

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 19 November 1980

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUATION BILL

In Committee

Resumed from 18 November. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mrs Craig (Minister for Local Government) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 19: Membership of scheme—

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after the clause had been partly considered.

Mrs CRAIG: The member for Geraldton asked a question yesterday which related to clause 19(2)(b). He wanted to know what employees, other than those who were employees of a corporation, council, or county were covered under the provisions of this legislation. I should more properly have referred the honourable member to the definition of "corporation" contained in clause 3, because the matter is explained there. In fact, I referred the honourable member to the definition of "employee".

For the interest of the honourable member, the organisations other than councils which already participate in the existing scheme and which, by virtue of clause 3(b) and (c) are able to participate in the new scheme are as follows—

Karrakatta Cemetery Board
National Parks Authority
Kings Park Board
Zoological Gardens Board
Busselton Water Board
Keep Australia Beautiful Council
Local Government Association
Road Traffic Authority

Mr Carr: The Road Traffic Authority?

Mrs CRAIG: Yes, some members of the Road Traffic Authority must be persons who were previously employees of municipalities; they would have elected to remain covered by that scheme, instead of changing to another one. I move an amendment—

Page 14, line 33—Delete the passage "corporation shall, so long as he has not been grant".

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 20 put and passed.

Clause 21: Lien on benefits—

Mr CARR: This clause allows for a council, in effect, to have first draw on superannuation benefits which have accrued to an employee under this scheme. It seems to be a most peculiar situation and I am surprised it is in the Bill. The clause indicates that any money which has accrued being an amount the employee owes to the employer and being any amount whatsoever shall be subject to the employing council having a claim on that superannuation benefit. Situations could occur where this provision could be most unfair. It seems to be in direct conflict with a subsequent clause, because clause 27 (t) enables regulations to be drawn; it allows for regulations provided that a benefit payable under the scheme shall not be assigned, etc. to satisfy liabilities of the person entitled to the benefit.

We have one clause where any particular entitlement to an employee shall not be used to discharge money owing by that employee and we have a separate clause which states that the council shall have first draw on a superannuation benefit which has accrued to an employee. It seems to me that clause 27 (t) is quite reasonable but that clause 21 is quite unreasonable. The two clauses seem to be in conflict.

Mrs CRAIG: Clause 21 simply relates to a situation where an employee owes money to the board or to the corporation. Each of those bodies will have a lien on any benefit which becomes payable to that member, but only in so far as that amount is concerned. The amount could be deducted from the benefit in order to meet the debt. I think the member agrees that is a perfectly reasonable and proper situation and that people who are entering into this superannuation scheme will know this is a provision contained in it and have agreed with the clause being there.

The other members of the scheme have the protection of a clause of that sort, otherwise the member is suggesting that all members of the scheme share the debt of another person to the board or corporation.

Mr CARR: This clause does not refer just to debts accrued by a member to the board. It refers to debts accruing to the corporation on any account whatsoever. There could be a whole range of circumstances where for one reason or another an employee owes money to the council that employs him in a way that is in no way related to the superannuation board. I could well imagine a situation where the debt which had accrued was directly related to the superannuation scheme or was directly payable to the superannuation board.

In that situation it is perfectly reasonable that the board has a claim that the debt be fulfilled out of the entitlement of the member. But to have a situation where the employing council may be owed money for whatever reason does not tally with what the Minister said.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 22: Review and appeal—

Mr CARR: I hope I get an answer to this query which relates to subclause (5) dealing with a person who is aggrieved by a decision of the board and who may appeal. Who pays for an appeal in this situation? Is there a provision that the board should pay or that the individual employee should pay?

Mrs CRAIG: The matter is not defined in the Bill so I will discuss it with the people concerned and try to get back to the member later this afternoon, and certainly tomorrow.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 23 to 28 put and passed.

Schedule 1: Provisions as to the Board—

Mr CARR: I refer to clause 8 which relates to disclosure of pecuniary interest by members who are directly or indirectly involved in matters before the board. Having looked at the members who make up the board and noting that two represent local government associations and two represent employees of local government, it would appear to me that four of the members of the board would have a direct or indirect interest in every matter that comes before the board. Certainly the two representatives of the two employee associations could well be employees of councils. We could have someone who is a full-time council employee nominated by the MOA to be a member of the board who would be affected by any decisions with respect to the benefits accruable under the scheme.

Even if we have someone who is a full-time officer of the MOA, for example, employed by the MOA rather than by a council, in a sense he will have an indirect interest in every decision of the board. I wonder whether this clause will preclude many people who would otherwise have been eligible to be appointed to the board from being on it. I wonder whether the Minister has considered that point. Can she comment on it?

Mrs CRAIG: I think subclause (2) will indicate to the member the mechanism that is built into the Bill in the event that the situation he described occurs. If the four members of the board to which he referred disclose they have an interest in a matter before the board, I think we could accept that it would not be a very direct

interest. They would be required to disclose the nature of their interest after the relevant facts have come to their knowledge, and then it would be for the board to decide whether they have to withdraw from the discussion of a matter. Surely we can leave the declaration of an interest to those four members of the board who the member states may be the ones who will have an interest in decisions in relation to just that matter. That being so, I believe their interests are well and truly safeguarded.

Schedule 1 put and passed.

Schedule 2: Functions, Powers, and Duties that may not be Delegated by Board—

Mr CARR: I think we have another misprint or a typographical error in schedule 2. I do not know whether the Minister is aware that schedule 2 sets out functions, powers, and duties that may not be delegated by the board and that it sets out six items and refers to where they can be found in the Bill, and describes those functions. The first five items appear to be quite in order, but item 6 suggests a provision in clause 20 of the Bill relates to "Functions as to objections".

Clause 20 of the Bill does not relate to objections, it relates to something else and the clause which relates to objections appears to me to be clause 22. It appears to me that item 6 should read, "s.22 Functions as to objections." I suggest to the Minister that is probably how her Bill should read, but I seek her advice on that. I know some discussion has taken place recently as to whether schedules can be amended. I have been advised that they cannot. I do not know whether that is true, but I would like to hear her comments.

The CHAIRMAN: I will make the point that a schedule can be amended.

Mrs CRAIG: I must admit to the member for Geraldton that I have not checked clause 20 to see whether what he says is correct or incorrect. I undertake to check that matter later this afternoon and then to confer with him. If an amendment is required because the wrong clause has been referred to, I will refer the matter to another place and indicate that the proposed amendment is in accord with an agreement we have reached.

Mr CARR: I will not accept that from the Minister. I think this Chamber has for long enough put up with this nonsense. We find something wrong with a Bill, and we say we know it is wrong but will pass it and send it to that other place at the end of the corridor so that it can attempt to justify its significance by pretending to find a mistake we have already

found here. In that other place they can say what good people they are when reviewing legislation which is sent back to this place to be corrected. That is just not good enough.

I am prepared to co-operate with the Minister in whatever way she deems appropriate in order to have the correction made here. I am prepared to talk for two minutes on whatever I can in relation to the Bill while she looks at the Bill to see whether what I have said is correct. I am prepared to move that progress be reported so that she can consider the matter and in 10 minutes or so say, "Yes, that is the required amendment; let us do that." I am prepared to move in whatever way the Minister desires so that we can have the mistake corrected and so that when this Bill is passed we will know it is correct.

The Minister might like to interject while I am on my feet to say which one of these options she prefers. If she does not I will move that we report progress. Would the Minister like to interject?

Mrs CRAIG: No. I believe the mechanism I have suggested we should adopt is a perfectly fair one, and that is, if the Bill is amended in another place it will return to this Chamber for consideration; therefore no reason exists for us to hold up its passage because the matter raised by the member has to be checked precisely.

Mr CARR: I move an amendment—

Page 25, item 6—Delete the passage "s.20" and substitute the passage "s.22".

In effect, I am moving that clause 22 be referred to instead of clause 20, and that is an amendment clearly needed.

Sir Charles Court: Accept the amendment.

Mr CARR: I gather the amendment will be accepted.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is a pity the Premier cannot be here all the time when we have problems.

Mr Young: It is six of one and half a dozen of the other.

Mr CARR: I do not think I need say any more on this matter. I do not need to delay the Committee any further.

Mrs CRAIG: It was indicated that the amendment moved by the member for Geraldton will be accepted by us; however, I point out to him that the situation has not changed because all he is suggesting is that an amendment be made without checking. The possibility still exists that it will have to be amended in another place.

Amendment put and passed.

Schedule 2, as amended, put and passed.

Schedule 3 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

SHOPPING CENTRES: DEVELOPMENT

Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion

MR COWAN (Merredin) [2.40 p.m.]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on all aspects of the development of retail shopping centres, with particular reference to—

the need for legislation or regulations that will require developers to undertake an economic impact assessment covering public need and the effect upon established local small businessmen.

The purpose of this motion is to appoint a Select Committee of this House to inquire into and report on all aspects of retail shopping development, with particular emphasis on the need for developers to be required to make an economic impact assessment of the effect on small businessmen operating retail shops in existing centres.

The principal reason for the motion relates to proposals put forward by a developer in the Geraldton region to establish a retail shopping centre at the new suburb of Utakarra, on the outskirts of Geraldton. The Minister for Town Planning has granted to the local authority preliminary approval to have the land rezoned, and develop it for the purpose of a retail shopping centre.

One can understand the dilemma of the local authority in that it has two options, both of which compete with each other. The first is that there is an opportunity to encourage development within the Town of Geraldton, and the second, of course, is that there is already in Geraldton a central business district which is suffering from the economic decline.

I am hopeful the member for Geraldton will support me in my move. The local authority is having some difficulty because it has to deal with a conflict of interests. The local authority can see there is a chance of development within the Town of Geraldton, but it has a problem whereby the existing small businessmen, who form the major part of the Geraldton retail area, are having some difficulty in surviving under the existing economic conditions.

We believe that before final approval is given for any rezoning of land for the purpose of establishing a retail shopping centre at Utakarra, there should be a commitment by the developers

to provide an economic impact assessment of the effect of the development on those businessmen in the central business district of Geraldton. At the moment I have not been able to find any such requirement under any Act.

