morning tea with David Black. I never knew him to be a Liberal.

Mr Bryce: Perhaps his prejudices have jelled over the years.

Mr CLARKO: Perhaps he has come to a better appreciation of things. I do not think the Deputy Premier is being fair to him.

David Black made the statement that, during the last 30 years of Government in Western Australia, the political party that formed the Government gained the majority of the votes. There has never been an example in recent years in Western Australia when the Government did not have the majority of the votes. Some people say that the system is bad, but it cannot be very bad when it provides a majority vote. Obviously it is a better system than the Federal system in which the ALP in Western Australia at one stage gained 40 per cent of the vote but won only 10 per cent of the seats.

One has to look around the world to find a nation that operates entirely on the system of the one-vote-one-value. I have said that Israel is an example of that; but it is the exception. It is very much in the minority. That system is totally inappropriate in a country which is large in area and diverse in population.

On the basis of what the Government has done, I take it that nobody in this Chamber believes in a totally proportional voting system. From what has been put in front of us, and from what I gather from the media, we will still have single districts

in the Legislative Assembly, so members opposite do not believe entirely in a proportional voting system. If they wanted exactitude of people voting, they would have to have proportional voting for both Chambers; and quite deliberately, the Government has not moved for that.

I wonder what people really think when they hear all this nonsense about the value of a vote. What is the value of a vote by a person in Nedlands who votes Labor, or a person who votes Liberal in Fremantle? A good electoral system provides the maximum contact between the electors and their representatives, and that is the system that we have in Western Australia. When we have a seat like Murchison-Eyre—I know some members opposite are super-critical of the fact that it only has 2 000 electors—and the electorate is about 400 000 square miles in area, or about the size of South Australia or South Africa—

Mr Jamieson: All but two per cent of the population there are on two roads.

Mr CLARKO: The Government is changing this to suit itself. If members opposite believe in one-vote-one-value, they should put a Bill through this House in the near future to bring in proportional voting for the lower House. I challenge the Government: It will not do that. It will bring in something else—a system which will produce the gross disparity which I pointed out in the Federal elections in 1975 and 1977 when it achieved 40 per cent of the vote and only nine per cent or 10 per cent of the seats. That is a hopeless system. If we had a system like that, we would have a bigger gap than the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, as he likes to call himself, was talking about when he referred to 27 per cent or 28 per cent of the vote being able to control the Legislative Council.

It has been said by political scientists that it would be quite inappropriate to try to divide the constituencies of the United Kingdom into 625 equally populated seats because that would break up towns and counties in such a way that they would destroy the community of interest which exists. As a result of that, in a system which aimed theoretically at equal electorates, they range from 39 000 constituents to 77 000 constituents. Certainly the people who live in the Orkneys and the Shetlands could not provide the same number of electors as in the more crowded south-eastern part of England. There is a significant difference between the number of people living on the isolated islands off the coast of Scotland and the people in the rest of the country.

It is true that in most countries of the world, allowance is made for distance and for community of interest.

Mr Bryce: On the basis of 17:1?

Mr CLARKO: That is a figure which just happens to come up. In the United Kingdom, the discrepancy used to be of the order of about 60:1; but with the move in population to the countryside, the disparity is not so great now.

There is no doubt in the mind of anyone on our side that if Murchison-Eyre suddenly had a huge uranium mine which the Government allowed to operate, and suddenly its population increased by 10 000, we would not suggest changing the boundaries because large numbers of people had moved into the area.

Generally, Federal systems are regarded as sound political systems. We would have no Australian federation if one-vote-one-value had been insisted upon at the Constitutional Conventions. The only way in which the Australian federation was formed was because the Senate was proposed as part of a bicameral system, to have exactly the same number of members for each State or colony, irrespective of its size.

Although the population of New South Wales is about 10 times that of Tasmania, New South Wales still has the same number of senators as Tasmania. In the lower House, when the Australian Federation was established, the system aimed at was a quasi one-vote-one-value system. In regard to Tasmania, the Constitution set down that it was always to have a minimum of five seats.

Mr Jamieson: And Western Australia.

Mr CLARKO: I give the example of Tasmania because it still applies there. It does not apply, as far as I know, in Western Australia!

If we consider the great federations of the world, we have to accept that Australia comes within that category. Others are the United States of America, Canada, and the Soviet Union. One of the two Houses in the Soviet Union has a system in which the Ukraine, which has something like 40 million people, and some of the parts in the Far East—the smallest one has 135 000 constituents—have exactly the same number of people in the House. If members look at those places, they will find that they do not have one-vote-one-value.

Mr Bertram: We have the Russian system here, where the Liberals are always in power.

Mr CLARKO: That may be a very good system! To be fair, it is essential, after every three

or four terms, that the Labor Party should come in so that the people appreciate us!

Mr Bertram: With the Liberals, it is one-party Government.

Mr CLARKO: The member can sit there in his regular smoke haze.

The next matter to which I wish to refer is, to some people, the most important political system in the world, the United Nations. I do not have the same feelings about it as members opposite; but it has a representative from China, with its 1 000 million people, and one from Australia, with its 15 million people. It has one representative from India with 500 million people, and one from Tuvalu, with 10 000 people, or something like that.

Mr Blaikie: Does the Government believe that is fair?

Mr CLARKO: I believe some members of the Government are great advocates of the United Nations. In addition to single representation from each country, the United Nations has a veto system by which one single country can say, "No" or "Nyet".

Mr Bryce: Have you been learning Russian? Does that make you suspect?

Mr CLARKO: I think it does.

Mr Bryce: You are quoting a lot of Russian examples.

Mr CLARKO: It seems to me the Deputy Premier is always rushin'—I mean, rushing in, opening his mouth. He would do better to sit there and be quiet.

If we want to consider this question of one-vote-one-value in a theoretical way, we could choose a small crowded island. I would not suggest we choose Singapore as having a democratic system, although some people say it is well governed. In fact, it indicates the contrast of a good Government in a poor system. That is uncommon.

Mr Jamieson: It is not a good Opposition.

Mr CLARKO: I think the one gentleman in the Opposition was arrested recently. He has just gone.

Mr Bryce: I was just there.

Mr CLARKO: The Minister obviously has been to Singapore on one of his trips. In any case, a member of the Opposition in Singapore got himself into a political problem and is no longer a member of Parliament. If we take a small island, say, an island off Malaysia which has Malaysians and Chinese with three electorates of 33 000 voters in each we will see what happens with a one-vote-one-value system. There could be 63 000

Chinese and 36 000 Malaysians. There could be a Chinatown of 33 000 Chinese people, another electorate of 18 000 Malaysians and 15 000 Chinese, and yet another with 18 000 Malaysians and 15 000 Chinese. Under a one-vote-one-value system the Malaysians would win two seats and the Chinese would win one. If we are to use theoretical models it is obvious that this system is not just. We could not say that the will of the people will be shown in direct proportion to the votes. If we consider a country like Cyprus where there are Greeks and Turks—

Mr P. J. Smith: You are talking about a situation in Western Australia at the moment with Malays and Chinese.

Mr CLARKO: Does the member object to their coming into this country?

Mr Bertram: Not at all.

Government members interjected.

Mr CLARKO: I do not think the member's point is relevant. I am trying to suggest that if we use a mathematical system we have inconsistencies and that would be with a system of one-vote-one-value. That is all I am trying to tell members opposite. I will go a step further to show how we could have systems which are unjust for other reasons. Countries try to overcome these problems. In Lebanon if the President is a Muslim the Vice President must be a Christian, and vice versa. That is an example of a system being worked out that does not have anything to do with one-vote-one-value. It is based on cultural or religious considerations.

It was wrong for the member for Helena to support the system of one-vote-one-value. We do not have it now and we should not have it, and I have pointed to all the things that are wrong with that system. Reference was made to geographic regional areas, and most countries do divide their electorates into regional areas. It is what we have had in Western Australia, but this Government proposes a dual system with the State taken as a whole for the upper House and a regional system for the lower House. No-one can say that one system is universally good and another is universally bad. That is the point I am trying to illustrate. In Fiji there are thousands and thousands of Indians who came into that country as indentured labourers, and they are now in greater numbers than the original occupants. The Fijians continue to have political control of Fiji, but is that wrong?

Mr Jamieson: It is very much wrong if you understand the system there.

Mr CLARKO: Under a one-vote-one-value system all sorts of things could happen. The Labor Party has used "rent-a-crowd" at demos. A

set of voters could be rented, and I have been told that in the past in Western Australia the people opposite have done that. Members opposite could pop over to Cocos Island to work out all sorts of skulduggery against the man with the dagger in his belt. The Chinese could send people to all parts of the world. I am sure that would not be difficult, considering the 1 000 million people it already has. We could all finish up with Chinese Governments. Do members think it would be just for the Indians in Fiji to take over Fiji?

Mr Davies: We don't have those circumstances here.

Mr Tonkin: You will talk about South Africa next.

Mr Bryce: South Africa is a good example of your theory.

Mr CLARKO: I have not at all referred to South Africa. The member for Helena said that his Government is trying to bring in something adopted by the rest of the world. South Africa does not have that sort of system.

Mr Bryce: That is a great distortion on your part. He never referred to the rest of the world.

Mr CLARKO: A one-vote-one-value system means that every electorate should have exactly the same number of electors. Members opposite would remember their good friend, Fred Daly. He made many humorous speeches and was a great success in the media. Members will remember his attempt to bring in by referendum in 1974—his aim was to do this by legislation—a system whereby each electorate had the same number of people. If a family came from Turkey it could have 10 children, which would be a total of 12 in the family, and most likely the family would live in a place like Carlton. In the outer suburbs such as Bruce, or a place similar, an Australian family would live with two children, a total of four. Under his system of one-vote-one-value there would have been three times as many electorates for the Turks with 10 children in each family as for the Australians, with two children in each family. Fortunately the people of Australia rejected that system.

A Government member: The children wouldn't have votes so you couldn't call it one-vote-one-value.

Mr CLARKO: It was distorted by the populations.

Mr Tonkin: It was a crooked system.

Mr P. J. Smith: When people come to your office do you ask them whether they are on the roll, and if they are not on the roll do you tell them to go away?

Mr CLARKO: If a Turk came to my office I would help him as I would anyone else. I would even try to help the member, which shows just how liberal I am. However, I would not reckon that the Turk would be entitled to a 3:1 advantage over other citizens of Australia. The position might be different if his grandfather had come to Australia. Eventually the family would have two children each.

Several members interjected.

Mr CLARKO: If the member for Bunbury went to Karratha on holidays and someone sat down next to him and said that he had a problem, would the member help him? Of course he would. I do not think the member will get anywhere by asking if I would help anyone who came to my office. I was talking about the weaknesses of one-vote-one-value. A system of mathematical exactitude produces nothing. The Labor Party's suggestion that we should have proportional representation in the Legislative Council was designed to favour the Labor Party. In a House of 22 members the numbers would be divided approximately equally with 10 members to each major party and two Independents. That system would cause nothing but problems and eventually the Labor Party would say those problems were reasons for abolishing the Legislative Council.

Reference was made to the decision by US Chief Justice Warren in the 1960s in a case called *Baker v. Carr*. Members of the Labor Party generally use that case to defend an argument that in the United States electors must have one-vote-one-value. In fact, it is very difficult to find a common system in the United States. It is often said that the only generalisation that can be made about the United States electoral system is that it cannot be generalised. That is true of the many political processes in that country.

Following the decision by Chief Justice Warren one of the State Legislatures, which apparently had the power to appoint commissioners to draw up Federal boundaries, produced an electorate which was shaped, according to the decision of a subsequent court, like a dachshund. When the matter went to court the court said that it was interested only in the equality of numbers and that it did not believe there was a need for an element of community interest. The Republican committee in that New York congressional district was allowed to draw an electorate to suit Republican needs.

Mr Jamieson: The original gerrymander was drawn like that. There wasn't a discrepancy in numbers, there was a discrepancy in boundaries.

Mr CLARKO: The original gerrymander was likened to a salamander. It is quite a while ago that Governor Gerry brought about the first gerrymander. The situation to which I have referred occurred in the last 10 years or so in which one-vote-one-value was followed for political purposes. The judge said that was okay because the numbers were right, but clearly the system was unfair. With one-vote-one-value we will have "dachshundmanders".

Mr Tonkin: We are not suggesting that.

Mr CLARKO: A later Supreme Court decision in the US said that the weighting in certain US States in certain circumstances was allowable. It was not good enough for the member for Helena, who amazingly has returned to his seat, to use just one US case as an example. I have tried to show that the system of one-vote-one-value does not work in theory and that it is rarely applied. Community interests are much more important; they are a better way to decide how the nation should be divided into electorates.

Mr Jamieson: That is still in the Bill.

Mr CLARKO: I have pointed out that other nations do not universally provide for one-vote-one-value and that other nations do not adopt that system. The United Nations does not accept it and the 1965 United Kingdom Act, which was a major work in the area of redistribution and so on, made it clear that without question we must take into account community economic, social, and regional interests in setting boundaries. It also asserted that we must take account of the means of communication and travel, density and sparsity of population, and remoteness and distances. That Act has been regarded by people interested in political systems as of considerable importance. For the life of me I cannot accept the argument put in relation to this measure that by giving each member of the Legislative Council extra offices around the State we would solve the problem of representation. As the member for Bunbury has said, constituents want to talk to their member of Parliament. If they had the choice they would rather talk by phone than write a letter, but above all would rather sit in his or her office and talk to the member.

I am unimpressed with the system whereby if a person vacates his seat in the Legislative Council that seat goes to the person who followed the person elected, provided that he belongs to the same political party. I do not believe that is an appropriate way of appointing another member. Trades Hall and our State council will control the selection of those people who become members of the Legislative Council under the system the Govern-

ment proposes. No doubt exists that what are crudely called "party hacks" will take the positions on both sides of the House. Those 20 seats for the Labor and Liberal Parties will go to people as rewards for party services and those people will not be known to the residents of Kununurra or Esperance.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [9.47 p.m.]: I also wish to raise my objections to this legislation. My concern is that this is a direct attack on country people.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Nonsense!

Mr LAURANCE: If the Labor Government has its way members will owe responsibility more to parties than to people. This legislation contains many provisions—nine in all—and it amends four other Acts. It all boils down to changing the Legislative Council according to the wishes of the ALP. It is difficult to discuss this measure, as it was with an electoral Bill we discussed previously, without canvassing a wide range of issues included in the ALP's package of measures. The Minister canvassed these issues in his second reading speech and referred in some detail to one-vote-one-value.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr LAURANCE: This is an example to the people of the State of the importance Government members attach to this legislation. It is their legislation and we see the callous and disinterested way in which the Government is bringing legislation to the Chamber. It is important legislation and, if successful, will bring major changes to the system of parliamentary democracy in this State. We have just had an example of the Government's attitude towards this legislation. It is a disgrace and I am sure the people of Western Australia, when they have an opportunity, will demonstrate that they believe it is a disgrace.

I had to chuckle earlier when one of the Government members said the matter should go to the people because I believe that is an opportunity we on this side would appreciate. Country people would use that opportunity to register the fact that the Government does not have a mandate for these changes.

Mr Tonkin: They will vote for the Bill.

Mr LAURANCE: I am registering my protest at the Bill.

Mr Tonkin: Give the people a chance to vote.

Mr LAURANCE: I am elected to represent their interests here, but given an opportunity, I am sure country people will register a protest at the fact that the ALP wants to disfranchise them.

Mr Bryce: You would have gone quite well in Hitler's Cabinet.

Mr O'Connor: You would have gone quite well as Hitler.

Mr LAURANCE: I am concerned about the loss of representation which this measure will cause for country people.

I want to speak mainly about the north of the State for two reasons. The first is that I represent an electorate in this House which is north of the 26th parallel. It is one of the very large north-west electorates which also forms part of Lower North Province—an area constantly mentioned by members of the Government when talking about weighting of votes or disproportionate weighting of votes.

The north is where the isolation factor is the greatest and many of the comments made by the Minister when introducing the Bill referred to northern electorates or remote electorates, or electorates like mine of Gascoyne. It is obvious that many of the comments made by the Minister simply are not true. They do not reflect the situation pertaining in this State. The principle of weighted electorates is not undemocratic. When one looks at the history of voting in this State one sees that people have had an opportunity to vote any way they wished. They have had an opportunity to return members of both major political parties. It is interesting that people in remote areas often have returned on the same day, at the same election, members of one political party in the Assembly, and of another political party in the Council.

I think those people value their representation and appreciate and understand the differences in what they are voting for. They do not all vote the same way and for the same party for both Houses. They have expressed a desire on many occasions to support different political parties for the two Houses of Parliament. That demonstrates in some way that they are perhaps hedging their bet about giving one political party control of both Houses of Parliament.

I have defended before the democratic system in this country and I intend to do so again at every opportunity. When electoral changes are proposed by this Government I will defend the existing system because I believe it gives adequate representation to the remote areas of this State. I have already pointed out in this session that the number of members representing remote areas has declined as a proportion of the total number of members of Parliament. Country people accept that as their numbers decline and metropolitan area numbers increase so will metropolitan rep-

resentation increase. That has happened and I do not dispute that at all. But when a wholesale change is made which will take away the remaining representation of people in the north of the State I am very much opposed to it, and I would be surprised if some other members opposite did not feel the same way. If they represent the interests of their people they should want to see at least the same representation retained in terms of the total numbers of members. I believe there is a good case for strengthening the number of members from remote areas.

No-one is better able than the member who preceded me to talk about theoretical models and the history of parliamentary democracy around the world. He gave a lot of examples and models to demonstrate that many systems and countries do not have a one-vote-one-value system. When one looks at the system in this country and that in Britain and Canada one sees that those countries have had tremendous parliamentary success in terms of democracy and the way of life they enjoy.

That has been proven many times by the way those countries have attracted people from other parts of the world. Our system has attracted those people as well. They do not decry our system; they vote with their feet by joining the system. It cannot be all that bad. As my colleague pointed out, many of the systems, particularly in countries with an enviable way of life such as Canada, Britain, and Australia, give a weighting of votes to remote areas. The result is a system which has become the envy of the world. The disparity in electorates in Canada and Britain is greater than that in this State.

The democratic rights and political stability provided to our people is second to none in the world. Our system offers the freedom to read, write, speak out, worship, and vote by secret ballot—although that is a little in danger under one provision of this Bill—and the right to protest. One sees they are all enshrined in our system of parliamentary democracy. It gives adequate representation to remote areas and is envied by many other parts of the world. The democratic rights I have outlined are not available in socialist countries. We should think long and hard before making wholesale changes to the system. Many aspects of our system are admirable and enviable and do not apply elsewhere.

The Minister in introducing this Bill talked about the Hon. John Tonkin, a previous Labor Premier, and said he was respected and in many ways revered. The Minister also referred to a former Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Robert Gordon Menzies. I will quote as the Minister did

from a respected and long-standing member of this House, the Hon. John Tonkin. He is on record in *Hansard* in 1965, when the Parliament was discussing electoral change and talking about a weighting factor, as saying—

I do not quarrel with that basis of representation in Western Australia,—

He was talking about the weighting of country areas. To continue—

—because this is a very vast State; the people in the outback have communication difficulties; their community of interest is different; and therefore I have no objection to their having a louder voice in the Government of the country than the person in the metropolitan area.

That former Premier and Leader of the Labor Party agreed that we should have some weighting because of the geography and unique demography of the State. He said he had no quarrel with that. I believe many fair minded people would see it exactly the way John Tonkin did then and as I presume he sees it today.

The Minister in introducing the Bill tried to overcome the problem to which the Hon. John Tonkin referred—the community of interest, remoteness and difficulties of communication—by saying that things have changed and communications, roads, and transport have improved, and that modern technology is more available to those people. That is all relative. The conditions experienced by people in the metropolitan area have improved vastly in recent times. People in outback areas are disadvantaged every bit as much today as in the past because of the tremendous improvements and breakthroughs available in the metropolitan area. The breakthroughs for which country people have been waiting for many years are still coming.

In the last day or two STD and ISD dialling have been extended to the Kimberley area. That is a magnificent breakthrough, as the member for Kimberley would appreciate. It has been a long time in coming but it is not true to say that these people are enjoying much better facilities in comparison with their city counterparts. They are not.

Many times we have heard talk about weighting—that one person's vote is worth 10 or 15 times more than the vote of another. I indicated earlier that I wanted to talk about my electorate because it is typical of such situations, typical of the people who will be disfranchised and who will lose representation because of the situation before us.

Mr I. F. Taylor: It would be no loss to lose you.

Mr LAURANCE: Let us talk about the telephone situation. If a person in the metropolitan area wants to telephone his local member of Parliament it costs 12c or 13c and he can speak for as long as he likes. If a person from Gascoyne Junction wants to ring my electorate office in Carnarvon, he must do so through the manual exchange and it costs \$1.30 for three minutes. So it costs 10 times more for a person to exercise his normal right to contact his member of Parliament. That situation is improving, and, to the credit of Telecom, from 1 October it is introducing a system which will be known as country-wide calling. This will greatly improve the local facilities for people in remote areas of the State. Such facilities are not available today, but they are gradually becoming available to country people. To try to point out that country people have had tremendous improvements in their facilities with modern technology and communications and that therefore they do not have any need for a greater weight of representation today is incorrect.

