

halted soon it will have a snowballing effect and we will all be gone.

As a first-year member of Parliament I am privileged to be selected to serve on the Standing Orders Committee. I assure honourable members that I will do my utmost to see that we, as a committee, do not destroy its traditions. I regard tradition and the environment as integral parts of our lives. We must continue to cherish them and never tamper with them unduly. However, there are times when change can be of benefit to all, as has been recently demonstrated in this House.

As you, Mr President, and other long-standing members look around, it would be evident to you that some of your ex-colleagues are not present. One such person is Mr Tom Knight, my predecessor. On behalf of all South Province electors, I thank him for the dedicated work he did for all. I sincerely thank all honourable members and staff for the cordial way in which I have been received. They have made my introduction to Parliament a pleasure.

Finally, I give heartfelt thanks to my wife and my family and every person who has supported me. I will do all possible to bring well-being to the people in this wonderful State of Western Australia. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Sitting suspended from 12.42 to 2.30 p.m.

HON. TOM HELM (North) [2.32 p.m.]: Thank you, Mr President, for the opportunity to support the motion. I thank you and the staff of this Chamber, plus my fellow members, for all the help and advice they have given me since I first arrived here.

I would also like to express my thanks to the people of North Province for their confidence in the ALP, and I assure them that neither the ALP nor I will let them down.

I especially would like to thank all those people, both party members and others, who worked so hard during the election campaign, and in the hot conditions on 8 February to achieve our victory. I wonder how much support we would have to hold elections for the north in the winter?

I am very proud to be an integral part of the Labor team and would like to record my thanks to Peter Dowding, whose talents will be missed in this place, but who feels that he can make an effective contribution in the other Chamber. The work that he did in not only winning back the North Province for Labor but also in

representing the people of that area, will never be forgotten, and must have played a leading role in our election victory. That good work was then built on by the member for Pilbara, Pam Buchanan—our own quiet achiever—whose own work-rate and dedication were reflected in her election success.

The member for Kimberley has once again done us proud by his elevation, and the people of North Province would not take kindly to any moves to stop Ernie Bridge from becoming a Minister of the Crown. We are not surprised that his talents have at last been officially recognised—we have known about them for a long time. I congratulate him.

Hon. Tom Stephens is well-known to this House and it is right to say that actions speak louder than words. Tom was campaign manager for three candidates and all were successful. He knows we are all grateful and will not forget the work he did, not only during the campaign but also as an elected member.

The North Province has a dedicated and hard working team, both elected and unelected, and I am very proud to be one of them.

I would like to follow the lead given by my colleague for North Province, Hon. Tom Stephens, and adopt a conciliatory approach in my remarks and also comment upon statements made by some of the previous speakers. I do realise how lucky I am to speak at the end of this debate, and I would like to speak on Labor philosophy and the need for consultation rather than confrontation.

Having been a rigger for Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd in the Pilbara, perhaps I can speak with some authority on the rewards of consultation and the rewards which have resulted from people working together. If we look at the areas where the widest consultation has taken place—for instance, in the iron ore industry in the Pilbara—we see the effects of using consensus in its most effective form. Days lost through industrial action have been reduced drastically; export tonnages are reaching record levels; and unpalatable decisions are being made jointly by everyone who is directly affected. Sometimes those who are indirectly affected are consulted and given consideration. This is a prime example of cooperation between unions and management, and this has been promoted by State and Federal Governments. It is time we recognised the contributions that can be made by all sections of our society, regardless of our differences, if we are concerned

about the future of our State, instead of trying to score points from each other.

Perhaps I should say at this stage, Mr President, that the word has gone around that I have been a pommie shop steward. Well, the first part is true; I suppose I will always be a pommie, but at least I can now say I am an Australian and I am proud of it. However, I have never been a shop steward, a convenor, or a full-time union organiser in Australia. I have been an active trade unionist during all my working life and I indicate at this stage that the result of my being involved in the union and being aware of what it does has helped me to understand better both the Australian and English systems and also to make a contribution in that area. It is the contributions which are made by unions, particularly in the Pilbara, which affect everybody in the community.

Let us try to look at things in a positive, rather than a negative way. For instance, one speaker suggests that we are governed by the ACTU. While as a trade unionist I may not find that idea altogether bad, I would recognise that one of the causes of our present predicament is our failure to consult all interested parties when we are planning the directions our nation should take.

Surely the ACTU has a legitimate role to play in this nation's future. It seems that there is general agreement that wages have an important place in the nation's economy, so should not the peak council of the unionised wage and salary earners be consulted with the available facts, to enable that council to make decisions that are better for them and the industry in which they are involved?