One of the main problems, of course, is that the market potential in the Town of Geraldton has not expanded. One could understand the desire of the Geraldton Town Council to have a new shopping centre constructed within the town, if the population of the Town of Geraldton had increased markedly. However, the population has not increased, so the catchment area for the new shopping centre will encroach on the already established businesses in the town.

The people involved in the established businesses object very strongly to the proposal, so much so that on 22 July those businessmen presented a submission to the Geraldton Town Council calling on the council not to seek official approval for the land to be rezoned to allow for the development of the new retail shopping centre. Quite a large submission was put forward by those businessmen, and they presented in detail the reasons they wanted the proposal stopped.

The most obvious reason the existing businessmen want the development stopped—and I am talking about the small business people already established in Geraldton—is that they are having some difficulty in making a reasonable living. The problem is confined not only to those small businessmen; there are also major department stores in Geraldton which are affected, and I refer particularly to Boans. The company owning that department store, in its annual report, stated that it was having difficulty with its Geraldton shopping outlet.

Mr Carr: That is the fault of the company because when they first established their store in Geraldton, they could have gone to exactly the same area where the new shopping centre is proposed. In fact, the initial proposal from the company was to establish in that area, but it changed its mind. While many of the small business people deserve some sympathy, that particular firm does not deserve any sympathy.

Mr COWAN: I would argue with the member for Geraldton that if the company had established its store in the new area, that would not have provided any additional customers. The problem is that there are not sufficient customers in Geraldton to provide the turnover in order for a department store to run at a profit. It does not matter where a store is sited; its establishment will not increase the number of customers because of the confined catchment area.

Mr Carr: The difficulty with Boans is the parking problem.

Mr COWAN: I accept that parking is a problem.

Mr Bryce: That affects the number of customers.

Mr COWAN: That is so, but as against that argument Boans is situated in the central shopping area at Geraldton which means the store attracts many of its customers from all parts of the Town of Geraldton. If the store were situated on the periphery of the town many people would prefer to shop elsewhere. The number of customers gained as a result of increased parking facilities would be counter-balanced by the lack of a central location.

The point I am making is the established businessmen in Geraldton are suffering from economic difficulties at the moment. There is no potential for an increase in the number of customers for any new retail shopping centre. Therefore, there should be a requirement on the developers who are putting forward the proposal for the new shopping complex to provide an economic impact assessment showing what impact the new complex will have on existing businesses. That is the basis for our move for the appointment of a Select Committee.

Members will be aware that a member of our party in another place was a retailer before he became a member of Parliament. He was vitally concerned in the retail industry in Geraldton, and he is strongly in favour of the people who already are established being able to make a reasonable living before there is any further expansion in the area.

Having placed the motion on the notice paper, I did a little research and I discovered the problem is not confined to the Town of Geraldton.

Mr Nanovich: Can you give an indication of the size of the proposed shopping centre?

Mr COWAN: I cannot provide the member for Whitford with the specific size, but I do know it is proposed to be quite large. As I said, the problem is not confined to Geraldton; it applies to Perth and other regional or provincial towns also. Several articles have appeared in the Press recently concerning comments made by various people calling on the Government for a moratorium on the construction of new shopping centres or, failing that, to implement some form of policy to curtail the growth of retail shopping centres in the urban and suburban areas of Perth. This call has not been confined just to one segment of the retail industry; the call was made by the Independent Retailers' Association.

In fact, I believe they thought so seriously about the matter that they forwarded a submission to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister in the Portfolio of Industrial Development and Commerce, calling on the Government to take firm steps to try to control the amount of shopping space being constructed in the metropolitan area. Similarly, some businessmen have made the same statement. I refer to developers who have made a statement in a magazine known as *Propertywise*, which is published by the Armstrong Jones Property Group, of which I think members of the House would be aware. An interview with a gentleman by the name of Bill Wyllie which appeared in *Time* magazine was published in the *Propertywise* magazine.

Mr Young: A former Scarborough resident.

Mr COWAN: Yes, and a credit to the Scarborough district.

Mr Blaikie: He did his schooling at Karridale.

Mr COWAN: I am sure members can take as much credit as they like for Mr Wyllie. I would like to read out his credentials as recorded in *Time* magazine. He is hailed as—

'South-East Asia's most effective Corporate Doctor' by *Time* magazine, he has a sharp sense of timing in his business dealing and an impeccable ability when it comes to property investment.

I quote further, as follows—

In WA the A.S.C. Property Trust, which he founded and effectively controls, now owns 11 shopping centres valued at more than \$25 million.

So, to put it in terms of capitalism, this gentleman is a man of substance. He was asked the following question by a *Time* magazine reporter—

Switching topics, at the A.S.C. Property Trust meeting you were asked a question on the number of shops in Perth. Do you think Perth is overshopped?

This was his answer—

I think Australia is overshopped.

There has been a high level of uncontrolled development of shopping complexes. In the past anyone with spare money has been able to develop small strip shops or marginal shopping centres.

I think it's been a problem of local authorities being too willing to re-zone land for shopping centres even where there is already an adequate supply.

Having said that, I think there are still places where shopping centres have a future and where there will be growth as new towns open up.

The regional shopping centre is still the most efficient form of shopping that can be made available to the residents who live in the area. Generally though councils must be prepared to limit the number of new centres.

That comes from a developer who has a large stake in the industry; and his comments relate exactly to the situation which exists in Geraldton. The local authority has been required to seek preliminary approval for the rezoning of some land. However, there is no requirement upon the local authority or the property developing company to tell anybody what will happen or what will be the effect of the new shopping centre on already established businesses.

I believe that is something which must now occur. Therefore, I searched around for some way of implementing a retail shopping policy, and I discovered such a policy already exists in the metropolitan area. The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has a retail shopping policy, which was established as a result of an inquiry by a consultant in 1973. A fairly comprehensive retail shopping policy has been developed from that inquiry.

The basis of the policy relates to the corridor plan which has been established for the Perth metropolitan area. The MRPA believes we should have a central city area; subregional centres of Midland, Armadale, Joondalup, and Rockingham; district centres; and then subdistrict and neighbourhood centres. The recommendation of the MRPA retail shopping consultative committee was that the central city area and the subregional centres should have uncontrolled development of shopping complexes; and the district centres and the smaller subdistrict and neighbourhood centres should be strictly controlled in respect of shopping space. The report refers also to the finding of the consultant (Mr Johnston) that there should be a certain amount of retail shopping space per head of population. In most cases the advocated amount of space has been exceeded.

Yet, whilst all these recommendations and policies have been formulated it seems the Government has been most reluctant to do anything about implementing the recommendations or the policy put forward by the MRPA. Certainly there has been no call, either by the Government or by the authorities which allow shopping centres to be constructed, for a

report on the effect the construction of new shopping centres is likely to have on existing shopping centres.

I would like to remind members, particularly those on this side of the House, that small businessmen are the foundation of the support given to their parties. Certainly they may not be a major financial contributor; perhaps the financial contributions come mainly from the people who are developers of retail centres; but numerically the strength given to the parties on this side of the House comes from the small businessmen.

Therefore, one would have thought those people are entitled to some form of protection by controls on the establishment of retail shopping centres. It is not just a matter of the provision of retail shopping space; in addition, one of the most contentious issues relates to the rentals that developers require a tenant to pay once a shopping centre is established. Small businessmen within existing shopping centres know that their catchment area for customers has not increased; yet they see another shopping centre being established within the same catchment area. They know space will be made available for the particular retail area in which they operate, and they have no choice but to try to rent or lease space in the new shopping complex in order to keep their customers.

Some of the rental agreements are exorbitant to say the least. Again, the Independent Retailers' Association in its submission to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister in the Portfolio of Industrial Development and Commerce devoted quite some space to this matter. It talked about the ties relating to conditions of some of the leases. The association said that rent and associated conditions in lease agreements are imposing enormous financial burdens on the small independent retailers, and that some of the demands appear to be so exorbitant in relation to the earning power of the majority of the tenants that the association believed too many managing agents and/or owners had no concept of the changed and changing conditions in retailing, both economic and otherwise.

That is the situation we have today. Some of these small businessmen are paying rent to the value of \$15 000 to \$20 000 a year. Having paid the rent, when they discovered they were no longer economical they found all sorts of constraints which prevented them from getting out of the dilemma they were in. They could not get out without having to pay through the nose.

It surprises me that this Government, which is reputedly the champion of small businesses and

small businessmen, has paid little heed to this situation which has existed for many years. If we can look at the position today, we have the MRPA, which is a Government instrumentality. It has developed a retail shopping policy that is quite comprehensive; and if it were implemented, it would be invaluable. Unfortunately, the Government has chosen not to implement some parts of that policy.

Mrs Craig: Which parts?

Mr COWAN: For argument's sake, I refer to page 73 of the retail shopping policy.

Mrs Craig: Of the Johnston report?

Mr COWAN: No. Page 73 of the retail shopping policy, which was published in May 1977, has a recommendation that there should be some reference to the economic impact a new shopping centre will have on existing shopping centres. That is one example of where the recommendations or the policies have not been implemented.

It is time there was overriding control on the establishment of retail shopping centres. It is time the retailers or the developers were required to do something about assuring the businessmen in the retail industry that there may be some form of control and some form of economic impact assessment.

If we were to adopt a legislative measure, we would not be alone. The Victorians have decided that they will restrict the spread of shopping centres, and they will allow new centres only where a need for more retailers has been proved. That would be a far better situation than we have in Western Australia. Queensland has done exactly the same.

Mrs Craig: You are not right about Victoria.

Mr COWAN: I must admit it is only a newspaper report, and I cannot vouch for the accuracy of it.

Mrs Craig: It has been often misquoted.

Mr COWAN: It is an article in the *Retail World*. The Minister for Planning received the report from the committee chaired by the Commissioner of the Board of Works, (Mr J. Keck). The report indicated that no more shopping centres should be constructed unless the need for more retailers had been proved. My understanding was that the Government of Victoria would act on that report. I would be grateful if the Minister could tell me I am wrong.

