

I believe that answers the member for Belmont and the charges he made against service clubs.

Mr. Jamieson: It answers nothing.

Mr. RUSHTON: There is no doubt that the service clubs do a tremendous amount of good for the community.

Mr. Jamieson: I said that. You did not read that part of my speech.

Mr. RUSHTON: I have already mentioned that all members of Parliament, no matter on which side of the House they might sit, would be welcome by these clubs as long as they did not introduce party politics into their midst. Because of the charges levelled by the member for Belmont, I feel it would be reasonable and proper for the Leader of the Opposition, at the first opportunity, to dissociate himself and his colleagues from the remarks of this senior member of his party.

Mr. Jamieson: You are laughable.

Mr. RUSHTON: I support the motion.

Government members: Hear, hear!

MR. JONES (Collie) [5.37 p.m.]: I would first like to join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to the Speakership of this House. I am certain you will do justice to this very important position.

Before making a maiden speech after winning one's first election, some consideration and thought must be given by the member concerned as to how he will approach the problem. Before proceeding, however, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all new members on their election, and to personally thank the Australian Labor Party for endorsing me for the seat of Collie. I would also like to express my thanks to the workers in the Trade Union movement, to the Collie Miners' Union, and to the Collie branch of the A.L.P. for the assistance they gave me during the campaign, and to say how much I appreciate the opportunity given me by the electors of Collie to represent them in this Parliament.

At this point I think it would be opportune for me to pay a tribute to the ex-member for Collie, Mr. Harry May. He represented Collie for many years, and I would like very much to pay a tribute to him on behalf of the people of that electorate, which now comprises the West Arthur and Preston areas.

I appreciate that my election to this House constitutes a challenge, inasmuch as I follow in the footsteps not only of Harry May but also of the late Mr. A. A. Wilson, both of whom did excellent work for the district.

At the outset I would urge the Government to give a great deal more consideration than it has in the past to the agricultural situation in the electorate of Collie, and to the position generally in the

south-west. There is a very urgent need for the Government to look at the position that obtains in the south of the State in conjunction with that which obtains in the north. A glance at the statistician's figures will reveal that there has been a rapid decline in the population of the south-west areas, generally, since June, 1960. The State figures show that with the exception of four shires the numbers in the south-west have gone down considerably.

I would now like to quote some figures from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics for the period the 30th June, 1960, to the 30th June, 1967. They are as follows:—

Shire	June, 1960	June, 1967	Increase	Decrease
Augusta	4,000	3,243	...	816
Balingup	1,347	1,196	...	351
Bridgetown	3,521	2,802	...	719
Bunbury Town	12,234	15,467	3,233	...
Busselton	6,039	6,833	794	...
Capel	2,010	2,132	122	...
Collie	11,034	8,586	...	2,448
Dardanup	1,558	1,072	114	...
Greenbushes	802	650	...	182
Harvey	7,480	6,594	...	886
Nannup	1,655	1,272	...	383
Preston	2,630	2,138	...	492
Upper Blackwood	2,719	2,237	...	482
Manjimup	11,177	9,168	...	2,009

Those figures show that from the 30th June, 1960, to the 30th June, 1967, there has been a decline in population amounting to 4,305 in the areas I have mentioned, and we find that the population loss within the Collie electorate is 2,448.

We have heard a great deal about the development that is taking place in the north of the State, and the problems of housing, etc., which are facing the city. Very little mention has been made, however, of the south-west portion of the State, and it is obvious that there is need for the Government to have a good look at this area.

The suggestion has been made that the Government should give consideration to the appointment of a minister for decentralisation. The south-west conference and other prominent organisations within the south-west have been advocating such an appointment for years.

We are aware that in one of the Eastern States—New South Wales—a Liberal Party Government—and I give it all credit for having done so—introduced a Department of Decentralisation, which has met with overwhelming success. In conjunction with this a Minister for Industrial Development was appointed, and within the short space of seven years since the department was established there has been considerable activity within the country areas of New South Wales.