There have been improvements in the ability of the representatives of remote areas to get around their electorates. Once again, I believe the improvement is comparative. It is still difficult and costly for country and north-west members to move around their electorates, particularly to get into outback places. I have just spent the last few days travelling to two remote areas in the Murchison Shire and Gascoyne. This is possible only with the advent of the electorate allowance for travel and charter rights. Even then it was only possible because one of my Legislative Council colleagues happens to have a private pilot's licence so we were able to share the expense of chartering a plane. Luckily I was game enough to fly with him as the pilot—this is not always the case with my parliamentary colleagues. I had confidence in him and we were able to get to remote parts of the area. However, it makes the point that these areas are still very remote and it is only with a great deal of time and effort that the people in these areas can see their member of Parliament. Usually it would require a very lengthy trip to Carnarvon or an expensive phone call to my electorate office for these people to contact me. So these sorts of things must be considered.

In any system of government, the geography of the State must be considered. Also, any Government has the responsibility of distributing the funds it raises through taxes and charges from its taxpayers and constituents. We must have some consideration for the source of the funds. I have had this argument with members opposite many times in my 9½ years in this Parliament. It is said

that dollars do not count but people do. I say that Governments have a responsibility to provide facilities. They must spend money to provide those facilities and they must have some recognition of where those funds come from. The remote and very sparsely populated areas of the State provide a great deal of its wealth.

This point was well made by the member for Katanning-Roe in respect of the agricultural areas of the State. Just as the agricultural industry provides a tremendous amount of the wealth that the Government has to spend, so too do the mining areas.

Mr Bridge: And the pastoral areas.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, and the pastoral areas of the State. Those two particular industries—mining and pastoral—in terms of the overall population of the State, employ a very small percentage compared with the contribution they make to the economy. Some weighting must be given because of that. In this House the weighting has diminished, and yet those industries still provide a tremendous amount of the economic well-being of the State and any parliamentary system ought to acknowledge that.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Would you say those industries have any less influence now on what happens in this State?

Mr LAURANCE: No, but some acknowledgement must be given to them.

Mr I. F. Taylor: It rather weakens your argument about the number of representatives.

Mr LAURANCE: No, we are talking about the people who work in that industry and their representation.

Mr I. F. Taylor: I was talking about them and their representation, and you say it has not altered.

Mr LAURANCE: I must have misunderstood the member's interjection. Currently the northern area of the State is represented by eight members out of a total of 89 in both Houses of Parliament. That means that less than 10 per cent of the members of the two Houses of Parliament represent an area which covers about 85 per cent of the State.

That is a very small number of representatives for a vast area—a very vast area in terms of this State or in terms of the world. It is the major portion of Western Australia, and a tremendous amount of wealth is produced in that 85 per cent of the State, when we consider mining royalties, personal income tax, and export earnings.

Mr Jamieson: Less than 25 per cent of the area you are talking about produces that wealth.

Mr LAURANCE: Sure, but I am saying that all that area is represented by less than 10 per cent of the members of Parliament. That is a very small weighting in terms of the overall number of members of Parliament.

Mr Jamieson: You would not get many votes out around Lake Disappointment, would you?

Mr LAURANCE: No, there are not even many voters at Useless Loop, but the ones who are there are important and they should not be removed.

Mr I. F. Taylor: They are not being removed.

Mr LAURANCE: They are. Probably there is a case for additional representation in the north of the State and in fact, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition outlined the package of measures that the Opposition has put forward to embrace the idea that we should take account of the growth in the north of the State in terms of its numbers, and also in terms of its contribution to the economy.

As I said, less than 10 per cent of the members of our two Houses of Parliament represent the north-west and Murchison—an area covering approximately 85 per cent of the State. We should have some nexus so that at least 10 per cent of the total number of members are representatives of that area, and an additional north-west seat would bring about a fairer situation. One could not get anyone to argue against the proposition that 10 per cent of the members of Parliament should cater for 85 per cent of the land area.

Mrs Buchanan interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: Would the member for Pilbara support it?

Mr Jamieson: It is a better scheme than you have got.

Mr LAURANCE: Members opposite are in Government now, and I am asking would they support a proposition which would give Kimberley—

Mr Jamieson: What happened in the Kimberley area is very likely to happen in others.

Mr LAURANCE: It would not happen under the proposal the Government published. Under the proposal of one-vote-one-value, two seats are shown for the north of the State.

Mr Jamieson: No.

Mr Wilson: You have got it wrong again.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: These figures were published, and I did not see a refutation from the leader of members opposite. If we eventually follow the proposals as indicated by the Minister who introduced the Bill, there would be two members from the north of the State.

Mr Jamieson: No, you have got it entirely wrong.

Mr LAURANCE: There would be two members for the north of the State. I say there should be more representation, so I think we have a "goer" here if members opposite will give that commitment.

Mr I. F. Taylor: How many electors do you say live there?

Mr Tonkin: Why did you not do something when you were in Government?

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the member should address the Chair.

Mr LAURANCE: At your direction I am happy to do that, Sir. The people in the north-west could quote the old American saying: There should be no taxation without representation. That is exactly the situation we are coming to.

Mr Jamieson: No representation without population, either.

Mr Brian Burke: Dead right!

Mr LAURANCE: That is not quite the case I have been making. I am sorry the member overlooked my earlier remarks.

Mr Jamieson: I am saying that Lake Disappointment should not be represented in this House.

Mr LAURANCE: I will come back to the member's point in a moment.

Mr Jamieson: Nobody lives there.

Mr LAURANCE: We must have regard also to the fact that this vast area is represented by one solitary member in the Federal Parliament.

Mr I. F. Taylor: And an excellent member he is, too.

Mr LAURANCE: It is not very much representation in terms of the importance of this area to the economy of the nation.

If the Labor Party were given its way in this State with this measure and others it is proposing, it would be very much in the interest of people in the north of the State to look elsewhere for their representation. They would get a better deal from Darwin than from Perth.

The SPEAKER: I remind the person in the gallery that this is not a refectory or a dining room.

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I do not know whether I should have brought an umbrella!

While we are discussing what we should do in the future, I would like to take this opportunity to go through the history of the representation of the north-west because of its importance.

Mr Jamieson: How far are you going back?

Mr LAURANCE: A long way—the member will see.

Mr Jamieson: You would need to.

Mr LAURANCE: The Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1893 provided for 33 districts for the Legislative Assembly. In the north of the State there were the following seats: East Kimberley, West Kimberley, Roebourne, De Grey, Pilbara, Ashburton, Gascoyne, Murchison, and Nannine. I would like to refer to Nannine in particular because the honourable member mentioned Lake Disappointment—I guess today there are as many electors at Lake Disappointment as there are at Nannine, although there are many temporary residents at Nannine. At that time nine members out of a total of 33 represented the north-west and the Murchison.

Mr Jamieson: Four of those seats had fewer than 50 electors in each of them.

Mr LAURANCE: Sure, but I am saying that was a total of nine out of 33 seats; something like a quarter of the seats. In the 1929 redistribution, that was reduced to six members. The seats at that time were East Kimberley, Mt. Magnet, Murchison, Pilbara, Gascoyne, and Roebourne.

It lasted that way until the Electoral Districts Act was introduced in 1947. That Act reduced the number of members in that area from six to four and we reached the situation which pertains today in the Legislative Assembly where four members come from the remote areas of the State.

Mr Cowan: This Bill refers to the Legislative Council, not to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr LAURANCE: I do not think the member was here, but at the beginning of my remarks—

Mr Cowan: I was here.

Mr LAURANCE:—I indicated I would be talking about the north-west part of the State.

Mr Cowan: I just wanted to remind you that this Bill relates to the Legislative Council; it does not relate to the Legislative Assembly and you should remember that when you talk about the Bill.

Mr LAURANCE: If the member reads the Minister's second reading speech, he will find that much of it related to one-vote-one-value and the other measures which it is proposed to introduce when this measure is passed. If the Labor Party succeeds with the measure before us, that particular area of the State will not have any direct representation in the Council. The Assembly area representation would be halved, taking it from four seats to two seats, and if one combines the effects of the measures, one will see that virtually

all the northern areas of the State would be disfranchised by the legislation proposed by the Labor Party.

There is no point in saying that the members who are elected under the system allowed for in this Bill would have any allegiance to those particular areas; in fact, the system would not allow it. The system would demand that the people have allegiance to such organisations as the State Executive of the ALP and the Trades and Labor Council at Trades Hall, because those people who have curried favour in the metropolitan area particularly will be the ones who get on the ALP ticket. A similar situation will pertain in relation to the Liberal Party. Those people who have the most sway with the State Executive of the Liberal Party will be on the list for my political party.

Mr Barnett: What happens now?

Mr LAURANCE: Quite the reverse happens now.

Mr Jamieson interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: If we have proportional representation, we will not have representatives from the northern areas of the State involved in the selection process.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You had better have another look at the way your party elects its people, because that will not be the case for the Australian Labor Party.

Mr LAURANCE: Therefore, the people selecting the team will not be from the northern areas of the State. Representatives will be metropolitan based and the people in the north will not have an effective voice.

Mr I. F. Taylor: You should take a leaf out of our book if you want your system to work.

Mr LAURANCE: People in the north will not have an effective voice and effectively they will be disfranchised. The people who are elected will not be answerable to the electorate; they will be answerable only to the party machine and the system and they will have no allegiance to country areas.

Let us look at the erroneous arguments advanced by the Minister when he introduced the Bill. He talked about the property provisions which prevailed in the Legislative Council voting system for many years. He referred also to voluntary voting for the Council. I point out that Liberal and Country Party Governments removed those provisions and introduced reforms. Therefore, it can be seen that changes have occurred in the Legislative Council and reforms have been made. They have been brought about by the very Liberal Governments the ALP is attacking.

I shall refer to a statement made by the Minister at page 693 of *Hansard*. When introducing the Bill the Minister said—

It is no accident that the majority of the people inhabiting those areas—

He was talking about the remote areas. To continue—

—vote for the conservatives”.

He went on to say—

By creating seats with tiny enrolments in areas where its support is strong, the Liberal Party has made the rules to suit itself”.

The Minister is wrong in both respects because the conservatives have not had a stranglehold on the seats about which he is talking and, in particular, on the ones to which I have referred in my speech, such as Gascoyne and Lower North Province, because Gascoyne is part of Lower North Province.

The Liberal Party did not create those seats in order to maintain conservative support. In fact, history proves just how wrong the Minister was. If members look at Lower North Province, for instance, and go back 20-odd years, they will see it was the smallest of the Legislative Council provinces, as the Minister would be well aware.

In the early 1960s, Lower North Province was won by Mr David Dellar from Kalgoorlie. He held the seat for one term of six years. He was replaced by Mr George Brand, a Liberal member, who held the seat for six years. The seat was then won by a Labor member, Mr Stan Dellar—I shall call him Mr Dellar junior because he was the son of Mr David Dellar. He held the seat for six years. It was then won by another Liberal, the Hon. Norman Moore, who has held the seat to this day.

That seat see-sawed in four elections between Labor, Liberal, Labor, and Liberal. How can the Minister say it is no accident the majority of people in these areas vote conservative and that the Liberal Party, by creating seats with such tiny enrolments in areas where its support is strong, has made the rules to suit itself? History shows the Minister is quite wrong.

Mr Gordon Hill: Look at Darling Range and Kalamunda.

Mr LAURANCE: If members look at the other side of Lower North Province—I have talked about one line of the two province members and I ask them to turn to the other stream—they will see Mr Heenan, for the Labor Party, held the seat for 32 years before it was won by my father-in-law, Mr George Berry, who held the seat for 12 years. The sitting member is Mr

Lockyer, a Liberal member, who has held the seat for three years. It cannot be said the conservatives in this State set up a seat which was strong for the conservatives when a Labor member held it for 32 consecutive years. That is another distortion by the Minister.

The Minister referred to the men who “cooked up these grotesque distortions of enrolments”. One of the small seats about which the Minister was talking was Gascoyne, which is my seat. The boundaries of Gascoyne were set in 1890 and they have not been changed since.

I have pointed out previously in this House that two Labor members—members who represented the area well and were an adornment to the ALP—represented that seat for 39 years from 1933 to 1974. In that period of 41 years, for a period of only 13 months in the middle, those two members did not represent the seat prior to my winning it. Therefore, for nearly 40 years two Labor members represented that seat.

It is interesting to note that, from 1890 until today, there have been only 10 members for Gascoyne. The majority of them have been conservative members, but in fact the Labor members who have held the seat have done so for far more than half that time. There have been fewer Labor members, but they have held the seat for longer than have conservative members.

The Minister talked about grotesque distortions and referred to some of the seats which have small enrolments today; however, when one looks at the history of the situation, one sees it has not been cooked up or gerrymandered by the conservatives of this State. In many cases, the seats frequently have been held by Labor members on more occasions than they have been held by Liberal members.

When one looks at the situation today, one sees circumstances are changing and some of the upper House seats are held by the Labor Party. Until recently, they were all held by the Liberal Party. People have expressed the point of view that on some occasions they will vote for the Labor Party and on other occasions they will vote for the Liberal Party. To make the Minister's statement even more incorrect, I can demonstrate occasions on which, on the same day, in those electorates, members have been returned successfully for the Labor Party in the Legislative Assembly and for the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council, which demonstrates those people have independent minds; they know what they are doing and they vote according to their wishes for both Houses of Parliament, so their votes do count.

Mr Tonkin: Over 51 per cent gave us seven seats and 41 per cent gave you nine seats.

Mr LAURANCE: The Government wants everybody to represent the metropolitan area and not the remote areas. It wants to disfranchise the remote areas, because the Minister says grotesque distortions exist up there which are to the advantage of the conservatives. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

In a fair electoral system, both Houses of Parliament should be looking at increased, not decreased, representation in the north. The effect of this legislation would be that northern communities would have no hope of electing their representatives. It is stupid for the Minister to say that politicians who specialise in baby kissing will have a hard time. I shall quote from *Hansard*—

Mr Tonkin: Don't bother to look it up. I said that.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister said that politicians who specialise in baby kissing will have a hard time of it. In that statement the Minister is criticising members elected by people in remote areas—members who have a direct link with those areas. If those members represent them as wholeheartedly as they can and gain their support, they will continue to be elected. In that statement, the Minister is criticising that and saying that instead of kissing babies and having a direct involvement with the electors, he advocates a system where people will kowtow to the State Executive of the ALP and smooch up to Trades Hall so that they will keep their names on the list of the ALP and get themselves re-elected to the Legislative Council. That is what will happen if the Minister is successful and has his way.

How will that help the people of Halls Creek and those in other remote areas of the State, such as Gascoyne Junction and Mt. Magnet? That will not improve their representation in this Parliament. It can only have the effect of taking away their representation. They will be lucky if they see their members. They certainly will not see them when the time comes for them to be re-endorsed, because they will be busy in the metropolitan area making sure they get to the people who make the decisions.

The whole system will be based in the metropolitan area and not in the northern areas of the State which do so much to add to the economic wealth of Western Australia. If country people get a member to voice their disapproval of this measure, that member will do so very strongly indeed.

Mr I. F. Taylor: That is exactly what you aren't going to do.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: When members opposite start canvassing on this issue—when they start promoting it in the media as they intend to do from today—they will find that the people already representing the ALP will have to start worrying about their seats, because once what the ALP has in store for them becomes known, members opposite will find this measure is very counter-productive. Indeed, the mandate some members opposite claim to have will turn very sour on those who represent the northern and remote areas of the State.

Mr Gordon Hill: Let us have a referendum.

Mr LAURANCE: Whether members opposite have a mandate—they may have a mandate for the metropolitan area, I am not sure about that—country people guard their representation in this place very carefully indeed and they know what is intended by the ALP in this State.

Mr Jamieson: Politicians guard their representation very well, too!

Mr LAURANCE: All politicians do that. However, country people understand that and they will be looking to see how their members perform and whether they toe the line on this; whether they will go along with the ALP's policy of disfranchising them, or whether they will have an independent voice.

These mining and pastoral areas have always been very independent. They are made up of independent people; only independent people can survive in these parts of the State. That is why they understand what is involved in this legislation and the other measures which surround it.

Country people will be very interested to see how members justify their stance if they vote for this measure. They will be called to account by the people they represent. I hope that will start immediately, but, if not, it will occur in the near future. Members will have to start accounting to the people they represent as to why they are selling out the northern interests of this State; why they are giving away the direct representation the people in the north of this State deserve; and why they are opting instead for a system which will be purely metropolitan based.

Nine other aspects of the Bill have been referred to by other speakers, and I do not agree with any of those aspects. I am strongly opposed to optional preferential voting systems. Even in the debate that has ensued, it has been shown that the Minister has not really thought through all the ramifications of this system of voting. For instance, he did not understand that it jeopardises

the secret ballot provisions to which we have always adhered.

Mr Tonkin: Absolute rubbish!

Mr LAURANCE: Markings can appear on a ballot paper, yet it can still be a valid vote. It will be very difficult for a person who does not cast a valid vote as we understand a valid vote under our present legislation, and it will be very difficult for the returning officer to understand the intention of that voter.

Mr Tonkin: Then it is invalid.

Mr LAURANCE: Then why bring in this legislation?

Mr Tonkin: If the intention is clear, the vote is valid.

Mr LAURANCE: Another complementary measure before the Parliament deals with super-annuation. The Labor Party has misjudged the mood of the electorate on this matter because the public of this State do not feel strongly enough about this issue to want to buy off or to approve the Labor Party's buying off these Legislative Council members. Even the Labor Party members of the Legislative Council will be bought off in order that they might go quietly and get out. The Labor Party in Queensland did exactly the same thing 60 years ago. In 1922, the Queensland ALP agreed to remove the Legislative Council members of that State, and the people of Queensland are still paying for those members.

I feel very strongly about this issue. There are many things I could have said about what this measure will do in the metropolitan area; but I want to represent the people in the remote and northern parts of this State. Therefore, I oppose the Bill.

MR I. F. TAYLOR (Kalgoorlie) [10.32 p.m.]: The conservatives opposite do so resist change. Why is it that they must be dragged kicking and screaming into the latter part of the twentieth century in all matters, not just matters of electoral reform? Why is it also that members such as the member for Gascoyne and the member for Katanning-Roe, and other members opposite who represent country people, think they have a monopoly on understanding and knowledge of what country people want and what country people desire? I do not believe they do.

The truth is that the Australian Labor Party represents some 120 000 country people, whereas the Country Party and the Liberal Party represent only some 80 000. We are the ones—not members opposite—who have a greater understanding of country people and what they want.

Mr Old: You would not have a clue.

Mr I. F. TAYLOR: Just over a decade ago, Australia echoed to a slogan of, "It's time", and that slogan is very appropriate to this legislation. It is time that democracy dawned on Western Australia; it is time that the Legislative Council in this Parliament represented the will of the people of Western Australia; after 90 years, it is time that the people of Western Australia decided they should have the Legislative Council they want and not the Legislative Council imposed on them by 41 consecutive conservative majorities in that Council; and it is time that the people of Western Australia had a true and democratic say in the way this State is run and not be tied by the hidebound conservatism of the Legislative Council as it has operated over the past 90 years.

Never have we heard as we have tonight, from an Opposition that is so afraid of change, an Opposition that is so afraid to see that democracy can work and will work given the opportunity, and an Opposition that is so afraid to let the people of Western Australia have the opportunity to go to a referendum to put their point of view on how this State should be run in a democratic and just manner.

It sickens me to hear members such as the member for Katanning-Roe and the member for Gascoyne trying to create divisions between country and city people. That is easy, but puerile, politics. Anyone can say that there are divisions in our community, and anyone can work on those divisions. That is easy politics, and all of us in this Parliament and in Parliaments in Australia know it is very easy to divide people in that manner. However, it is much more difficult to say to people that country and city people should work together to make this State great. Representing a mining region as I do, I know full well that the people of my electorate realise that we are as dependent on city people as they are dependent on us. I know, for instance, that Western Mining Corporation, the major employer in the eastern goldfields, has its major office in this State in Perth, even though I would like it to have that office in Kalgoorlie. Nevertheless, I realise and understand, as do the people of Kalgoorlie, the very real need for the office to be in the city so that the company can draw on the resources of the metropolitan area, and on the wealth of the people in the metropolitan area, so making the company even greater.

We must realise that; we must realise that we can work together; and we must realise that, given the opportunity, we can represent people in country areas just as well with large electorates as we can at present. Better roads and better communication throughout the State and Australia

will make the job of politicians representing large electorates in country areas—the job of politicians in the Legislative Council with only 22 members but elected on the same basis as are members of the Senate—much easier than some people opposite would believe. Better telephonic communication, better air transport services, and better roads will make their job a whole lot easier.

