

members will realise, when we reach the stage of having proper representation in local government elections, the Local Government Association will be changed from a Liberal club to a truly representative club.

In conclusion I refer back to the issue on which I spoke at the outset of my speech. The main reason I rose to my feet tonight was to speak on the subject of education. Once again I say that I have no regrets in having made the assertion I did make, because I want the Minister and the department to have every opportunity to show the members of this House and the public that they know where they are going, and that they are dealing with matters in their right priority and so tell the people what is happening. I therefore sincerely hope the Minister will take notice of the remarks I have made.

**MR GREWAR (Roe) [8.52 p.m.]**: Mr Speaker, I wish to join with my fellow members in congratulating you on your promotion to your high office. Your impartiality has already been clearly demonstrated.

My congratulations are also extended to members elected to the Parliament on both sides of the House, to the Premier and Cabinet, to the Leader of the Opposition and his shadow Ministers. I trust that this Parliament, regardless of different ideologies of the parties, will achieve much for the good of Western Australia.

We are all here because of our beliefs, and our desire to implement changes for the good of the people of this great State.

I have grown up in the free enterprise system and believe in it. It is a system which has developed this country to the status of a great nation. To me it represents the rights of the individual to freedom, justice and self fulfilment. I will challenge any system of Government that takes away these rights.

I wish recorded my appreciation of the former member for Roe (Mr Bill Young). During his seven years in this House he worked hard for the people in the electorate and brought about many improvements to their way of life.

My thanks are extended to the Hon. David Wordsworth for his help and encouragement prior to and since my election to Parliament.

Tonight I wish to acquaint the House with problems which exist in my electorate and to inform members that, by virtue of our remote location and recent development, our problems are somewhat different from those of other areas.

During my address I wish to highlight many aspects of specific concern to the people I represent and would hope that this Government will take some cognisance of what I have to say.

There have been many problems in Roe that have been shelved by Governments and it is my constituents' wish that these be brought to the notice of the Government.

The Roe electorate comprises the Shires of Gnowangerup, Ravensthorpe, Lake Grace, Kent, and Esperance. It covers a total area of 27 000 square miles, approximately 300 miles long by 90 miles wide, with a population of 15 379.

A small population no doubt by comparison with metropolitan electorates, but what we lack in numbers we make up in quality—the quality of the rural Australian citizen now fast disappearing as our society becomes more urbanised; citizens who have taken up the challenge to move to frontier country to develop new farms, new industries and new communities.

Because the area is mainly heath and mallee land, it had largely been neglected for agriculture until recent times. Scientists of the Department of Agriculture and enterprising farmers only 20 years ago took up the challenge to pioneer the development of this inhospitable country. In these 20 years the transformation has been spectacular.

A tribute must be paid to the Brand-Court Government for taking the bold and progressive step of releasing vast areas of virgin farm lands during its term of office. Much of this was in the Roe electorate. It was because of that Government's enthusiasm that the area today is so soundly based and thriving.

In retrospect, the area has had a most exciting history and the challenge has enriched the lives of the people who make up the community. It has been an achievement for science, for the fortitude, courage and determination of the people who pitted themselves against a hostile environment. There have been stories of success and stories of failure—people with very limited means, people with fortunes, people from all walks of life, bus drivers, wharfies to presidents of American banks have been involved in this great development.

As I started out to say, however, we have problems—big problems yet to face. It has been interesting to hear speakers make reference to small sections of their electorates not having deep sewerage. We have only one small town sewered. Most of the area does not receive TV.

Electricity—for years considered so much a part of the life of cities or older areas of the State—is a fairly recent introduction to our area. There are still towns without power supplies, where Tilley lamps still provide illumination.

A considerable number of our towns do not have reticulated water. Telephones are not available to all settlers and, when installed, can cost the subscriber a connection fee as high as \$4 000 to \$5 000. Hospital services are available at three



centres up to 120 miles away. Apart from Esperance the nearest doctor is at Gnowangerup—a distance of 200 miles.