Quite apart from the establishment of new industries, greater loans have been made possible. Because of the limited time at my disposal I cannot go into any great detail, but the report is available to anybody who wishes to study the activities of this Department of Decentralisation.

In view of the general decline in population in the south-west of our State, I would recommend that the Government give consideration to the appointment of a minister and a department of decentralisation.

My electorate covers the town of Collie, the majority of the Shire of West Arthur, and portion of the Shire of Preston. It is true to say that all these areas have their own particular problems. For example, Collie is dependent upon mining and agriculture for its existence and, to a lesser extent, upon timber milling; the Shire of Preston is dependent upon agriculture, fruit growing, and cattle, whereas West Arthur depends on agriculture, sheep, and, to a lesser extent, on timber, for its existence.

The member for Narrogin and other members on the other side of the House mentioned that more people should go to the country areas. I agree with this view; but what is the Government doing to attract people to the southern portion of the State? I can suggest one way in which this can be done.

If one looks at the present cost of electrical power, one will find that the minimum cost to consumers supplied by the south-west power scheme is 5.80c per unit whereas in the metropolitan area the cost of the first hundred units is 5.50c per unit. On Wednesday, the 31st July, I asked a question in the House requiring the Minister to supply the production costs of electrical power. Members will recall that the cheapest operating station within the State electricity system at the moment is at Muja, which operates on coal fuel and that a unit of electricity is produced at the low cost of .33c. Yet we have the situation that the people living in the area where the power is produced are paying a greater price for that power than are the people in the metropolitan area.

People living in the city enjoy amenities that are not available to the people who live in country districts, so here is an opportunity for the Government to give some incentive to the people who reside in the south-west by making power available at a cheaper rate. After all, the power is generated some 10 miles from Collie, and yet we have the spectacle of those people and industry paying more for electrical power than do the people who live in the metropolitan area.

The Collie Shire area has many problems, the main one being the matter of water conservation, or the system that has been introduced in relation to the area generally. The Minister for Water Supplies will no doubt agree with me when I say that a vast portion of the electorate is being retained as a water catchment area. Coupled with this is the problem of the forest reserves, and finally that of mineral leases. Eighty-two per cent, of the total area of the electorate, which comprises

some 37,559 miles, is retained for forestry purposes, water catchment, and Crown Lands.

Surely it is not unreasonable for me to suggest to the Government that some consideration be given to the fact that Collie cannot expand. If the salt content in the Wellington Dam increases, more land will be resumed; and, as the Forests Department will not release land, Collie cannot expand and this will have a big effect on the economics of the town.

In regard to another facet of my electorate, I asked a question of the Minister for Police concerning the Collie gaol and in reply he said that this will be on the Estimates for the financial year 1970-71. I would urge the Government to do something now about the conditions at the gaol. It comprises three 10 ft. by 8 ft. cells and on one night the gaol contained 30 guests of the Government. In this gaol, prisoners can be detained for up to 14 days, and yet there is no shower available to them. There are no proper facilities for washing; there is only the old system of washing containers. I suggest it is not fair in these days, with our present standard of living, to ask anyone to stay in gaol for 14 days without a shower being available.

I am sure the Government would expect me to say something about its secrecy on fuel oil prices, and I would not be doing justice to my electorate if I did not mention this point. I am also certain the Minister for Electricity would expect me to make mention of this matter during my maiden speech.

It will be remembered that last year the Government decided to double the capacity of the Kwinana oil burning station and refused, for reasons best known to itself, to disclose the price being paid for fuel oil. *The West Australian* newspaper wrote several editorials condemning the Government for not disclosing the price it was paying for oil. Despite this, the Government was still not prepared to give its reason for refusing to disclose the price it is paying for fuel oil.

