

The second matter concerns the apparently widening gap in the standards and opportunities in education between the country and the city. Members should note that I am not saying that the standard of education is falling - that is a matter of conjecture - but I am referring to the apparent disparity between the standard reached by upper secondary students from the small country high schools compared with the larger institutions. Access to quality education is becoming a real problem and many students are being left behind. The Unit Curriculum has not served the country areas very well. Unfortunately the poor academic conditions already outlined so often preclude parents from sending their children to metropolitan schools. The provision of help for isolated children, while appreciated by its recipients, falls far short of what is desirable. Similarly, access to tertiary education, especially university, is becoming increasingly difficult for country people, particularly from an economic point of view, and, to put it mildly, Austudy is an utterly pathetic effort - to the point of being cynical.

This State Government must lobby the Federal Government to change its assets test formula for country people. Unless one has a broken home, beats one's children or sexually molests them, no help is forthcoming. By way of illustration I advise members that one of my constituents who has an average income has twin daughters, one who wants to be a nurse and the other who wants to be a teacher. There is no way he can afford to educate them. He has no choice but to sell his house and shift to Perth and look for another job if he is to give his children a fair go at life. This situation is inexcusable and I sincerely hope that some effort will be made to correct these types of glaring anomalies. Perhaps there is much merit in returning to the system of bursaries, bonded cadetships and State Government scholarships for those children in country areas. At the very least, since no training facilities exist for some disciplines outside the metropolitan area, some realistic assistance for board should be available and the country taxpayers should be given assistance, through their considerable taxes, to establish training institutions, similar to those in the metropolitan area.

I could mention a third point; that is, roads. I wish only to draw attention to this subject and to put it on the record that it is an area of concern. For me to give a detailed analysis of what is going on in Greenough in relation to roads would be to repeat what several other members, in their maiden speeches, have brought to light and which everyone can gauge from reading the newspapers.

I thank members for their attention and their courtesy during this address. I have tried in a short period to paint for members a picture of Greenough as it now is and to give some idea of the great economic and social changes that have occurred in what is often regarded as a stable electorate. I have tried to present the truth without displaying a doomsday mentality. To paint a trite and rosy picture that misrepresents the truth would be to deny my own nature, as well as my responsibility. I close with a comment that there is much to be done in Greenough and indeed in country areas generally.

[Applause.]

MR SHAVE (Melville) [3.05 pm]: As I understand the position I have been given the privilege of being the first Liberal member elected to represent the seat of Melville. For that honour I would like to thank the electorate of Melville for the support they have given me.

In my maiden speech today I would like to address the subject of Government. Parliament House has sometimes been described as the "people's House". Until I made the decision to become a parliamentarian the phrase, the "people's House" was not a saying I had thought a lot about. However, during the course of my address I would like to take the liberty of expressing my perception of the legitimacy of that saying.

My reason for entering Parliament was very simple. I consider I have been extremely lucky to grow up in a free society and I want this country to remain one of free enterprise. If that happens my children and future generations can hopefully enjoy the opportunities and freedom which I and every member in this House have enjoyed. At the same time, I recognise the need to care for those people who through sickness or some other reason cannot care for themselves. As each day passes it becomes clearer to me that it is not only the exorbitant amount of money that Governments take in in taxation that is causing individual financial hardship, but also it is the way in which Governments spend the money they collect.

Our Prime Minister has said that no Australian child will live in poverty by 1990. Such a comment may appeal to media headline writers but, unfortunately, the sad reality is that many people remain in poverty because of Government policies. Politicians like ourselves too quickly forget that this place should be the House that genuinely protects individuals' rights. Unfortunately, the converse is often the case.

It is an interesting exercise to compare the dramatic increase in the amount of money spent by State and Federal Governments today compared to a decade ago. In Western Australia in 1979 the State Government spent \$1.4 billion and this year the Government proposes to spend \$4 billion. In 1979 the Federal Government spent \$29 billion and this year it proposes to spend a massive \$82 billion.