One high school with an associated hostel serves the educational needs of the area. Many farmers still live in sheds in conditions city health officers would condemn.

As can be appreciated, the people of this electorate have endured many hardships to pioneer the region. Their privations have made them more thoughtful of their fellows. They are people who do not condone strikes or slow-downs; people with a great community spirit who provide their own services, recreation, and other amenities. They are people I am proud to represent.

Urbanisation has done much to destroy the quality of life of Australians. The basic ingredients that historians and writers tell us was once Australia have largely gone.

The electorate is essentially rural in character. It supports one major centre, the Port of Esperance, and 12 small towns. There are a few industries, in the main servicing agriculture. Our main enterprises are cereal growing and livestock raising. We also support small fishing and mining industries.

The fortunes of agriculture in the past 10 years are well known to members. Since 1965 the prices for our products fell continually until 1972-73. Survival of farmers has depended on improved efficiency and technology. It is worthy of mention that per unit of labour input, we are the most efficient agricultural country in the world. The year 1972-73 saw a dramatic change of fortune. Farmers who took advantage of the improved cash position paid off some of their accumulated mortgages and re-tooled their equipment. But the holiday is now over. We are entering a major recession in prices for our products.

I do not think the community at large is yet fully aware of the seriousness of the present situation. The downturn of prices for wool and meat places farmers in a worse position than in 1970—a time when many left the land. If this downward trend continues for very long, or costs continue to escalate, the effect will flow on to the entire community. As a nation we are still vitally dependent on agricultural income.

The agricultural industry deserves some consideration by the Government for the following reasons—

- (1) This industry bears the main brunt of tariff impositions in order to support our less efficient secondary industries;
- (2) it provides goods to the Australian consumer at a cheaper price than could be obtained on world markets;

(3) it sells its surplus products in a market place supplied by other countries heavily subsidised to produce similar goods; and

(4) it bears big inbuilt freight costs to these market places.

To compete profitably we must of necessity be efficient in our production and marketing. We need production incentives—not handouts. In the national interest it is better for farmers to receive a super subsidy than to have to restrict production. Let us get one fact straight: the super subsidy is a subsidy to the consumer because it is passed on in cheaper products.

By the foregoing remarks I have tried to justify the need for the Government to watch closely the prosperity of agriculture. It is vital to our economy that this industry be not unjustly discriminated against. I genuinely believe that this has happened. I would refer members to the rural policy in Australia—the green paper—which sets out in very clear terms the role of agriculture, its problems, and recommendations for future stability.

Not all farmers are rich land barons. If I achieve nothing else in this address, let me impress upon members that the average farmer is a very poor member of our society, with a mean income of \$3 120 per annum compared with \$3 900, the average of all male workers in Australia. My reference is a green paper of 1968-69.

The State Government may not have great powers in influencing the Federal Government on major issues of policy, but it can help considerably in assisting farm technology. Our State Department of Agriculture has made a great advance in knowledge in the development of some of the world's most inherently infertile soils—land that would still be lying idle if it were not for trace elements and subclover. The techniques were perfected by the officers of the Western Australian Department of Agriculture, not by the CSIRO or other research institutions, but by our Western Australian team. Their achievements have had far-reaching effects on our economy. The story, however, does not end here. There are still many unknowns and innovations to be perfected.

We have diseases in our pastures which are reducing production up to 50 per cent in some areas. These are—

Crop varieties unsuited to our south coastal farm lands; and

Insect pests ravaging our pastures and crops.

Australia must rank last in the development of new plants for agriculture. In most advanced countries plant breeders have developed pasture types suited to different micro climates, soil types, or, for different purposes, plants tailor-made for their environment.



