

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 18 June 1986

**THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT** (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

#### *Appointment*

The following members were elected to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, on motion by Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the House)—

Hon. Garry Kelly, Hon. N. F. Moore, Hon. C. J. Bell, Hon. Mark Nevill, Hon. E. J. Charlton, and Hon. B. L. Jones.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

#### *Motion*

Debate resumed from 17 June.

**HON. D. W. WENN** (South-West) [4.34 p.m.]: It is a pleasure for me to be in this place as a member of Parliament and to have the opportunity to make a maiden speech. I have worked very hard over a number of years to achieve this ambition and I am sure other members will understand how pleased I am to be here.

Before discussing a number of topics, I wish to express my thanks to certain people. I appreciate the support given to me by my family, particularly my wife and daughters. I am sure members will agree that if one's family is not supportive and there is conflict at home, the campaigns do not start off on the right foot. I express my sincere thanks and my love to my wife and daughters.

During campaigns one often begins to regard certain friends who gather around and assist with the work as part of the family. Of course, they are not in the same category but one friend in particular, Therese Howard, gave me great direction during the campaign. At times when I became a little frustrated she grabbed me by the tail and faced me in the right direction. I express my sincere thanks to her.

In some regards I was lucky during my campaign because I had in my electorate two sitting members who were able to guide me. I refer to David Smith, the member for Mitchell, and Phil Smith, the member for Bunbury. They showed me how to work with and help my

constituents from the beginning. I thank them sincerely.

However, those members were not able to guide me with regard to the procedures in the upper House. In this connection I express my thanks to you, Mr Deputy President (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth), and the staff of Parliament House for the seminar on parliamentary procedure held a few weeks ago. It was most enlightening and a great help, I am sure, to every new member of the Legislative Council. From the activities I have witnessed in the last week and a half I suggest that some of the senior members could perhaps have learnt a little from that seminar about decorum.

I wish to refer briefly to topics related to my electorate, the South-West Province. It covers a large area and takes in the lower House seats of Bunbury, Mitchell and Vasse. Therefore, it provides a number of topics for discussion.

I am concerned about an issue which applies to the whole State; that is, the environment. It is becoming a major issue not only in my electorate but throughout the State. When allowing large developments to proceed or granting permission for mining to commence, it is important for the ecology of the area to be protected. The Cape Leeuwin reserve, for instance, is a very fragile part of our coastline and without proper management it may be destroyed and lost to future generations forever.

I believe the Department of Conservation and Land Management should play a large part in maintaining and protecting the Cape from those who have no care for the environment, not only in respect of the damage they are causing while having what they call a good time but also in respect of their having no thought for others. It may be possible for the Government to provide full-time rangers for the area and for four-wheel drive vehicles and trail bikes to be kept to designated tracks. I am not saying that the drivers of four-wheel drive vehicles and trail bike enthusiasts are irresponsible, but a few idiots will always disregard the rules—albeit some are unwritten rules—and spoil it for others.

I believe taking a full-time ranger from the staff already available within the Department of Conservation and Land Management would cost very little. He would be able to keep a closer eye on what was happening in and around the Cape Leeuwin reserve and associated areas. For as sure as the sun rises in the morning, progress will happen in some of the more touchy areas mentioned, so it is im-



perative we direct that progress in a way that is compatible with all interests concerned. As someone said to me recently, let us not give everything to development and foreign tourists; let us save some of the beauty of the area for Western Australians.

I am particularly pleased with the Government's intention to introduce an environmental protection Bill to replace the present Act of 15 years' standing. For too long industry has held the reins and led us in the direction it has wanted to take, cutting costs wherever possible without any thought of the effect on people or for the environment around its factories. We and future generations will pay dearly for that lack of control. Although I believe this control should have been in place long before, I am pleased that one of the proposed Bill's changes will be that a unit of the Environmental Protection Authority will be established in the Kwinana area. The unit will have the responsibility for the control of pollution in the region, including Cockburn Sound. The intended appointment for 12 months of an industrial environmental expert to establish a detailed mechanism for control of industry at Kwinana is certainly a step in the right direction. The information that will be gathered could and should be used to make sure that the present problems do not occur in other areas, particularly in Bunbury where large industry has begun to become established.