Similarly, in Queensland, the joint Government parties decided that they would require the developers to undertake an economic impact assessment covering the public need and the effect

on local small businessmen. That is the sort of thing I would like to see happen here.

The MRPA has a retail shopping policy. In that policy, there is reference to the need to protect the interests of established small businessmen; yet nothing has been done in this State.

Mrs Craig: In fact, the information about Queensland is not correct either; and I will correct that later.

Mr COWAN: I hope the Minister does that. My information is that if the legislation does not exist, it will exist shortly.

Mrs Craig: It exists, but it does not do what you say it does. It did not set out with the intention of doing that.

Mr COWAN: I am quite sure the parties in Queensland set out with the intention of doing that. My information is that the reason for the inquiry into retail shopping centres was to provide some form of protection for the businessmen who were already established.

Mr Skidmore: In that case, Mrs Minister, it does not make the proposition morally wrong.

Mr COWAN: Because the time on private members' day is somewhat limited, I wish to relate only very generally to the issues. I do not want to take up specific issues, other than that of the new development at Geraldton.

We have asked for a Select Committee to be appointed. Members of this House would be aware that a parliamentary party committee has already been established under the chairmanship of a Liberal member of this House. That committee will have far less influence on the Government than does the MRPA.

Mr Nanovich: That is not correct.

Mr COWAN: The MRPA has already presented a recommended retail shopping policy. Some parts of that policy have been used; other parts have been ignored. Certainly they have not been implemented. Yet suddenly, because there has been a public call for some curbs on the development of retail shopping space, the Government has decided to establish a parliamentary party committee. I maintain that committee will have no more influence on the Government than on the MRPA. In fact, it will have less influence.

Mr Stephens: It is a whitewash.

Mr Herzfeld: That is your opinion.

Mr COWAN: The parliamentary committee has no power to summon witnesses or to hear evidence. It can make recommendations only to

the Government. What would happen to those recommendations? If the Government is prepared to implement only that part of the MRPA's policy with which it agrees, what will it do with a parliamentary party committee's recommendations?

If we had a Select Committee, we would be dealing with the Parliament. The Select Committee would be required to report to the Parliament. I can go further: A Select Committee would have considerable power to summon witnesses and to hear whatever evidence it wishes to take. In fact, as I understand it, it would have all of the powers of an Honorary Royal Commission. Therefore, it would have the ability to make recommendations to this Parliament that would be of value, and the Parliament could act upon those recommendations. The report would not have to be hidden away secretly by the Government, with no action being taken on it. It would be a public report; and the Parliament could act upon it.

The power of any Parliament relates directly to its power to legislate. If we were to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into this matter, on consideration of the report the Parliament would have the choice of introducing legislation which would do the very thing that the present Government has chosen not to do—that is, to regulate and control the construction of retail shopping centres.

It would also ensure that the increase in retail shopping space is kept to the required levels which would allow those businesses which are established already in the industry to make a reasonable living.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Coyne): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Mr STEPHENS: I formally second the motion.

MR TAYLOR (Cockburn) [3.11 p.m.]: The Opposition would like to support the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into retail shopping outlets. We do so, bearing in mind many of the points raised by the previous speaker, but we place a slightly different emphasis on those comments.

We suggest the Minister should give some real thought to the appointment of a Select Committee. It is clear such committees can be used, and indeed are used in some cases, in a political way, where political issues are involved; but in this case, we are dealing with retail shopping which is of fundamental importance to everybody in the community.

By accepting the motion, the Minister would not be admitting weakness on her own part, on the part of the MRPA, the Town Planning Department, or the Government.

As pointed out a moment ago, the Government could have a majority on such a committee. Therefore, it would have every opportunity to obtain all the information available to the Minister and the Government. It would have access also to the information which was dealt with selectively by the Liberal Party back-bench committee, and I endorse the comments made by the previous speaker as to the uselessness of that committee.

However, most importantly, the appointment of a Select Committee would enable this matter, which is of importance to every member of the community, to be aired publicly.

The Opposition does not necessarily accept the problem is of the extent mentioned, but it believes there is a problem and the public at large feels there is a problem. In that context, the Parliament has a clear duty to examine the matter and make a determination.

A determination could well be in support of the policies of the MRPA. It could be in support of those policies, but contain minor or major recommendations. A determination could well be in support of the Government's attitude generally. However, most importantly it would give those who feel they have a grievance an opportunity to express their feelings. It would take the heat out of the matter and it would give confidence to local authorities, the department, and the community at large which relies on shopping centres either for commercial or consumer reasons.

Generally we support the proposition that a Select Committee should be appointed. The Opposition bases its attitude almost exclusively on the two aspects of price and service; that is, the price of goods to the consumer and the service provided to him. As we all know, people are rather selective in the matter of price, but most people do not mind paying a little more on occasions if they receive better service. The combination of price and service is what we all seek and we base all our attitudes in the commercial field upon those two criteria. Whenever we go to shopping centres, we make our judgments on the criteria of price and service. I would class service as including general accessibility.

With perhaps the exception of you, Sir, in your electorate most people have rather flexible shopping habits. Over the past 10 to 15 years they would have dealt with various groups of shops.

There are a number of reasons for this and I shall refer to them in a moment. However, ultimately it is the consumer who makes the decisions. The Opposition looks almost exclusively to the consumer in terms of the way in which it approaches a retail shopping programme.

We are concerned when the Retail Traders' Association complains there are too many shopping centres, but what else would one expect to hear from that group? The Retail Traders' Association is an established organisation representing people already in business. They would quickly attack the proliferation of shopping centres, as would the consultants appointed by that group. We do not say they are wrong, but their approach must be looked at in this light.

There have been some complaints from local authorities and, once again, their complaints can be treated in the same way as those of the Retail Traders' Association. Invariably when one looks at the complaints, one sees they are based not on service or price to the consumer but on a regional attitude. The rating power of the local authority influences its attitude, as does the effect it would have on the authority if a shopping centre were constructed elsewhere. Local authorities want to protect their ratepayers. The owners of shopping premises may live elsewhere, but the occupiers of residences within the boundary of a particular local authority pay rates, and this influences the attitude of the local authority.

It is a very legitimate approach, but one must look at it in the overall context with respect to shopping and place it alongside the approach adopted by the Retail Traders' Association.

We must consider the attitude of developers who have an axe to grind also. They seem to be split into two groups. There are those who have developed shopping centres already and who are reaping rewards as a result. They watch very carefully whether new developments are likely to take place and their attitude is usually voiced to the effect, "Let us slow it down a bit and hold it for a while."

There are other developers who have capital available and, therefore, they take the reverse attitude. They want to invest their capital and make some money out of a shopping proposition. They are eager to test themselves on the market and see whether they can capitalise on a situation. They tend to say, "We should build more shopping centres. Let us not restrict them. Let us not behave as socialists. Let us allow the market to make the decision."

Both those groups have legitimate cases, but their approaches must be placed alongside those

of the Retail Traders' Association and local authorities.

There is also a small section of developers who are holding land which has been rezoned already for retail shopping. This land may not be developed for some time. Such areas may be zoned "urban deferred" and there is an indication that, at least within the next five, 10, or 15 years, they will be involved in a new development. The attitude taken by this section of developers lies somewhere between the attitudes of the other two groups I have mentioned already. They do not mind development going ahead anywhere else, as long as it does not go ahead in the corridor in which they have an option on land.

All those stances are legitimate, but it must be pointed out they are all self-interested. We support the appointment of a Select Committee which would look at these various points of view and make recommendations.

The MRPA has looked at these matters. It is the function of that body to examine all the evidence.

Mr Wilson: It is not acting quickly enough.

Mr TAYLOR: The interjection raises a qualification and I hope the member is not saying I was dealing with the matter exclusively. It is part of the function of the MRPA to look at these matters, assess the information, and try to the best of its ability to bring some sort of order into regional planning as a whole.

The evidence available is very clear and, on the face of it, it appears efforts are being made in this direction. The 1971 corridor plan for Perth was accepted in 1973 and laid out specific guidelines in an endeavour to put a stop to haphazard development. In 1973 the Johnston report on retail shopping, which was accepted by the MRPA in 1974, had a great deal to say and its recommendations were made available to interested sections of the community.

In 1976 we had the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Local Authority Retail Structure Plans". That was another MRPA document. It came out two years after the Johnston report was accepted and it tried to bring the situation a little closer to reality.

The Leader of the National Party referred to a document which was published in 1976 and which was called the *Retail Shopping Policy Guidelines*. It was an MRPA publication and a very comprehensive one. A great deal of work went into its compilation and it would have been a very worth-while set of guidelines for the future planning of these facilities.

In 1972 a "Statement of the Planning Policy of the Retail Shopping Centres" was published by the MRPA and in 1980 the "Guidelines for the Planning of Shopping Centres" was published. This was over a period when there was a tremendous proliferation of shopping centres. The MRPA has obviously been active and alert in producing this material.

If one reads that material one must be quite sensitive to the thought that has gone into these publications and the realities of the situation. My cursory reading of these publications confirmed the view which I held as a result of examination of the matter previously. I felt these publications were quite rational and they were a basis for a good planning system.

I wish now to return to the matter of price and service to consumers. As an Opposition, we are not so concerned with the developer who speculates. A developer is committing his money to land in the hope of making a profit. I am including in that category banks and insurance companies who wish to invest their funds in land in the hope of making a real profit. We are not primarily concerned as to whether or not they make money.

We are concerned with the price and service to consumers. Again, I am not so sure that our interest is with the larger stores—such as Moores—who set up in large shopping centres. However, we can show some sympathy for a store such as Moores which has moved to Floreat Park shopping centre and has helped create a community centre in that suburb.

I do not travel to Floreat Park very often but I do have a relative I visit there. I understand it is a centre which is a community centre as well as a place to spend money. It appears that Moores at Floreat are in real trouble because of the moves in adjacent suburbs to develop large shopping centres. However, that store took a risk and must take the consequences. Boans at Melville had to close because of the moves in Booragoon shopping centre. There was also an occasion when David Jones had to move from the Booragoon shopping centre because they were experiencing problems. The development in adjacent areas becomes something of a worry to these stores which are almost institutions within the State.