Although workers may not have a big capital investment in industry, there is the total investment of their future; and, in many cases, the future of their children is invested in industry. A consultative method of conducting our affairs is more productive than our age-old system of confrontation, which has been tried, tested, and found to be wanting.

Perhaps that is the message I bring from the north. For instance, there is great concern over the effects of the fringe benefits tax and Government regulations on small business. For the most part, however, that is treated as an integral part of everyone's lifestyle in the north and, like the weather, it can be coped with.

There is a greater threat to these small, local businesses, particularly in the north, and that is the power of the big businesses which have the

ability to shut down many of the smaller enterprises which have been operating in our towns with marginal profits. For example, the North-West Shelf project has resulted in the establishment of big businesses in the area and the smaller enterprises cannot compete. Now that the big name competition has taken over, the small enterprises find that they cannot afford to compete in respect of the prices for which they sell their goods and also, when there is a shortage of shopping areas or space to rent, they cannot afford the exorbitant rents that are being asked. I just wonder in our society whether that is called fair or unfair competition.

Some members may be surprised to hear how many times small businesses have been helped by union organisers who have had to approach major contractors to pay the correct rate for a job that has been given to subcontractors. This problem of pyramid contracting has been referred to by a previous speaker, but I wonder how they would fare under proposed job deregulation. There was some talk of job deregulation before the election and we already have some effects of that in the subcontracting field.

Many tenants have been assisted by the union movement when they are victims of unscrupulous landlords trying to take advantage of the extreme housing shortages in the north.

Honourable members opposite have been most eloquent in their descriptions of the plight of the rural sector, and we in the north are aware of their problems and are sympathetic. But we are no strangers to hardship either. Mining communities are made up of people who know about suffering, but we also live in an area where many Aboriginal communities consider economic hardship a way of life, and it is not one bit easier to accept because of it. We still have communities without adequate water, power, or health facilities. It is generally accepted that more work has to be done to help our first Australians. I am pleased to hear that aid to these communities will not be affected by the economic crisis we face; and that decision is to be applauded and will be appreciated by the people concerned.

We have been asked which stance on electoral reform is being pursued by the Government. The only answer I can give is that it seems to me to be the one that is most acceptable to the Opposition in this place. Many proposals have been debated in many forums, but if we are serious about reform, then it is up to the Government to propose the one that is closest to the one-vote-one-value which has

always been part of the ALP's platform. But of course, we accept that there has to be room for compromise.

I was interested to hear a member comment that his son was learning to bake scones, when he felt he would have been better off learning maths or English or some other skill that would help him in the job market. I suppose that is true to some extent. I have been involved in P & C activities for quite a long time, and it has been my experience that for the most part the direction taken by the Education Department has met with a great deal of community support.

I was a delegate to the annual conference of WACSSO—the peak council of P & C's, and the debate on our standard of education did not take up much of the agenda, except on how best we could implement the Beazley report recommendations regarding community involvement in schools. That is how the P & C's felt. That is my information and that is how I became involved. I applaud the Government's programme of peace education and am pleased that my son is well aware of the nuclear threat, and how he can be involved in working for peace and in protecting our environment, which our generation and those generations before us have damaged so much—in some cases, beyond repair. Mostly this damage was unknowingly done, but perhaps if we had had the education to understand what damage we were doing, we may have found some other way to achieve our aim.

Mr President, I cannot allow this opportunity to go by without making some comment upon the mindless union militancy that we have experienced lately. If a trade union had behaved in the way we have witnessed the National Farmers Federation behaving, then the national Press would vilify it without any hesitation; but somehow it seems the rules are different for certain sections of our society.

Given the help that both the Hawke and Burke Governments have given the rural sector, surely they are entitled to a better response than they receive now. When will we learn that "jaw-jaw" is better than "war-war"? I hope the farmers can learn from the iron ore industry. They do themselves no credit by this behaviour, and I am glad that the Leaders of the Opposition distance themselves from this talk of defying the law.

Members should be aware of a success story that is happening in the Kimberley with the announced extension of the Camballin project.

This is only a part of the turnaround that has happened, and instead of multimillion dollar projects that have in the past fizzled out as quickly as they started, now smaller, cheaper, more plausible schemes are taking place in which people can participate. They are not fly-by-night, make-a-million-bucks operators, but the people who are prepared to make a commitment to the area, bringing long-term stability. This is being done with only minimum direct Government subsidy, if any, but with maximum support by way of facilities, such as roads and other forms of communications, as well as schools and medical facilities. The people and the Government are to be congratulated on the consensus and consultation processes that show progress is being made in the attempt to bring into being the great potential of this region.