In the past the mining industry has been guilty of a lack of care and a lack of appropriate protection for the environment. The industry has now seen the light of day on this matter and it is re-establishing areas it has mined previously. I have seen some of the flat areas it has re-established, and it is encouraging to see this work. Nevertheless I am still to be convinced that the mining industry can re-establish those forest areas successfully. Only time will tell whether it will be successful.

One thing still concerning me is the radiation level that is slowly being increased throughout the area by the use of tailings as filling. We have seen some big examples of that in the Wannerup area. Some of the companies in the area are aware of the problem and are trying to combat it in their own way. I have read a paper on this matter by John Koeys of Margaret River who wrote a thesis on the problem. I can make that thesis available for anyone who might want to read it. It is a very thorough paper. John is a highly intelligent man who has put his paper together well. I am sure his thesis contains interesting reading for other members

who feel this could be happening in their electorates.

It is becoming an alarming reality that radiation is still increasing throughout the Capel and Wannerup areas. It has not reached the level of being dangerous to a person's health, but it is moving in that direction and will reach that point if we let it. Such is the problem that has been created through the lack of control by our decision-makers of the past. I repeat that I welcome the Government's Bill soon to be introduced to protect our environment.

I move now to the subject of tourism, an industry which is becoming one of the largest employers in the south-west where some of the most beautiful scenery in the world can be seen along our south coast, and I speak now of areas such as Gracetown and Augusta. This further enhances my statement that we must seek progress and the protection of our environment in such a way that this beauty can be kept for all of us to enjoy.

A large portion of this new employment has been found in the hospitality industry and it has recently been shown that a large number of people will be employed at the Lord Forrest, which is soon opening in Bunbury; and the newly decorated Margaret River Hotel has added further staff and is a credit to its owners. There are older hotels in Busselton which are being bought and upgraded and all this means a continued increase in staff required. This is very encouraging.

The wine industry is becoming a tourist attraction itself; it is expanding at a fast rate. It is forever looking for people to work on a seasonal basis because of its picking requirements, and this seems to coordinate with the tourism industry.

Throughout the south-west coast area we have many caravan parks and camping sites, most of which are seasonal operations with the exception of a few which are capable of handling some of the permanent residents.

I feel a change in the route of Highway 1 would help the tourism industry, greatly enabling it to continue its contribution to employment on a long-term basis instead of under the present system. At present people are employed on a part-time basis, and when the season finishes they look for work elsewhere or go on the dole.

I do not suggest lightly the change of Highway 1 from its existing route to follow the Bussell Highway. I believe that people in their own minds think that because the existing



route is classified as No. 1, that is the most scenic route to take, when in fact the most scenic route is along the south coast. Obviously this remark will stir up a few people's thinking, but that is how I feel about the subject. I will be approaching the Minister responsible for this very subject at a later date. I should add that I have the full support of the local people, particularly those in the Busselton region through to Margaret River and Augusta. They are very keen to see the route changed through their area.

I move on now to discuss the policies of the Burke Government. Since being first elected in 1983 the Burke Government has seen WA, and in particular Bunbury, flourish. There is no doubt in my mind that one of the major successes of the Burke Government in that area is its decentralisation programme and the creation of the South West Development Authority in 1983, which has helped to formalise this decentralisation and has really put Bunbury on the map in the three years the authority has been in existence. One cannot speak too highly of the work carried out by Dr Manea and Kevin Strapp. Through their efforts immense benefit has already come to the south-west.

One benefit has been the creation of the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education. This has created in the south-west region a great feeling, particularly amongst parents, because they know their children can get an advanced education without having to send them to the metropolitan area. Their children can now receive that further education in their own area. This has meant cost savings to these families by not having to have a child educated in Perth.

Another new development concerns the old rail reserve, something that has been the subject of argument since 1926. A lot of previous Governments and councils made a lot of promises to the people about this old rail reserve. The last promise was made by Ray O'Connor when he was Premier. The people were told then that the railway would be removed from the centre of Bunbury within 10 to 15 years. A year and a half later the O'Connor Government was put into Opposition and the Burke Government was in office. Within 12 months the people were told that the old rail reserve could be shifted out of the city centre.