We show a little more concern for the smaller retailers who take over small shops in the centres. In many circumstances these small shopkeepers have invested money—perhaps unwisely—without any background knowledge of the industry. My remarks are not in support of the small speculative traders—although that comment must

not be taken to mean that I do not support small traders—who are genuinely providing a service at a reasonable price to consumers.

Statistics show that 60 per cent of the owners of these small shops are first-time lessees. They are often people who have a belief that they will be able to make a first-up success at something which may not have been done by others. It appears that these people who go into small businesses do so without full knowledge of the business and are somewhat unprepared for the task ahead. That is not a reason that they should not attempt to make their way as a legitimate section of the community, because they are prepared to provide a service for our society. However, they should be given some protection.

These small shopkeepers do not receive any support from the developers who buy the land and who hope to make a kill. There is some minor support from the large bodies who move into the shopping centres and there is some support from the small entrepreneurs who occupy these centres.

We are interested in the price and service provided to the people we represent. People who go into business take the risk and so these small shopkeepers should receive a small degree of protection. We are primarily concerned with not setting up a monopoly situation where people can be charged high prices for goods or services without any adequate protection.

Mr Nanovich: What do you do with a person who has taken up three shops in three centres within 10 or 12 months and then finds out that there is a moratorium on shopping centres?

Mr TAYLOR: It is a fair point, but I think that is covered by my remarks earlier. If a person takes that risk—

Mr Jamieson: He is not doing the community any good.

Mr TAYLOR: —it is his choice to do so. It was also his choice to try to maximise a profit on his investment.

Mr Cowan: Often these shops are in close proximity and all he is endeavouring to do is retain his customers.

Mr TAYLOR: We can take this point when referring to the work force. At any time, a person with skills and with greater ability will have a greater capacity to get on. The people who provide a better society and right of way receive a greater reward.

We are looking at the disadvantaged and trying to ensure that they are not left behind. We are trying to ensure that the disadvantaged are not any more disadvantaged. It would seem to me

that the decision to purchase three shops would involve a risk. However, a judgment was made and if that does not work out as planned I am not sure that that person could be protected.

The Opposition would have liked the terms of the motion to be broadened substantially. However, we are at the end of the session and we do not intend to make any amendments to the motion. We note the changes that have taken place in the planning of the City of Perth and the larger shopping centres. This expansion has occurred since the Town Planning Act of 1927-1929.

From time to time reviews of many areas have been carried out, but I cannot recall a single Select Committee or Royal Commission into the planning of our community. It would seem to be one of the fundamental actions Parliament should take from time to time to set up such a tribunal, and I support the Leader of the National Party in the motion he has moved.

When we consider the major problems that have arisen in the last 10 or 15 years, we must accept that, on an overall assessment, the planners have done a very good job. There has been a great increase in population both by way of migration and through the post-war baby boom. We have seen dramatic changes in retail needs. Probably the first of these problems to arise was that of the sites for one-brand service stations. A great deal of controversy arose over these sites.

Then we had the proliferation of self-service grocery stores such as Tom the Cheap, Freecorns, and Charlie Carter Pty. Ltd. This phase took approximately three to five years to work through the system. Then we had the hotel monopolies, and especially The Swan Brewery Co. Ltd. hotels. Each little community had its own hotel, and in my electorate we had a hotel at Hamilton Hill, Spearwood, Naval Base, Kwinana, and Rockingham. The hotels were neatly spaced through the suburbs, and while perhaps it was a nice planning concept, it was a little inhuman.

Next we saw suburban and regional developments by G. J. Coles & Co. Ltd., and Woolworths (WA) Ltd., with Boans Ltd. and Myer WA Stores Ltd. following close behind. Recently we have seen the development of large hardware and gardening stores such as Alco and Waldeck Nurseries Pty. Ltd.

Probably the first of the fast food outlets was Kentucky Fried Chicken. Then alongside one of these buildings a pizza parlour would be erected, or perhaps a beefburger store. These outlets have at times placed a great strain on planning.

In the last four or five years there has been a tremendous proliferation of taverns introducing us to a new lifestyle. Just north of Fremantle and in the City of Fremantle there has been a minor restaurant boom.

Probably the regional shopping centres have placed the greatest strain on planning, and I am referring here to the K-Mart type of development.

Perhaps the most recent phenomenon is the growth in the number of Chinese restaurants. Wherever there is a new small shopping centre in the metropolitan area, the largest shop is invariably a Chinese restaurant, and in most cases it is the shop on the corner.

These developments have all occurred over the last 15 to 20 years, and they have all disrupted the communities in which they have been established. The problems associated with these developments are noise, light, traffic, dirt and rubbish, as well as other inconveniences to the public. In the main I believe that our planners have coped with the problems reasonably well. The public make their own choices, and we know minor irritations have been caused by the developments. Every member of Parliament will have heard from some of his constituents who have been irritated by particular planning decisions.

However, we need an overview of the whole situation. At this stage there seems to have been more irritations than successes in respect of shopping centre development from the planning processes.

The motion we are supporting today relates to shopping outlets, but it could include at the same time a survey of town houses and apartments. Many of these have sprung up around the metropolitan area and in large country centres. Their growth will be just as significant as the growth of the shopping centres.

We could also consider a review of the metropolitan region plan which was brought down in the mid-1950s. This plan was designed to carry us into the 1970s and 1980s, but it is doubtful whether the concepts of the 1950s will be relevant to the 1990s and the year 2000. Every one of us is aware of the problems in relation to Servetus Street, Reabold Park, Orrong Road in Belmont, and now in the south-east corridor. Certainly the old scheme needs a complete review. This is not to say that the scheme was wrong initially; I am sure it was right. We must remember that in those days some major roads were planned largely in undeveloped bush country. The planners made the right decisions, but the time has now come for a reassessment.

Over the years we have seen the creation of parks, golf courses, etc., and the amount of land which is valuable environmentally is limited. So it would be incorrect to say that the planners were wrong then, but it would be correct to say the plan should be updated now.

This is how we see the problem of retail shopping centres. We are not saying that the planners were wrong in the early days. The Opposition believes in planning; it believes there should be some rationale behind developments. However, we say that people should be the main consideration when such plans are drawn up. While it appears that the MRPA considers people as the most important element when making planning decisions, nonetheless, it frequently happens that people finish up in second place.

So I come right back to a point I made in my early remarks to this motion. We do not see this motion as an attack on the MRPA, or as an attack on the Government—although it may well come out to be an attack on the Government. The setting up of a tribunal to study shopping developments would enable the public to put forward their points of view as to the way in which the actions of the MRPA may be affecting them. That is the argument we put forward to support the motion.

The task of such a Select Committee would be twofold: It would review the effectiveness of the MRPA retail shopping centre policy with special reference to the powers and actions of local authorities—and I will elaborate on that point in a moment—and, it would investigate the role of the MRPA in assisting positively the viability of regional centres, and particularly those in the Perth central business district and in the Fremantle City retail area. Secondly, it would review possible ramifications of the excesses of shopping centre proprietors who, because of a planning policy or planning decision, find themselves in a monopoly situation. These are the two areas on which we would like such a committee to concentrate, and, as I say, such an inquiry would be of tremendous advantage to the population at large, and it could be of advantage to the MRPA.

If we allow members of the public the opportunity to express their points of view, this could assist the members of the MRPA in their deliberations. The Royal Australian Planning Institute put out a small publication some time ago in which it expressed some thoughts in respect of retail shopping. This institute does not believe that too much space had been allocated for retail shopping areas. As I read the summation of the institute, it was not prepared to accept the

proposal we hear around the community at present that the development of shopping centres should be stopped until the matter is sorted out.

This reminds me of the situation in South Australia where, on the eve of a vital by-election for the seat held by the former Premier of the State (Mr Don Dunstan), it was announced—although one newspaper only had the information—that there would be a moratorium on shopping centres for six months. South Australia is the only State which has moved for a moratorium, and this move was made in the circumstances referred to, and obviously it had all the earmarks of the decision's having been made for local electoral consumption in the short term.

Victoria and Queensland are now examining very carefully the zoning of shopping centres. I am impressed in one sense that at least one State has sent its officers to Western Australia to ascertain what we are doing here because it believes that our system is not too bad. It is not regarded as a really good system, but at least it is regarded as being better than the system in some other States. As I said, the Royal Australian Planning Institute believes that retail floor space should be balanced, but at the same time, the main complaints are being voiced by those already occupying space in shopping centres.

Another interested group I mentioned earlier are the local authorities, and some comment must be made here. It would seem that while the MRPA has set out certain guidelines for the development of retail shopping outlets and while those guidelines appear on paper to be worth while, as a result of pressure some years ago, this Government agreed to allow a discretionary power to local authorities to zone for larger shopping areas. I think it went from something like 5 000 square metres to about 9 000 square metres. It was felt this would overcome an alleged shortage of shopping space.

Under normal circumstances, that might have been a reasonable proposition. However, unfortunately, local authorities, like all sectional interest groups, have their own interests at heart and the proposition has not been as workable as it should have been.

One example is cited where a local authority agreed to the rezoning of four separate shopping outlets or community neighbourhood centres, all of which were very close together. Whilst under the guidelines they were allowed to zone for those four shopping centres, if the matter had been under one proposal it would have needed to come through the MRPA and ultimately to the Government for examination and, possibly,

determination. However, the local authority was able to overcome that requirement by the manoeuvre I have just mentioned.

In a sense, one can understand the local authority. Again, for reasons I mentioned earlier, it is interested in rates and in the status of the local authority; it is interested in the welfare of the residents of the area. If the authority, by any means, can upgrade its community at the expense of communities alongside it, it will do so; there is nothing wrong with that as long as it is seen for what it is.

Certainly, the guidelines are not being accepted by local authorities in the spirit in which they were put forward at the time by the MRPA.