While all these billions of dollars are being spent, a diabetic woman in her thirties, living in poverty in my electorate, is now in a coma because the system we created forced her to make a decision between vital medication and necessary nutrition. Sadly, my constituent is not an isolated case. In Western Australia over 8 000 people are on waiting lists for elective surgery; surgery they need to save their lives or make their lives less painful. Our Federal Government is to spend in excess of \$82 billion this year, yet there is not enough money to provide basic drugs and surgery for people in desperate need. If these people are not the people we should be caring for, then who are the people we should be caring for and where are the billions of dollars going?

Mr Speaker, last week my staff tried to find out where all the Government's money goes. The Department of Premier and Cabinet said that they had no idea how many Government departments there were in Western Australia; no-one seemed to know, exactly. We know that there are 17 State Ministries to serve a population of only 1.5 million people, but no-one could advise how many Government departments there are now and how many there were a decade ago. My staff were told that these sorts of records are apparently not kept. What I do know, Mr Speaker, is that all the Government departments in the world will not solve the tragic circumstances of my constituent; nor will they stop the waiting list for elective surgery from growing; nor will they eliminate child poverty in the nine months that remain before 1990.

Governments are notorious for creating problems, not for solving them. Ask any small business person. A dramatic increase in State taxes from \$695 million in 1979 to nearly \$2.5 billion this year certainly has not helped business. In 1979, 3 461 businesses went bankrupt. In 1986, huge increases in Government taxes and charges, coupled with the Government's so-called problem solving rules and regulations significantly helped in assisting the number of business bankruptcies to reach a staggering 6 476.

I am also told that there are no statistics readily available on the increase in the number of Western Australians struggling to exist below the poverty line, but if our Prime Minister - or anyone in this Chamber - wants to find out about the rapid increase in child poverty, there are many people in my electorate who would welcome a visit. To many of my constituents the so-called "people's House" is simply a palace for politicians who use the people's money to build monuments to themselves. Overwhelmingly, the public believe that politicians ignore their fundamental responsibility to help those who cannot help themselves.

Many of the people in my electorate who live below the poverty line simply want an opportunity to work their way out of the poverty trap. They do not want a handout - they just want a hand. They want a better life for themselves and their families and they are prepared to work and make sacrifices for it. However, in too many cases it is the Government which stops them. Take the case of the young single mother I know who wanted to buy the Homeswest weatherboard house she currently rents. It would have been a financial struggle, but it would have given her and her children security and an appreciating asset. This lady had made up her mind to become independent of the poverty trap. She was very excited. The house in which she lived was an old one; I am sure that no-one in this Chamber would have wanted to buy it, but it was her home and she was proud of it. For this woman it represented an independence that she desperately wanted - a first step up the ladder out of poverty - but the Government said, "No, you can continue to live in that house, but you must be our tenant." The Government refused to let that woman work her way out of the poverty trap. I fail to understand the logic of that.

There is another case of a gentleman who has lived in his Homeswest house for 28 years and

is prepared to buy it from the Government outright as he fortunately received some money through his family. He wants to give the Government all of the money. He was told last week, "You cannot pay us the money because you are too close to the sewerage."

Then there are our senior citizens, many of whom are now being taxed on the superannuation that they worked so hard to provide for their retirement. What a wonderful stroke of genius it was to discover a tax on superannuation! Now we can all tell our kids, "Do not bother being responsible and saving for your retirement darling, there is no point. After all, when you retire the people's House will grab the money, anyway." Next week is Senior Citizens Week. Thousands of tax dollars will be poured into a special week for our elderly. I do not begrudge them a cent, as they deserve it. However, it seems illogical to me that, while we spend all this money on Senior Citizens Week, which among other things will tell the elderly how they can go to university to better themselves, we continue to tax our seniors to the hilt.

Many of these people are highly competent and capable of having a part-time job and continuing to contribute to our society. However, in many cases for every \$10 they earn they lose about \$8 in reduced pensions and increased taxes. What a wonderful incentive that is! What do we spend that money on? We spend it telling them how to better themselves. The irony is that they already know what to do to better themselves: It is the system that is stopping them.