The people of my electorate wonder what is going on. The situation is that the Bunbury station, which has only been built for a period of some 12 years, is to be drastically reduced in output in the next two or three years. We find it hard to follow a statement made by the Premier in *The West Australian* of the 23rd June last year when he is reported to have said—

A decision to build a power station had effect for 45 years—five years for commissioning, 30 years for important use and ten years on standby.

As a result of information obtained from questions asked during the session, it has been revealed that by 1969 the Bunbury power station will be operating at less than

50 per cent. capacity. In line with statements made, and undertakings given, in regard to power generation, the Government should give consideration to the Bunbury power station operating at a higher level of capacity.

Why will the Government not reveal the price it is paying for fuel oil? Is it because of some deal made with the oil companies; or would there be a hue and cry from other users if the information were made available? After all, the Government had no compunction about making the price of coal available, so why not make the price of oil known? Last year, the Minister said that if the coal-mining industry wished to hold its own against other fuels, it must be prepared to compete against them. I ask the Minister: How can the industry be asked to meet competition when it is not aware of the type of competition it has to meet? It is clear that some deal has been made with B.H.P.

On the 7th June, 1967, the *Australian Financial Review*, under the heading "Fuel Oil and Coal" published the following:—

Friday's Australian Financial Review referred to what is called the recent "controversial" decision of the West Australian State Government to make the next major power extension in that State by doubling the capacity of the oil-fired Kwinana Station.

The article said this decision was seen locally as a major blow at the Collie coal field, and went on to say that Collie miners were heading a campaign to force the W.A. State Government to publish the price it was paying B.P. for fuel oil for Kwinana.

The pricing policies of the oil refineries have been examined in several Tariff Board hearings and the Tariff Board has reported (to quote from its 1965 report) that "confidential information submitted by the marketing companies show that the actual prices for refined products have been reduced more than indicated by the changes in list prices. It was stated that marketing companies have been prepared to allow large discounts off list prices to defend their market position or to secure large contracts for which distribution costs are low. Discounting is most pronounced in the furnace fuel market . . ."

The increases of \$1.25 per ton in fuel oil prices for bunkers announced last month are evidence that it is not "to secure large contracts for which distribution costs are low" that price reductions are made for fuel oil. It is "to defend their market position,"

in other words to drive out competition from competitive fuels, the chief of which is coal.

The new fuel oil prices for bunkers, for which distribution costs are virtually nil compared to the distribution costs to coal's customers are as follows:—

	\$
Geraldton	17.95
Fremantle	17.76
Kwinana	17.76
Bunbury	18.33
Albany	18.33
Adelaide	18.70
Port Pirie	—
Melbourne	18.70
Westernport	18.70
Hobart	19.46
Port Kembla	19.52
Sydney	19.02
Newcastle	19.52
Brisbane	19.90
Townsville	19.90

The same product is, however, being offered to coal's customers at under \$14 per ton delivered to the customer.

In effect this means that a Governmental instrumentality like the Australian National Shipping Line is being levied by the oil companies to subsidise them in their campaign to acquire a monopoly of Australia's fuel markets.

The Tariff Board's inquiries in the petroleum refining industry before the 1964-1965 inquiry had recommended that the refineries' pattern of production should be brought into line with Australia's consumption by producing some of the more valuable products such as gasoline and less of the heavier products such as fuel oil.

In the 1964-1965 inquiry the Australian Coal Association recommended certain proposals to the Tariff Board aimed at ensuring that fuel oil should not be sold in Australia at prices lower than prices of marine fuel oil (which are bulk consignments with minimum distribution costs) prevailing in the nearest port.

This shows quite clearly what the Tariff Board thinks of the move of the Government in this State and the effect on industry generally. The Collie coalminers and the Collie people are asking this question: Why is this Government adopting a policy which it not being adopted in any other part of the world?