Within the Department of Agriculture there is a Rural Economics Branch that has been of considerable assistance to farmers in making them acquainted with business management principles. However, unless one can forecast likely costs and returns with some accuracy, the budgeting exercise is a wasted effort. Greater emphasis must be placed by this branch on expanding its research into marketing trends. The farmer must know where he is going. He has enough variables due to seasons, etc., without adding any of prices.

More country-based advisers are needed to disseminate research findings to farmers. The present approach of mass communication, because of the limited number of men in the field, is not the answer. A return to more individual farm visits is necessary. It brings the adviser on to the farm where he can readily identify a problem that the farmer may not be aware he has. There appears to be a need to regionalise many of the specialised branches within the department. At the present time most of the research officers are now located in Perth, travelling to country areas for a few days to investigate a problem. There is a need to establish specialised research units in the country where they would be in close contact with the problems.

In my opinion there needs to be a greater awareness on behalf of farmers towards soil conservation. Our heritage—the soil—is being washed away continuously. One only has to fly over the agricultural areas to see the denudation that has taken place in the short period of 50 to 60 years. The attack on this problem is now being carried out in a piecemeal way; only here and there are farmers applying preventive measures. It would be my wish to see a more comprehensive approach adopted in this field and I would suggest that whole catchments be treated simultaneously—there should be a whole district approach rather than our dealing with isolated trouble spots.

I would now like briefly to touch on wheat quotas. There has been only one year in the past 10 in which restrictions on wheatgrowing have been necessary and this was the year prior to the introduction of quotas. Wheat quotas were allocated on a farmer's "production history" basis and tended to favour well-established farmers. Many new land farmers did not have a big history during this period of review—1965-1969 inclusive—or they may have entered the industry after this time. Because of this many have been restricted by the allocation they received. Quotas have not enabled the efficient farmer to expand his wheatgrowing enterprise, but have allowed the inefficient one to survive. There is an urgent need to rethink this whole question. I, and most Roe farmers, are being penalised by this inequity and would prefer to see a relaxation of quotas for several years. Wheat is in world

shortage again this year and the Australian crop will fall short of its expected production. It would have been an ideal year to forgo restrictions.

I would now like to say a few words on marketing boards. Agriculture, by its very nature, cannot produce at a constant or predetermined level. We have seasonal variations leading to gluts or shortages. When superimposed on a world situation the price received for primary products can vary much from year to year. Some instability is tolerable but not the violent fluctuations as at present—50 per cent drop in wool prices this year.

We need some security by way of a predetermined price. This is possible only through orderly marketing schemes. I would instance stability in grain growing due to grain boards. The bulk of our farmers' income is obtained from wool and meat, both sold under an auction system—a selling system I cannot condone. It is so easily possible for buyers to form cartels.

There is one organised body representing buyers of wool—the International Wool Textile Organisation. The buying pressure must, therefore, be taken out of the auction to the detriment of sellers. Wool, like iron ore or motorcars, has a value and should be sold on the same basis as other goods or services, at a price based on cost of production. If a farmer cannot produce at this figure he should either improve his efficiency or change his enterprise.

There is one word of warning, however; orderly marketing boards can become bureaucratic and inflexible. There should be scope within their terms of reference for quick adjustments if, and when, situations alter.

I wish to look now at the question of farm land releases. If I could start by offering Western Australia a \$100 million industry with few strings attached, the response no doubt would be very favourable. We can offer this in the Roe electorate—four to five million acres of land ready and waiting for development, land capable of producing annually 15 million bushels of grain, 100 000 bales of wool, 500 000 carcasses of mutton or, in money terms at today's value, at least \$35 million per annum.

The basic infrastructure to support more farmers is already established in our towns. Many businesses and servicing agencies have been planned for expansion. The viability of the new Esperance Abattoir could well hinge on the expansion of our agriculture enterprise.