Mr President, I want to finish by recording my thanks to the two people who have been the most supportive and understanding during the period up to now, my wife Edna, and my son Mark. They have had to go through the most remarkable changes, and have been there with me all the way.

I support the motion.

[Applause].

Adjournment of Debate

HON. J. M. BROWN (South-East) [2.45 p.m.]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [2.46 p.m.]—by leave: I point out that I had discussions with the Attorney General prior to the lunch break and he indicated he would take this course of action. The Opposition does not disagree with the move this time because an arrangement was made wherein the Opposition agreed that the Bill which the Government proposes to put before the House is one of urgency. That agreement was made before the change in the sessional orders, but I do not believe that we should take this course of action at any other time because the new sessional orders were designed to enable the Address-in-Reply to progress, and when it is adjourned for a particular day the Government would go about its business and on the following day the Address-in-Reply would continue. I understand the circumstances applying at this time, but I indicate the Opposition will take strong objection if it occurs again.

Question put and passed.

Debate thus adjourned.

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 June.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [2.48 p.m.]: I rise to support the legislation. My understanding is that this Bill may be treated as a Supply Bill and in that event members are able to speak on any subject they like, and obviously I will take advantage of that arrangement.

The Opposition certainly does not oppose the legislation brought forward by the Minister for Budget Management. It simply means that the Government is seeking \$150 million from the Treasurer's advance account during the financial year commencing on 1 July 1986. That will not be disputed by the Opposition, but in saying that I take the opportunity to make some remarks about what has happened over the past few days.

Over recent days the Government has presented or forecast to the public that more and more Government charges will be imposed on the community. I remind the House of a statement made in a document called "People in Business" of 4½ months ago. I quote from part of that document under the heading "Taxation and Charges" as follows—

Central to this Government's policies is the belief that taxes and charges must be kept to an absolute minimum.

Ensure the economic strategy of the last 2 State Budgets of minimising taxes and charges is maintained. This stringent policy has meant that most State Government taxes and charges have risen by less than the rate of inflation . . .

It goes on to say Labor will—

Launch new initiatives for the further reduction of payroll tax.

I point out that that was 4½ months ago. Since that announcement—in recent days—the Government has proposed more taxes, reduced services, and broken election promises. Among the tax increases that have been presented to us are the following: Payroll tax—I just referred to the Labor Party's statement in which a reduction in payroll tax was proposed—to rise by 11.3 per cent; taxes on beer and liquor to rise by 51 per cent; petrol tax to rise by 86.7 per cent; and hospital bed charges forecast to rise by an unspecified percentage, which will lead

to increased medical insurance costs. Departmental fees and charges are up by seven per cent or more.

Since 8 February and particularly in the last few weeks, there has obviously been a strong move by the Government to greatly increase Government charges, despite the comments made before the election and the promises to the electorate 4½ months ago.

I said during my speech on the Address-in-Reply there was a growing tax revolt in the community against ever-increasing Government charges and the growth of the Government sector. All Governments, whether Labor, Liberal, or National Party, ought to pay attention to what the community is saying. Woe betide them if they do not. Those increases will add fuel to the resentment at the growth of Government. An increase of between 45 per cent and 50 per cent in tobacco tax is forecast; it has not been announced, but I understand it is under consideration by the Government. So it goes on.

It is interesting that just before the Premiers' Conference took place Mr Burke made a statement to the effect that it looked as though the Government would have a deficit of \$306 million for the coming year. That is a deliberate distortion and a misleading statement. I was a Minister for three years, and I know how departments work. Mr Burke knows how they work, but the public do not.

A deficit of \$300 million sounds bad, but Mr Burke did not say that when departments come forward with their estimates and budgets every year they always put up a fairly high figure at first to continue existing services and meet the cost of new services. The figure is always pretty high. I have no doubt that when Mr Burke used the figure of \$300 million he was taking the highest figure the departments had produced. The first presentation by departments to Ministers and the Treasury was for an increase in estimates of 15.4 per cent. The Premier and I, and anyone who has been a Minister, know that those first estimates and requests from departments would be totally rejected by the Government which would say a 15 per cent increase was not tolerable and the public would not stand it. The Government would say, "We cannot lift taxes to that level; go away and do your homework", and the departments would then come back with a lower figure.

If the increase was set at seven per cent, which is the estimated inflation rate for the coming year, the Government would have a