Who creates this wonderful system? We do, the politicians who live off the people's taxes. Our patronising and callous treatment of the elderly exemplifies absolutely the arrogance of Governments. Over the decades Governments have believed that they know best, that they are the finite problem solvers. They are not. The more Governments tax and spend the greater the problems become. When our Prime Minister made his incredible children in poverty statement I had a vision that he would take a huge chunk of our massive welfare budget and hand it over to a responsible, caring, capable private agency. If he had given it to the Salvation Army, or to Graham Maybury's Nightline family, it would have been a good start. He could have said, "We have a real problem; let us solve it." Had he had the foresight or commitment to make such a decision then I believe we would have a far better chance of eliminating child poverty by 1990.

Government has a place in our society as the overseer of a fair and just society. It has an absolute responsibility to uphold law and order and to protect the defenceless and the sick. We have no mandate to waste money on rewriting Government manuals to eliminate the word "woman" while a woman in Willagee is seriously ill because she could not afford critical medication or food. As politicians we have no mandate to support departments we cannot name or administer regulations we cannot remember and certainly cannot justify.

WA Inc was, in fact, only the icing on the Government's rich fruit cake. Even if one scraped off all the icing one would still be left with a fruit cake of ill-conceived Government spending programs that destroy individual freedoms and fall disastrously short of assisting the truly needy. As long as I am in the so-called "people's House" I will work to change the attitude that Governments know best. The truth is that Governments do not know best. Furthermore, the people know that they do not. That is the main reason why less than 10 per cent of the public have any respect for us as politicians. While the opportunity prevails I will endeavour to resist Governments that waste millions of dollars on irrational, ideological schemes while truly needy individuals get little or no support.

In conclusion I thank you, Mr Speaker, and the members of this House for the courtesy extended to me during my maiden speech.

[Applause.]

MR McNEE (Moore) [3.20 pm]: Mr Speaker -

[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: I am not sure if we should give you the honour!

MR McNEE: I am not too sure how many times one gets a crack at this. I thought when one had done it once, one had done it. Perhaps this place is different.

I congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment to the position of Speaker, with the great responsibility it carries. I am delighted to be elected member for Moore, and I say that with some humility, considering those who preceded me - Bert Crane, Edgar Lewis, and indeed

Sir David Brand and Reg Tubby, who was mentioned previously by the member for Greenough and who also represented part of the electorate of Moore. Bert Crane is a man who I am sure is respected by both sides of the House, a man who had the ability to communicate with people across a very broad spectrum; indeed from the wealthiest to the poorest. That is certainly borne out by the high regard in which Bert Crane was held in his electorate. I wish Bert and Mrs Crane a very happy and long retirement. They are currently on their way to England to enjoy a holiday, and I wish Bert good sailing when finally that yacht is furbished and he takes off on his lifelong wish for a trip around the world.

I thank the electors of Moore for their faith in electing me as their member, and I assure them of my efforts to represent them in the way in which they are used to being represented. I express my gratitude to all those people who supported me during my election campaign. Without the support of my campaign committee and the hundreds of people who assisted in many different ways it could not have been possible.

The electorate of Moore is a new and interesting challenge to me, because while it is a rural electorate, it encompasses a wide variety of enterprises, from the rock lobster industry through wheat, sheep, cattle and flower farming, tourism, mining, orchards, vineyards and so on. Within that area we have problems in areas such as education. I thank the Minister for the attention she is paying to the education problems in my electorate; I realise that they cannot all be resolved in one fell swoop. We have inadequate classrooms in some cases, and inadequate teacher housing has been a problem for some time. Only when one looks at some of the houses the teachers live in does one begin to realise how bad the standard is. Perhaps it is because those standards have not kept up with the increasing standard of living to which we have become accustomed. I urge the Minister to take notice of those problems, particularly in my electorate, as I am sure she will.

During the campaign it was interesting to see that I ran consistently into the problem of law and order. This is something which concerns everyone, regardless of age or political philosophy. When doorknocking I noticed that elderly people particularly were almost fearful of opening the door. Of course it became easier when I assured them I was from the Liberal Party, not the Labor Party! Nonetheless I gained the impression that people are concerned for their safety. I had never realised that so many people barricaded themselves inside their homes. This is an indication of the depth of concern people have for their safety.