That has now occurred and the new developments on the old reserve are expanding. A guarantee has been given to a major shopping complex that space will be available for it in

the area of the old reserve. The whole area will become aesthetically appealing to everyone.

The redevelopment has allowed the redirection of traffic away from the city centre, allowing a better flow of traffic and easier access to all the shopping facilities. It also combines with various gardens which will give the people of Bunbury, once they have done their shopping, a place to visit after a hectic day so that they can relax on the foreshore with their children and perhaps stay there for the rest of the day.

Some people will argue with me, but I believe the siting of the new railway station in Bunbury is ideal. It is very central to more areas than was the case when it was in the city centre. It is ironic that most of the people complaining about the siting of the new station are those who in the past caught the train at the old railway station and then got a taxi out to where the new station is. They seem to think that it is their right still to catch a taxi to these areas. But perhaps they are learning.

Public transport is available at the new station. The buses are running extremely well and they run on a similar basis to the buses servicing the East Perth station. No-one gets a free bus ride into Perth, and the same situation applies in Bunbury. Taxis are also available. The parking facilities at the new station are a big improvement on the facilities that were available at the old station.

The new rapid rail service will be ready for use around October, according to what I was told today.

I am looking forward to the establishment of that service. It is a two-hour train trip from Bunbury to Perth. I drive up here thinking I should be on the plane or that I should be coming up with David Smith or Phil Smith so that I can get some work done; but the train will alleviate that problem and make things a lot easier for me.

The level of Government-generated economic prosperity in Bunbury is quite evident. The "Bunbury 2000" decentralisation project has injected an air of confidence into the area, and there has been a substantial increase in the number and value of new buildings being constructed, the number of new businesses coming to town, and the number of developers seeking information from the South West Development Authority as to how they can invest in the region.

In the central Bunbury district it is almost impossible to get any floor space other than upstairs. I know for a fact because I looked around for an office. That is indicative of the demand in Bunbury at the moment. Employment has been boosted by State and Federal Government initiatives such as the Community Employment Programme, Westrek, Skills West, and the new enterprise scheme. As a result the unemployment rate in the area has been steadily dropping. Hon. Vic Ferry might argue with me about that, but he can attack me later.

I would like to refer now to a body for which I have great regard, the Bunbury Port Authority. Since I joined the board in 1984 I have found it to be a very educational period. Under the chairmanship of Mr John Willinge the port is one of the few making a profit along our coastline. However, I must admit it was not all peaches and cream with the authority having its first dispute in over 70 years of its existence. The dispute got nasty at times, and like all disputes of that kind mistakes were made on both sides and absolutely no-one came out a winner. I believe things have now settled back to a good working relationship between all concerned and the port is getting on with the job.

During the past 12 years, as a result of declining markets and containerisation, there has been a major shift in the pattern of trade through Bunbury from the export of timber, apples, and bagged minerals, towards bulk cargoes such as ilmenite, zircon, woodchips and alumina. Considerable investment and development during this period has enabled the port to efficiently meet the new demands.

Some of the imports now going through Bunbury are caustic soda, petroleum products, phosphorous rock, sulphur, chemical fertiliser, vegetable oils, formaldehyde resin, and general cargo. The exports include alumina, which accounts for 2.2 million tonnes per annum; mineral sands; woodchips; wheat; oats; timber; coal and clay; and general cargo. The total trade in the year to 30 June 1985 was 4.6 million tonnes and the total number of vessels handled was 233.

At this stage 102 men are employed there with further indirect port-related employment in shipping agencies, stevedoring companies, customs, providores, importers and exporters, transport, and other back-up facilities. That alone runs to at least another 100 people. Ten unions are established in the port in relation to port activities, whereas elsewhere in Australia it is felt the waterfront would be better served

industrially by a lesser number of unions. This aspect is being studied by the unions themselves, employers, and Government industrial officers. With the exception of the serious inter-union dispute during 1985, the port has been outstanding in Australia for 75 years for having a good employer-union relationship.

Over the past 20 years there has been a dramatic change from physical handling of cargoes and port maintenance to mechanisation, containerisation, and unitisation in cargo handling and the use of sophisticated equipment, and in engineering activities such as the dredging and construction of port facilities. The ships calling at the port have undergone many technical improvements, in particular in cargo handling and stowage. The derricks and winches have been replaced by highly efficient ships' cranes or gantries. Square and easily accessible holds have contributed to greatly improved handling of cargoes. This in turn has contributed to considerable changes in local working conditions.