We have the land resources, the men ready to start developing, and most of the capital. Our products are needed in world markets. We are not suggesting that vast areas of virgin Crown land be made available for selection in a short period of time,



but rather a realistic release of 60 to 70 blocks per annum. The first release would test the demand and the type of applicant available. Many of our established farmers have sons old enough and keen to tackle the job. Most of these have access to farm machinery and stock. There are also young men who are share-farming, contracting, or managing properties who have over the years saved their money in the hope of one day being able to have the opportunity to acquire land for themselves.

Our district is somewhat unique in that there is ample potential for share-farming and contracting on some of the larger properties. A new settler would, therefore, have the ability to obtain outside income during his establishment years. One enterprise alone spends in excess of \$250 000 per year on contracting operations and has a share-farming potential in excess of 20 000 acres per year.

I would strongly recommend that the Government view favourably this request for the future stability of this region.

I would briefly like to comment on the Federal Government's removal of tax concessions for primary producers. As I have stated before, our agricultural industry is extremely efficient. We can produce goods, ship them to distant markets, and offer them at competitive prices against heavily subsidised competitors. This is no chance happening; it has been made possible largely by incentives in our system. The removal of these subsidies will drastically restrict production which will not be in the best national interest. The farmer will still survive, but at a lower production, higher price level. The export income must fall because of decreased volume. I would strongly stress that this Government liaise with the Federal Government for an urgent reappraisal of the tax system.

Before I move away from this area there is a need to make some reference to probate duties. A farmer is somewhat different from fellow members of the community in that during his working life he invests surplus funds into farm build-up. His property, therefore, becomes his superannuation investment. Probate duties are, therefore, somewhat akin to taxing superannuation income. Such a tax is grossly unjust. Sections of the community who try to help themselves—and this country—should be encouraged to do so, not penalised.

I would now like to make reference to secondary industry in relation to its ability to survive in country areas. The subject of decentralisation of industry is one which could well occupy a full address. It would be my wish to speak more fully on this matter at some future date. However, there are a few points that I wish to highlight while I have the attention of the House. Before it is too late and while we

have the opportunity, we should take heed of the enormous social problems that occur in areas of high density living. If we really care for this country, and care for the welfare and quality of life of our people, we should realise the social advantages of decentralisation. Economics must not be the sole criterion. It is very much in the national interest that industry be not concentrated in one centre.

One could argue this point on defence grounds alone. But more importantly, decentralisation is a vital factor to the stability of regional towns. At the present time our potential regional growth centres are almost solely dependent on their agriculture servicing role. In times of agricultural recession these industries are often completely disrupted, employees are retrenched and, because of the lack of other employment opportunities, move to our already crowded city. A diversity of industry in these centres could cater for such disruptions or depressions that occur, absorbing those displaced.

Economic considerations are the main basis for the location of industry in the Perth metropolitan region. It is up to our Government to make it possible for industries to function viably in other regional centres. Incentives are necessary initially and here I would like to mention a few leads in this direction as follows—

- (1) Water and power would have to be made available on site, as in the metropolitan area and sold at, or near, metropolitan prices.
- (2) Freight concessions may have to be considered for industries where the raw materials are not available in the area.
- (3) Government guarantees for the establishment of new industry or the expansion of existing ones may be needed.
- (4) Uniform telephone call charges would have to be considered or, at the very least, considerably modified from the present system. This works quite satisfactorily with postage service charges: \$1.71 for a three-minute phone call from Esperance to Perth is a considerable disincentive for industry establishment at our centre.
- (5) The reduction or removal of payroll tax would assist industry to adjust more easily to establishment in a regional centre. It has been highly successful in Victoria and has been a major factor in the establishment of large textile operations in country areas.
- (6) Housing: Because many rural employees are paid in excess of awards or receive high pay because of skills. State Housing



Commission Homes are not always available to them. The expansion of the role of the industrial and commercial housing authority is a matter for serious consideration.

Not all factors are weighed against decentralisation. It has been demonstrated that there have been many advantages for industry to establish in regional centres. A few of these need mentioning—

- (1) Land is cheap.
- (2) Better quality of employees, less absenteeism, and less turnover.
- (3) Travelling time to work is greatly reduced.
- (4) There are fewer industrial disputes.