The family, of course, is a basic part of resolving that question of law and order. I found as Christmas approached people locked themselves in their businesses at night to keep the thieves out. That struck me as most un-Australian, but it indicates the great concern that people have not only for their personal safety but for the safety of their possessions, their businesses, or the places from which they make a living. That is an appalling situation.

While on law and order, I might mention that wretched question of random breath testing. While I appreciate that what the Government is doing is necessary - it is obvious we do not want drunken drivers running up and down the roads causing the havoc they can cause - it would be a fair comment to say that while we support that program - or I do - people, particularly rural people, are made almost prisoners in their own homes because they cannot go to town and walk home. That is the very real problem that they face, so perhaps they must accept that they cannot take the place in their social activities that they might like to do. It is not always possible to provide oneself with a reliable driver.

I received a very strong message from the program surrounding random breath testing, and it was this. Perhaps I misconstrued the message, but as I understood it, provided I did not have a drink and then drive my car, I could do almost anything else; nobody seemed to care. There are many more facets to maintaining law and order than reminding me of my responsibilities as a driver. I am particularly aware of those, as are many other people, but the point I make is that while we appear to be placing a great deal of emphasis on apprehending those drivers who are fool enough to break the law, thieves are breaking into stores with reckless abandon. In Wongan Hills during that period one store had \$100 000 worth of drapery removed from it.

Not only do we need to keep the roads tidy, but we need to do our best to ensure that those towns and the properties surrounding them are also given the full protection of the law. If we are to tie up every policeman in a motor car, I question whether we are using those facilities in the best way. While the policemen are mobile, surely it would not be too much trouble at

least for them to drive through the backstreets of many of those towns in order to ensure that they are safe at that time. While I realise we cannot police those areas consistently, I think we should at least increase the safety somewhat.

The family remains the basic unit in a just and stable society. A family where the parents are responsible for the wellbeing, good health, education and moral guidance of their offspring, and a family in which the children feel secure, loved and safe from interference, will result in children who in turn will go on to create happy and secure homes themselves. We must ensure that women who choose to stay at home to care for their families are not financially disadvantaged. A more equitable taxation system where married couples, especially those with dependant children, could split their incomes - or indeed if the threshold of non taxable income were raised - might well see the beginning of an approach towards something definite being done to help those people. As well as aiding needy families, financial relief would in the long run be a saving upon the public purse. In *The West Australian* of 4 April, the Reverend George Davies, the spokesman for the Perth Inner City Youth Service, said that increasing police numbers was a political sop to voters who believed it was the way to curb rising violence.

I certainly agree with Reverend Davies in that sense. I support the need for a strong, well armed police force; I believe it is absolutely essential, but I do not necessarily subscribe to the view that putting a policeman on every corner will curb violence or anything else. I am sure a great deal of violence is caused by the disruption to family life and the great pressures that the modern day family is placed under. I believe that if we are to address violence in that sense, we need to look at giving the family some assistance. We must help with education programs and financial support for marriage guidance. The emphasis these days seems to be on splitting up couples and pushing them apart. I would have thought it was in the nation's best interest to put some emphasis on reconciliation. I was appalled to hear recently that a young couple who sought marriage guidance were asked to pay \$60, or a figure like that, for marriage counselling. I cannot believe that could happen.

We must be very aware of the disquiet felt by so many thinking people in our community about the proposed legislation on reproductive technology. Given moral, ethical and monetary concerns, these procedures deserve thorough investigation. It seems to me to be unbelievable that in a society in which we see every day in the media stories of family reunions - of mothers and children who are reunited, in many cases after a lifetime of searching by the children - we could even consider a program which could result, in 20 years' time, in people being unable to discover who their biological parents were; of being able to discover only that their mother sold an ovum or their father donated sperm. I think we must be extremely careful when considering that. How can we, as a society which takes pride in tracing family histories, consider preventing people in the future from knowing their ancestry? In 1986 I visited an Australian thoroughbred stud. I was amazed at the great expense incurred in bringing a stallion backwards and forwards from Ireland to Australia. When I enquired whether there was a cheaper way, I was given a look of horror and was told, "Well, you have to understand that these are thoroughbreds and we must be certain of the bloodlines." The thought has often struck me since then that people here have less value than horses.