The local authorities are also ignoring a prime requirement in one of the reports that, wherever possible, small shopping centres should be established where there is adequate public transport; in other words they should have access to public transport. The corridor plan for Perth was established during the term of the Tonkin Government, and was accepted by this Government. One of the major reasons for such a plan was the access to public transport down the corridors. For local authorities to allow shopping centres—no matter how attractive they may be—to be established in areas away from public transport, or to require a distortion of public transport links is running counter to what has been put forward by the planners.

A prime example of what is happening at the moment is at Fremantle and Booragoon.

Mr Skidmore: And Midland.

Mr TAYLOR: I take the point of the member for Swan; however, the two I am most familiar with are Fremantle and Booragoon. Fremantle was set out as a subregional centre, but Booragoon, because of its geographical location, is likely in normal respects to be able to attract a substantial section of the catchment area of the Fremantle City Council. It is a tussle and the Government and the Minister at the moment are at the centre of that tussle. That is where they should be, by the way; that is the whole purpose of government. However, the MRPA had covered all the arguments that were necessary to enable the Minister or the Government to make a decision on the matter. The guidelines are very clear: There is to be orderly planning; there is to be a corridor plan; regional centres are to be established.

People who invest in these regional centres should be able to expect that the regional centres are going to be focal points for growth. If a local authority, quite legitimately, was to promote its

own area and the Government of the day supported that move against the guidelines set down by the MRPA, that is very questionable indeed. In fact, it throws the whole planning process in jeopardy. It does not affect only the planning on paper of where things ought to go; it also affects the plans of people who wish to invest both large and small sums of money in an area; it affects the choice of people as to where they want to live. People choose a home on the basis that they are moving into a community in which it will be worth while to live. If the Government accepts what local authorities are doing, and does not support the recommendations of the MRPA, but virtually is effecting planning changes in mid-stride, a lot of people are going to be dissatisfied. It simply is not acceptable.

From my understanding of the situation at Fremantle and Booragoon, no major move is contemplated immediately. However, certainly a Select Committee examining retail shopping could look at that matter.

The member for Swan referred to the Midland example. A minor matter—although the member for Swan would think it was a major matter—would be the example of a shire such as Mundaring permitting a development near the border of the two local authority areas. All local authorities are permitted to establish such regional centres; it is quite legitimate for them to promote their own areas. This would have the effect of intercepting a great deal of the patronage which now is enjoyed by the regional centre at Midland. We therefore support the move for a Select Committee.

The Government plays a very important and real role in the developmental area. Members may be interested to know the Government is quite serious in this regard, and I applaud it, because it is one of those things suggested in the United States as to the control of shopping centre development. I refer to the fact that the State Housing Commission and the Urban Land Council own a substantial amount of land which is used for urban shopping. The SHC owns a number of centres. For example, it owned the land on which the Mirrabooka district centre—one of the largest centres in the metropolitan area—was established. The commission owned the land, and arranged for it to be zoned; it was part of a planning scheme in association with the MRPA. I do not know how successful it has been.

Mr Wilson: Some aspects of its planning have not been successful.

Mr TAYLOR: I wish the member for Dianella had not interjected to that effect, because I was trying to support a larger Government role in this area.

However, I do know that in my own electorate, the Government certainly owned and sold land in the Coolbellup area on which the Coolbellup shopping centre has been established. It still owns what is now the Pace Road shopping centre. It owns the land and the shops, which are leased; the SHC is the landlord.

The Hub shopping centre is quite a large regional centre. The Government owns the land and it has sold a lease to a developer, who built a shopping centre. The owner of the buildings then leased them out to tenants. However, the appreciating value of the land in years to come will go to the community. Ultimately—it may be 10 years, 20 years, or 30 years hence—when some new development needs to take place at Kwinana, it will be the Government of the day which will benefit from the value of the residual land. It will be able to place certain conditions on the use of that land as it did in the instance of the Hub shopping centre.

I am pleased to be able to say I was the Minister at the time the lease was negotiated, and that is one of the reasons the land is still owned by the Government of the day. The Government will be able to impose certain requirements that facilities be provided. For example, playgrounds could be provided for children and creches for nursing mothers; any conditions the community wants could be required by the Government of the day because the Government itself owns the land.

Certainly, as the value of the land increases, it would not be a windfall for someone who happened to be lucky in the early stages; the Government of the day would benefit from that increase.

The Government still owns land set aside for stage 2 at Mirrabooka. This, too, will enable the Government of the day to place certain conditions on the use of that land.

In South Hedland the Government owns the "Day to Day" shopping centre and lease the shops. In Grand Promenade, Bedford Park, it owns land. In Bunbury, it built and owns eight shops, some of which are being leased. It owns land in Adeline in Kalgoorlie; and it is zoned for shopping. In Hookey Road, Midvale, it owns shops. In Geraldton it has land that could be used for commercial development or for shopping, but it has been negotiating unsuccessfully on that. In Albany the Government sold land for a shopping complex which has been built at Spencer Park.

Therefore, it is a force compared with other developers in the shopping centres. It is still the owner of some centres.

There is not much more I would like to add. I repeat that we support the move for a Select Committee, and that this move need not be disadvantageous to the MRPA or the Government. Certainly the recommendations of the Select Committee could be of advantage.

If this move is rejected today, that will not stop the hue and cry. The Government is promised that the hue and cry will be raised next year, and the year after that. Certainly, if the economic situation continues as it is—

Mr Nanovich: Did the current problem exist in the early 1970s?

Mr TAYLOR: There has always been some form of problem. My understanding is that in the early 1970s it was suggested that not enough land was being rezoned—there was a shortage of places. There was pressure on the Government of the day to allow for greater flexibility. During the period of the iron ore boom, the investors felt there was a great need for development. The names of several shopping centre developers should be on the lips of us all. They are well known to us. They made fortunes in a matter of years.

At this stage, the problem is that too much land has been rezoned for retail development. As long as the local authorities have the power, and as long as there is doubt with the developers about whether they should invest their money, and the small businessmen have doubts about the future, and other people have doubts whether they should invest at all, and if the consumers have doubts about whether the major shopping centres are charging too much and extorting premium prices, the Government of the day will be under pressure to do something about the situation.

Mrs Craig: Are you really saying that the power of the local authorities to initiate rezoning should be removed?

Mr TAYLOR: No. As I see it, with those qualifications, the local authorities have too much power.

Mrs Craig: How would you change that power?

Mr TAYLOR: There should be a reduction in the area that local authorities can rezone for any purpose.

Mrs Craig: So they should recommend only the smaller areas?

Mr TAYLOR: The local authorities should be able to rezone in a minor way only without reference to the MRPA.

Mrs Craig: That is so in part, in relation to references to the Town Planning Board in the compilation of their schemes.

Mr TAYLOR: There is the situation in Nedlands, say, where there is a ribbon development down the highway. If the Nedlands council wanted to do so, it could allow further development until some sort of conurbation of retail shops existed. That is not right.

Mrs Craig: How would you remove the power from Nedlands? How would the Government be able to do it?

Mr TAYLOR: If I debate this in black and white terms with the Minister, I am cutting across my support of the motion for a Select Committee. The whole tenor of my remarks is that the Opposition is not dogmatic about these things. All sections have a limited case to put forward in a sectional way. I am prepared to give my personal views; but they are based on the information in various reports, or comments made to me. The Minister might accept what she is told as gospel. I do not accept it as gospel. I have made up my mind for the moment, but I am prepared to consider changing my mind when I obtain more information.

Mrs Craig: I was only seeking from you your opinion.

Mr TAYLOR: In my opinion, the local authorities are negating the essence of the metropolitan region scheme. The scheme was designed to create a single, large, central community with a number of neighbourhood communities. There is a philosophy involving people within the scheme and behind the whole function of planning. The Minister has said that any number of times, at any number of functions.

In my opinion on one sectional area in respect of local authorities, there are instances where local authorities are pursuing the interests of their electors legitimately. Nonetheless, they are not in harmony with the reports put out by the MRPA with respect to retail shopping.

I instance the Stirling Highway, the development of which is controlled by a number of local authorities. The Albany Highway is another classic example of a major road leading into the metropolitan area which appears, to the person driving up and down it, to have been destroyed in terms of an environment and in terms of its function. In relation to Wanneroo Road, I suggest that there is perhaps a little too much development there also.

I am making these points only as observations and as comments made by others. As long as the State planning authorities can set down guidelines

for control, it is reasonable to require the guidelines to be adhered to.

I have a few points to conclude. Certainly, planning is a worry in a major respect. I understand that surveys indicate something like 54 per cent or 55 per cent of housewives have their own vehicles available to them at any time to do their shopping. That allows a lot of mobility and a lot of selectivity and changes of venues at which to do their shopping. That would mean there could be a lot of bankruptcies of small shops in the process. Another 25 per cent of housewives have the use of a car; so something like 75 per cent of housewives are able to have a vehicle to go shopping. That creates a problem.

I understand also that the Bureau of Statistics advises that the average person spends something like \$650 per annum on food. That means that if the number of retail food outlets is doubled, the only effect would be that half of them would go to the wall because the same amount of money would still be spent on food. There is a figure of something like \$580 in respect of day-to-day needs except food. That is a finite figure; so if the number of retail outlets proliferates, there is trouble.

If the local authorities can move in the spirit of the various reports and suggestions made by the planning authorities, some of these problems could be met.

We support this motion for a Select Committee. The problem will not go away. It will become even more pronounced; and the longer the problem is left, the harder it will be for the Government, through its planners, to bring the matter under control at some time.

The isolated instances of development could be deleterious to the community at large. The local authorities should have a look at the reports to which I have referred, as well as the other material which is available.

The decision to appoint a select committee should be made now. In the long run, it would not only assist the MRPA, but also it would not necessarily be damaging to the Government and it would certainly assist greatly the community at large.

We support the motion.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Trethowan.

(Continued on page 3740)

BILLS (4): RETURNED

1. Local Government Amendment Bill.
2. Reserve (Port Denison Suburban Lots 6 and 6a) Bill.

3. Perpetual Trustees W.A. Ltd., Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

4. Industrial Training Amendment Bill.

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

POLICE AMENDMENT BILL

Council's Message

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the further amendment made by the Assembly to the amendment made by the Council.