I know full well how well the Federal member for Kalgoorlie (Mr Graham Campbell) looks after his electorate. He is one of the hardest working politicians in Australia and one of the best, and he manages to look after the electorate of Kalgoorlie, which is the largest electorate in the world. He finds it within his capabilities to look after an electorate into which we fit many of our State electorates. If it is possible for this Federal member to look after an electorate representing two-thirds of Western Australia, surely it is possible for a few Legislative Councillors to look after the country areas of this State.

I know that, given the passing of this legislation and the approval of the people of Western Australia, come what may, we will still have two Legislative Councillors representing the eastern goldfields and looking after the interests of the people of the area, because that is the way the Australian Labor Party works with its preselection system. That is not necessarily the same as the preselection procedure for the members on the other side of the House. The Liberal Party preselects people from the metropolitan area, possibly because it is afraid to select people from country areas because it is worried that the country people will not wear the people it chooses to represent it in country areas, the right-wing type such as the member for Gascoyne.

We hear a lot of talk about one-vote-one-value and about what it will mean to the people in this House and to those in the Legislative Council. We know for a fact that one-vote-one-value will cost some 12 seats in the Legislative Council and that it may cost a few seats in this House. What members of the Opposition fail to understand is the real determination of the Australian Labor Party to see that system brought about.

It does not frighten me one iota to think that it is possible that even Kalgoorlie and Boulder could go by the board and that I might not be the member for Kalgoorlie for much longer. That will not be the case, but even so it does not bother me, because I know that the people of Australia—our fathers and our forefathers—have fought in many wars, particularly World War II, for what they considered to be a democratic Australia.

If they were prepared to lay down their lives for democracy, surely it is not too much to ask that the members of this Parliament should lay down their seats for democracy and give this State a democratic place in the Parliaments of Australia.

We do have a mandate for this reform; there is no doubt about that. This reform was brought to the attention of the people in every seat in Western Australia in the lead-up to the February election. In fact, in this very House the Premier said just after we had been elected to office—

In any community that likes to regard itself and to be regarded as democratic, equality and fairness of parliamentary representation is fundamental to everything else.

I cannot but be amazed at the attitude of the Opposition and the way it is prepared to run away from democracy and the way it is prepared to run away from the necessity to give the people of this State an opportunity to decide what they want in the way of parliamentary reform.

One of the most important aspects of this legislation is that Governments will no longer be involved in drawing up the electoral boundaries to suit themselves. For the first time in this State, we will have an electoral system that is fair and boundaries that are drawn on the basis of fairness. I cannot say it any more eloquently than did the Minister in his second reading speech when he said—

There are few principles which are closer to the core of our western cultural tradition than this one. I suppose its deepest roots are religious in the sense of every person being equal before God. Ownership of property, place of residence, or social status has no bearing whatsoever on a person's intrinsic worth.

The dignity of every citizen demands an equal claim to freedom, or equal right to look after his or her own interests. In our system of representative government, one of the most important rights a citizen has is the right to vote and thus to influence the development of events.

We should insist that that right to vote should be on the basis of one-vote-one-value and on the basis that we have a Parliament that is fair and that truly represents the will of the people.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [10.42 p.m.]: About the only thing the National Party has in common with this legislation is a recognition that electoral reform is necessary. This Bill is about electoral reform, but from then on our common interest ends.

Mr Gordon Hill: Didn't you ask for a referendum last year?

Mr STEPHENS: Last session, I did move for a referendum to be put to the people of this State, that referendum to deal with proportional representation on a regional basis. It is history that the motion was passed and that members of the Liberal and Country Parties supported the National Party members on that motion for a referendum. I was amazed earlier this evening to hear the member for Katanning-Roe criticise the proposal, bearing in mind he had voted for it. I will come back to that later.

Mr Watt: You should mention that you did not vote for it yourself.

Mr STEPHENS: That is true by virtue of the fact that I was not here. The member for Albany would realise there are many occasions on which he is not present in the House. I do not think his interjection was particularly intelligent.

When I moved the motion calling for a referendum, I said in my speech—

Electoral systems, in and of themselves, cannot do very much. They cannot guarantee responsible or responsive government; they cannot guarantee good government; they cannot guarantee an interested, active and caring electorate. They cannot guarantee that the electors will make thoughtful decisions when they vote.

However, some electoral systems have advantages over others. Most commentators on democracy agree that a minimum definition involves all voters being entitled to have a say in who will form the government and no one group or individual being especially advantaged or disadvantaged by the electoral system.

Mr Tonkin: What a joke.

Mr STEPHENS: It means we must have a system which gives due recognition to both majority and minority groups. As Gladstone said in the House of Commons in 1870, oppression of a majority is distasteful and odious; oppression of a minority is only one degree less distasteful and odious. The electoral system must therefore be careful to be a consensus of all parties in Parliament, reflecting the views of the people. Unfortunately, things have not changed much in the last 200 years.

Edmund Burke has been quoted in relation to parliamentary reform, and I will quote from a speech I made when moving for a Select Committee to look at all aspects of electoral and parliamentary reform. I said then—

Edmund Burke is quoted as having said of parliamentary reform—

The keeping it as a political plaything to be taken up or laid down, just as best might answer the purposes of ambition or convenience, was what could never be right and what ought not be endured. This reform of Parliament was a pretty subject for men out of office to handle; but he observed that when they got into place, they did not choose to meddle with it; or rather they thought it wiser to extol it to the skies, to talk of its expediency, but always to find an excuse in regard to the time, declaring that the proper opportunity was not come.

Further on in my speech I said—

In the short term, political advantage may be an attractive proposition, but in the long term the prestige and respect of Parliament declines. This prospect should be of concern to all members of this House; indeed, to all those with an interest in the continued stability of our whole society.

In the Minister's second reading speech he said—

It is the sincere wish of the Government to create an electoral system that is fair to all, that is accepted by all, and that is above the machinations of party politics. In other words, we want the people of this State to be given a fair go, nothing more, nothing less than a fair go!

Later on, he said—

In none of these changes to the electoral system have the Liberal or Country Parties sought consultation with the Australian Labor Party.

In none of these changes has the Legislative Council engineered a delay or asked for further discussion. That great House of Review has been quietly sleeping when a watchdog was needed to guard the great principles of democracy.

It is quite clear that the Leader of the House was criticising what Liberal Governments had done in the past in not consulting the Labor Party or any other parties in this House. Having made that criticism, however, the Government now is doing the same thing. The Government has brought before Parliament a Bill for electoral reform, but it has not consulted any members of the Opposition or crossbenches.

Mr Gordon Hill: We want to consult the whole electorate—the whole State.

Mr STEPHENS: If the Labor Party wants to achieve a worthwhile reform, it should throw the question open to further review and invite discussion from all sections of the community. This could be done by means of a Select Committee. The member for Helena's interjection was quite timely because my notes say, "refer to member for Helena's speech". I will refer to his claim that the Government has a mandate. The Government may have the numbers in this House, but I question whether it has a mandate and what the mandate really means.

I will admit that the ALP recently went to the people and, in the Assembly, won a greater number of seats than did all the other parties put together. Why did the people support the Government and give it this so-called mandate? Was it a mandate for the Labor Party's economic policies; was it for its education policies; was it just for the hell of it because they wanted a change; or was it because the Labor Party had the best new leader? That was its catchery during the election campaign. Which of those points did the public support? I would suggest they did not support all these points, and it may even be possible that they supported only one of them, although they were opposed to electoral reform. All I am trying to say is that it is utter nonsense to say that the Government has a mandate. I accept that it has the numbers, but neither it nor anyone else can claim to know the reasons the public supported the Labor Party. Let us forget about the point relating to the mandate.

Mr Blaikie: That is fair comment.

Mr STEPHENS: I can see that the member for Vasse is improving—he is supporting me.

Mr Jamieson: Unusual things do happen.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Vasse may even support us in our proposals that will come out of this Bill.

The member for Helena also made reference to a referendum to let the people decide. Supposing we let the people decide; what would the people decide? After all, if this Bill did happen to pass through this Parliament, the people would have limited options.

Mr Gordon Hill: What do you mean by that? The whole State would have a say.

Mr STEPHENS: Yes, I am not questioning that. The people of this State will have a little say on one particular part of a Bill this Parliament will pass.

Mr Tonkin: Yes they will. They can say "Yes" or "No".

Mr STEPHENS: They have little option. If they say, "No", it may be taken to mean they want to retain the status quo. I question whether that is right. If the people say, "Yes", the Government will obviously say that it was right when in fact they are only accepting the lesser of two evils. If the Government wants to ascertain what the people of Western Australia are seeking, it should give them a variety of options. A Select Committee could, no doubt, come up with a variety of options which could be put to the people for their consideration. It would certainly be a better way of ascertaining the views of the people than by our passing this Bill and giving them a "Yes" or "No" option.

I accept that Western Australia does not have a Constitution, but it has a Constitution Act. Any alteration to that Act should be the subject of a referendum and not as it is at the moment, in one or two limited areas only. I am happy to say that amendments to the Constitution Act were brought about as a result of comments I made to this House. The Premier at that time (Sir Charles Court)—

Several members interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: —recognised the desirability of such reform and subsequently brought the Bill before the House.

In his second reading speech the Leader of the House indicated that, even though there would be a reduction in the number of members, there would be an increase in the number of officers in order that representation might be maintained or, as he tried to imply, improved. I believe this representation would be purely representation by proxy. It would not provide equality of representation and it would not enable people in far-flung, scattered, and sparsely populated areas to meet with their members to the same extent as would people in the metropolitan area or in the provincial areas where settlements are closer.

Generally speaking, the people of Western Australia and Australia do not have a high regard for members of Parliament. However, it is peculiar that most of them have a high regard for their local member and they would certainly not like to meet a proxy.

Therefore, I reject the suggestion of the Leader of the House that, by reducing the number of members of Parliament and increasing the number of officers, people in the country would have the same quality of representation.

Mr Bryce: Would you say that legislating was possibly the pre-eminent responsibility of members of Parliament?

Mr STEPHENS: Yes it is.

Mr Bryce: I began to wonder.

Mr STEPHENS: Two aspects concern me and one is how a member of Parliament ascertains the views of his electors unless he has the opportunity to mix and converse with them. He certainly would not do it effectively through a proxy. Quite apart from his involvement, this is one area which, I believe, is not in the interests of country people.

Great emphasis has been placed on the question of one-vote-one-value, and in his second reading speech the Leader of the House said that it was something accepted by most western-style democracies. I refer him to the *Parliamentarian* of April 1983 and to the comments on constitutional and political matters in an article on the challenge of the redistribution process under the Westminster system. We pride ourselves on the fact that our parliamentary system is based on the Westminster system. I quote from that article as follows—

On Friday, 11 February—

I assume it is 1983, because this is an April 1983 edition. It continues—

the House of Lords, not in its role as a legislative House but as Britain's supreme court, told Rt Hon. Michael Foot, MP, and other leaders of the Labour Party that it was refusing them leave to appeal to the Lords against decisions of the lower courts concerning the rearrangement of constituency boundaries in England.

I will briefly quote some of the matters that were under discussion because of those boundaries, as follows—

Some rules are definite enough—that Wales must have at least 35 seats, Scotland at least 71, . . .

Therefore we have a number of seats irrespective of the number of voters. Further on the article reads—

. . . (always allowing the preferential over-representation historically given to Scotland).

In Great Britain, the home of the Westminster style of democracy, there is a weighted vote situation.

To continue—

The most natural basis of parliamentary representation, therefore, equality of electorate or population in each constituency, is one which the commissions are ordered to depart from on some grounds and given freedom to depart from on others; but no guidance is given on the proper limit of the departure.

So here it is clearly outlined that there is the power to depart from this so-called one-vote-one-value principle. Further on, the article reads—

The judges no doubt felt that if Parliament had wanted to lay down a limit to the inequality of constituency sizes, it could easily have done so. It could have prohibited variations of more than 15 per cent either side of the average. It did not do so. It did not even lay down a limit of 20, 30 or 50 per cent which clearly implies an intention to leave an extreme degree of discretion to the commissions.

That is in Great Britain. It is indicated clearly that it is permitted to have electorates with varying numbers. I know there are other countries, Canada for one, where there is discretion with regard to the number of electors in constituencies. Notwithstanding that, the Leader of the House said that most western-style democracies have one-vote-one-value. Here is one democracy—and I believe the leader of them all in our present society—which allows a variation, and Great Britain is a very small country.

If it is reasonable to tolerate a discrepancy in Great Britain, surely it is reasonable to allow it in a State like Western Australia—possibly the most urbanised country in the world and certainly the most urbanised State in Australia. Of our population 80 per cent lives in the metropolitan area, yet our State covers one million square miles. So 80 per cent of the population lives in a very small area. Bearing in mind the weighting allowed in Britain, surely we could allow a weighted vote here to try to overcome or minimise the disadvantages of distance and the sparsity of population.

Mr Jamieson: They have never been able to show that it has been an advantage to the people of the country though.

Mr STEPHENS: I would not know about that, but likewise it has not been proved to be a disadvantage.

Mr Jamieson: The Federal system does not allow for that and the people of the country have not been ill-treated.

Mr STEPHENS: Rubbish! I would not say the people of Western Australia have been particularly well-treated, *vis-a-vis* the more populated States of Victoria and New South Wales, and this is one of the reasons no doubt that many people in this State have secessionist tendencies.

It is also interesting to note that the Government is now trying to introduce the principle of one-vote-one-value into the upper House, but it has done nothing about it in relation to the Assembly.

Mr Tonkin: We can't do everything—don't be stupid. About five Bills have been drafted already.

Mr STEPHENS: I cannot see the urgency about this.

Mr Tonkin: Of course you can't.

Mr Jamieson: This one has to have a referendum—the others do not.

Mr STEPHENS: I would have been more prepared to accept the bona fides of the Government if it had introduced a composite Bill relating to both Houses.

Mr Tonkin: Isn't that Bill big enough for you?

Mr STEPHENS: That situation has lasted for so many years that another year will not make much difference.

Mr Tonkin: That is your attitude.

Mr STEPHENS: I am prepared to have my opinion and to state it. That is what I am doing, and the right of an individual to express his point of view is democratic.

Mr Bertram: Not just to express his point of view—it has to be translated into action, and that is what this is.

Mr STEPHENS: I am hoping that the honourable member may have the freedom to be persuaded by my argument.

Mr Bertram: Plenty of words are said in this place.

Mr STEPHENS: I doubt whether members opposite have any such freedom. I do not really think the Government has been absolutely genuine in going ahead with this measure. If it were genuine, it would bring forward a composite Bill. If people are disadvantaged because we do not have the principle of one-vote-one-value—and I am not saying that they are—they will be disadvantaged in respect of this House also. Why is the Government proceeding with one piece of legislation and not the other?

Mr Jamieson: It will be here.

Mr STEPHENS: I believe I have indicated sufficiently the reasons that the National Party is opposed to this Bill. Our reasons are soundly based. I have not bothered to go into the details of the Bill itself—I have concentrated on the principle behind it. We are prepared to stand by the views we have expressed.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to refer to some comments made by previous speakers. During his remarks, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the upper House has always acted responsibly as a House of Review—

Mr Bertram: What does that mean actually—a House of Review?

Mr STEPHENS: —and always makes decisions on the facts. I trust I am paraphrasing the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's remarks correctly. I do not want to misquote him at all. I want to remind him of one situation—there are many of course—where this did not apply in the upper House. I am referring to an occasion when legislation was introduced by the National Party member in the upper House. The Hon. Tom McNeil had an accident in his power boat and he discovered a weakness in the insurance legislation. This matter was discussed with the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Parliamentary Draftsman and the result was that Mr McNeil introduced a Bill in the upper House to overcome the weakness.

After the member had explained the reasons for the Bill, the then Leader of the Government stood up and said that the idea behind the Bill was excellent, that the Bill was necessary, but that the Government of the day intended to introduce the same amendments in the following year and, therefore, the Government would vote against the private members' Bill. Is that a reasonable consideration of legislation by the upper House? The only reason for the rejection of the Bill was that it had not been introduced by the Liberal Government. Every Government member, exercising his free will and voting according to his conscience, did what he was told. The legislation was defeated, and 12 months later the same amendments were introduced by the Liberal Government. So much for the statement that the Legislative Council always make decisions on the facts before it.

Mr Bertram: Rubbish!

Mr STEPHENS: That is quite correct, and I am glad we can agree on that one.

The member for Katanning-Roe, consistent with his usual form of course, stooped to a bit of hypocrisy. He said that during the last session I introduced a motion for a referendum. Of course, he did not admit that he had voted for that motion, but he was quick to criticise us for wanting to reduce country representation. In the terms of the referendum, we wanted 18 seats for the metropolitan area as opposed to 14 now—an increase of four—12 seats representing the agricultural and mining areas, and four seats for the north-west.

I acknowledge that there would have been a slight reduction in the representation from the country areas. That was done for simplicity, bearing in mind it was a motion only for a referendum to ascertain the feelings of the people. National Party policy is for 16 members from the metropolitan area, 12 from the agricultural and mining

area, and four from the north-west, giving equal representation in the country and in the city. However, for the sake of simplicity, I allowed it to go ahead with the numbers as they are at the moment—34 members. We would like only 32 members in the upper House.

I said that the member for Katanning-Roe was talking hypocritically because, as a member of the coalition, he supported measures which have increased the number of metropolitan seats by 10 since 1975.

Mr Old: It has not reduced any in the country.

Mr STEPHENS: No, but the member for Katanning-Roe, would not be smart enough to work out the rest of it.

Mr Evans: What about all this "kiss and make up"?

Mr STEPHENS: That is an increase of 12½ per cent in the metropolitan area, and no increase in the country. The member for Katanning-Roe, who was so quick to interject, knows that effectively reduces the country representation.

Mr Old: Not the way you were going to do it!

Mr STEPHENS: No, not the way we were going to do it, but to a much greater extent. That is the difference.

Mr Bertram: He was in his capacity as a Liberal member at that stage.

Mr STEPHENS: We hear talk about two country parties in Western Australia, but there is only one country party, the National Party. There are two Liberal Parties. Most members of the public realise that.

The member for Katanning-Roe was party to increasing the number of metropolitan seats by 10, with no increase in country representation. Effectively, that reduced country representation.

Apart from that, the Liberal Party has held the power in the Assembly and the Council for many years, and it accepted a weighted vote of 2:1 in the Assembly. It made no move to alter that. Why then are members of the Liberal Party suddenly opposed to a move which would result in maintaining in the Legislative Council a weighted vote of 3:1? The measure proposing the referendum would have maintained a weighted vote of about 3:1 for the Legislative Council; but no members of the Liberal Party have been able to tell me why they have supported 2:1 in the Assembly, but opposed a weighted vote of 3:1 in the Council.

I pause to allow a response; but still there is no indication from any member of the Liberal Party. I suggest that my question cannot be answered. I have challenged members of the Liberal Party in letters to the editor, but I still have not received

an answer. I am challenging them in the House tonight, but still I have not received an answer. I will pause again. I have plenty of time.

Mr Bateman: I do not think they want to talk.

Mr STEPHENS: It is amazing.

Mr Bertram: They are not dinkum and never have been. How could they be with these crooked laws, anyhow?

Mr STEPHENS: While we are talking about representation, I would like to deal with the Senate situation. Members have spoken about one-vote-one-value, but we do not have that in the Senate. Tasmania returns the same number of senators as does New South Wales, the most populous State.

Mr Jamieson: Do Tasmanians get equal votes?

Mr Cowan: Of course not.

Mr STEPHENS: I am prepared to concede that the Senate is in a Federal situation. In a federation, the States may have equal representation, regardless of their population. However, the fact remains that it is not a one-vote-one-value system; yet I have never heard of the Labor Party trying to alter that situation. Why not, when it wants one-vote-one-value?

Mr Blaikie: It does not suit its argument. That is the only thing.

Mr STEPHENS: It may give us the argument that it is a federation, so each State has equal representation in the Senate. However, that argument can be used to take into account the fact that Western Australia is a vast State with a population concentrated in one city—80 per cent of the population in one city—and the differences in the interests of the various regions. It would be appropriate to have a degree of equal representation, as we in the National Party have suggested; but the interests of the city as a region are not the same as the interests of the agricultural and mining areas. We are all one State, but while the agricultural and mining interests have 12 seats, and the north-west interests have their four seats, we have a degree of balance between the interests of the various regions of this vast State.

That argument is just as valid as the argument that we should have an equal number of senators because of the need to protect the interests of the various States. In the National Party, we say that we should protect the varied interests of the regions within this vast State.

Unfortunately, the member for Karrinyup is not in the House. I am sorry about that because he could correct me if I paraphrased him incorrectly. That is the only reason I regret he is not in

the House. No doubt, other members on the Opposition side listened to his speech with bated breath, and they will be able to correct me.

The member for Karrinyup made the suggestion that with proportional representation based on the State as a whole, the minor parties could take control of everything. If that is the best argument he can come up with, he is on pretty weak ground and is talking a lot of rot. This is not the first time he has spoken in that manner. He has become a victim of his own propaganda because the major parties—and they include the Labor Party—make their members vote as members of a party. Of course, the fact is that every member has the right and the responsibility to vote in the interests of his electorate. He is not here as a member of a party; he is here as the member for an electorate. The fact that he is in a party is incidental. He should be responsible to the people, and answerable to his electorate; and if he acts irresponsibly in the determination of his vote, the people should remove him.