I have traversed the situation in various parts of the world and I find that no fuel other than coal is burned in base power houses. It is all right to say we are moving towards oil or nuclear power, but such is not the situation. I have a cutting from the American magazine, *Time*, of the 20th

January, 1967, under the heading, "Lighting Up with Coal." Portion reads as follows:—

The world's largest seller of coal, Peabody Coal Co. of St. Louis, last week signed one of the biggest single contracts in the history of the industry. The \$500 million agreement calls for the delivery by Peabody of a minimum of 117 million tons of coal to the yet-to-be-built Mohave Power Project in Clark County, Nev., 80 miles from Las Vegas.

Further on the article states—

Coal-generated power costs about 60% as much as that produced by a new nuclear plant, and at least 10% less than gas-oil generation. Moreover, new, extra-high voltage power lines, such as the ones that will carry current 200 miles from Mohave to San Clemente, Calif., have made long-distance power transmission economically feasible. The choice of coal will also result in additional jobs and some \$30 million in royalties to the Hopi and Navajo owners of the Black Mesa coal mines.

This clearly indicates that coal is still being preferred irrespective of other opinion in America.

If we go to Britain and look at the scene in that country we will find there is one of the lowest productivity levels in the coalmining industry, but we will also find that the use of coal is being extended in that country also. A report from the British Coalmining Commission indicates that 4,000,000 tons per year will be required for additions to the big Yorkshire coal-fired power stations under construction; and other coal-fired stations are being constructed, indicating that coal is still being preferred.

A recent publication shows that coal is holding its own in Scotland, where there is a 2,400 MW, coal-fired station under construction that will burn 6,000,000 tons of coal per annum. We have the situation in Scotland that the calorific basis of the coal is identical with that of coal in Western Australia.

The Irish Electricity Trust decided to use peat in preference to imported fuel; and a report I have shows that in order to assist with employment and create a more balanced trade peat is being preferred rather than imported fuel.

Nuclear power is at present under consideration in the north of this State, but I have a report which shows that nuclear power cannot compare with coal. Lord Robens, President of the Joint Coal Board in Britain, recently congratulated the miners on their excellent effort in producing 39 cwt. of coal a day. In this State, we have the situation where the Collie coalminers are producing over 80 cwt. a day.

So it can be seen that coal is still preferred to other types of fuel in Britain. Of course, if we look at the rest of Australia, we see a somewhat similar pattern. In Queensland the annual report of the State Electricity Commission shows that new power stations are being constructed in the north of Queensland at Callide and Calcap. In New South Wales we find that there is a \$200,000,000 power station—coal-fired—under construction to the north of Newcastle. Coming more up to date, the New South Wales Liberal Government has recently decided to extend the coal-fired station at Wallerawang at a cost of \$55,000,000.

There is no shortage of coal in Collie, and this cannot be denied even by the Minister. The miners look at the position of South Australia, where 2,000,000 tons of Leigh Creek coal is burnt per annum. That coal is inferior to the coal produced at Collie, the British thermal unit rating being only 6,500 compared with 9,500 at Collie. In South Australia the coal has to be transported 175 miles, but it is still preferred to oil and nuclear power.

The Hydro-electric Commission of Tasmania reported that oil was preferred to hydro power in that State because coal was not available and seasonable conditions favoured oil. The miners at Collie have complained, and have asked a lot of questions with regard to the Government's decision to double the capacity of the Kwinana power station. That decision left a lot to be desired, and the report appeared in the Press headed, "Secrecy Vow at Fuel Talk." The article—in part—was as follows:—

SEC. members were sworn to secrecy when oil and coal prices were discussed at a commission meeting in the Fremantle City Council Chambers, one of the members said today.

The oil price varied with the quantity used and the public would still have to accept the commission's estimates that the average price of oil was less than the average price of coal.

The report showed that some members of the commission did not know what the price was to be. The article shows a lack of administration by the S.E.C., and I hope the Minister will look into this very important question.