The number of waterside workers employed in stevedoring operations in the past 20 years has declined unfortunately by 80 per cent while tonnage handled has increased by 400 per cent. As an example of the change, 20 years ago it took 12 men eight hours to load 1 200 tonnes of ilmenite; now it takes two men two hours.

Although the number of workers has decreased the duties and responsibilities have increased considerably. These include forklift and front-end loader driving, and handling of grain and woodchip bulk loaders. There have been considerable improvements in working conditions such as dust control provisions, provision of first-aid facilities, industrial clothing, and various training schemes, and staff amenities are also of a high standard.

One of my pet interests is the environment, and most people would realise that around ports anywhere in Australia there is a lot of dead land and what could be called "dirty" areas. The Bunbury Port Authority has an intimate and independent relationship with the City of Bunbury and the hinterland and plays a major part in deliberations and planning by the port administration. As a contribution, and to encourage tourism, access to the port area and the wharves is kept open and visits are encouraged. In addition the authority has embarked on a programme of environmental improvements with particular attention to upgrading port roads, beaches, the wharf, and parking areas, the landscaping of port entrances and the planting of numerous trees.



There is a small park at the beginning of the inner harbour which has been developed by the staff and the office of the Bunbury Port Authority. It is one of those little parks which people seem to be attracted to. I do not think I have seen a weekend yet, other than a wet one, when there has not been someone there using the barbecues and facilities. This complex has a complete recreation area and it has been established for the public with barbecues and children's playgrounds and bird islands. I do not know how many members have been to Bunbury recently or can recall the old jetty baths, but that area is being redeveloped by putting a brick wall along the edge of the embankment and rebuilding it. That will also greatly enhance the area.

The authority will repair and maintain the historic Leschenault homestead, and maintain the lawns and surroundings. I know that is something that Phil Smith and David Smith have worked towards with the encouragement of all members of the board and all concerned. That property is being looked after and the authority is doing a good job. In its budget the port authority made a reservation of \$90 000 per annum solely for environmental improvements and public relations. It does show the authority is dinkum about what it is doing.

During my time on the board we have had some lengthy discussions and they have not always been good ones; some have been pretty heated at times. But with other members of the board such as Loui Tuia, Ross Rancon and Colin Ganfield, and the managing secretary, Brian Cunningham, we have always been able to reach consensus, and always for the better of the Port of Bunbury.

There is also a move afoot in Bunbury to get the live sheep trade put through the port. Some members representing the Fremantle area might suddenly blink and say, "Hang on!", but it is happening, and I notice someone asked the Minister the other day what would happen with the sheep during the America's Cup period. I suggest to the Minister that we support Bunbury's campaign to have the live sheep trade shifted down there.

I want to turn now to some wider issues affecting the State. There is a concern in the community that crimes of violence are on the increase. I know that the Opposition would have us believe that all is doom and gloom and we should return to the days of the lash and long gaol sentences, even for minor crimes. It seems ironic that innocent citizens can be subject to horrifically violent beatings, rape, or torture,

and the assailant can be convicted and given a sentence which often is substantially reduced for good behaviour.

It appears that too often the concerns of the victim are overlooked. I do not support long gaol sentences with hard labour for relatively minor crimes, but it is time we made the punishment fit the crime. The death penalty has been abolished and I agree with this, but it has created problems regarding those people who are convicted of crimes where once the death penalty applied. There is a need to increase penalties—both fines and sentences—to reflect the community's concern about what is and is not justice. A ludicrous situation exists when a person can be heavily fined or gaoled for crimes against property, stealing, or misappropriation of money, but depriving a person of his freedom and dignity or physically damaging a person results in relatively minor sentences.

The public are dismayed at the lenient sentences handed out to criminals who are convicted of crimes of violence. I do not blame the judges because they can only judge on the evidence presented to them and are often restricted by the circumstances of the crime and the penalties allowed.