Apart from that, a minor party can achieve nothing unless its members have the support of one of the major parties. That has been evidenced here on many occasions since the National Party came into existence.

We have seen situations in which there have been only a few members and many vacant seats on one side and a large number of members and no vacant seats on the other side, because the Liberal and Labor parties have joined forces to vote against the National Party. I accept that situation, because it proves that a minor party is not controlling the Parliament. It proves also that Parliament is making a decision and that is what the people in this State want it to do. They want the Parliament to start making decisions. They do not want it to rubber stamp the decisions of the Cabinet or a major party. Therefore, the member is talking a lot of nonsense when he refers to the fact that a minor party could control the situation. A minor party can do nothing unless it gains the support of one or other of the two major parties.

In talking about this, I am reminded that many years ago the member for Katanning, as the electorate was called then, said he would never vote on the same side as the Labor Party; but, of course, after the National Party came into being, on many occasions that member has voted on the same side as the Labor Party. However, perhaps he thought obedience to his Liberal masters was more important than following the party lines.

Finally, I return to the point I made earlier in my speech about the need to allow the people of

Western Australia to have a full involvement in electoral reform. We have before us a Bill which has been put forward by the Labor Party without consultation with the other parties, without the opportunity for genuine input from the community; and, as it will affect everybody, it is desirable that electoral reform be approached on a consensus basis.

Therefore, although the National Party will vote against this Bill, if unfortunately the second reading should be carried, it is my intention to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee so that the people of Western Australia will have the opportunity to indicate what they would like to see in the way of electoral reform.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [11.23 p.m.]: We often hear the member for Karrinyup speak in this House on electoral matters and try to bamboozle us with a complete or incomplete set of figures. It is quite easy to do this when one starts to break up the situation from a complete electorate, as is proposed under this legislation, into a number of electoral boundaries. This is the flaw in the argument put forward by the member for Stirling, because once one starts to break up an area into boundaries, all sorts of funny things can happen.

Gerrymanders might not necessarily happen by chosen means; they may happen because of the instruction given to those drawing the boundaries to use natural boundaries such as rivers, railway lines, or geographical features. Having done that, one can set up an amazing set of circumstances where perhaps, using as an example a small Parliament of 12 members where all the boundaries are numerically even, if one party were successful in five seats and averaged a 1 000 majority in each seat and the other party was successful in seven seats and averaged only a 100 or 150 majority in each of those seats, it would become the Government; yet it would be far behind the other party in the total number of votes it received. It is possible one party could have 55 per cent of the vote and the other party 45 per cent, yet the latter party would virtually have won the election.

One can go on indefinitely giving examples of figures which will pull the wool over people's eyes. However, the purpose of this Bill is to provide the opportunity to the people of Western Australia to have an electoral system that has been established in two other States already, South Australia and New South Wales. That system seems to have worked reasonably well.

All the fanciful situations which members opposite seem to think might occur, do not seem to have happened in those States. As a matter of

fact, when the Tonkin Liberal Government was in power in South Australia it did not attempt to alter the system that had been set up. That Government seemed to consider it to be a fair and proper system, bearing in mind it had long since adopted—indeed this occurred in the days of Steele Hall—the one-vote-one-value basis for its judgment of electoral responsibility.

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the new Queensland Liberal leader also has very clearly set out that as a fundamental part of his belief in electoral reform.

It would appear the Cinderella State, with its Liberal supporters, is still a long way behind the other States which have already adopted a very clear indication that in Liberal Party thinking one-vote-one-value is of paramount importance. Evidently, that is not the case here and it does not mean very much.

Mr Stephens: Do you really think the States in the east have the same degree of centralisation as we have in Western Australia?

Mr JAMIESON: Yes, to a great extent I do. Queensland might be an exception, but in South Australia the population is largely on the fringe of the State with a few pockets in other places. In the northern part of that State there are some vast, open areas.

Mr Stephens: With practically nobody there.

Mr JAMIESON: The same situation applies here. I argue that we should not expect to represent broadacres which have practically no population.

Much play is made of the Murchison-Eyre region. There are really only two roads in the area where the population exists. One goes up to Leonora and the towns in its vicinity including Laverton, and the other is the Murchison road to Meekatharra where we find most of the population.

Less than two per cent of the population of that electorate would be found in other areas. It just does not mean very much. The concept that the countenance of the area is vast, and, therefore, the people need some special kind of servicing, is more imagined than real.

It is necessary to appreciate that in vast areas of the State there is no population to be serviced by parliamentarians. Of course, stations are situated in out-lying areas, but the people who work on them have a remarkable ability to make contact in their own ways. These people are pretty ingenious and they survive out there in many different circumstances. Meeting their member of Parliament or contacting him when they need him is

not as difficult as some people would like to make out.

Mr Stephens: The real problem is not meeting their member of Parliament!

Mr JAMIESON: Indeed, these people, in some cases, would rather not meet their Legislative Councillors. I say that on very good advice given to me by other elected members in this Parliament who would be on the same political wavelength as the people to whom I refer.

When the member for Karrinyup breaks into giving us a lecture on numbers in electorates, he should first understand that all sorts of complications can arise. This reform is worth trying. It is a proposition we put very clearly to the people of the State at the time of the election. We told them it was in line with the situation in South Australia and New South Wales. There is no doubt in the minds of the people of those States that the system appears to be working. I frequently read the Eastern States Press and I have not noticed the people there complaining in letters to the editor about the way their system is operating.

Let us look at the criticism that if we adopt a list system, all the representation will come from the metropolitan area. List systems just do not do that; if anything they go the other way. If members consider the setup in Israel, which has a complete list system for members of Parliament, it will be seen that the parties select candidates from various towns and from various ethnic groups in order to attract the attention of voters and so obtain for those parties a maximum vote.

In these circumstances, the headquarters of the Liberal Party or any other party would be absolutely queer if it did not select candidates from Kalgoorlie, from the north, or from the south, who could help draw a maximum vote and so get the maximum number elected under a list system. That is what it is all about. In the main the people who are selected to represent the various parties are the favourites of the parties and are not necessarily the favourites of the individual districts. Of course, some are because of the very nature of those districts. However, in the main in party political systems we find that the people selected, particularly for strong seats, are party political favourites. They are not people who just come along and offer themselves.

We do not want to get to the situation where we have too many political parties. I have no objection to small parties having a say, but if we get to a situation like that in France or Italy, where there is a lot of confusion and where from one day to another political groupings on a single issue

may be capable of throwing out a Government, it becomes confusing to the people. We bear enough odium as members of Parliament now because people say we are not in accord with what they see as the real problems. I do not know what they think we should do, but they do think at times that we do not do as well as we should. However, we do not see droves of them putting up at election time.

I think the member for Stirling mentioned that we would not like to tackle this one-vote-one-value system on an Assembly basis because we might sacrifice some of our own seats. However, every time we have had political reform in this Parliament the Labor Party has lost seats; it has never missed. If members consider the 1965 effort of the Legislative Council they will realise we already had people endorsed for the provinces which were lost in the eastern goldfields. We had to do without them. We had 13 members, but we went down to 10 in that Legislative Council. I can remember the intense arguments that took place in the party room. The then leader of the party in the Legislative Council, the Hon. H. C. Strickland, warned us that we would lose seats. We knew we would. Nevertheless, getting adult franchise on a compulsory basis was paramount to our platform and it would have been absurd to think we would not have been involved in that move.

Mr Stephens: If one-vote-one-value is so paramount, why not bring it in for the whole State at one time?

Mr JAMIESON: We have clearly indicated that more legislation is to follow. Legislation dealing with Legislative Assembly activities such as amendments to the Electoral Act and matters dealing with enrolments are all composite in our whole package of electoral reform. To bring it in at this juncture while we have this Bill that will need a certification by way of a referendum would only unnecessarily complicate this legislation and would achieve nothing we could not achieve later. In respect of one-vote-one-value in the Legislative Assembly, all that is needed is an amendment to the Electoral Districts Act; all that is needed is an instruction to the electoral commissioners to do something. Once that is done they set about their task.

However, if the Liberal Party and its cohorts obtain 51 per cent of the vote at the next election, out goes the Labor Party. That is a risk the Labor Party has to take. That is why we say there should be as fair and as equitable a system as possible.

Mr Cowan: Why not lower the number of Legislative Assembly members?

Mr JAMIESON: We have not made any promise in that regard. The only promise we made on the subject of reductions was the promise of a reduction of 12 members in the Legislative Council. I think the attitude taken is that we have roughly the same population as does South Australia and therefore we have the justification for having roughly the same size Legislative Council. The Legislative Assembly in South Australia is a different kettle of fish. At one time it had multiple electorates; it played around with them for a long time. I think it had seven or five electorates and it eventually evolved a single electorate system. Under the Playford regime the Assembly had 35 members. Only recently the membership of that Chamber was increased.

The popular House in the various States of the United States varies considerably in size. In the most populous State, California, there are 80 members in the lower Chamber of its Sacramento Parliament.

Mr Cowan: Sixty.

Mr JAMIESON: However, in Minnesota and in other lower Chambers there are hundreds of members. It is all a matter of taste. The State Senates vary in districts, appointments and so on. We can become confused if we try to go into the ramifications of all that exists in the different systems of Legislatures.

We understand what exists in some of the Parliaments in Australia; we all agree to some extent that there needs to be some new thinking in respect of legislative reviews in this State, and that is what we propose. I suggest that when people say, "It might be all right, but we should have an allowance for some weighting of the vote", it must be understood that those people cannot have it all their own way all the time, or in the case of the Labor Party it cannot have its way any of the time. It certainly has not had its way over the last 90-odd years.

In the ultimate we must approach the public with the best possible system of electoral reform that appears to be available to us. If we start to allow for a weighted vote we will give electoral commissioners or somebody else a basis upon which to manoeuvre or manipulate the electorate, which could lead to one political party or the other to saying it is being badly treated.

The National Party has said that it is not treated well on a Federal basis. The combined conservative parties when in Government in Canberra seem to have given the supporters of the National Party fairly good service, and when the

Labor Party has been in Government in Canberra it has done things well accepted by rural people, and at other times we have heard complaints. The conservatives have done similar things. In general, Commonwealth Governments have endeavoured to be fair and reasonable, and electorates are generally determined on a one-vote-one-value basis with a loading. We must always have a bit of a loading, otherwise we would have absurd situations. If we were to have each electorate divided exactly as set down, we would have to put the boundary straight through houses. We must have some loading to take account of expected growth or the falling away of a population. At a later stage when we get around to other legislation dealing with the Assembly, members will be able to consider the proposal for small variations under a certain set of circumstances.

It was mentioned by the National Party that it had never heard the one-vote-one-value system advocated for the Senate. For 60-odd years my party went further than that. Until a few conferences ago we advocated the abolition of the Senate so that there would be only one Chamber, which would be elected on a one-vote-one-value principle.

Mr Stephens: You have progressed a little from that.

Mr JAMIESON: It is not now proposed that the Senate be abolished.

Mr Cowan: It was proposed that the Senate cover one electorate.

Mr JAMIESON: No-one thought that was necessary for the republic of the United States of America. A governing body within a State, within its own requirements, within its own people and subject to its own legislative Chambers, is far different from a body governing an area that is part of a federation. A State agrees to go into a federation on the basis of a Constitution put to it. That is where the difference is quite paramount, whether it be the federation of West Germany, Australia or the United States. As all members would be aware, some differences exist between Australian States, which were created from Whitehall, and US States, which were created from a central Government in Washington—our States were created from a different source. If we get into the argument on territories, we could go on indefinitely and we could be terribly confused.

When looking at the Legislature to govern one's own State one must put that Legislature in its correct perspective and not confuse it with what might happen in other States. We have witnessed in New South Wales and South Australia the list system. It has acted fairly well; therefore, it is

worthwhile our recommending it and endeavouring to get the public of Western Australia to try it out as a more just system than the one we have at present.

Mr Stephens: You would acknowledge that the equality of numbers in the Senate for the States within the federation is a recognition of the conflict of interests amongst the States. Would you not also agree that there are conflicts of interests within the regions of a State as big as Western Australia, and that those conflicts should be recognised?

Mr JAMIESON: I would not agree with that. Dramatic changes have taken place in the Pilbara, for example. On two occasions it has had an influx of population, and on one occasion a diminution of population. This time the population has not decreased to any great degree, but it has occurred in the past. To take consideration of those changes we would have to be legislating constantly for more or less representation.

Mr Stephens: Irrespective of the populations, that region could have a conflict of interest with the metropolitan region. That is what I am talking about.

Mr JAMIESON: The main trouble with our system in Australia is that we did not follow fully the US system of separating our capitals from our principal cities. In Western Australia Perth governs the country areas, and that should not occur. If the Government was placed in some little place we would not have this problem.

Mr Stephens: I would suggest Albany.

Mr JAMIESON: The capital could be in a more central position, but no doubt that position would be too hot and desolate. Decentralised capitals would be ideal, but we were not able to have them. We can approach this situation only on the basis of approaching the citizens of our State at this juncture with the best possible system we are able to recommend. Electoral reform was promised as a prominent part of the Labor Party's platform at the last election. We are quite justified in pressing for the legislation as proposed now to cover those promises. The people of this State can make the decision. If they do not want these reforms we will have to consider something else. Until we have sounded them out on the propositions we have put before them, we would not be justified in changing our approach to this question of human rights, by which we determine the democratic process of one-vote-one-value.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [11.48 p.m.]: Anyone who believes in parliamentary democracy or in our particular form of parliamentary democracy which we call the Westminster system,

would know the reason this system is better than most other systems; namely, it is that it evolved through time. It has been adapted by circumstances, instead of a few wise men sitting down to write the Constitution. Of course, I refer to the origin of the system in the United Kingdom.

Anyone with those beliefs would be well aware that this legislation is one of the most important pieces of legislation to reach this Parliament. Because, however, it has been introduced by the Labor Party and is opposed by the Liberal-Country Party in Opposition, its significance will not be heralded by full opposing Public Galleries, which usually has been the case the situation is reversed.

The legislation will not be heralded by week-long filibusters, but by a few proper, perhaps logical speeches which will not enjoy headlines in the Press for a long period of time or occupy lengthy space in the electronic media. It will not be done in such a way that people are in the street opposing it or threatening a national strike. It will not receive the same treatment that I recall was given when I had the privilege nine years ago of introducing the fuel emergency Bill, which went so far that the present Prime Minister came here to address mass rallies and threaten national strikes. The result was that instead of any curtailment of individual liberties or Nazism as was suggested in an emotional way, nobody got hurt. Perhaps fewer strikes occurred, and the same legislation has been introduced in other States with Labor Governments.

This most important legislation will pass through this Assembly with a few speeches like that of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which was an excellent treatise, and other speeches. Indeed, after the most exhaustive speech by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition which embraced every aspect of this legislation, and the other speeches, it would be fairly difficult to speak to the legislation without being repetitive. I will have to canvass certain aspects with added or different emphasis. My approach will be first to analyse the Government's introduction of this measure.

In a fairly long second reading speech by the Minister very few paragraphs, oddly enough, dealt with the provisions of this extremely complex Bill—and then with very few of the provisions. The remainder of the Minister's speech, I am sorry to say, was nothing but political propaganda.

I do not think that was an oversight. I do not think it should be considered an omission. It was a deliberate manoeuvring for the only conceivable

way in which the Government could hope to achieve this hideous proposition—to use all the power and facilities it has, and more, to mislead and brainwash the public and misrepresent the case for the single aim of achieving and maintaining absolute power. Let us make no mistake: That is the aim of this legislation. The Labor Party is misleading and brainwashing the public, and misrepresenting this legislation, and it has done so for some time and with some editorial support in the media. The Government has been reasonably successful so far.

If the Minister's speech is analysed objectively, one sees that most of his arguments would support the opposition to his proposals. I have said that one of the reasons for the supremacy of the Westminster system is that it evolved. Not one person, nor even a group of people came together and created it. History and the circumstances of the passing of time formulated it. In the US, the UK or any other western democracy, a drastic change such as that proposed in this Bill would come about, if ever, only after years and perhaps decades of consultation, conference and argument. Such change should not occur, and would not occur in any of those countries by the drafting of a single Bill, no matter how complicated that Bill appears to be.

The implication of the Minister's introductory paragraph is that the people should be consulted about any drastic changes in their representative chambers. Members will recall that when we introduced the concept of a referendum for changing the composition of the representation, the ALP, which was then in Opposition, bitterly opposed the measure. The Minister now calls the prospect of a referendum "consultation with the people."

It appears to me and it must appear to every objective observer that the Government's philosophy is that it should have democracy with all the rights of criticism, delay and amendment while it is in Opposition, but it should have autocracy in Government. It says, "Do not criticise or distract us in any way or form and let us maintain our autocracy". What more consultation is there about the whole conglomerate of these measures than there was with any other change in constitutional representation? Is it the necessity for a referendum to which the Minister referred? Is that the consultation which the Government has introduced?

What really is needed for any such drastic constitutional change is a genuine desire by the people. I do not think there is any sign of that. One can prove the contrary as I will try to do shortly. Then we have to have the machinery and

prima facie, a non-partisan consultative body very much on the lines proposed by the Premier when he was Leader of the Opposition. No genuine desire exists in the public for change; it is only concentrated propaganda by the Labor Party, political association fostered by the ALP and letters to the editor encouraged by the ALP. I believe the public view is to the contrary.

I am not sure anyone has examined electoral results from this point of view, but if one did, one would find in every election, particularly in areas where non-ALP members have been elected, that the non-Labor party candidate for the upper House usually gets more votes than the non-Labor party candidate for the Legislative Assembly. That is despite the fact that the Legislative Assembly candidate, particularly if he is the incumbent, would be much better known than his Legislative Council counterpart. That is, of course, a clear indication that even though the people might want to vote against a non-Labor candidate in the Legislative Assembly and even though they might feel it is time to change the Government to Labor, some people, at least, are cautious and will vote for a non-Labor candidate in the House of Review in order to maintain the supervision and review of the Government's actions. Therefore, it is notable that the first paragraph of the Minister's speech supports the Opposition's argument.

The Minister says that it is the wish of his Government to have a fair system to give the people a fair go. Not everyone would claim that besides legislation, and administration for some, representation of the electors is not one of the most important duties of the member of Parliament. From my experience, proportional representation, even as it applies to the Senate, is really not representation at all. An example of multiple representation is the State of Massachusetts in the United States. That State is divided into a number of electorates, each having one to four members of Parliament. We could go further and take as an example Austria where, in the lower House, there is virtually total proportional representation for large districts. The net result is that there is virtually no representation of individuals.

I have spoken to people who do not know whom to approach or whom is their member, and who do not want a member of Parliament who is selected purely by the party machinery even to fill casual vacancies, as this legislation is proposing. With proportional representation we could perhaps obtain a statistical result at elections; but even that does not necessarily have to be equitable. We would get a statistical result but not a human result. I agree with the Minister when he

said that the sole basis for our authority is that we represent the people.

I do not think that the ALP could claim that the proposals put forward by the Minister contain more fairness than the status quo. No matter how much they may dislike the present electoral system, the ALP would not have gained more success in the last 27 years or 39 years had we had proportional representation in the Legislative Assembly. It had two turns out of nine if we go back to 27 years and four out of 13 if we go back to 39 years. I think that the people gave their choice fairly with a majority vote mostly to non-Labor Governments. I say that fairness is not an argument to support this measure.

I deal now with some of the less important comments made by the Minister in his second reading speech, which are grossly inaccurate. He referred to property franchise and to representation of women—tracing the origin of this back at least 100-plus years. I do not think it is fair comment because if one considers what has happened in other countries one would find that we are no worse off from this point of view. Even countries such as Switzerland, which everyone classifies as a proper democracy, introduced the vote for women later in Australia or, for that matter, Western Australia.

The Minister spoke with contempt about the Electoral Districts Act. I would remind him of an experience I had about 15 years ago when I studied parliamentary systems in Manitoba, a Canadian province. The chief electoral officer in that province was *ex officio* the chief clerk of the Legislative Assembly. I spoke to him and examined their electoral laws to discover their electoral Act is similar to and has passages almost the same as our Electoral Districts Act. It was obvious that it was a copy of the Western Australian Act, despite the fact that nobody knew about it because few people would have seen the connection. They adopted something they considered to be good.

I take exception to the reference—at least as it appears in *Hansard*—by the Minister to the Hon. Ruby Hutchison. I served at the same time as the Hon. Ruby Hutchison and nobody would deny that she was a very good Laborite; nobody would deny that she worked for the abolition of the Legislative Council; but nobody would deny that she was a true lady.