We have a very active and progressive Department of Industrial Development with many dedicated officers; but, until industry is given financial inducement, no positive change from the present centralisation can be foreseen, at least in the short term.

While on this subject, I would like to make brief reference to a related matter—the use of renewable energy sources. The world oil crisis has stimulated many legislators into rethinking the harnessing of other power sources. We should not neglect our interest in this matter. Australia, by virtue of its latitude, has a tremendous solar energy potential. It has a tidal power availability in the Kimberley of 300 000 megawatts. Are we doing enough to further our future interests?

I would now like to deal with educational problems in my electorate. In the primary area we are adequately serviced. The Education Department is to be complimented on its attention to the provision of primary schools. Wherever there has been a proven need the fullest co-operation has been forthcoming from this department. The use of the demountable classroom has been a boon to the establishment of primary schools in remote sections of the region.

The problems in education begin in the post-primary area in the so-called district high schools, of which there are four in the electorate. Because of attendance numbers it is not possible to upgrade these schools to the status of senior high school.

The variety and extensiveness of the subjects taught leave much to be desired because of limited staffing, which must relate to the pupil ratio. Children wishing to continue their education to matriculation level are therefore handicapped. In some instances parents send their children to the Esperance Senior High School or other high schools outside the area, or to private schools, in an effort to give them a more suitable, professionally-oriented education.

Hostel facilities have been made available by the authority at Esperance, Narrogin, and Katanning. Students wishing to pursue their education to higher levels, but who live beyond the range of high school bus routes, complete their education by residing at hostels. The financial burden on parents whose children attend such hostels is a big imposition on many. The Government has increased the allowance paid to hostels but there is still room for improvement. The annual fees range upwards to about \$1 000 per child per year. The Isolated Children's Allowance Fund pays \$350 for each child, leaving approximately \$650 to be met by the parents. This is a considerable cost burden to many of my constituents. I would urge the Government to give further relief in this field as it is precluding many from continuing their education.

There is an urgent need for a senior high school in the south-east wheatbelt area. Lake Grace is the centre of this vast and expanding region and is the logical site. There are sufficient student numbers in the area to warrant the building of this high school. The case for a senior high school at Lake Grace could be supported on the grounds that it would upgrade the present district high school thereby giving an increased number of pupils the opportunity to receive a more extended education. It would also enable students to have a home situation during weekends, which is now denied to most of them because of the distance of their present schools from their homes.

I would now like to raise a few points on local government, an area subject to a revolution of thought by the Federal Government. The importance of having this third level of government administered by local people, who know and understand their own problems, is of vital concern to country people. Attempts to reorganise and regionalise this form of government will take it further from the people; this will destroy its function and purpose. Rather than taking power from local government there should be a move to expand its responsibilities.

The reduction in CAR grants by the Federal Government shows flagrant disregard for country shire councils and places them in a very serious financial position. These grants have been reduced by approximately 33 per cent. In order that councils may remain viable, this State Government has found it necessary to increase licensing fees by 65 per cent, but even with this infusion of money shires will receive only the same allocation as in 1973-74. Due to inflation and wage increases, country road works and other programmes will have to be reduced by 20 to 30 per cent at least.

I would like to illustrate the severity of reduced funds to one shire—the Shire of Kent—

Roadworks programme reduced by \$69 000.



Retrenchment of 33 per cent of staff, and leaving two vacancies unfilled.

55 per cent increase in rates—serious to a shire where payment in 1973-74 was \$105 per head of population.