What concerns the coalminers at Collie, generally, is that when the new Kwinana station comes into operation, most of the power produced in this State will be produced by oil generation. The Kwinana power station will produce 480 MW; the South Fremantle power station will produce 100 MW; and the East Perth power station will produce 55 MW. The total capacity will be 635 MW. At Muja the output will be only 240 MW; at Bunbury the station can produce 120 MW; and the

old Collie station has a capacity of 55 MW. The total output in the south-west will be 415 MW.

I suggest the Government should honour the promise which the Premier made regarding the economics of power generation. Instead of reducing the output of the Bunbury power station, the Government should consider assisting the railways and the coalmining industry by retaining the Bunbury station on a higher load.

This brings me to the question of rail freights. At the moment, the cost of transporting coal the 52 miles from Western No. 2 mine to Bunbury is \$3 a ton. Other agreements have been reached where, as an example, bauxite is transported some 32 miles at a cost of 54c a ton. The answer to a question I asked last week showed that the company did not pay for any rolling stock, although it did advance some finance, which is repayable to the company. There is also the position of iron ore being transported for 1.4c a ton per mile; and wheat is transported at a concession price. But coal is being transported at a cost of 5.77c per ton per mile.

I suggest the Government could well assist Collie and the coalmining industry, by allowing concessions similar to those granted to industries which it attracted to this State. I am not opposed to industry receiving concessions, but the Government should give the coalmining industry the same opportunity. If we had the same opportunity, perhaps the Bunbury power station would be more economical and more competitive, and there would not be the need to reduce the capacity of the station.

The Wayne report shows that the Collie line has been a payable line so far as the Western Australian Government Railways are concerned, because this section of line has been running at a profit. In November, 1965, the freight on coal was increased by 22c per ton from Collie to Bunbury, and this section of line at the time made a profit of \$373,278 for the year. Why did the Government increase the freight on coal when the industry was battling for survival? All we ask is that the coal industry be given the same treatment as that which is extended by the Government to other industries in this State.

It is true that the Government is considering a special concession on freight rates for the Griffin Company on the basis of \$2 a ton for some 500,000 tons, provided the company can obtain an export order from Japan. Might I suggest that this special freight concession should be allowed to the State Electricity Commission so that the Bunbury station could be retained on a higher output. Such a concession would also assist the railways. The employment in the railways at Collie has, with

the introduction of bigger locomotives, declined by 25 per cent. in recent years; and this, too, is having an effect on the town of Collie.

The business people at Collie do not know where they are heading. At the moment, there is not one junior employed in the coalmining industry. The average age of the employees at Western Collieries is 47 years. The average age in the Griffin Company is 44 years. Between now and Christmas, 134 construction workers will be put off from the Muja generating station. I have checked with the Commonwealth employment agency and there is not one job available in Collie for senior labour. The question is: where will these men go?

With the general reduction in the output of the Bunbury power station, there will also be a surplus of railway employees in the town. We do not have housing problems at Collie, and I am sure the Minister for Housing knows that I do not intend to attack him on that point. However, we have another problem, because we have too many empty houses. The State Housing Commission is sending deserted wives and widows to Collie, and also wives whose husbands are in prison. This means that the community at Collie has to look after those people.

They approach me, and the church bodies in the town, for assistance, and I suggest the Government should make a welfare officer available each week to look after those people who are obviously in need.

Returning to the question of coal, whilst I have indicated that the outlook for Collie, at present, is not bright, the C.S.I.R.O. does not consider this to be the case, and does not see the position as this Government sees it. In a special news item dated the 8th of this month, the following appeared:—

The C.S.I.R.O. predicts a bright future for coal in Australia.

In a bulletin just published, the C.S.I.R.O. said industry was expected to increase its use of coal by fifty per cent. in 1975.

New techniques had lowered the cost of coal for the generation of electric power and generating stations were likely to take seventeen-million tons by 1975 compared with eleven-million at present.

So it will be seen that the C.S.I.R.O. is contemplating the further extension and use of coal for power generation. I hope this Government, before it makes any firm decision on the siting of the next power station, will give some consideration to another coal-burning station.