I give as an example, which some members might remember, that at the first Joint House Committee meeting at which I participated it was proposed that we should be given paper serviettes. The Hon. Ruby Hutchison said, "They are not

serviettes, they are table napkins". She was a lady, and this Minister addresses her as "Ms". I am sure she would take exception to being addressed as "Ms Ruby Hutchison". She was known to all of us as Mrs Hutchison. She was not able to take her husband's name because the law required that she be known as Mrs Hutchison and not Mrs Lavery. I think it is atrocious for the Minister to call her "Ms Hutchison".

Another misleading statement by the Minister was that in the 1971 elections the Labor Party had the majority of the votes, in the upper House, yet it was defeated on seats. This is an absolute untruth. The Minister might have added up the Labor votes, the Liberal votes and the Country Party votes. He then said that the Labor votes were more, but he completely and conveniently ignored that three provinces were not contested by either the Liberal Party or the Country Party. If we deduct the Labor votes in these provinces the combined Liberal and Labor Party vote is considerably higher; namely, 152 226 as opposed to 133 182.

I did not include the figures of the DLP vote. At that time the DLP contested every province and it achieved a considerable vote in some of them. Even without detailed analysis, nobody would deny that the DLP preferences went towards the non-Labor parties rather than towards the Labor Party. So it is quite misleading, in fact it is deliberately misleading both the Parliament and the public, for the Minister to say that the Labor Party achieved a majority of the aggregate votes and yet missed out on a majority of members. The Minister ought to apologise to the House for this statement. We do not know who suggested that sort of tricky exemplification to strengthen his argument.

The Minister made an interesting comment also when he referred to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights—a declaration to which, as he said, Australia is a signatory. The implications of his comment are interesting, and I ask the Minister to answer a very simple question: Does this statement of his imply that he wants Commonwealth intervention to decide the electoral laws in Western Australia?

Mr Tonkin: That is what will happen if you do not do something.

Mr MENSAROS: That is what I am asking.

Mr Tonkin: No, I do not. I want us to clean up our own mess.

Mr MENSAROS: Why then did the Minister refer to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and say that Australia was a signatory to it?

Mr Tonkin: What I am saying is that if this State does not wake up to itself and do the decent and honourable thing, we are inviting Federal intervention.

Mr MENSAROS: In the Minister's speech he said that his proposed method of proportional representation would bring a different cross-section to Parliament. On reflection everybody would see that exactly the opposite is true. Under a system of proportional representation, representatives would be selected by the respective parties. Obviously they would prefer the people who are chosen by and at that time appealing to the special electoral control bodies of the particular parties involved.

Under the present decentralised system, we have a much better chance of a wider cross-section of representatives than under the proposed system. So again the Minister's argument is against the proposition he put to the House.

The Minister further said that the Senate has a far better record of review and scrutiny than has the Legislative Council and he says that this is because the Senate is elected on a proportional representation system. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Senate, as a whole body, cannot be said to be elected on full proportional representation; it is based on only partial proportional representation. However, it does represent the States, particularly in the past, with their various endeavours and various wishes.

In another passage in his second reading speech, the Minister virtually tried to defend the overwhelming capital city representation, and he challenged members to give examples where representatives of one area of the State have acted against the interests of some other area. Of course there are plenty of such examples, not only in the State, but also in Australia. The Minister who claims to be an historian will know the history of politics before we had political parties in Australia. At that time one was either for protection or against it. It was one side against the other—the consumers against the producers or the rural people against the city people.

In relation to the Minister's challenge, a typical example, and a recent example, occurred in Western Australia with daylight saving. The first Bill to introduce daylight saving was sponsored by the Tonkin Government. It was passed in this House and rejected in the Legislative Council. At that time the Legislative Council was criticised as a gerrymandered Chamber, weighted for the country electors. So in this question there was generally one geographical part of the State against the other, the two parts having entirely

different interests. What happened after that? The enabling Bill, introduced by the Court Government later, more or less had Labor Party support. A referendum followed, and, despite the criticism that the Legislative Council was able to reject the Tonkin Bill only because of the country weighting, the referendum with the absolute majority of the people rejected daylight saving. The funny thing was that every party miscalculated. Mostly Labor Party members were for daylight saving and, with some exceptions because we had a free vote on the issue, the Liberal Party was against it. And yet, when the results of the referendum were examined electorate by electorate, it was found that, in the metropolitan area at least, the majority of Labor electorates voted against it and the majority of Liberal electorates were for it. We all make mistakes, and the results are there for anyone to study. So the Minister's challenge is yet another argument which supports our opposition to this Bill.

I would like to point out some of the propositions, to my mind, are entirely disadvantageous—some of them are even false. If the system proposed by the Minister were to eventuate there would be almost a perennial stalemate in the upper House—and I think the Minister anticipates this. It could be that one or other party would have a majority of one, and in this situation, as foreseen by the Minister, the Bill provides for the President of the Legislative Council to have two votes. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, that is quite ridiculous and it is in direct contradiction to the Minister's constant plea for one-vote-one-value. Why should the President have two votes?

Mr Tonkin: He doesn't.

Mr MENSAROS: The Bill provides for him to have a casting vote. Is it proposed to take away his deliberative vote? The Minister said he should vote on every second and third reading.

Mr Tonkin: I did not say that at all—I said he could concur if he has not already used his casting vote.

Mr MENSAROS: So the Bill gives him a choice to have two votes if he so wishes?

Mr Tonkin: Nonsense! It says he can concur in the passing of the second or third reading of any Bill if he has not already had his casting vote. That is what the Bill says.

Mr MENSAROS: I did not read the clause like that, and neither did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The words "if he has not had his casting vote" are not in the draft Bill, or at least I did not see them.

Mr Tonkin: It is in plain English, "If he has not had his casting vote".

Mr MENSAROS: Maybe we misinterpreted it.

Mr Tonkin: If there is any doubt I will certainly put it beyond doubt by an amendment.

Mr MENSAROS: Equally iniquitous and fairly dangerous is the proposition that the ballot paper should be judged partly according to the voter's intention, and not on a hard and fast rule as it ought to be, particularly combined with the provision that the ballot paper would not be invalid although it may have some signs or writing on it which could identify the voter and therefore remove the principle of the secret ballot. Again, that is not purely a theoretical statement and criticism, because we have heard of the misuse of secret ballots when the first person has been sent in to bring out a blank ballot paper which is filled out by the people outside so everyone belonging to a pressure group can go in in sequence; take in a ballot paper already filled in, bring out a blank one, and so on; and achieve a 100 per cent vote. With the present proposition scrutineers could intimidate people and say they ought to make some sort of sign on their ballot paper; and the scrutineers could check whether the people voted in the way they were told to vote.

Another aspect mentioned by the Minister was that Western Australia has more representatives per head than most of the other States. My answer to that is twofold: Firstly, we are a State which is not only large, but which also has tremendously remote areas. Members on both sides of this Parliament have advocated decentralisation policies, so why should we not have better representation? Secondly, at about five o'clock this afternoon it was announced on the news that a joint party committee in the Federal Parliament, including the Australian Labor Party and the coalition parties, recommended an increase in the number of Federal members in the House of Representatives and the Senate of about 20 per cent. The recommended increase in the representatives was 24; the recommended increase in the Senate was 12. They represent an increase of about 20 per cent.

Because of the lateness of the hour, I should conclude; but I would say simply that the aim of the legislation, quite clearly, is to abolish the Legislative Council as the first step, at least, towards more autocratic government. It is quite clear that if this legislation were to pass, the Labor Party would have the equal chance, through proportional representation, of winning a one member majority in the upper House. Then, of course, the Labor Party would be able to do

whatever it wanted to do. It could easily take the next step and abolish the Council.

The Government is simply afraid of the checks and balances which may occasionally prevent it from doing what it wants to do. The Bill is the living proof that the Government is not the meek, the moderate, the "no different from the Liberals" Government it tries to make itself out to be occasionally. If it were those things, it would not be afraid of a vigorous upper House as it exists today. The Government wants to do away with the House of Review, to be able to do what it wants, and how it wants to do it. If nothing else, that is enough reason to oppose the legislation.

MR P. J. SMITH (Bunbury) [12.25 a.m.]: Despite the large number of members of the Legislative Council, I do not believe that the country people are represented adequately at the moment. The situation in the goldfields and the north is that we have upper House Labor members and lower House Labor members. In most of the rest of the country areas, we have Liberal, National, or National Country Party members in the upper House, and lower House Liberal members. In the south-west, we have a mix, and I have noticed that the councillors tend to operate only in the areas where they have any opposition.

At the last State election, the ALP received 28 702 primary votes in the south-west area, and the total opposition votes were 27 976. One would expect that perhaps the ALP would have won one upper House seat; but of the three upper House seats contested covering seven south-west Assembly seats—I know they were linked with other areas—we did not gain one upper House seat. In total, we have six Liberal Party upper House members representing the south-west area; but in the lower House, of the seven seats, we have five Labor Party seats and two Liberal Party seats.

For many years in the Bunbury area we have had two South-West Province members, and we have heard very little of them. We heard a lot about Mr MacKinnon as a Minister, but since he was re-elected three years ago, he seems to have disappeared from the scene. The other member, Mr Ferry, has been in the seat for 18 years. His address is at Booragoon, and we heard from him only very seldom until he became a member of the Opposition. Since he has been in Opposition, he has appeared in the south-west as an expert. We have him coming to the south-west as part of a team, or leading a team, to conduct tours of the south-west to show other members of the Liberal Party just what is going on.

I can understand that the member for Murray-Wellington would perhaps not know what is going

on in the mining or timber industries because, like many new members, he had other business to look after, so he was unable to get into some of these areas and see close up exactly what happens. However, I find it ludicrous that members of the Liberal Party should come into areas with which they should be thoroughly familiar and make statements as if they had no previous knowledge of what they saw.

Mr Pearce: Some of them would need a road map to find their way around their own electorates.

Mr P. J. SMITH: I believe that the people who want to speak to their representatives contact people from their own party or with their own political leanings. This tends to happen more particularly in the country. People ring me from all over the electorates. If they live in an electorate represented by the Liberal Party, they will ring me. I am sure there are people in my electorate who would ring Liberal members if they are Liberal voters.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The member for Narrogin could tell you about that.

Mr P. J. SMITH: Under the present proposal, we have the offer of two offices. I am sure each of the major parties would like to have the offer of extra offices. If the Government put a Labor Party office in Albany, the Labor people would be represented; and I would expect that if the Opposition put a Liberal Party office in Bunbury, perhaps 40 per cent of the people would have a representative they could go to. I see this Bill as being of advantage to the country people because of that.

Some members of the Opposition claim that the people do not support electoral reform in their own electorates. Certainly the people who support the Liberal Party would not support electoral reform; but in 1981, I was part of a Labor Party team in the Bunbury area which tried to bring electoral reform into the minds of the people. We circulated a petition to see whether people would support the idea of one seat in the Bunbury area.

This was mainly to look at the ludicrous situation where Bunbury is split in half, we believe, for purely political reasons. There were 1 015 signatures on the petition and we thought initially we would go to the Carey Park and Withers areas and get the Labor people to support us. We then thought, "That is no good. Someone will look at this petition and see all the Labor supporters who have signed it and say that obviously it is just set up". So we went into the Liberal area—what is commonly called the "Trees" area right in the heart of the conservative part of Bunbury—where we collected signatures.

Many of the people there were in favour of electoral reform. They said, "Yes, we are in favour of electoral reform, but we will not sign the petition". When we asked why they would not sign it, they said, "Because we are Liberal Party supporters and, therefore, we will not sign it". We said, "So what?" They then said, "No, we will not sign it, because we support the Liberal Party". Other people said, "If I put my signature on this petition, my local member will see it and he will come and ask me why I signed it, because I am a Liberal Party supporter".

Therefore, I would not say because one has strong support from the Liberal Party members in one's electorate, they do not support electoral reform.

Those are just a few of my ideas, and I support the Bill.

Government members: Hear, hear!

MR COWAN (Merredin) [12.31 a.m.]: I am quite certain many conservative supporters support electoral reform. The greatest supporter of conservative parties in this State would perhaps be *The West Australian*, but it is a great advocate of electoral reform.

Many people in Western Australia believe a need exists for electoral reform. I am one of them. By the same token I do not believe that the reforms put forward by the Leader of the House can be accepted by either this Parliament or members in another place.

Mr Bertram: They are a vast improvement on what we have now.

Mr COWAN: That is open to debate and that is what I am debating. My point is that, while we have since our formation advocated reform, particularly of the upper House, we cannot support this legislation.

Mr Brian Burke: I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was right about you.

Mr COWAN: I wish I had been here to hear it. I wonder if the Premier would be kind enough to repeat it.

Mr Tonkin: He does not want to cause trouble!

Mr COWAN: I am sure any comments the Premier relates to me will not cause trouble between us.

Mr Brian Burke: He said you are neither one thing nor the other; that people can vote for you, the Democrats, and other minority corner parties and get nothing but a pig in a poke. Your deputy was here at the time.

Mr COWAN: I would like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to go into my electorate and

perhaps into quite a number of others and make that type of comment. It would not be very well received.

Several members interjected.

Mr COWAN: We have constantly advocated some form of proportional representation for the Legislative Council. We believe that perhaps it is the only way to rid this State of one or two anomalies that exist within its electoral system.

Another anomaly is the definition of the metropolitan area boundary which was determined by this House during the last session of Parliament. However, we advocate electoral reform. We advocate proportional representation in the upper House, but we believe it should be based on regional proportional representation.

In this debate many people have referred to the structure or composition of the Australian Senate. Certainly that has been the case in relation to the way in which people are elected to the Senate; in other words, proportional representation. However, it should be taken a step further. As with the Senate, we are dealing with a federation of States; each State is represented by an equal number of members elected to the Senate and, of course, recent additions have been made to that with representation being given to the territorial portions of Australia.

I suggest to the Leader of the House that his legislation would have been better received had he taken that concept of representation for a State and transposed it into representation for a region.

Mr Bertram: That was a concept which arose before the party system in the Federal scene and it never worked.

Mr COWAN: That is the problem of the people who are elected to that place. We are talking about regional proportional representation. I am suggesting that the way in which the Senate is elected should be brought to Western Australia and we should have elections for the upper House on a regional basis.

The Government can have its proportional representation; it can remove the very highly disproportionately weighted vote which exists at the moment and reduce it to approximately 3:1. Most people in Western Australia would find that ratio of rural vote weighting acceptable and there would be no argument against that type of representation.

If members look at the figures which came out of the election held recently in this State, they will see very clearly that there is much to be said, in the eyes of the Labor Party, for one-vote-one-value in the Legislative Council, because it would

allow those people in the metropolitan area to dominate completely the entire voting system in Western Australia. After all 80 per cent of the population lives in that region and when one looks at the results in the metropolitan area, one sees that 55 per cent of the people in that region voted for the ALP. When one looks at the number of seats which were returned, it lists 67 per cent of the seats; therefore, if one is an ALP supporter, an argument exists for maximising the metropolitan vote and that can be done with proportional representation on a one-electorate basis.

We in the National Party are quite in favour of proportional representation, but we advocate that it be on a regional basis.

Mr Tonkin: How many regions do you suggest?

Mr COWAN: I would suggest a minimum of three. I am of the opinion, as is my colleague, that that is a matter which is open for discussion and debate and should be referred to the public in order that they may comment. There could be as many as five regions.

Mr Jamieson: There would not be much input. You would get input only from interested political parties.

Mr COWAN: I think we would find many members of the public who are interested enough to be able to make some comment and have some input on that question.

I am not aware as to how many regions the State is to be divided into by the Government for regional administration purposes, but perhaps that may be a starting point.

I turn now to the number of seats the Leader of the House determined would be suitable for the upper House. He selected 22. Given that half of them would be elected every three years, if I remember correctly, that means one would need approximately 8.5 per cent of the total vote. On the basis of optional preferential voting, I suggest that that figure will be extremely elusive even to the National Party and the NCP when they combine. I read the Minister's speech very carefully. He would think that is not the case.

Mr Tonkin: You would be surprised how many votes you would get in the metropolitan area. There is a great affinity in the metropolitan area for country people.

Mr COWAN: On the percentage vote obtained by the Country Party in the year before the National Party was formed, Sir Donald Eckersley—

Mr Tonkin: In the Senate?

Mr COWAN: Yes. This is the best example of a party-political vote. Sir Donald Eckersley, one

of the most popular members of the public in the minds of the rural community, and certainly one of the best known members of the rural community, could not obtain a vote sufficient to win a seat in the Senate on a double dissolution basis. He failed to get eight per cent of the vote. Even though attempts are being made towards unity—and I am confident they will go ahead—on a combined basis we would have a great deal of difficulty obtaining a representative of the minor parties in the other House. That holds also for the Australian Democrats.

I can understand why the Government would be looking to do this, because the problem with proportional representation is that we tend to have what is commonly termed a "hung" Council; in other words, the major parties are well balanced and the one minor party or the Independent finds himself with the so-called balance of power. By reducing the number of Legislative Councillors to 22, the Government would have lifted the quota to a level which will obliterate the minor pressure groups.

A good example of this is the Deadly Serious Party which started on the Mornington Peninsular when Sir Phillip Lynch retired. That party managed to get 3½ per cent of the vote, yet its policies included social welfare for one-legged seagulls and its main policy was to ensure sunny weather for each day of the year.

Mr Pearce: Are you thinking of adopting its policies? I think 3½ per cent of the vote is better than you have done in this State.

Mr COWAN: Our percentage would be marginally more than that, but it is also on a State-wide basis and not on one area, and certainly not on a gimmick.

However, I make the point that the number chosen by the Leader of the House was not chosen because it is the number of members the South Australian upper House has. He may prove me wrong by demonstrating when he introduces his one-vote-one-value legislation for this House that he intends to reduce the number of members in this House to equal the number in South Australia, which I think is 45.

Mr Tonkin: They have 47.

Mr COWAN: I would be very surprised if that were to happen.

The member for Welshpool, if that is still his electorate—there have been so many changes recently—

Mr Bertram: It is difficult to keep tally with all the rorts on the boundaries.

Mr COWAN: —commented that Australia was being well served federally under our Federal system. I criticise that comment, because I do not believe it is. As an example, I cite the agricultural industry, which is, apart from the mining industry, perhaps the greatest decentralising industry in Australia, and which receives in direct assistance from Government just two per cent of its gross product.

Mr Jamieson: What about indirect assistance?

Mr COWAN: It is impossible to measure, but, if the member could give some example of indirect assistance, we might find that it totals four per cent of its gross product. The fact is that manufacturing industries in Australia are naturally based around major towns and centres, and those industries receive 20 per cent of their gross product in direct assistance. There may be some indirect assistance, but what is held to be good for one can be held to be good for the other. These are the types of decisions being made by Federal Governments, and for very good reason—that is where the votes are.

Unfortunately I have to agree with the member for Mt. Hawthorn that the Senate has never done its job, because it has never said, "This is a House representing the States and we believe there should be some correction of this imbalance". Because that has not happened in Canberra does not mean it should not happen here.

We believe there is a need for this State to be broken into regions and for those regions to be represented, if not by an equal number of members, then certainly by members who would give a weighted vote ratio of no greater than 3:1 in any area. We think that would be fair and reasonable.

Finally, I will touch on a comment made by the member for Floreat. Reform is a very necessary requirement of our Parliament and the reason must be obvious after the last three decisions by the High Court. There is no question in my mind that the Federal Attorney General will introduce his human rights legislation and that he will have the support of the Australian Democrats in the Senate, so he will have no difficulty in getting the legislation passed through the Australian Parliament. The moment that legislation becomes law, any citizen in Western Australia will be able to make an application to the High Court and seek to have the electoral system in this State corrected by High Court intervention. That is something all Western Australians should avoid.

Mr Tonkin: We agree. That is why we brought this measure here.

Mr COWAN: The Government introduced the legislation because, firstly, it is in accord with its

policy on one-vote-one-value. However, it also gives advantage to the Minister's party because it maximises the metropolitan vote, and the ALP gained just under 55 per cent of the metropolitan vote, yet it won 67 per cent of the seats. That is one of the reasons the Government introduced this measure.

Mr Tonkin: That would take away our advantage.

Mr COWAN: No, it would not.

Mr Tonkin: The very fact that 55 per cent of the metropolitan vote gave us 67 per cent of the seats indicates that under this system 55 per cent would give us 55 seats.

Mr COWAN: But in comparison with the existing system in the upper House, the Government is giving itself an advantage.

Mr Tonkin: Based upon people. What you are saying is that if most people want us, we will get an advantage. That is the way it should be. It is called democracy—quite a revolutionary concept!

Mr COWAN: I am sure the Minister understands what I am saying, but I will get back to what I was saying about the intervention of the High Court. The National Party believes that if the reforms advocated by the Government were in accord with the electoral system we have federally, where we happen to have a Senate which represents if not regions then certainly States, we would have an equal number of members representing each part of the State. We believe that had there been regional proportional representation in this State, there would not be a case to answer.

I am quite sure that, while members opposite may not have much time for them, members in another place will be sensible enough to realise the threat posed by the High Court. Had the Government presented members of the upper House with something which was acceptable and which might have gone only halfway, the Government would have had its legislation passed. However, I am not sure the Government wanted that.