I will now discuss one aspect of community welfare. We are creating a select class in our society, a group that does not have to work; people who have gone beyond the bounds of our society's traditions and rules; people who have become degraded and degenerated by alcohol. After three generations of contact with the white community, these Aboriginal people still have not adapted to the white man's customs or patterns of behaviour. They display little motivation or drive and little will to achieve; they have little dignity. Social welfare money keeps them in idleness and drink. The children with no parental guidance soon follow in their elders' ways. Truancy from school is running at a very high figure and petty crime is rife.

We now have on our hands a very serious racial problem. Members should go to Gnowangerup to see it if they do not believe me, but I suggest they do not leave their cars unattended or stray out at night. They should go just to see the wasted welfare money, the smashed houses, and sexual performances in the street—and I am not over-dramatising the situation. The submission to the Royal Commission by the Gnowangerup Shire Council clearly spells out the problem. The incidence of venereal disease is high—20 per cent of the adult population, and this includes three cases of congenital syphilis treated during 1973. This problem of the Aborigines is being compounded by an extremely high birth rate. Do not let us hide away from this problem. It has to be tackled now. Dignity must be restored; motivation and ambition must be encouraged; a sense of purpose must be kindled in these people; *ad lib* drinking must be stopped. The children are the victims and our next generation. What is going to be done to save them from the same fate? Hand-outs must include responsibilities to preserve self-respect. This Aboriginal question is a whole subject in itself; suffice it for me just to touch on it here.

I now wish briefly to comment on housing problems. People are severely disadvantaged by living in the country. Building costs are between 25 and 30 per cent higher in Roe than in the metropolitan area, mainly due to the high cost of freight. This frequently results in country building standards being generally lower than in the city. Relief in respect of transport charges is urgently needed if we are to attract people to the country.

In the rural sector there are many farmers living in partitioned sections of their farm sheds or in very substandard dwellings. They are living under conditions

that many would not believe possible in 1974. Their properties' assets may have a value of tens of thousands of dollars, but all ready cash is being used to maintain their property improvements or provide living essentials. Because they already are heavily mortgaged, it is not possible to raise loan money for even a humble cottage. Banks rate housing on a farm property on very low priority. The pioneering farmer's initial cash reserves had to be poured into his land in order that it might become a viable business enterprise. The home was planned to come later, but, due to falling prices, the day for the homestead has never come. There is no joy in living in a shed. I can speak with some experience on this subject.

Provision of special Government funds is urgently needed to finance housing on farms. There need be no risk for the Government. Purchase conditions could be the same as for State Housing Commission homes. The houses themselves could be transportable or demountable and could be removed if default occurred in payment.

With new Crown land allocations a house could be provided under these terms. It would enable the farmer to establish his enterprise with some degree of comfort, and would enable his wife to fulfil her homemaker role. What other section of the community is expected to pay cash for their homes? Yet farmers are.

I would now like to touch on the lack of Government services in many rural areas. We have in the electorate towns with a population of 100 people or more which have no water or electricity supply. To Government departments they have low priorities because the formula applying to the supply of water and electricity reveals that the cost of the provision of these services is a certain percentage above the mean. I must instance the case of Hopetoun, which is a delightful coastal resort. For nine months of the year the population is fairly constant, but for three months during the summer the population may quadruple. Largely because of this influx of tourists, the town must forego its water and power. The Government will not provide a substandard service and must build dams and power houses to cater for peak loads. The high cost is then charged against the few permanent services. With this system, few tourist towns will ever qualify for services. There are many towns in Roe without water supplies. Some are being considered but only if the budgeted funds become a reality. Governments talk of decentralisation but the whole deal is a sham when it comes to the provision of such a necessity as water.

In the region we are privileged to have one million acres of national parks and flora and fauna reserves. These areas include the Fitzgerald, Cape Le Grande, and Cape Arid national parks, and the Pingrup wildlife sanctuary, plus the islands of the Recherche Archipelago. Most of these



reserved areas lie along the south coast and contain magnificent scenery and a wealth of flora and fauna. The use of these reservations is now largely denied to local residents and tourists. It is possible to enter the Fitzgerald and Cape Arid national parks only by four-wheel drive vehicles. There is an urgent need for Government funds to provide access to selected areas of our national parks. Funding for such works is not possible from the limited resources of local authorities.