ACTS AMENDMENT (STRICT SECURITY LIFE IMPRISONMENT) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Deputy Premier), read a first time.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ACTS AMENDMENT (STRICT SECURITY LIFE IMPRISONMENT) BILL

Second Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the second reading.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [4.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Government has become aware of expressions of public concern over questions of the protection of the community and the preservation of public safety.

Over a period there has been a tendency for persons convicted of wilful murder and whose sentences have been commuted to life imprisonment, to be released after periods of imprisonment becoming increasingly shorter.

Attention has been drawn to this by Mr K. H. Parker in his report to the Government on parole, prison accommodation, and leave from prisons, in February 1979.

Mr Parker indicated that although the statistical records of releases over a 50-year period of those whose death sentences had been commuted were incomplete, a review of cases had revealed that more releases occurred after 15 years' imprisonment than after any other term, with the next most frequent terms being 10, 11,

13, and 14 years—all approximately equal—and 20 years.

The indications were, he said, that a pattern may be emerging for release on parole of persons whose sentences were commuted at or shortly after the 10-year period.

The Government believes that this tendency in relation to some cases of persons convicted of wilful murder who may be released back into the community after too short a period of imprisonment is a cause of public disquiet.

The Government has no present intention of abolishing the provision for capital punishment in the Criminal Code, but it desires to have an additional option available should a decision be made to commute a death sentence; that is to say, an option additional to commutation of a death sentence on the existing terms as set out in section 679 of the code—an option which will provide for suitable tight security over a longer period than has become customary in recent years.

The view has been expressed that any such commuted sentence on terms of strict security for life should not be capable of being changed without a resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

However, the question of not releasing a prisoner until there is a resolution of both Houses of Parliament introduces some vexed questions, not the least of which is that the Government of the day should rightly make such a decision rather than that it be made through these rather cumbersome processes.

The matter did not seem appropriate for a parliamentary resolution.

The Government decided, therefore, that the decision in such cases must remain with the Executive, but the Government believes that any such Executive order should be tabled in Parliament to provide the opportunity for the public to be notified, and for public debate where necessary. Parliament will retain the right of debate and the right to challenge the decisions of the Executive in such cases without the power to disallow.

A new form of exercise of the Royal prerogative is proposed on the basis that a prisoner's sentence on a capital charge may be commuted to life imprisonment on terms of strict security.

For practical purposes, such offenders are and will be those who have been convicted of wilful murder. Although any case of wilful murder is by definition serious, it is clear also that some cases may be considerably worse than others.

Cases do arise where the circumstances are such that the facts of the case taken with the circumstances of the background of the offender indicate clearly that if the death sentence is not to be carried out the offender must be regarded as presenting a substantial risk to the community for a considerable period in the future, if not for the rest of his life.

At present, under section 679 of the Criminal Code, the commutation may be on condition of imprisonment for life, or in the case of a child, indefinite detention. In relation to such a sentence, the Parole Board must report to the Minister on the offender when requested, or at least after 10 years and thereafter each five years.

It is desired to retain the flexibility generally which such provisions offer, but to graft upon them an additional option for the Governor which may be more suitable for worse types of cases.

This we have sought to do by amending section 679 of the Code to introduce the concept of "strict security life imprisonment". The content of that type of imprisonment, which will be available only as an option on commutation of the death sentence, is to be derived from appropriate amendments to the Prisons Act and the Offenders Probation and Parole Act as set forth in the Bill.

Those amendments are designed to provide that the Parole Board is to report upon a prisoner so held after a period of 20 years has elapsed, and thereafter every three years.

The Parole Board will not generally report sooner than those intervals, although it will have the power to report more frequently and earlier in circumstances which appear to it to be exceptional.

The Minister, himself, will have a power to call for a report on such a prisoner at any time. Those provisions are designed to ensure an appropriate continuation of detention whilst, at the same time, allowing flexibility to meet exceptional cases.

Such a prisoner is not to be released from the terms of his detention under strict security life imprisonment before a period of 20 years has elapsed, except where the Governor is of the opinion that special circumstances exist. Upon release, the usual conditions in relation to parole may be applied.

Because of the seriousness of such cases, a degree of public accountability resulting from parliamentary debate is to be achieved by the provision which requires the tabling of an order for the release of such prisoners, together with an explanatory note as to the circumstances, in each House of Parliament.

The amendments proposed to the Prisons Act are designed to ensure that, whilst being held in conditions of strict security life imprisonment at a place which will be specified in the appropriate order, a prisoner will not be able to be removed from one prison to another, to hospital, or otherwise beyond the walls of the institution specified, except in circumstances of emergency which are to be reported to the responsible Minister. It is envisaged that such an emergency might be constituted—among other things—by a prison fire, a riot, or need of medical care not available in prison.

In addition, it will be by order of the Governor-in-Executive-Council only that such a prisoner will be relieved of the strict security element of the detention or granted leave of absence from the prison, and thereby the Governor will be able to ensure, for the protection of the community, an appropriate maintenance of conditions of strict security, subject only to the dictates of humanity.

The object of this Bill is to provide greater public confidence in the level of protection to which the community is entitled from persons convicted of capital offences whose sentences are commuted.

It is designed to provide greater flexibility in the exercise of the prerogative of mercy.

The Bill will not change any existing options which are presently available.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram.

SHOPPING CENTRES: DEVELOPMENT

Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [4.28 p.m.]: I was interested to note that the mover of this motion, the member for Merredin, acknowledged that a Government party committee had been set up to inquire generally into the whole area of shopping centre development in Western Australia. It was an appropriate comment, and I can inform the House that that committee has reported already to the Minister—in fact, the report has been in the hands of the Minister for over a week. The Minister has agreed that this afternoon I can quote from some of the conclusions of the report.

Mr Taylor: Can I ask you one little query: Is it correct that almost all the material examined by your committee actually came from the Minister?

Mr TRETHOWAN: No.

Mr Taylor: Therefore, you reviewed the material which she gave you, and then gave her back an answer based on that material?

Mr TRETHOWAN: No, that is certainly not correct.

Mr Taylor: Could you explain where it is not correct?

Mr O'Connor: Are you prepared to stand and give us the details of your sources of information?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! The member for East Melville will resume his seat. I ask members to refrain from interjecting to give the member on his feet the opportunity to put forward his views. I am sure many of the answers the member for Cockburn seeks will be forthcoming.

Mr TRETHOWAN: Later in my speech, I will refer to that matter in more detail, which will in part answer the honourable member's question.

My opposition to the motion moved by the member for Merredin is based on the factor of time; it will affect any action the Government may take in the area of shopping centre development. It is my understanding there could well be a considerable number of development proposals currently before the Minister which have been awaiting decision for a considerable period; the delay in decision has been caused by the fact that the Minister has been awaiting a report of a joint Government parties committee.

Mr Pearce: How long did it take you from the time you started until the time you presented this report?

Mr TRETHOWAN: Just over two months.

Mr Davies: Did it include members of the National Party?

Mr TRETHOWAN: It was a joint Government parties committee.

Mr Davies: Well, they are not part of the Opposition; they are sitting on your side.

Mr TRETHOWAN: The Leader of the Opposition would be aware of which parties comprise the joint Government parties.

Mr Davies: They are sitting on your side; they are certainly not sitting over here.

Mr Watt: It is by circumstance rather than by choice.

Mr TRETHOWAN: If a Select Committee were established, the Minister would feel bound to delay any decision on the applications currently before her until the report of the committee was recorded. This could delay by six months or more a decision on a number of matters which currently are before her. I believe this is a factor which

should be considered deeply by the House, because it could result in considerable difficulties being experienced by all parties interested in the proposals presently before the Minister.

Mr Taylor: You mentioned a period of two months.

Mr TRETHOWAN: They have been waiting at least two months.

Mr Taylor: Was the committee established one day after the member for Merredin placed his motion on the notice paper.

Mr Old: No, it was established prior to that.

Mr Stephens: One day prior. The Government heard the whispers in the corridors.

Mr TRETHOWAN: If the member for Stirling is the sort of person who listens to whispers, he should not be a member of Parliament.

As the member for Cockburn pointed out, many parties are interested in shopping centre development whose interests may be clearly defined. This includes consumers, who were not initially included in the group cited by the member for Cockburn. It could be of considerable disadvantage to many interested parties to have a long delay before a ministerial decision is made. In fact, a delay of an additional six months or more would constitute a general moratorium.

One of the facts the committee did establish was that a moratorium probably would not be in the best interests of all people—including consumers—concerned with shopping centre development. As I have no doubt the member for Cockburn would agree, the problem of over-supply of retail shopping centres is not universally distributed throughout the metropolitan area or, indeed, throughout the State. In fact, in some areas a general moratorium could result in some areas being considerably under-served with adequate shopping centres or adequate choice of shopping; this is due to the long lead time associated with the development of shopping centres.

Mr Pearce: Which areas are you referring to?

Mr TRETHOWAN: It would take too long to go through the areas one at a time.

Mr Taylor: Do you believe the City of Melville is under-supplied or over-supplied with shopping centres? In fact, it is over-supplied.

Mr TRETHOWAN: The matter of the over-supply of shopping centres is affected by the lead time of the development of such centres. The effect of a decision in the planning stages is not necessarily felt until perhaps two or three years after that decision has been made. That fact must be considered in any discussions regarding the

postponement of Government action in this area, and the appointment of a Select Committee would bring about that postponement.

In its consideration of the problems regarding shopping centre development in Western Australia, the joint Government parties committee sought the views of most of the groups which, in the past, have clearly expressed an interest in this area. In fact, most of the organisations we contacted put forward a submission for the consideration of the committee.

Mr Bertram: Did any of the members of your committee have a vested interest in its outcome?

Mr Nanovich: Why don't you stop scraping the bottom of the barrel?

Mr Pearce: It is our job to look for crooks. You should spend more time looking for areas of corruption.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order! I remind the member for Gosnells that people on the committee were possibly not crooks, whereas he has implied they are in that category. I do not take such remarks lightly. I suggest members allow the member for East Melville to make his address as the member for Cockburn was permitted to make his; namely, without interruption.