It is my view the Government wanted to present legislation which would be rejected so that it could take the issue to the High Court and have High Court intervention in our electoral affairs.

Mr Tonkin: Untrue.

Mr COWAN: I am reassured by the Minister's comment.

Mr Hassell: At the Australian Constitutional Convention the Premier got up to move that the Commonwealth intervene in the Western Australian electoral situation.

Mr Tonkin: That's right, but we would prefer this.

Mr COWAN: We will see how events unfold and then determine whether or not this is true. A need exists for electoral reform, but I cannot support the types of reform advocated by the Leader of the House in this legislation. I would have preferred reforms that went halfway between the Government's position and the Opposition's position. I am sure they would have been agreed to by members in another place.

I cannot accept the position of the Liberal Party that, after 21 years in Government out of the last 24 years, it suddenly believes a problem exists only with the metropolitan boundaries, and that, once that problem is addressed, all the other problems will go away. That would be a token reform and I am sure the Liberal Party could do better than that. If something reasonable were presented to another place, I am sure an agreement could be reached which would not leave us open to High Court intervention.

I oppose the legislation, and I hope in the short time before the next election we will see in this place legislation to bring about electoral reform which I can support.

MR CRANE (Moore) [12.52 a.m.]: It is not surprising that I rise to oppose this legislation. Unlike the member who has just resumed his seat, I am not convinced a need exists for electoral reform, particularly along the lines he has advocated. Western Australia is a large State with varying populations in different areas. For this very reason, our forefathers, if we can use that term, adopted a system to give the people living in the sparsely populated areas a voice in this Parliament.

The legislation before us is a smokescreen. The Government would spend its time much better by directing its attention to the real problems affecting this State, problems such as unemployment and the loss of contracts in the iron ore industry to such places as Brazil. This legislation is an endeavour to take the heat off this inadequate Government.

I appeal to members of the public to see this legislation for what it is. They have been brainwashed into believing that we ought to have one-vote-one-value, but no-one can convince me that there is any difference in the value of our votes as they presently stand when we relate them to the area of Western Australia and the populations in the varying districts.

The Bill relates to the Legislative Council, but it is the forerunner of legislation for one-vote-one-value. I am sure the Minister for Agriculture

would agree with me when I point out the difficulties encountered by members representing large electorates. It takes me 3½ hours to travel from one side of my electorate to the other. It is not as big as Kimberley, but it does take me that time to travel from one end to the other within the designated speed limits.

Mr Pearce: I had a car like that once.

Mr CRANE: The people in the northern part of my electorate are just as entitled to representation as are the people in the southern end, and all the people in my electorate are just as entitled to representation as are the people in, say, Geraldton. In my electorate there are 31 schools, and it would take me many days to visit each of those schools. I am sure that it would take me less than a day to walk to all the schools in the electorate of the member for Geraldton. This is an example of the disadvantages to people in large electorates; they do not have the opportunity to see their local member as often as they may wish.

I hope that people of Western Australia are sufficiently intelligent not to fall for this gimmick.

Mr Bertram: Do you think they will get the referendum?

Mr CRANE: I do not think the situation will reach that point.

Mr Tonkin: How can you say that?

Mr CRANE: I am sure the people in another place are sufficiently intelligent to see through this legislation just as I have seen through it. Many of them have claimed that they are more educated and intelligent than I am, and perhaps they are. I know what the smokescreen is all about; it is an opportunity for the Labor Party to maximise its vote in the metropolitan area with a view to extending that vote to other areas so that it can govern without interference. It wants to run roughshod over the people of Western Australia, especially those in country areas. The people in those areas make the greatest contribution to the income of this State. That is not because they are better people, but because they are out there.

Mr Jamieson: Do you mean as well the transferred school teachers, the bank clerks, and the postal officers?

Mr CRANE: It does not matter who they are; they are just as entitled to proper representation as is everyone else. Many school teachers contacted me during the debate on the Bill to cut Public Service salaries.

Mr Bertram: Were they from your electorate?

Mr CRANE: Yes, and I have the letters here.

Mr Bertram: So they had no problem contacting you?

Mr CRANE: I was phoned at the cost of a trunk call. As the member for Gascoyne pointed out, everything that is done in the country costs more than it does in the city. It is about time the Government honoured its promise to reduce the price of fuel. If it had done so, it would be easier for constituents to contact their members. We are still waiting for that 3c a litre decrease. I am sure the Minister is still working on it.

Mr Tonkin: There has been a 4c or 5c a litre decrease in many areas.

Mr CRANE: As I have said, this Bill is a smokescreen over what the Government intends to do, but we will not fall for that trick. The tools of trade of this Government should be the umbrella, the thimble and the pea—it is the greatest umbrella trick I have seen for a long time.

I refer now to the wise principle our founding fathers considered when they wrote our Constitution. Unfortunately the Constitution is today in great danger of being eroded. Mention has been made of High Court decisions which can be and are being made as a means of circumventing the Constitution, which is the basis of our society.

Mr Bertram: They are your appointees, not ours.

Mr CRANE: If one has a computer, one can get any information out of it one wants, depending on what is put into it. So it is with the High Court, or any court; one can get what one wants out of the court depending on what is put into it. This is where we are being let down and the Constitution is being placed in great danger.

Mr Bertram: Are you saying you appointed the wrong judges?

Mr CRANE: I am not saying that. I am saying we can get an answer out of the High Court depending on who are the judges making the decision.

Mr Bertram: You appointed them; the overwhelming preponderance are your appointees.

Mr CRANE: I did not appoint them.

The Senate was designed under our Constitution so that it would have 10 representatives from each State. The system of one-vote-one-value does not apply in that.

Mr Bertram: That was for a specific purpose.

Mr CRANE: It was designed that way so that those people would look after the States. Unfortunately they are not looking after the States because the Senate, rather than being a States' House, has become a party political House and members in the Senate vote on party political lines and not on State lines.

If a reformation of our upper Houses is to take place, perhaps we should be looking along the lines of their being Houses of Review where legislation would be reviewed on its merits, rather than their being party political Houses. Unfortunately, as with the Senate, upper Houses tend to become a part of the Government. This is one of the great criticisms I have of the upper House, but what the Government proposes will not alter that in any way. It will only make matters worse for people living in sparsely populated areas. The Government believes it will improve its chances of retaining control of Government in this State. For that reason I oppose this legislation.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Premier).

House adjourned at 1.03 a.m. (Wednesday)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Hamilton Hill: Smoking

652. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Government approve or disapprove of the decision by the Hamilton Senior High School principal to allow years 11 and 12 to smoke at school if they have their parents' permission?
- (2) Is the scheme employed by the principal, Mr Frank Usher, a successful means of educating children not to take up smoking or to give up smoking?
- (3) If the scheme is considered successful, will it be used in other schools as part of the Government's antismoking education programme?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) to (3) Hamilton Senior High School is an innovative high school which provides an educational environment which is different from that prevailing in most other schools.

As a part of this total educational approach, students over the age of 16, with their parents' permission, have been permitted to smoke in defined areas. The school activity encourages antismoking programmes directly aimed at these identified smokers. While statistical evidence has not been compiled, the principal believes these programmes are successful in lowering the incidence of smoking by his students.

POLICE: CRIME

Drug-related

901. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Prisons:

- (1) What percentage of criminals in Western Australian prisons are imprisoned for drug related crimes; i.e., drug use, possession, trafficking, cultivating, etc.?
- (2) Does the Minister know what proportion of criminals committed crimes to support drug dependency?
- (3) (a) If so, what is this proportion;
(b) if not, will a survey be conducted to establish this information?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) (a) Of prisoners received during 1982-83 whose major offence was drug offence, 188 prisoners out of 4 879 fell into this category (3.9 per cent);
(b) in terms of the major offence of prisoners at the census of prisoners carried out at 30 June 1983, 93 out of a total of 1 399 prisoners fell into this category (6.6 per cent).
- (2) No.
- (3) (a) See (2);
(b) I am reluctant to authorise a survey to be carried out on this topic as any data obtained would not add significantly to the knowledge that there is a clear link between drug dependency and the commission of offences.

SEWERAGE

Claremont: Davies Road

911. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is he aware of the situation which has developed in relation to adjoining properties in Davies Road, Claremont, where a small shop formerly serviced by a toilet on adjoining land now has no toilet facility because of its demolition by the new owner of the adjoining land and a new toilet cannot be provided on the site of the shop because the making of the necessary sewerage connection would require demolition of the shop?
- (2) Is he further aware that as a result of this situation arising the Town of Claremont has no option but to require the shop premises to be vacated?
- (3) Is it fact that the Metropolitan Water Authority has refused to allow the problem to be resolved by the installation of a septic system on the shop property?
- (4) Is the Metropolitan Water Authority acting pursuant to statutory or regulatory requirement in refusing to allow this solution to the problem?
- (5) If not, will he please exercise his authority to seek a solution to the current problem by allowing the installation of a septic system so that the shop owners will not be put out of business?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) I am aware that the toilet serving a shop in Davies Road, Claremont, was demol-

ished. There are no problems in building a new toilet on the property but its connection to the sewer is difficult.

- (2) To meet health regulations a new toilet is required.
- (3) to (5) Whether or not a septic tank is permitted on this site is a health matter, and an application should be lodged with the Town of Claremont.

In order that no unnecessary delay should occur during the parliamentary recess I have already arranged for the property owner to be advised accordingly.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: STAFF

Additional: Political Adviser

916. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) What are the qualifications of the Attorney's adviser (external)?
- (2) Where was he previously employed?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The Attorney General does not have an adviser (external). As indicated in the answer to question on notice 540, the only contract employee on the staff of the Attorney General is a Ministerial Officer at C-II-10 level.

That officer's qualifications are appropriate to his position. He is a barrister and solicitor with a Master's degree in law.

- (2) His previous employment was as a practitioner with a legal firm and as a lecturer in law.

TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLES

Licences: Farm vehicles

921. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) What is the reason for vehicles with farm licences being restricted to use of the road during daylight hours?
- (2) In what respect do the conditions of road worthiness differ between those vehicles licensed under a farm licence and an ordinary licence?
- (3) If there is none, especially in the provision of lights, why is the daylight restriction imposed?
- (4) As farming is occasionally a 24-hour operation, will he give consideration to al-

lowing farm licensed vehicles use of the road for a similar period, providing all regulation vehicle lighting is fitted?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Farm vehicles restricted to daylight use only are those which have not satisfied the Police Department in complying with the requirements of the Vehicle Standards Regulations in respect to lighting.
- (2) Vehicles licensed for unrestricted road use are required to comply in all respects to the Vehicle Standards Regulations. A farm vehicle, because of its restricted use on the road, is allowed a degree of tolerance in respect to body condition and other non-safety related items.
- (3) Answered by (1).
- (4) Yes, provided the limitations relating to the issue of a free licence are complied with; e.g., the vehicle is used on a road only in passing from one portion of the farm or holding to another portion of the farm or holding.

WATER RESOURCES

Holt Rock and Purnto Rock

922. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) When were the emergency water storages at Holt Rock and Purnto Rock constructed?
- (2) What was the cost of each project?
- (3) How often have these storages run dry?
- (4) When they did, were they augmented by water carted from other sources at Government cost?
- (5) If "Yes" to (4), at what cost?
- (6) Is there any potential for the capacity of either storage to be expanded?
- (7) If "Yes", have initial surveys been made, and what is the estimated cost of any such project?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) 1 125 kilolitre reinforced circular concrete roofed tanks and associated drains were built at Holt Rock and Purnta Rock in 1935. These storages were duplicated at each location in 1949.
- (2) As the works were constructed so long ago, actual costs are not readily available. Based on current costs, the value of each installation is approximately \$200 000.

- (3) Full records are not available but in recent years the tanks have run dry as follows—

Holt Rock—1973, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1983.

Purnta Rock—1977, 1982 and 1983.

- (4) Water has been carted from other sources into either Holt or Purnta Rocks when the farm water supply advisory committee deemed such action to be necessary.
- (5) No records of costs prior to 25 August 1976 are presently available but since this date the following sums of money have been spent on water carting—

Holt Rock—

1977—\$27 390

1980—\$ 6 235

1982—\$ 3 290

Purnta Rock—

1983—\$ 2 193.

- (6) Yes.
- (7) Preliminary investigations were carried out in 1977 at Holt Rock and indicated that additional storage there would be feasible in the range of 4 000 to 8 000 kilolitres and that the cost would be of the order of \$500 000. No similar investigations have been carried out in regard to Purnta Rock.

HIGH COURT

Government Charges: Ruling

935. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) In line with the commitment by him given in his answer to my question without notice to him on 23 August, will he request from the Attorney General an opinion as to whether or not the ruling of the High Court in the case of Hematite Petroleum Pty. Ltd., against the State of Victoria rules also invalid, legislation in Western Australia affecting—
- collection of revenue under the Petroleum Pipelines Act;
 - tobacco franchise taxes; and
 - liquor licence fees?
- (2) Will he inform me of that opinion prior to debate on amendments to the Petroleum Pipelines Act 1969-1975 being

proceeded with in the Legislative Assembly?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Attorney General has provided an opinion that the decision of the High Court in the Hematite Petroleum case does not invalidate any of the measures referred to.

ROADS

Agricultural Areas

938. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Transport:

- In what areas suggested for release to agriculture as conditional purchase blocks, have road construction works been carried out, or had funds allocated for road construction works, in the financial years 1982-83 and 1983-84?
- What is the estimated cost of construction and the length of roads involved for each of these areas?
- On what date were funds first allocated for each of these areas?
- On what dates was final authorisation for expenditure of funds, either wholly or partially, given for each of these areas?
- Have any roads been constructed in any suggested conditional purchase release areas, in the past six months, to service blocks already serviced on at least one side by a formed road?
- (a) If "Yes" to (5), where did this occur; and
(b) was this construction done so as to use funds allocated before the conditional purchase blocks were designed?
- What precautions are generally undertaken by department road construction crews when operating in areas of known or suspected dieback fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) occurrence?
- Were these precautions taken prior to the recent excavation, by the department, of a gravel pit straddling Bell track, north of the Fitzgerald River National Park?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) to (4)

| Year | Shire | Area | Length Km | Funds Provided \$ | Date Approved |
|---------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1982-83 | Ravensthorpe | Sth Counjinup Creek | 19.5 | 46 500 (part cost) | Works transferred to 1983-84 |
| | | North of Fitzgerald National Park | 10 | 85 500 | |
| | | Moolyall Creek | 5 | 15 500 (part cost) | |
| | Esperance | Mt Beaumont | 31.2 | 274 000 | \$3 000 8/9/82 re- remainder of funds to other works 10/9/82 |
| | | North Munglinup | 2.6 | 18 000 | |
| 1983-84 | Ravensthorpe | Sth Counjinup Creek | 10 | 89 000 | 12/8/83 |
| | | North of Fitzgerald National Park | 5 | 58 000 | 14/7/83 |
| | | | 4 | 44 000 | 24/8/83 |
| | | Moolyall Creek | 5 | 42 000 | 12/8/83 |

The Main Roads Department's practice is to provide funds for new land settlement roads when, on advice from the Department of Lands and Surveys, release appears imminent.

If the land subsequently is not released, funds are re-allocated to other works.

(5) Yes

(6) (a) In the South Counjinup Creek subdivision, work is currently in progress to provide access to a new block on Bandalup Road. This section of road passes along the north boundary of a block previously released which has access on its western boundary;

(b) no.

(7) The department follows advice of Forests Department in areas nominated by that department in respect to dieback fungus.

(8) The areas of new land settlement release detailed above have not been declared as subject to dieback fungus and no specific action has been taken by the Main Roads Department.

LAND: AGRICULTURAL

Release: Working Party

939. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) Has a working party of officers been appointed to assist the Cabinet sub-committee reviewing agricultural land release procedures?

(2) If "Yes", who are these officers and how often has the working party met?

Mr McIVER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) J. R. McFadden, Assistant Surveyor General, Department of Lands and Surveys, Chairman.

Dr A. A. Burbidge, Chief Research Officer, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

T. C. Stoneman, Principal Research Officer, Department of Agriculture.

N. Orr, Senior Environmental Officer, Department of Conservation and Environment.

L. Annison, Divisional Surveyor, Department of Lands and Surveys.

J. F. Thomas, Resource Economist, CSIRO.

The group has formally met on two occasions and discussions have taken place between these meetings.

The member would be aware that the Cabinet sub-committee (and associated

working party) appointed to review agricultural land release policy has invited written submissions from interested organisations and from the public, the closing date for such submissions being 14 October 1983.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Kalamunda: Upgrading

940. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Education:

Has any decision been made with respect to the request made of him by the parents and citizens' association of the Kalamunda Senior High School that accommodation at that school be upgraded?

Mr PEARCE replied:

The association has been advised that approximately \$20 000 will be made available in 1983-84 for essential upgrading. The full effects of the Lesmurdie High School operating as a senior high school will not be felt on Kalamunda enrolments until 1986, at

which time further upgrading can be scheduled as required.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Darlington, Glen Forrest, Gooseberry Hill, and Kalamunda

941. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Education:

(1) How many students were enrolled at each of the following primary schools at the start of the past five years—

- Glen Forrest;
- Darlington;
- Gooseberry Hill;
- Kalamunda?

(2) What is the anticipated enrolment at each of those schools for the start of the 1984 school year?

(3) At each of the schools listed in (1), what was the year one intake in each of the past five years and what is the anticipated intake for 1984?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1) (a) to (d)

| | 1979 | | 1980 | | 1981 | | 1982 | | 1983 | |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|
| | Primary | Pre-Primary | Primary | Pre-Primary | Primary | Pre-Primary | Primary | Pre-Primary | Primary | Pre-Primary |
| Glen Forrest | 272 | 37 | 302 | 30 | 320 | 36 | 316 | 32 | 287 | 42 |
| Darlington | 454 | — | 468 | — | 457 | — | 457 | — | 439 | — |
| Gooseberry Hill | 386 | 42 | 382 | 50 | 376 | 46 | 357 | 50 | 354 | 43 |
| Kalamunda | 678 | — | 626 | — | 621 | 44 | 610 | 42 | 585 | 47 |

| (2) | Primary | Pre-Primary |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|
| Glen Forrest | 290 | 50 |
| Darlington | 450 | — |
| Gooseberry Hill | 350 | 50 |
| Kalamunda | 530 | 50 |

each of the years since the construction of the pipe-head dam?

(2) (a) Has there been any deterioration of the quality of the water taken from that catchment;

(b) if so, please give details?

(3) If "Yes" to (2), is the deterioration considered serious?

(4) What, if any, treatment is applied to water taken from this catchment and is such treatment considered to be appropriate in future seasons?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) The quantity of water from Lower Helena Catchment pumped back into

WATER RESOURCES

Catchment Area: Lower Helena

942. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Water Resources:

(1) What quantity of water was harvested from the Lower Helena catchment in

| (3) | Year 1—as at March | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 |
| Glen Forrest | 34 | 40 | 44 | 37 | 32 | 35 |
| Darlington | 51 | 56 | 55 | 51 | 58 | 58 |
| Gooseberry Hill | 52 | 46 | 48 | 50 | 43 | 40 |
| Kalamunda | 61 | 59 | 71 | 66 | 64 | 64 |

Mundaring each financial year has been as follows—

1973-74—6 443 548 cubic metres
 1974-75—1 978 235 cubic metres
 1975-76—5 280 126 cubic metres
 1976-77—9 165 234 cubic metres
 1977-78—10 730 502 cubic metres
 1978-79—9 321 440 cubic metres
 1979-80—6 489 760 cubic metres
 1980-81—13 562 231 cubic metres
 1981-82—14 527 900 cubic metres
 1982-83—8 344 880 cubic metres
 1983-84—6 614 190 cubic metres
 to 31 August

- (2) (a) and (b) No comparative data is available though the quality of the water being pumped into Mundaring Weir was such that when the pump-back scheme was being increased in capacity in 1976 it was necessary to divert the Lower Helena inlet pipeline to the south side of the weir, remote from the pumping station offtake, to prevent turbid water from being supplied to goldfields and agricultural consumers. This pipeline re-alignment cost the State in the order of an additional \$230 000 based on 1976 costs or \$440 000 in today's dollars.

In terms of water quality in general, recent stream testing confirmed the already well-known and accepted fact that developed catchments contribute more to pollution than do undeveloped catchments. The tests were of insufficient duration and detail to provide quantitative pollution estimates. But as there is a known correlation between development and pollution and as development in the catchment has continued it can be stated confidently that water quality has deteriorated.

- (3) No.
- (4) The present system whereby water is pumped to the southern side of Mundaring Weir remote from the offtake has proven satisfactory to date. This allows the water sufficient time for the turbidity to settle and due to the large volume of water in Mundaring Weir the only additional treatment required is chlorination. For the present system to remain effective it may be necessary to impose more stringent development controls on this catchment at some future time.