The people in the Fitzgerald district are only 25 miles from the coast, but to actually get to the beach involves a trip of 70 miles or more. I am not suggesting a major network of roads through these areas; only a few selected accesses to beaches or scenic spots. This tremendous asset must be made more fully available to our people. Camping areas will have to be provided, with associated facilities. The ranger services will, no doubt, have to be expanded as a safeguard against the spoiling of the parks. No management practices have been applied to the parklands. A rigid and controlled system of burning to maintain our flora is indicated.

As our society becomes more sophisticated, the need for wilderness areas will become greater. It is time to think now and plan seriously for the uses we are going to make of our parks, and their management in the light of their preservation for the future generations.

Before I conclude, one vital point needs to be discussed. Planning for the future in our region is an urgent priority: we have just groped along during our formative years. Servicing facilities, Government utilities, and schools have sprung up more or less as the need arose, with no overall plan. It is my hope that industry, Government disciplines, and planners can come together, assess a region's growth potential, nominate growth focal points, study and integrate transport links, and set about encouraging development along sound lines.

Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

**MR T. H. JONES (Collie)** [9.27 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, with other members I congratulate you on your appointment to your high office as Speaker of the House. I also congratulate other members on their election to this House of Parliament. I can assure them from experience that if they do their job a seat in Parliament is not an easy one to occupy.

I entered Parliament in 1968, and prior to that I was the Secretary of the Miners' Union for 17 years. During that time I have seen Collie go up and down—probably down more often than up! Since I have been in this House I have on many occasions taken the opportunity to draw the attention of all Governments, particularly the Liberal-Country Party Governments, to the plight of Collie and the coalmining

industry. I have especially drawn attention to the unbalanced and improper policies that have been adopted in the generation of power in Western Australia.

When we look back briefly to the early 1950s, we recall that Collie was a town which experienced a number of strikes. Jobs were uncertain and when miners went on annual leave at Christmas time they were not sure a job would be available for them when they returned. In 1954, 1 560 employees were engaged in the coalmining industry at Collie, and 500 men were employed in the railways. At that stage Collie was a very viable town with a population of around 11 000.

From then on we saw destruction—the type of destruction the member for Canning referred to the other night. In 1960, 500 men were thrown out of work, 300 houses became empty, and a number of shops became vacant, as a result of the policy initiated by the Brand Government. Sir David Brand—who is in the House now—when giving his memoirs to the *Daily News* on the 5th June, 1972, said that one of the hardest decisions he had to make was to throw 600 men out of work and deal Collie that unfortunate blow.

So it will be seen that since I have been here I have attempted to draw the attention of the Government to the reliance which this State at some point in time would place on the coalmining industry. Reference to my submission in support of the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the State Electricity Commission on the 7th October, 1970, will clearly demonstrate that I warned members of the present Government of the shortcomings of their policies so far as the reliance on the Kwinana oil-burning power station for the generation of power was concerned. Of course, associated with this policy, as you would well know, Mr Speaker, was the secrecy which surrounded the price of oil. The Government of the day entered into an agreement with the oil companies not to divulge the price of fuel oil. We know that wharfage charges did not apply, and that these policies were to the detriment of the State and of the coalmining industry in particular.

When the Government was investigating the doubling of the capacity of the Kwinana oil-burning power station it received strong opposition from the trade union movement and the Labor Opposition of the day. It was argued by the then Minister for Electricity (now the Hon. Sir Crawford Nalder) that the coal reserves in Western Australia had a life expectancy of only 30 years. I challenged that figure in this House and it was also challenged by many authorities on coal. It is noteworthy now that a member in another place—in the year 1974—said the other evening whilst referring to coal that we now have reserves of extractable coal in excess of 282 million tonnes, as a result