From time to time the Government has interested itself in the new developments and new techniques which are taking place overseas. I would ask the Government what it is doing regarding the future use

of coal. Have any officers of the Department of Industrial Development been sent overseas or have any officers from the S.E.C. been overseas to look at new developments in power generation? I suggest the coalmining industry in this State could be assisted by making a bursary available, perhaps, to a university student to encourage an investigation into new developments. By this means the coalmining industry at Collie could benefit.

The development of the vapour injection unit invented by Mr. Fred Kohler, an engineer living in Collie, could have been the means of providing another industry which might have helped the town and district of Collie.

The unit which Mr. Kohler invented has been fitted to his car for many years and has increased the mileage of his vehicle by some 15 to 20 miles per gallon. A test carried out by an authority shows there is no wear and tear on the motor. Unfortunately, nothing has been done about developing this unit, but I hope the Government will do something to see if it is possible to set up an industry to produce the unit at Collie.

Having been associated with the industrial section of the trade union movement, I am aware, of course, that the Trades and Labour Council recently proposed a number of amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act. I hope the Government will give favourable consideration to the amendments, because our Act does not compare with the New South Wales Act. Our Act contains a lot of anomalies.

I had the spectacle last week of an employee in the coalmining industry who met with an accident whilst he was single. He is now married with six children and because of the requirements of our Act, he is being paid compensation at the single rate only. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the matters placed before him.

I come now to the question of the Coal Mine Workers' (Pensions) Act. This legislation should be looked at because when it was introduced the work force in the coalmining industry numbered 1,400 to 1,500. At present it is down to the low level of 680, and within a short space of time there will be more miners receiving pensions than there will be making contributions.

The Act provides that each mine worker shall pay \$2.80 per fortnight into the pension fund. The companies then make a contribution on the basis of three and three-quarter times the amount that the worker contributes. The situation was kept level when we had a big work force, but now the number of workers employed in the industry is being reduced annually. If the pension fund is to survive, then I suggest a scheme similar to the long service leave scheme should be introduced by this Government.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JONES: Before the tea suspension I was speaking of the coalminers' pension fund and the need for the Government, in my opinion, to give some consideration to introducing an amendment to the legislation, because with the numbers decreasing in the coalmining industry and the actuarial position of the fund, the Government needs to give some consideration to new methods of financing the fund.

In the course of my speech I have drawn the attention of the Government to the problems that exist in the Collie electorate and the need for the Government to make an examination of the current situation, because I do not think the position is one that cannot be rectified. If correct policies are introduced and implemented, and advantages which the Government has granted to other industries are granted to the coalmining industry, I feel certain Collie can be brought back to the town it was a few years ago.

I can recall the Premier being reported in a newspaper article last June as saying the Government could not sacrifice schools and hospitals to the benefit of Collie; but I am not saying he should do that. I merely draw the attention of the Premier and Treasurer to the fact that in South Australia the Government is charging 48c per ton wharfage charges on fuel oil, whereas in this State the Government has granted the oil refinery company a concession of \$2,000,000 per annum; because there are no wharfage charges.

As the Government has also granted concessional rates in regard to other commodities that are transported by rail, might I suggest that the same privilege be extended to the coalmining industry, especially as the Collie-Bunbury section of the railway line is highly profitable and, with the added income, the freight charges on coal could be reduced? This line is paying for itself and any concessions granted would not place a heavy burden on the Railways Commission.

I have not said anything about the apple industry, because Mr. Kitney, the member for Blackwood, has spoken on this subject. However, apple growers are having their troubles at the moment, but I do not know the answers. Whilst the problem being faced by the industry does not come completely within the scope of this Parliament, some attention should be directed to the industry by the Government. It should also direct its attention to those engaged in the wool industry, because it is generally known that woolgrowers in the Preston area, especially the smaller producers, will fail by the wayside unless they are granted some assistance.