HOSPITAL

Kalamunda District Community

943. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What bed capacity does the Kalamunda District Community Hospital have?
- (2) What has been the average bed occupancy in each of the last 24 months?
- (3) What has been the maximum number of beds occupied on any day during the past 12 months?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) 72 beds plus two cots.

| | | |
|----------|------|------|
| (2) Sept | 1981 | 58.4 |
| Oct | 1981 | 58.1 |
| Nov | 1981 | 58.2 |
| Dec | 1981 | 56.5 |
| Jan | 1982 | 56.3 |
| Feb | 1982 | 57.1 |
| Mar | 1982 | 57.3 |
| April | 1982 | 56.8 |
| May | 1982 | 57.2 |
| June | 1982 | 57.3 |
| July | 1982 | 62.5 |
| Aug | 1982 | 61.8 |
| Sept | 1982 | 62.3 |
| Oct | 1982 | 61.1 |
| Nov | 1982 | 60.6 |
| Dec | 1982 | 59.4 |
| Jan | 1983 | 51.2 |
| Feb | 1983 | 55.4 |
| Mar | 1983 | 64.2 |
| April | 1983 | 58.1 |
| May | 1983 | 57.6 |
| June | 1983 | 63.3 |
| July | 1983 | 62.5 |
| Aug | 1983 | 61.5 |

- (3) 78 beds. Temporary additional facilities were made available to accommodate the demand on this particular day.

944. *This question was postponed.*

HEALTH: MENTAL

Hospital: Heathcote

945. Mr TRETHOWAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that Heathcote Hospital has insufficient beds to accommodate all

those residents south of the Swan River requiring psychiatric care?

- (2) If the hospital is now operating at maximum bed capacity, will he ensure that Heathcote suffers no reduction in staff numbers under the Government's one-for-two replacement policy so as not to reduce the standard of patient care available?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) From time to time bed numbers at Heathcote are inadequate to meet the admission needs of the southern sector of the metropolitan area of the State. On such occasions patients from this area are admitted to Graylands Hospital.
- (2) There are no exceptions to the Government's general policy, but in the health field the policy is being administered in such a manner as to ensure that there is no reduction in the standard of care and attention available to patients.

NATURAL DISASTER

Drought: Cranbrook

946. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What date were final drought declarations made for the Shire of Cranbrook?
- (2) What was the cut-off date for receipt of applications for drought loans?
- (3) How many applications for loans from the Shire of Cranbrook are pending?
- (4) When is a decision expected on the outstanding applications?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) 27 June 1983, backdated to 1 April.
- (2) 30 April 1983, for farms declared in 1982. No closing date has been set for farms declared on 27 June.
- (3) Rural adjustment advises that two claims are pending.
- (4) In the near future.

WATER RESOURCES

Ravensthorpe

947. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Water Resources:

What plans has the department to provide extra bitumen catchment and storage for the Ravensthorpe water supply in the current financial year?

Mr TONKIN replied:

Investigations for improvements to the Ravensthorpe water supply headworks are currently in progress. On completion of the investigations, consideration will be given to the inclusion of the works in future programmes.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Act: Itinerant Food Vendors

948. Mr CRANE, to the Premier:

- (1) In view of the facts that individual local authorities and the Local Government Association have attempted without success to have Parliament amend local government legislation to improve the control of itinerant food vendors, and that on several occasions amending legislation whilst debated in Parliament has been defeated, does he propose to introduce appropriate amendments to the Local Government Act to enable shires to control itinerant food vendors?
- (2) If "Yes", when does he propose this legislation may come forward?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government proposes to introduce amending legislation in the current session to include in the Local Government Act a by-law which would empower councils to regulate street trading generally.

ROAD

Rochdale Road: Bypass

949. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Has he made a decision towards taking the necessary legal and engineering steps to build a bypass road to alleviate the plight of Mt. Claremont residents?

- (2) If not, when is he going to make the decision?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Following Cabinet's consideration of the report and recommendations of the task force which will shortly review the options for management of traffic in the western suburbs.

ROAD

Rochdale Road: Bypass

950. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Has he received a letter dated 23 August 1983, from Mr T. Sweet, regarding the bypass of Rochdale Road issue?
- (2) Has he ascertained that the Nedlands City Council is not opposed to the bypass road proposition, in fact it supports it?
- (3) Is he still maintaining that the bypass road would attract more traffic through Servetus Street?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), would he say—
- (a) what objective proof is there for this expectation; and
- (b) what routes does the traffic—which is expected to go through Servetus Street if the bypass road is built—use to-day?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes. There is no question of this, and my understanding is the Nedlands City Council does not disagree.
- (4) (a) The construction of the bypass would require that traffic management works are also carried out in Servetus Street and a part of Curtin Avenue and Alfred Road, which would favour the traffic using the through route;
- (b) many other streets.

TECHNOLOGY

Park: Executive Officer

951. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Has an executive officer been appointed yet to the Technology Park?
- (2) If so—
- (a) when and where was the position advertised;
- (b) when did applications close;
- (c) how many applications were received;
- (d) how many applicants were interviewed;
- (e) who is the appointee and what are his/her qualifications?
- (3) If not, what is the present status of applications?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) No, a permanent appointment has not been made. Dr John Barker has been seconded for a few months to expedite the early planning of the Technology Park.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) When the structure of the Technology Park Authority is finally determined, such a position will be advertised and applications will be called.

WATER RESOURCES: METROPOLITAN WATER AUTHORITY

Fees: Review

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

- (1) Has the review of testing and affiliated fees charged by the Metropolitan Water Authority commenced during the previous Government, been continued?
- (2) If so, has it been concluded, and with what results?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes. Testing and affiliated fees is taken to mean—
- fees for testing for mutual approval of plumbing fittings and fixtures for use on works connected to the MWA system; and
- fees for testing and stamping of the above items resulting from ongoing production.

- (2) The review has been concluded; charges have been increased as from 1 July 1983.

WATER RESOURCES: METROPOLITAN WATER AUTHORITY

Fees: Abolition

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

Would he consider abolishing most of the testing fees (which no matter how high, usually do not cover the cost involved yet are a considerable burden on manufacturers and business generally) charged by the Metropolitan Water Authority and leaving the testing, which really is a quality control exercise, to the manufacturers, with only random checks by the Metropolitan Water Authority whether they comply with the required standards?

Mr TONKIN replied:

It would be inappropriate to have the general ratepayers bearing the costs of testing plumbing articles since the costs of testing are specific to the respective manufacturers and users.

New procedures are being formulated by the major Australian water and sewerage authorities, including the MWA, which will ultimately result in quality control in the manufacture of fittings and fixtures for use in plumbing resting with the manufacturer.

Random checking by this authority is envisaged.

WATER RESOURCES: METROPOLITAN WATER AUTHORITY

Building: Extension

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

Considering his statement reported in the *Daily News* on 1 September 1983, that the \$6.4 million extension to the Metropolitan Water Centre will not be a cost against the metropolitan water users, because the debt would be repaid from country water rates, could he say by what percentage country water rates would increase for this commitment only?

Mr TONKIN replied:

As the member is aware, rates and charges for country water, sewerage, irrigation and drainage are not directly related to the costs incurred, and for this reason there will be no direct connection between the costs of the new accommodation and these rates and charges. The annual costs of the new accommodation will be offset in part by substantial savings in rents presently incurred. The net increase in expenditure is expected to be initially approximately \$400 000 per annum, but the net figure is expected to diminish with time. It has been estimated that after eight years the break-even point will be reached and thereafter the cost in real terms will be less than the rent saved. The figure may be compared with the estimated total cost of the Public Works Department public utilities for 1983-84 of \$83 million.

FUEL AND ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Land: Acquisition and Sale

955. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Considering the Minister's recent announcement re utilising the State Energy Commission land upon which the East Perth gasworks are situated—

- (a) will the land be used for State Energy Commission purposes;
- (b) if not, will the provisions pertaining to the State Energy Commission's power to acquire and sell land be amended?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (a) and (b) No decision has been taken regarding the future use of the East Perth gasworks site.

HEALTH: CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (KWINANA) PTY. LTD.

Waste Disposal: Licence

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

- (1) Could he explain the present situation in connection with the waste disposal licence of Chemical Industries (Kwinana) Pty. Ltd., in particular whether the company is allowed to continue to

manufacture the lines of which it is the sole supplier in Western Australia?

- (2) If not, how are these chemicals, important to the rural industry, going to be provided to the market?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) Chemical Industries (Kwinana) has been given permission to continue the disposal of the process effluent from the plant into the surface aquifer for 15 days as from 1 September 1983. This will give the company time to find suitable temporary storage for the effluent until the construction of the deep well is completed.

The purpose of a waste disposal licence is to control pollution of the groundwater and not to control the manufacture of chemicals. In the absence of such a licence it is the manufacturer's responsibility to develop an alternative method of disposal, such as the temporary storage of effluent already referred to.

TOWN PLANNING

Wembley Downs

957. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Does he know about the overwhelming wish of nearby residents for rezoning from shopping to residential of Lot 111, Valencia Avenue, Wembley Downs?
- (2) Does he know that both the State Housing Commission (being the owner of the land) and the Stirling City Council do support the rezoning?
- (3) Considering that in the view of the residents and their first tier of government—i.e., the City of Stirling—there are adequate shopping facilities for the area—
 - (a) is he prepared to undertake that the rezoning will be made;
 - (b) if not, why not?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) (a) and (b) Many representations have been made to me on this question. This is the first interest shown, of which I am aware, by the member for Floreat. As a result of previous representations made

to me, I am in the process of resolving the matter in the terms of my decision in the context of the City of Stirling town planning scheme No. 2

PORT

Dampier: Dredging

958. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Are the dredging operations at Dampier's East Intercourse Island proceeding according to plans despite the industrial action experienced with Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd.?
- (2) Accordingly, has the largest carrier yet, the *Csishirogawa Maru*, berthed and been loaded as planned?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes, the carrier berthed, loaded and sailed on 7 September 1983.

LIQUOR: DISTILLERY

Swan Valley: Government Assistance

959. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) As the official Press release did not include all relevant details, will he state what funds are being provided by the Government for a new still for use by grape growers in the Swan Valley?
- (2) Was a feasibility study of the project undertaken by his department either for his Government or the previous Government?
- (3) What was the result of the feasibility study?
- (4) What is the estimated annual operating loss of the proposed still?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) The level of funding is still under consideration.
- (2) No. A feasibility study was carried out in 1981 for the previous government. The study seriously underestimated Western Australian consumption of fortifying spirit and its results, therefore, had no validity.
- (3) The feasibility study referred to in (2) concluded that a distilling industry based on production of fortifying spirit was not viable in the long term. As

stated, the results of that study cannot be held to be valid.

- (4) Confidential negotiations are aimed at attracting an industry which will operate without continuing government assistance.

LAND

National Park: Jarrah Park

960. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) What discussions has he held with Alcoa regarding the proposed northern jarrah forest national park sought by the Conservation Council and some other environmental activists?
- (2) Have any discussions been undertaken by the Government with companies or persons who would be affected if the proposal was accepted?
- (3) Does the proposed area lie within the mineral lease granted by Parliament to Alcoa as part of the ratified agreement for which he is the responsible Minister?
- (4) If so, can any portion of the mineral lease be statutorily created as a national park without Parliament's approving an amendment to the ratified agreement?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Informal discussions have been proceeding with Alcoa and Government departments to further this issue.
- (2) Yes (see 1).
- (3) The location and extent of the proposed park is not yet confirmed.
- (4) Not applicable (see 3).

MINING: DIAMONDS

Lake Argyle: Progress

961. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) With regard to the Government's approval for the next stage of the Argyle diamond project, what stage has been reached in discussions with the Ashton Joint Venturers?
- (2) What requirement has the Government proposed regarding the establishment of a new town to service the project?
- (3) Apart from discussions regarding the establishment of a new town, what other

items remain to be resolved before approval can be given?

- (4) When is it expected approval to proceed will be granted by the Government?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) The discussions on the Ashton Joint Venturers' mining proposals are at an advanced stage.
- (2) The development agreement clearly states that the joint venturers are required to provide a town for the project.
- (3) The town site and related issues are the only major outstanding issues.
- (4) As soon as agreement is reached with the joint venturers.

SHOPPING: CENTRES

Leases: Inquiry

962. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) With regard to the proposed inquiry into commercial tenancies with emphasis on shopping centre leases, what are the qualifications and experience of Mr Nigel Clarke which fit him to conduct the inquiry?
- (2) What fees and emoluments will be paid to Mr Clarke for conducting the inquiry?
- (3) What is the estimated total cost involved?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Mr Clarke is a solicitor and barrister with wide experience in aspects of general, commercial and legal practice in several countries; seven years experience in the State Crown Law Department; and other related senior legal positions including a period as acting judge of the District Court of Western Australia.
- (2) The fees are in accordance with those normally paid for this type of inquiry.
- (3) The estimated total cost of the inquiry is \$30 000.

TOWN PLANNING: SERVETUS STREET

Metropolitan Region Planning Scheme: Amendment

963. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) What reason does the Government have for putting off the action to remove

Servetus Street from the metropolitan region scheme provisions?

- (2) Does he realise the resulting uncertainty is distressing the people living in Servetus Street, Rochdale Road, and the many other streets which will be affected by the Government's decision?
- (3) Will the Government abandon the promise to remove Servetus Street from the regional scheme or bring before Parliament a Bill or amendment to allow Parliament to resolve the issue and remove the doubts and concern caused by the Government's delay?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) The Government has announced that it will be reviewing the Servetus Street proposal by means of a task force. Following the findings of that body, a report will be submitted for consideration by Cabinet.
- (2) The Government is keenly aware of the situation. It is assisting by allowing the road reserve to remain in the metropolitan region scheme, pending the outcome of the study referred to above, in order to protect the right of persons affected so that an owner may sell to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority. The member can hardly complain of uncertainty considering the many contradictory decisions and refusals to make decisions to which he was a major party during the term of previous governments.
- (3) All aspects of the Government's action in this matter will be announced following its consideration of the findings of the task force.

RECREATION: FOOTBALL

Finals: Transport Services

964. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will he detail the number of public transport services—
- (a) by train;
- (b) by bus;
- for transporting people to and from the WA Football League at Subiaco for matches during 1982 and 1983 at the—
- (i) first semi-final;
- (ii) second semi-final;
- (iii) final?

- (2) Will he give the number of people transported by bus for each of these matches in 1982?
- (3) Will he detail the number of people transported by—
- (a) bus; and
- (b) train;
- to each of these matches this year?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) (a) Special trains run
- | | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| (i) City-Fremantle..... | 3 |
| Fremantle-City..... | 3 |
| City-Subiaco | 2 |
| Subiaco-City | 3 |
| City-Armadale..... | 1 |
| | <hr/> 12 |
- (ii) and (iii)
- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| City-Fremantle..... | 5 |
| Fremantle-City..... | 4 |
| City-Subiaco | 2 |
| Subiaco-City | 3 |
| City-Midland | 1 |
| City-Armadale..... | 1 |
| | <hr/> 16 |
- (b) Special buses run
- | | |
|------------------------|----------|
| (i) City-Subiaco | 9 |
| Subiaco-City | 12 |
| Subiaco-Fremantle.. | 2 |
| | <hr/> 23 |
- (ii) City-Subiaco
- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Subiaco-City | 9 |
| Subiaco-Fremantle.. | 15 |
| | 2 |
| | <hr/> 26 |
- (iii) City-Subiaco
- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Subiaco-City | 9 |
| Subiaco-Fremantle.. | 13 |
| | 2 |
| | <hr/> 24 |
- (2) (i) 2 734;
- (ii) 3 293;
- (iii) 2 729.
- (3) (a) (i) 582;
- (ii) 586;
- (iii) 821;

- (b) Numbers of passengers conveyed by train to the three football fixtures were not recorded. However, the numbers of tickets sold at West Leederville and Subiaco stations after the football matches were—

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1st semi-final | 1 715 |
| 2nd semi-final | 1 407 |
| Final | 2 726 |

RACING AND TROTTING

Byford

965. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services:

- (1) Does the Byford trotting complex have a first-class track and facilities?
- (2) Is he aware that horses trained at the Byford complex often make up the majority of horses entered at country trotting fixtures?
- (3) Why are some race meetings not allowed at the Byford complex?
- (4) Will he take any action necessary to enable some race meetings to be held at the Byford track?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) I am advised that the track and facilities are suitable for race trials.
- (2) No.
- (3) No approach has been received from the Western Australian Trotting Association. The Racing Restriction Act restricts the number of race meetings that may be held in the metropolitan area, 50 kilometres from the town hall in Perth.
- (4) If any approach is made to me by the Western Australian Trotting Association, or other representative groups in the industry, I will give the matter consideration.

TRANSPORT

Timber: Deregulation

966. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of the Transport Commission's report on the transport of timber?
- (2) Is he aware of the commissioner's recommendation that timber should be deregulated?

- (3) Is he aware that the recommendation is based on the most efficient use of all resources?

(4) Will the deregulation of timber—

- (a) reduce the cost of timber;
- (b) create more jobs in the timber industry;
- (c) reduce the cost of homes; and
- (d) reduce Westrail's deficit?

(5) Has he considered the deregulation of timber on or after 30 June 1983 as agreed by the previous Government with the timber industry?

(6) What decision has he taken regarding the deregulation of the transport of timber?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The report does not embrace a resource cost approach to the evaluation.
- (4) (a) to (c) According to the report, timber deregulation will reduce average timber transport costs. The effect on actual timber costs, home costs and timber industry employment was not addressed in detail.
- (d) Timber deregulation is expected to have an adverse effect in the short term, and a favourable effect in the longer term.
- (5) I am not aware of any commitment made by the previous Government with regard to the introduction of timber transport deregulation on, or after, 30 June 1983.
- (6) I am considering the issue, and I would anticipate a decision to be announced in the near future.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Contract Employees: Salary Cuts

967. Mr RUSHTON, to the Premier:

What is the extent of each of the salary cuts on the people employed by the Burke Government under contract from outside the Public Service?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Persons employed under a contract of service outside the provisions of the Public Service Act, who are "affected persons" under the Temporary Reduction

of Remuneration (Senior Public Officers) Act 1983, are subject to a temporary reduction in remuneration as are other persons subject to the Act.

The extent of each of the salary cuts depends on the level of remuneration in each particular case. The cuts are determined in accordance with the formula in schedule 2 of the Act.

REVIEWS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Cost and Delays

968. Mr RUSHTON, to the Premier:

- (1) Can reviews and reports initiated by the Government cause people to delay their own programmes, with the resultant loss of jobs?
- (2) Will he, in future, give greater emphasis to his Government's taking a decision to implement instead of to defer by further reviews and reports?
- (3) What is the estimated cost of carrying out reviews and reports initiated by his Government?
- (4) What reviews and reports have been initiated by his Government in addition to the 30 already made known to me by him?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Should the member be aware of any such direct consequences, I would appreciate receipt of the details.
- (2) See part (3) of my answer to question 103 of 26 July 1983.
- (3) Some of the reviews and reports are part of the normal work of Government and involve no special costings. I shall have the information on inquiries outside this category compiled and forwarded to the member in due course.
- (4) As advised in the reply to part (1) of question 561 of 16 August 1983, the detail requested will be made available as soon as it is compiled. Staff are fully committed and the task will take time, as will the necessary research associated with the undertaking now given in (3) above.

APPRENTICES

Commonwealth Assistance: Money Lost

969. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

- (1) Further to question 712 of 18 August last respecting craft subsidies, which departments or Government instrumentalities failed to apply for craft subsidies?
- (2) How much revenue was forgone by each?
- (3) What is the total value of the subsidies forgone?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1)

| | Amount to be Recovered for 1981 and 1982 \$ |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Government Printing Office | 48 889 |
| State Housing Com- mission | 19 713 |
| Forests Department | 12 959 |
| Road Traffic Authority (Police) | 756 (approx.) |
| Zoological Gardens | 1 331 (approx.) |

- (2) The above information indicates current amounts to be recovered and as the Commonwealth Government will not pay retrospective claims prior to 1981, information on amounts forgone prior to this time is not available.
- (3) The total funds lost by Government departments and instrumentalities since CRAFT was introduced in January 1977 is not available because of (2) above.

IMMIGRATION

Noalimba Migrant Hostel

970. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Multi-Cultural and Ethnic Affairs:

- (1) Referring him to question 746 of 23 August respecting Noalimba Migrant Reception Centre, have staff at the Noalimba Migrant Reception Centre been advised by the Government of their decision to phase the centre out of its immigration function by 31 December 1983?
- (2) If so, when and how were they so advised?

- (3) If not so advised, why not?
- (4) What plans does the Government have for the staff of this centre after 31 December 1983?
- (5) When will the staff be advised of these plans?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Director, Multi-Cultural and Ethnic Affairs Office, who is the officer responsible for the administration of the Noalimba Reception Centre, called a meeting with all supervisory staff, including the union delegate, in the manager's office on 11 August.

At that meeting, staff were advised of the Government's decision to phase this centre out of its immigration function by 31 December 1983, and that alternative use of its facilities was being investigated by the Public Service Board. Furthermore, the director outlined the steps that were being taken by the Public Service Board, and of a number of options open to the Government. He further indicated that staff would be kept informed of developments, as they occurred, through the manager.