If we are going to be genuine in trying to help families, we must have a look at our situation. Currently our economy is in tatters. We have had the J curve - I never found out what the J curve was or what it did -

Mr Lewis: Then there was the walking stick.

Mr McNEE: We need crutches now. We were then told we were on target. Well, the Treasurer must have a pretty big target and must be a pretty poor shot because he has not hit the target too often. Then we were told we were on track. All I can say to the Treasurer is that if I were on that sort of track I would find the longest bog chain and the most powerful four-wheel drive I could to pull me back before I got any further in, because that is precisely what is happening to him. We then had the profound statement of the Prime Minister in January when he came over here and said it was obvious that interest rates would go down.

Mr MacKinnon: He said they were not going to rise this year.

Mr McNEE: The rate then would have been around 15 per cent; well, the rate is about

18.5 per cent today. That is, if one is borrowing from a bank; if one borrows from a stock firm, one would pay 21.5 per cent. That is what is happening. Regardless of the Prime Minister's profound statement, people living in the mortgage belt - I think one could pretty quickly whip a line around Western Australia and call it all the mortgage belt, because the mortgage belt as we used to know it is old hat - are no longer able to see their dream of owning their own home become a reality. In better days people not only dreamed about owning their own home but actually did own it. That is becoming a fast disappearing dream, and it will continue to be so.

I had a brief look at some primary interest rates around the world, and I found out - I think my research was fairly accurate, but I will take a little bit here or there - that Canada was paying 13.5 per cent, Japan was paying 5.75 per cent, the United States was paying 11.5 per cent, England was paying 14 per cent and West Germany was paying 7.75. We wonder why we are going badly. I think it is time someone told the Keltys and Creans of this world that we do not care what they think. I want such people to understand clearly that regardless of what they keep saying, I believe that wages are coupled to productivity. If they want to believe in their dreamers' words, that is fine by me but it is time we put them on notice that the honeymoon is over. The wide range of industries which my electorate represents are strangled from the point of production to the point of export by unrealistic work practices. Make no mistake about it, unless we get rid of some of these practices we will continue on the downward trend.

The effect on rural industries has been marked and yet we have consistently been told that it is the American farm bill, the export enhancement program that America embarked upon and the European Community which have had an effect. One would be a fool to deny that they have, but one should bear in mind that an equally bad effect stems from the policies which we have been pursuing in recent years - the ridiculously high interest rates, the ridiculously high price of fuel and the condition of our roads. I meant to mention the condition of some of the roads in my electorate. I sincerely hope that the shires in my area are successful in obtaining more funds, because they are obviously struggling for funds. Local authorities do not fail to repair roads because they choose not to; they simply have to try and spread what butter they have over as big an area as they can.

We have been following a tight monetary policy. The Treasurer is on a track - I suppose he thinks he is right - which is causing high interest rates. It is causing people to buy our dollar, so that we have an artificially high dollar, and we will continue to be in a morass unless we change our ways. I urge this Parliament to prevail upon the Prime Minister and the Treasurer to change their direction. We are balanced on a precipice and unless we change direction we are headed for disaster.

We simply have to raise our productivity in this country. We cannot have people putting their fingers in the till and taking more out of the business than it is earning. There is not a business in this fair city that can stand that, and nor can Australia, but we have allowed people to believe they can live in a fool's paradise. Australia has to temporarily throw away the cheque book and get back to work. There are many people in my electorate, and in rural Western Australia, who are just recovering from one of the greatest recessions we have ever seen, who would know exactly what I mean. Anyone who does not understand that should quickly find out what it means and help to resolve the situation.

Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Speaker.

[Applause.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Court (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

STAMP AMENDMENT BILL (No 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 30 March.

MR LEWIS (Applecross) [3.44 pm]: The first point I wish to make is that the scales under the stamp duty legislation, as they are currently structured, are hopelessly in need of review. Secondly, the Government's proposals in this respect are somewhat token. Thirdly, I would like to present to Parliament an alternative scheme which I would like the