As a result of the new methods in existence at present, small farmers are finding it difficult to exist, and some

organisation or authority should pay attention to the wool industry, the agricultural industry in general, and also the apple growing industry.

An approach has been made to the Minister for Railways to retain some of the old railway equipment in the south-west. It will be recalled by members that during the previous session of Parliament the decision was made, for certain reasons, to preserve the well-known Barracks Archway. The Historical Society in the south-west has suggested that one of the old "G"-class or "F"-class locomotives might be retained or preserved for historical purposes. Last Sunday a train was run by the Historical Society from Bunbury to Collie. The train was packed out and it is the intention to hold a similar event very shortly.

I have been advised by the Minister for Railways that the considered opinion at the moment is that, due to the cost, an old steam locomotive and a set of railway coaches cannot be retained in the service for such a purpose. This is a shame, and I am sure if they are not retained or preserved we will regret the fact in years to come. Other States of the Commonwealth have already taken steps to retain in service some of the old steam locomotives and also some of the old coaches that have been taken out of general service so that the younger members of future generations will have an opportunity to ride in this old type of transport; and if this Government does not take steps to preserve an old locomotive and a set of coaches it will, in the future, regret not having done so.

When I spoke of the problem of the number of widows in Collie, I did not intend to create a wrong impression. In actual fact, like any other town, Collie is anxious to bear its responsibility in this regard. For the purpose of keeping the record straight, it is considered by those in Collie that we are getting too many of this type of person and if this trend is to continue the appropriate authority should ensure that widows are well cared for when they are sent to Collie.

If given the opportunity, I firmly believe the coalmining industry will be able to compete with oil and other fuels. Having heard my views on the problems confronting my electorate, the Government must be well aware of the situation in the south-west and the need for something to be done with a view to giving new vitality to this portion of the State.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [7.37 p.m.]: As leader of the Opposition cross-bench, I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, firstly, on your electoral survival and, secondly, on your subsequent elevation to the Speakership. Your legal training and background make you well equipped to

look after all members of the House irrespective of the side on which they sit. Like others who have spoken, I congratulate those members who have been elected as Chairman of Committees and Deputy-Chairmen of Committees.

Although I confer on you your proper title, Mr. Speaker, I do not expect you to refer to me as the leader of the Middle Opposition cross-bench. My colleagues on my physical right and left, as distinct from the political right and left, have conferred on me this honorary status.

Mr. Dunn: Are you getting any extra pay?

Mr. Graham: The tribunal is working on that.

Mr. FLETCHER: I also survived electorally against my not very formidable opponent. With the indulgence of the House, I would like to place on record the post-election statement I submitted to the Press. It is a tidy order for the benefit of *Hansard*, and I will read it as quickly as I can. It is as follows:—

STATEMENT by HARRY A. FLETCHER, M.L.A., at the DECLARATION OF THE POLL on 5th APRIL, 1968.

Owing to growing public awareness that the D.L.P. is now nothing more than a nuisance element at election times, support has progressively declined. Officials are now apparently groping for ways and means to demonstrate an impression of support.

Opportunity was quite apparently seen in Fremantle and South Perth, where no Liberal or Labor candidates opposed the respective sitting Members, to obtain votes which the D.L.P. would not otherwise receive. This, as no doubt anticipated, paid off in both electorates, for it is apparent from previous election figures that a percentage of Labor voters in South Perth, and Liberal voters in Fremantle, rather than cast an informal vote, gave their second preference to the D.L.P. as the only alternative, in the sure knowledge that the candidate had no prospect of election. In this manner, a percentage, rather than a fraction of a percentage, of State-wide support, is able to be shown.

My Fremantle opponent, as a resident of Boulder, to the best of my knowledge did not leave that address throughout the campaign, for there was no evidence of his presence by way of street signs or any distribution of election material. He was nominated by an agent a quarter of an hour before nominations closed.

I would like the House to listen carefully to this part of my statement—

I welcome traditional conservative opposition at election time, and a democratic opportunity to obtain a