- (3) to (5) Not applicable.

971. *This question was postponed.*

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rockingham Area: Study

972. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Government supporting a regional development study of the Rockingham area?
- (2) If so, who is conducting the study?
- (3) What are the terms of reference for the study?
- (4) What support is the Government providing for the study?
- (5) When is it anticipated that the study will be completed?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) The MRPA completed a study of the Rockingham subregional centre and published a report in November 1978. Subsequently, a Rockingham regional centre development plan, commissioned by Rockingham Park Pty. Ltd. and prepared for the Rockingham subregional

centre advisory group, was completed in March 1982.

- (2) to (5) See above.

BUSINESSES: SMALL

Government Regulations Review Committee: Report

973. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

Referring him to his reply to question 258 of 28 July concerning the small business sector, when can we expect decisions and action on behalf of the small business sector as a consequence of the Government regulations review committee report?

Mr BRYCE replied:

This matter will be the subject of an announcement by me in the near future.

HOUSING

Land: Leeming

974. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

When will the Government be making a decision on how and when the State Housing Commission will dispose of or develop its land holdings in Leeming?

Mr WILSON replied:

The Government has appointed a consultant to examine and report on the commission's land holdings.

The consultant is to present his first report to the Government in a short time and this report is expected to contain recommendations for the disposal and/or development of certain lands including Leeming.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Personal Assistant

214. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Premier's personal assistant, Mr Baden Pratt, is currently occupied on work in or involving the Mundaring electorate, and if so will he please inform the House what Government work in that electorate requires Mr Pratt's personal attention?

- (2) Will he also tell the House whether any other Government advisers or staff have been similarly assigned?

BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) To my knowledge, Mr Pratt has not been engaged in work on the Mundaring by-election. However, I will have inquiries made and, if there is any substance to the allegation made by the Leader of the Opposition, I will report the fact to him.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Job Creation Programmes: Number Employed

215. Mrs WATKINS, to the Premier:

How many jobs have been created in Western Australia in the last two months under the employment creation programme?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

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

865 jobs have been created in the past two months under the Federal Government's employment creation programme.

28 new projects will mean work for 178 of WA's long-term unemployed people.

Projects include developments at Lake Leschenaultia which will create 29 temporary jobs.

Katanning will get \$143 626 for an "all-age" playground.

Mr Old: You can come down any time.

Mr McIver: Would you like us to reallocate it?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: To continue—

Twelve people will work on the project, building about 60 structures for recreation by people of all ages.

The City of Cockburn will get \$50 848 for dune stabilisation at Coogee Beach. Six jobs will be created.

The old Perth Fire Station will be converted and refurbished to become a fire safety and educational Museum.

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Questions without Notice

216. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

On 24 August, I asked the Minister for Agriculture questions regarding the Lamb Marketing Board. As it is now almost three weeks since I asked the questions, will the Minister explain the reasons for the delay in giving answers to questions about what I regard as an important and vital industry?

Mr EVANS replied:

As I indicated to you, Mr Speaker, earlier I was going to seek an opportunity to hand in this letter.

I draw the member for Vasse's attention to the fact that the substance of the answers required would involve the efforts of a senior officer for 4½ days. If the member for Vasse is impatient about that, I refer him to the delays I experienced from the previous Government—six weeks delay on one occasion.

Several members interjected.

Mr Blaikie: What did I have to do with the previous Government?

Several members interjected.

Mr EVANS: I appreciate the member's concern about the importance of this issue, but other factors are involved. I would appreciate the courtesy of the member's giving that aspect some consideration. In view of the nature of the question, the member has asked, I will now hand in the letter.

Mr Blaikie: It still does not take three weeks. You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr EVANS: It took 4½ days' work by a senior officer.

MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Meetings

217. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister For Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Does the Minister meet on a regular basis with the Confederation of WA Industry?

- (2) Are there any other groups with which the Minister meets on a regular basis in order to effectively carry out his ministerial duties?

Mr BRYCE replied:

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

- (1) Yes, I am maintaining good lines of communication with the Confederation of WA Industry.
- (2) I have also initiated regular meetings with the Trades and Labor Council, the Federated Chambers of Commerce, and several other peak industry and employee organisations.

I believe the economic development of WA depends on a solid working consensus and the free flow of information between these groups and the Government.

The previous Government's lack of consultation with groups like the TLC on matters of economic development was a glaring omission.

Might I emphasise this, particularly in light of the hypocrisy which members opposite unloaded this afternoon.

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Boycotting

218. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is Mr Goodchild who is identified with the boycotting of lamb in Western Australia a deputy member of the Lamb Marketing Board?
- (2) If "Yes", does the Minister intend to take action to have him replaced?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) I have not had the opportunity to give this matter any consideration. However, as the member has raised the matter, I undertake to investigate it and ensure that he receives a reply.

TOURISM

Fuel Subsidy

219. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Tourism:

With the Federal Government's plan to subsidise diesel fuel costs to Barrier Reef tourist resorts, will he approach the Federal Treasurer for similar subsidies for Western Australian island resorts, including Rottnest Island?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The approaches outlined by the member for Nedlands have been made to the Federal Government. I have not yet received any positive response from that Government to those approaches, but the point highlighted by the member for Nedlands is a valid one and disadvantages to travellers to Rottnest and tourists using other better known holiday resorts in this State are quite marked.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployed: Number

220. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Premier:

Can he give an indication of movements in the numbers of unemployed in Western Australia last month?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Yes. Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that the number of unemployed persons decreased in both Western Australia and Australia during August.

The decrease of 2 800 or 4.5 per cent for Western Australia during the month was contrary to normal seasonal expectations and contrasts with increases of 4.6 per cent and 11.6 per cent recorded in August 1982 and August 1981 respectively.

Mr Clarko: What happened to the level of employment?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am sorry, but I do not have the figures with me.

A fall in unemployment would be something the Opposition would welcome. Does the Opposition want unemployment to rise?

Full-time unemployment:

The number of full-time unemployed persons—i.e., those looking

for full-time employment—in Western Australia decreased by 1 500 or 2.7 per cent to 53 100 during the month. Nationally, full-time unemployment increased by 7 500 or 1.3 per cent to 605 200. Corresponding movements for the other States were—

New South Wales—(+ 4.0 per cent)

Victoria—(+ 1.1 per cent)

Queensland—(-0.4 per cent)

South Australia—(+ 0.5 per cent)

Tasmania—(0.0 per cent)

Total unemployment—full-time plus part-time—

Total unemployment in Western Australia decreased by 2 800 or 4.5 per cent to 60 100 during August.

By comparison, the number unemployed in Australia during the month decreased by 700 or 0.1 per cent to 684 100. Corresponding changes for the other States were—

New South Wales—(+ 1.7 per cent)

Victoria—(-0.2 per cent)

Queensland—(-1.0 per cent)

South Australia—(-1.2 per cent)

Tasmania—(+ 2.2 per cent)

Comments on the labour market situation—

While the number of full-time unemployed decreased by 1 500 or 2.7 per cent, the level of part-time unemployment fell by 16.9 per cent.

Some of the main factors which influenced the labour market position during the month were—

Increased employment in the rural sector largely associated with shearing and related operations.

An increase in the level of activity in the gold mining industry resulting in further recruitment in this area.

Significant recruitment of operational and maintenance staff at the Worsley and Wagerup aluminium refineries.

Some general improvement in the building and construction

sector over recent months creating increased employment opportunities.

Seasonal improvement in retail sales during August.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Job Creation Programmes: Number Employed

221. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

In view of the fact that the employment situation is showing a different trend from that indicated by the Premier, and referring to the Premier's pre-election promise that a Labor Government would reduce unemployment in Western Australia to three or four per cent and the fact that the Labor Government already had 25 000 jobs pinpointed, will he advise—

(1) When these 25 000 jobs will be provided?

(2) Does he still believe he will bring unemployment in Western Australia down to three or four per cent?

(3) If so, when?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) to (3) The Government, as indicated in answer to a previous question without notice that referred to job creation, has been actively about the task of creating employment. I do not know whether the leader of the Opposition seriously asks me to name a date by which a certain number of jobs will be created?

Mr O'Connor: Not specifically, but within six or 12 months of it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We gave an undertaking in respect of the lifetime of a Labor Government.

Mr O'Connor: You said you had jobs pinpointed.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: When the State Budget is brought down, the areas in which there are likely to be big increases in employment opportunities will become clear to members opposite. It is true that consistently we have set areas in which we believe we can create jobs. Firstly, in the building industry, where there is a marketable product which depends on demand, interest rates are being brought down and job security is increasing.

We have set also the area of tourism and an injection of money will be likely in labour-intensified areas, and we have pinpointed a number of areas in which employment opportunities will be created.

I still say that we simply cannot provide the Leader of the Opposition with a date by which a certain number of jobs will be created. I would urge members of the Opposition to realise that, instead of their attempting to carpet the Government in its efforts to create jobs and bring down interest rates, the State would be better served by their acknowledging that employment opportunities are slowly being created. If we all work towards this end, the unemployment situation will be solved more quickly.

EDUCATION: STUDENTS

Gifted and Talented: Programme

222. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has he seen the report in the *Weekend News* of 2 September in which it is alleged that he gagged the official in charge of the gifted and talented students programme to prevent him from commenting on the Teachers' Union resolution concerning this programme?
- (2) Is this report accurate?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The report to which he refers was drawn to my attention some days after it appeared in the *Weekend News*. I advise the House that there is no substance whatsoever to the report. I have given no direction, directly or indirectly, to any officer of the gifted and talented students programme that he is not to make any statement to do with that programme. I have given no instruction to Mr Atkinson, either directly or indirectly, on any matter whatsoever. The allegation in the *Weekend News* is untrue and unfounded. I advise the House also that the reporter, Mr Alan Hale, did not contact me to check the truth of the allegation or to seek a comment from me. I am told this is a significant breach of journalistic ethics.

I am particularly perturbed that a journalist should print an allegation of that kind without even attempting to

check the truth of that allegation with the Minister involved.

Mr Clarko: It will not matter, will it? You are closing down the gifted and talented students' scheme shortly, aren't you?

Mr PEARCE: If the member for Karrinyup would like me to discuss that whole question, I will deal with it in a moment.

I understand Mr Hale has a child in the gifted and talented children's programme; doubtless his article is yet another manifestation of the unhealthy passions which participation of their children in this gifted and talented children's programme seems to raise in some parents.

I address myself now to the interjection of the member for Karrinyup to say that the Government does not intend to close down the gifted and talented children's programme. The programme was established some years ago in a fairly *ad hoc* and haphazard way, and it grew like Topsy under the direction of the member for Karrinyup, when he was Minister for Education, without any proper check or supervision of the way in which it was established, the basis on which children were selected, and the way in which programmes were provided—and here, I refer particularly to the way in which children were isolated in specific classes for the purposes of this programme.

I have instituted a review of the programme under the chairmanship of the Hon. Gary Kelly, MLC to investigate whether or not the most efficient use is being made of the resources made available for this programme and whether the criteria for the development of courses and the selection of students are the best ones, in the light of the available knowledge in that area; in other words, the review is designed to make the system more efficient, not to scrap the gifted and talented children's programme.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

Perth Meat Export (WA)

223. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

What action has the Minister taken in relation to the request from the Trades and Labor Council to quash charges

brought by the firm, Perth Meat Export (WA), against trespassing pickets at Osborne Park some 18 months ago, in relation to section 82B of the Police Act? In fairness to the Minister, I point out that his colleague in another place has already answered questions relating to approaches made to and taken up by that company.

Mr CARR replied:

It is true that approaches were made to me from the TLC seeking to have the charges dropped. It was intimated to me at the time that the company involved supported the charges being dropped. I did two things. Firstly, I spoke to a representative of the company—I believe, a Mr Everett—to confirm with him the company's position. He advised me the company's position was not as had been represented by the TLC delegation. Secondly, I spoke with the then acting Commissioner of Police to ascertain the position with regard to the charges. No further action has been taken.

HEALTH

AIDS

224. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Has he seen the comments attributed to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in yesterday's issue of the *Daily News* in which that gentleman said, in respect of a submission to the Government by the Homosexual Counselling and Information Service seeking a grant to employ two counsellors, "My God, what are they advocating? The spreading of AIDS?"

- (2) Could he outline to the House whether this attitude coincides with that of the Government to serious social and medical problems such as AIDS?

Mr Hassell: What does it have to do with employment?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes, I did see the report.
- (2) I was very disappointed by the comments attributed to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on this matter. His comments certainly do not coincide with the Government's attitude.

Whatever one might think about homosexuality, the fact is that AIDS is a serious disease which has already killed dozens of people, although fortunately, as yet, no-one has died in Western Australia.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has chosen to make this terminal disease the subject of a sick joke and is trying to score the cheapest of political points.

Mr Hassell: Your grant was a sick joke. It was a disgrace!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition seems to have adopted a policy of denigration of minority groups. This latest disgusting comment by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Hassell: Your disgusting grant. You are supposed to be promoting employment. What do homosexual counsellors have to do with promoting employment? Will you tell all the wage earners of Western Australia who have had to give up some of their pay what this has to do with employment?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —follows on from the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, when he told a Liberal ladies' meeting an unfortunate joke about Aborigines.

The one good thing that can be said about the Liberal Party's superior and denigratory attitude to minority groups in the community is that it will do much to keep it in Opposition for a long time.

ABORIGINES

"Labor Voice" Article

225. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the August 1983 issue of *Labor Voice* which contains a reference to Aboriginal people as "boongs"?
- (2) If this disparaging reference to Aboriginal people has come to the Minister's notice, can he inform the House whether he supports it?
- (3) If not, does he intend to take any action about the matter?

Mr WILSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, of which I received no notice. The answer is as follows—

(1) No.

Mr Hassell: It is there clearly in your party's newspaper.

Mr WILSON: Obviously the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pays more attention to my party's newspaper than I do. I repeat that I have not read the article to which the Leader of the Opposition refers.

Mr Hassell: You will pay for that in due course.

Mr WILSON: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is very keen on telling other people what they should do and what they should not do; he is very smarmy in all his comments in this House. I will not take any notice of what he says, and I will not take notice of his advice. I will simply answer the question put to me by a person whom I shall assume for the time being is the Leader of the Opposition. My answer continues—

(2) and (3) I will check the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and if such a comment did appear in that paper, I will certainly see that action is taken to rectify the situation because I would be as offended as, I hope, the Leader of the Opposition would be by the use of that term to describe Aboriginal people.

TIMBER: HARDWOODS

Production and Marketing

226. Mr BURKETT, to the Minister for Forests:

With reference to the Government's recent announcement that it has appointed a group to report on possible future production and marketing matters relating to Western Australian hardwoods, I ask—

(1) Have any steps been taken to get access to information and expertise from outside the Government?

(2) If not, will the Government give consideration to seeking such information?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) Yes, steps have been taken to obtain outside expert advice in respect of the deliberations of this committee. I will forward the relevant details to the member in due course.

HEALTH: INSURANCE

Medicare: Wards of the State

227. Mr TRETOWAN, to the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

If, as has been foreshadowed by the Federal Minister for Health, children of 14 years of age and above are to be given separate Medicare cards, will wards of the State be allowed Medicare cards?

Mr WILSON replied:

This matter is still under consideration and, when full consideration has been given to it, I will be glad to provide the member with an answer.

WATER RESOURCES

Dams: Storage

228. Mrs BEGGS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Will the Minister advise the House of the state of the hills' storage?

Mr O'Connor: That was in the newspaper this morning.

Mr TONKIN replied:

I thought the House would be interested to know the present state of our water supplies. When I became Minister, I took immediate steps to ensure adequate water supplies for the people of Perth.

Mr Bryce: Nobody can accuse this Minister of being unable to make water.

Mr TONKIN: I have been dissatisfied for a long time with the efforts of the previous Government. As members know, we have had eight or nine very dry years. Of course people expect the Labor Government to be able to undo very quickly all the mischief wrought by our predecessors; however, these things take time. In fact, as members know, we had the driest autumn on record, which gave some indication of how long it can take

to overcome the ineptitude of the previous Government. However, I am pleased to say that eventually, we were able to change the system, and ensure adequate rainfall for Perth. As a consequence, the hills storage is now over 50 per cent of capacity.

Mr Blaikie: What are you doing for country people?

Mr TONKIN: I am pleased to be able to report that the situation in that area reflects this Government's concern for country people. Our first priority was Mundaring Weir. Its storage now is much higher than that of the metropolitan dams; whereas metropolitan dams are at only about 50 per cent of capacity, Mundaring Weir is over 80 per cent of capacity, indicating our concern for country people.

Mr Blaikie: You are going to steal water from the people of Busselton and Bunbury.

Mr McNee: You have no concern for the people in the country.

Mr TONKIN: The present storage situation is very good, and we feel fairly sure there will be no need for restrictions in the coming summer.

PORTS

Authorities: Directives

229. Mr LAURANCE, to the Premier:

As the Minister for Transport has indicated publicly that the Government will act to ensure State port authorities heed the Government's policy directives, I ask:

Can the Premier explain which policy directives of the State Government the port authorities have not been heeding?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I cannot answer the question. If the member puts it on the notice paper I will give him a considered answer in due course.

LAND: ABORIGINES

Rights: Inquiry

230. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to funds which have been offered to groups wishing to make submissions to the Seaman inquiry, and ask—

- (1) Are the funds available to non-Aboriginal groups?
- (2) If so, has any such group been allocated funds?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) In the main, of course, the funds are meant to be available to disadvantaged groups to allow them to meet to prepare their submissions to present to the inquiry. I anticipate that, in the main, it would apply to Aboriginal groups.

Mr O'Connor: What about the white community, who may be disadvantaged?

Mr WILSON: However, if other disadvantaged groups or persons wish to make application for funds, their applications will be considered by the liaison committee established for that purpose.

WASTE DISPOSAL: LIQUID

Midland Abattoir Lagoons

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

The previous Minister for Health stated in a Press release last year that the Midland Abattoir lagoons may be used at some time in the future for liquid waste disposal. I ask—

- (1) Has the Minister reviewed this situation?
- (2) If "Yes", can the Minister give an undertaking that the Midland Abattoir—or Hazlemere—lagoons will not be used for the dumping of liquid waste?

Mr Mensaros: It was decided before you became the Government. What are you talking about?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) and (2) I am delighted to give the member an assurance that the lagoons will not be used for the dumping of liquid

waste. When the Gnangara liquid waste disposal site was closed some time ago, and the new Canning Vale site was opened, the previous Government was not sure whether the new Canning Vale site would be capable of dealing with the volume of liquid waste which was likely to be disposed of there. I am pleased to advise the House that the Canning Vale site has been able to cope very adequately over the past 12 months and that, therefore, the contingency plan of the previous Government for the possible use of the Midland Abattoir lagoons would not be brought into effect. I give the member an assurance that the Midland Abattoir lagoons will not be used for that purpose.

EDUCATION

Expenditure

232. Mr CLARKO, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it still intended to allocate 25 per cent of the 1983-84 Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget to education, as he promised prior to the 1983 State election? I add that, assuming an increase over last year's Budget of only 10 per cent, that would mean a Budget of approximately \$2 600 million, and an education vote of \$650 million.
- (2) If "Yes", why has he decided, as recently indicated in the media, not to meet his commitment made in his policy speech when Leader of the Opposition to appoint 50 additional primary school teachers, which would cost an estimated \$1 million per annum?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) This is a typical ploy of the member for Karrinyup. He quotes what he perceives to have been an undertaking given by the Government prior to its election and then asks whether we have fulfilled his perceived undertaking. If—as in the case of the Perth-Fremantle railway line—we happen to have fulfilled an undertaking, we are usually criticised

for wasting money; if we have not done something, in his opinion we are falling down on our promises. The truth is that at no time was any undertaking given that 25 per cent of the State's Budget in the first year of a Labor Government would be expended on education.

Mr Clarko: Will you give us a year? Is it the year 2000?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: My answer seems to evoke great mirth in the ranks of the Opposition, but that is the way it is. No one—not even those of us who can remember a promise of 100 000 jobs variously between 18 months and three years—said we would devote 25 per cent of the State's Budget to education in our first year in office. What we did indicate was that we would work towards the allocation of this money as a share of the Budget, because, in our view, that percentage was a proper share to be devoted to education.

- (2) No undertaking was given to appoint an extra 50 teachers "immediately", to use the word of the member for Karrinyup.

Mr Clarko: You used the word in your policy speech.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: On reviewing the financial mess left to us by the previous Government, the Government has decided it is not financially prudent to fulfil that undertaking in our first Budget. Were we to attempt to fulfil that undertaking when it was financially imprudent to do so, members opposite would rightly criticise us for doing so. Give credit where it is due. We are prepared to say that the financial situation does not support the appointment of that number of teachers. We realise that it would be easier for us simply to appoint them and escape the problems in that way. However, we have chosen the hard course, which is to appoint only 20 of the 50 additional teachers.