Mr TRETHOWAN: As I mentioned earlier, diverse interests are involved in the development of shopping centres; these interests range from the developers and retailers, down to the consumers. In fact, Western Australia has developed a relatively satisfactory system of assisting in adequate planning for these particular needs. As the member for Cockburn mentioned, other States have sought our advice regarding the solving of their own problems in this area.

Mr Taylor: I thought I would mention it before the Minister did, that is all.

Mr TRETHOWAN: This indicates that the MRPA shopping policy of 1977 is a relatively adequate document and basis for the future development of retail shopping within the metropolitan area. I point out at this stage that only the metropolitan area is covered in this regard; the policy does not also cover country areas.

I think some of the problems which shopping centre developers face in rural areas is the need for separate consideration of those problems which can be solved under the MRPA shopping policy. One of the problems which has developed is the extended period of time which the implementation phase of that shopping policy has

faced. It calls for the development of structure plans, in agreement with the MRPA, by the various shires in the various corridors.

One of the aims of the structure plans is to provide an adequate description of the present and proposed shopping facilities in a given developing area. Although all commercial rezoning decisions require the approval of the Town Planning Board, in granting approval for rezoning, the board takes into account the effect of the catchment area on the proposed development and the relationship between that development and other existing shopping centres or proposed developments. That establishes the long-term optimum for the whole area and the long-term requirement for shopping centre floor space.

One of the mismatches which has been mentioned is the control of development. At the present time the MRPA has the power only to grant or advise of development approval for shopping centres over 9 500 square metres or approximately 100 000 square feet, which are relatively large centres, or those smaller centres which are adjacent to major roads.

This has raised a problem in terms of the rate of development of smaller centres. At the present time these are matters purely for shire approval and it may well be that the growth of the net catchment areas between the various shires can mean the approval granted by different shires for smaller centres may not take into account the approval granted in adjoining shires.

Mr Pearce: Isn't the problem that the bigger centres tend to swamp the smaller centres? Did the committee look at what is happening in Armadale?

Mr TRETHOWAN: The problem exists with the retail space provided in relation to the relative size of the growth of catchment areas from which they would draw. One of the recommendations the committee made for MRPA development approval was that consideration should be given to reducing the lower level from 9 500 square metres to 3 000 square metres until such time as we achieve the full development and implementation of the current structure plans.

Mr Taylor: Would you include that recommendation?

Mr TRETHOWAN: Yes; that is, that the lower level of development approval by the MRPA be lowered from 9 500 square metres to 3 000 square metres. That is the level of which the Minister was advised over a week ago. However, a limitation was placed upon this and that recommendation should last only for a period

of two years or until the full implementation of the structure plans for the various corridors, because it was felt that once the structure plans were completed and implemented the requirement for the MRPA control for the lower level of minimum-sized centres would not be necessary.

One of the other problems which was seen was that at various levels of the industry insufficient information is available for the making of decisions. I believe both the Town Planning Board and the MRPA do have and require a considerable amount of detailed information before granting a rezoning or a development approval. However, it would be of assistance for much of the information to be more generally available at local government level and for people interested in proposing shopping centre developments in order that well-based decisions for applications could be produced.

It would be of assistance also if those particular retailers at the smaller end of the scale were to have this information available to allow them to make more accurate market assessments of their prospects before entering the industry. This could be accomplished through the Small Business Advisory Corporation which is a body which up to now has provided considerable advice to many people proposing to enter the retail industry. It would be a very appropriate organisation for the provision of general information about the retail industry to the public. Further, it is possible for that body to work very closely with the MRPA, the Town Planning Board, and local shires in the collection of this information.

Mr Wilson: Would you agree there is a general dearth of information?

Mr TRETHOWAN: There is a maldistribution of information. The information is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics; but I do not believe the information is co-ordinated and made available in a simple way which would facilitate public access. I believe the Small Business Advisory Corporation would be a suitable body to make available this information.

Mr Pearce: How much statistical information did your committee collect?

Mr TRETHOWAN: We supplied the Minister with the information upon which we based our opinions and it is up to her to assess that. The problem is not the restriction of statistical information but the lack of access to this information for people entering the industry.

Mr Jamieson: The major developers would use it, though.

Mr TRETHOWAN: They might also have done their own independent market research

which is a very useful adjunct to an application in order to justify a development.

The other area where such information would be of assistance is in the negotiation of leases, particularly for small shopkeepers. One of the problems which appears to be evident with many people entering the industry is that not only can they not identify their market but also they do not understand the implications of many of the leases they sign.

Again, the Small Business Advisory Corporation has made endeavours in this regard; but I believe an extension of this information service would be of considerable assistance. It seems it would also be of assistance if the industry and those interested parties within it would agree on a standard lease document for the industry with respect to retail space. This would lessen the difficulties faced by someone entering the industry for the first time in gaining an understanding of what is normal for such leases. Again I believe this would be of use in any information resource programme that the advisory corporation undertook.

The report that our Government parties committee supplied to the Minister provides a relatively full summation of the investigation of the present problem. It would be of disadvantage to a great many of the people involved in the industry if a further delay was caused through the appointment of a Select Committee to recover that area. Therefore, I oppose the motion.

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning) [4.51 p.m.]: At the outset I indicate that I oppose this motion, and I would like to enumerate some of my reasons. The member for Merredin in proposing the motion indicated to the House that his interest in this matter had arisen because a colleague of his had brought it to his attention; his colleague had a certain problem at Geraldton. I agree with the member for Merredin that a problem exists at Geraldton in relation to the rezoning of land for a shopping centre.

The local authority has made application for a zoning amendment and supports that application very strongly indeed. The local authority, the elected body, believes it is in the best interests of that area that the shopping centre development proceed, and for that reason it initiated the amendment. Opposed to that view are, of course, the many people presently involved in retailing—the small businessmen for whom we all feel very much—and other citizens at Geraldton. Those people have written to me. I have received many letters from them about this matter. My

advice to those people has been that they should ensure during the advertising period that they indicate their concern to the council.

The process is that all those submissions will be received by the council and it will then decide whether it will uphold or dismiss the application. That decision and the submissions will then be put before the developer who will give further consideration to the matter. I will then go through the submissions by all parties to see whether the weight of opinion is that there ought to be or there ought not to be a shopping centre developed in that area. However, we should not accept that will be the only information available to me.

In assessing whether a rezoning should take place, especially at present, it is necessary to establish whether it will have an impact that is not beneficial to a community. The Town Planning Board requires a deal of information from the council. If the rezoning occurs the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority will not deal with the development application when the amendment comes finally before me; the information that is provided to be the basis on which the decision is to be made will relate to an economic impact assessment and also give me an accurate picture of the number of people resident in the particular catchment area. That is one of the problems we have had.

Many local authorities assume the rate of growth for their area based on the growth in the previous five years, and they make a provision for zoning in their town planning schemes for shopping centre development sites. They assume that the need will exist. Because we presently have such zonings a great pressure is exerted upon local authorities by developers for the developers to be able to put up a shopping centre in a zoned area although the centre will be established before the population increases sufficiently to utilise it. I mentioned this at the beginning because it was a matter to which the member for Merredin referred.

Because he became aware of action being taken in other States and because he became aware that the problem was not the only one confronting the residents of Geraldton, he then said he believed it would serve a good purpose to have a committee of inquiry into the problems surrounding retail shopping centre developments. I think it is important that the House is acquainted with just exactly what has occurred in Victoria and in Queensland because much that is untrue has been said in the Press and by people who are closely associated with retail developments in Western Australia.

The situation in Victoria is that until about mid-1979 a retailer could build a shopping centre in a residential area if he obtained a permit. No requirement at all existed for rezoning. It was only necessary for him to obtain a permit from the local authority for him to be able to proceed with the development.

Of course, vast areas in Victoria were zoned "residential" and it was for that reason the Victorian Minister responsible for town planning occasioned an inquiry to investigate the matter and make recommendations to him. The member for Merredin quite accurately told us about that. The interesting point is that the recommendations the Victorian Board of Works came up with and provided to the Minister responsible for planning in Victoria detailed almost precisely the process that has been followed for a very long period in Western Australia.

It still seems to be in the minds of some people that that was not true. So, approximately three weeks ago I met with the chief planning officer in Victoria, the Minister for planning, and asked him to detail very carefully for me what Victoria's new legislation entails and what the process will be. In fact, the only difference in the situation in Victoria and the situation in Western Australia will be that the drawings of a plan will be on display. In our case we say exactly what the area will be, but in Victoria the plans will be displayed. That is the only difference. We were told a moratorium was called for in Victoria but the Victorian Minister has written to me and told me that it was not.

We should consider the situation prevailing in Queensland. Prior to legislation the Queensland Parliament enacted in April of this year and which came into effect on 1 July this year, Queensland had a situation whereby with the approval of the local authority it was possible for a shopping centre to be built. The authorities were in a tremendous amount of trouble. The Minister responsible for planning in that State told me that Queensland had something like 68 large shopping centre proposals presented when the Government realised it must do something about the situation.

Land is now required to be appropriately zoned, and, if the land is appropriately zoned, the developer is free to build a shopping centre. If the land is not appropriately zoned a requirement is placed on the developer to supply an economic impact assessment. Those conditions are really very little different from those pertaining in Western Australia. The only difference is that in Queensland a statutory requirement now exists for an economic impact assessment to be carried out. In Western Australia and in Victoria no

statutory requirement exists for an economic impact assessment, but, indeed, from the information we gather before granting an approval we have such adequate information available to us.

Western Australia can indeed be proud of its planning history. In so far as the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority is concerned, as other members in this House have said this evening, the authority is aware of a problem related to retail shopping centres.

The Johnston committee has been mentioned and I think it is important now to know that as a result of that committee all local authorities within the metropolitan area are required to develop what we call a "structure plan". The structure plans are nearly all to hand. The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority will then compile an overall structure plan which will indicate quite clearly where shopping centres of various sizes may be established. The compilation of the plan will assist people who are thinking of moving into new shopping centre developments to be able to see—because a visual presentation is better than a written presentation—exactly where shopping centres are located, their size, and moreover where future centres are planned.