At the same time, there is a perceived need for an increase in police presence within the community and I commend the Government and the Police Force for their efforts to upgrade the image of the Police Force. For too long we have allowed the media to reinforce the feeling among our youth that police should be labelled as "pigs" and should not be trusted. I do not agree with this attitude which seems to prevail among our youth. We have lived in an American fantasy land of heroes being able to break the law and show up the police as being unintelligent. The images portrayed by "Mr T" and "Rambo"—that one should take the law into one's own hands—are not what we should be promoting.

It has been observed that a significant way to reduce crime is to have reasonable police presence. This can be done by increasing the number of police who can be seen by the public as being actively on duty. In the old days the local policeman rode his bike around the town and undertook regular patrols on foot. Probably some of the older members in this House today would remember that. The local people knew the policeman personally and were reassured by the knowledge that he knew what was happening in their town. He had contact with the populace and many a juvenile criminal's career was stopped by a quiet word



to the parents before the action went too far. Another remedy which did help in those days was a swift application of the boot to the rear! These days if a constable tried that action he would find himself up on a charge of assault. The kids seem to know the law better than some adults.

A traffic police car parked at the side of a busy road will have a greater effect in slowing traffic and restoring highway order than a traffic car parked on a long stretch of road booking drivers who have exceeded the speed limit. I do not condone the fact that people should be able to speed anywhere above the law, but there are times where the sight of a traffic policeman would be more alarming to a driver.

I give full marks to the police for their Blue Light Discos, which are having a huge effect on the youth of today, and give parents peace of mind. The children have somewhere to go where they can enjoy themselves and, at the same time, they see policemen as real people with concern for their safety and security. I hope that all members of the public will continue to support the police and help them in their vital and difficult job.

I see a need for recruiting extra police in order that they can maintain their visual presence. I am happy to say that this Government has increased the presence of police in public areas.

I refer now to some statistics which show that 56 police are stationed in the Bunbury area, and this includes the superintendent, chief inspector and the senior constables. Eleven policemen are stationed in Busselton including the senior sergeant, J. Willis. Five policemen are stationed at Margaret River and they serve the Augusta area also. A temporary police facility operates in Augusta during the Christmas and Easter holiday periods. I find that inadequate because Augusta is quite a distance from Margaret River and if an incident occurred it would take some time before a police officer arrived at the scene. I have spoken to the Minister concerned and he has told me that a permanent police officer and quarters have been approved and construction will commence when funds become available. I asked him to make sure that the funds became available as soon as possible. He did not give me a guarantee as to when construction will commence, but I hope that it is at the end of this year.

I did intend to speak briefly on electoral reform, but the subject has already been covered by those members who have spoken previously and, no doubt, will be covered by other speakers who will be able to cover the subject much better than I would. I do make the point that there is a need for electoral reform in this State. I did believe that this State has been registered second only to Queensland as the worst gerrymandered State in Australia. However, I have been advised that I was wrong because it is the worst gerrymandered State of any parliamentary system in the world. It is not a situation of which any Western Australian could be proud. Opposition members, as few as they are, should be able to see that it is time for a change. I do not wish to go any further on this subject except to say that I hope the Opposition members, the members of the National Party—who tell me they are intelligent members—and not forgetting the leader of the Independents, will see that a change is needed now.

I hope that I have not bored members too much during my maiden speech, but I refer to the following quote from my colleague, Robert Hetherington, who is not present at the moment—

I am truly not here to entertain you, but  
I am here to enlighten you.

I hope that that is what I have just done.

[Applause.]

[Questions taken.]

**HON. E. J. CHARLTON** (Central) [5.18 p.m.]: I would like firstly to congratulate the people who have been elected to this House and to another place to represent their various electorates. Each new member who has been elected for the term of this Parliament comes here with a great deal of enthusiasm to represent the people who elected him.

I also congratulate those new members who have made their maiden speeches, especially the last speaker, Hon. D. W. Wenn. His remarks about courts and the police were very apt and I am sure would have the wholehearted support of the majority of members present.

I will begin my remarks on a point which is obvious to those people who do not live in the metropolitan area at this time, and that is the rural crisis. Everything that needs to be said probably has been said. Right across the nation varying opinions about the rural crisis have been put forward. Indeed, some people—including economists such as David Clark and others—have stated that it is the greatest con of