The decisions they will be able to make as a result of that information will assist them greatly. But, at the same time I must admit I am in complete agreement with many of the recommendations made by the parliamentary committee, and certainly the recommendation that seeks to have more information of a type easy to assimilate and distribute to all persons who wish to go into business and wish to be able to assess the population they will serve and the competition they are likely to encounter.

It has been asserted that, perhaps, we appointed the Government party committee to investigate shopping centres and lease agreements only because of corridor talk. I can assure members that is not so. Many members of the Government have been very concerned about the comments which have been made. We all have a very deep concern for the people involved in small businesses, and much investigation has been carried out to see whether any of the proposals which have been put forward by the Press or other groups would, in fact, have a significant effect on shopping centre development in Western Australia, and on the already established small businessmen.

Early in September, I believe it was, I indicated to the MRPA I would like it to re-examine its policy to see whether the area of shopping centres

which came under its control could be reduced. Presently, the area under the control of the MRPA is 9 500 square metres. I suggested that the area could come down to 2 000 square metres.

The only areas in which the MRPA is able to comment on shopping centre development is when they are of a lesser size than 9 500 square metres, and when shopping centres are to be located on regional roads. Those two options give the authority an opportunity to comment.

It is thought that decisions rest very largely with local authorities. It is fair to indicate to the House that in recent times many applications have been received by local authorities for rezoning for the further development of shopping centres. The member for Melville referred to the difficulty which would have been encountered had a moratorium been effected. That is true.

Mr B. T. Burke: How many times have you overridden the Town Planning Board?

Mrs CRAIG: The time involved in developing a shopping centre is up to four years. A number of shopping centres now under construction were, in fact, approved in 1976. The developers were told in 1976 that they could utilise the areas for that purpose, and rezoning was initiated by the local authority. An enormous number had been publicised, and a moratorium would not have had any effect on them because of the legal implications which could have accrued. Untenable costs would have been involved so far as the taxpayers were concerned. Further, a moratorium would not have been fair because of the expectation of both the people in the area and the developers of that the development would proceed. It would have been thoroughly advertised, accepted, and planned.

It has been asserted that the Government has done very little about the proliferation of shopping centres. I want to indicate that at the present time something like 24 applications are with the department for rezoning. If they are not with the department already, we know they are coming up because of preliminary investigations which have been made. It is true to say that many of those applications will be unsuccessful, and many people will be aggrieved because they will not be allowed to proceed with the type of development they have proposed.

Regarding many of the other proposals that have come before me in recent times, I have negotiated often with the local authority and the developer in order to reduce the size of the centre so it would have a lesser impact on other small businesses operating within the area. The only other mechanism available was to endeavour to

reduce the size of the development associated with a rezoning application. Then it was possible to reduce the size of an area on which a shopping centre could be placed.

The Government has taken action to endeavour to ensure small businessmen are not unduly disadvantaged by too great a proliferation of shopping centres. As has been said by several members this afternoon, only certain actions are available to the Government. Most of the decisions are made by local authorities and that, of course, is their prerogative.

I must say on some occasions when I have indicated an opposition to an amendment, a flood of letters has come in from residents within the area because they say they want the facility. They say they will not have the buying power which additional shopping centres make available, and which enable people to shop more competitively. There is a difficult balance to achieve.

I can assure members that every group of persons who have felt that they have a recommendation to make to the Government, or who felt they had a solution to put forward in relation to the growth of shopping centres, has been heard. I have given very deep thought to the proposals which have been put forward. Many of the suggestions which people believe would be helpful simply would not work.

Mr Skidmore interjected.

Mrs CRAIG: I am sorry, but I have to speak to the Chair.

Mr Skidmore: I asked you to speak up. I am aware of Standing Orders; I do not need a lesson.

Mrs CRAIG: The member for Swan said I was speaking in a certain direction.

Mr Pearce: The Minister for Transport is carrying on a conversation, and it is very hard to hear the Minister.

Mrs CRAIG: I can assure the member for Swan I have not the faintest intention of keeping my reply to myself. I am quite sure that the *Hansard* reporter is able to hear me, but it appears that nobody on the other side can hear.

Mr Skidmore interjected.

Mrs CRAIG: I am very sorry about that.

There has been comment about the difficulty of small businessmen in relation to lease agreements. I must admit that some agreements contain provisions that are very difficult indeed. I have taken the opportunity to speak to the Building Owners and Managers Association, and I have been assured they share my concern.

Mr B. T. Burke: How often have you overruled the Town Planning Board?

Mrs CRAIG: The only real action the Government can take in so far as lease agreements are concerned is to ensure there is available to people who wish to go into a small business, a facility to enable them, at no charge, to have their lease agreement vetted and receive advice from competent persons as to whether or not the agreement is appropriate to sign.

We all know—but I am afraid not sufficient people in the community know—a small businesses advisory service is available to those people.

I do not know how a Government can possibly legislate to protect people against themselves, and that is one of the real problems we have—

Mr B. T. Burke interjected.

Mrs CRAIG: —in relation to this matter. I wonder if I could ask the member for Balcatta to state his objection so that I may answer it.

Mr B. T. Burke: I am interested to know how often you overrule the Town Planning Board.

Mrs CRAIG: I must admit I have never taken a percentage in respect of the times I overrule the board, nor do I think it is a relevant matter to introduce to the House this afternoon. If the member feels aggrieved by any decision I have made, I suggest he discuss the matter with me at a later date and we will see whether he can prove it was not the best planning decision to make under the circumstances. If he is privy to recommendations made to me or the decisions I make in respect of them, I regret that information is available to him because it certainly should not be.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr B. T. Burke: Mainly from the Minister.

Mrs CRAIG: I simply want to say I believe the recommendations made to me by the committee are sensible, and that many of them will be capable of implementation. The committee did a lot of work; it received many submissions and interviewed many persons, and I believe it got a better overview of the situation than would have been possible had it not been established.

The knowledge so gained is now available to the Government. A great deal of work has been done in relation to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, as all speakers have mentioned. There is an awareness on the part of local authorities that requests to rezone land for shopping purposes are being scrutinised very carefully and that if

there are valid planning reasons for rejecting an application, it will be rejected. However, shopping centres must be allowed to continue to develop in some places because communities deserve such facilities. That is why every application must be carefully considered on its merits.

Mr B. T. Burke: To see who is making it.

Mrs CRAIG: With those words, I oppose the motion moved by the member for Merredin.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [5.13 p.m.]: I have listened patiently to the debate, and I find none of those members opposed to the proposition advanced by the member for Merredin has actually endeavoured to tackle the matter in a genuine or constructive manner. I listened carefully to the member for East Melville, and I do not want to steal the thunder of the member for Merredin because he has the right of reply; however, the argument of the member for East Melville that a Select Committee would cause a moratorium in respect of matters already under consideration is so specious that it does not stand up.

In her remarks the Minister suggested that these are ongoing things and because they are under way at present they should not be stopped. Good heavens, they have been going on for decades and they will continue to go on. Where do we make the cut-off? At what point do we say, "No more development will occur while a Select Committee considers the matter"?

My concern is that at the moment there are some developments I would not like to see go ahead, and I will refer specifically to them in a moment.

Mrs Craig: They have been withdrawn.

Mr SKIDMORE: I know that. I am talking about the propositions that are in the pipeline now. If they are disadvantaged, others will come along. It is not a stop-go situation.

I agree that timing is important, but I see no reason that should be advanced—as apparently it was by the member for East Melville—as an argument against the appointment of a Select Committee. Perhaps the member for East Melville felt restricted in respect of time; but I thought his argument did not stand up to the light of day.

I listened carefully to the Minister when I was able to hear her. I did not wish to be discourteous to her, although she always seems to bridle when I ask her to speak up. She seems to think I am having a shot at her. That was not the case; I was concerned to try to understand what the Minister was mumbling about. If she questions whether she

can be heard, let me point out that the member for Merredin also was straining to hear what she was saying. In essence, to my mind the Minister failed to answer the arguments presented.

I wish to raise the issue of Midland, which is a classic example of over-kill, over-production, and over-development in respect of retail shopping space. It is an area which desperately needs to be left alone for a while because it is so over-developed. What has occurred in Midland is a classic example of over-development. When the new Midland Gate complex was constructed, it was situated about half a kilometre away from the main, central shopping area. The development was opposed by the business people in Midland proper, because it was a move away from the accepted shopping area. It was considered the move would split the shopping area and begin to create a new shopping area. Of course, that is exactly what the developers wanted, because further land was available in the area for rezoning and development; and it was desired to shift the emphasis to the new shopping area of Midland Gate.

That meant the destruction of some 30 or 40 perfectly good homes to enable the shopping centre to be developed for an area which was already adequately catered for in that respect. The surveys conducted by the Shire of Swan and by the developers of Midland Gate indicated that; but the development went ahead anyway, to the detriment of the business people in Midland.

Mr Nanovich: Can I ask a question?

Mr SKIDMORE: No, the member cannot.

As a result of this overdevelopment, the trade of many small businesses in Midland was progressively reduced. The decline commenced in a discreet pattern, but it finally resulted in the situation to which I have referred. Somebody saw an opportunity to develop an area of land opposite Midland Gate. The intention was to buy some 10 to 15 fairly good homes which were desperately needed for people to live in; and they were to make way for another shopping complex. However, it was not really a shopping complex in the true sense of the word. You would not believe it, Mr Speaker, but a multi-storied office block with a shopping complex attached to it was proposed to be built there. I would say Midland needs a multi-storied office block like I need a hole in the head.

Mr MacKinnon: There is something in that.

Mr SKIDMORE: I suppose some members would find that funny.

A Government member: You were asking for it.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not mind; it makes no difference to me because I have 39 minutes left. I do not mind using that time if members want to interject.

Mr B. T. Burke: They are their minutes too, Jack!

Mr SKIDMORE: The idea of a multi-storied office block is one which surely must be challenged when one considers the fact that every shopping centre development must be paid for by someone. The developer pays for it initially with his capital in the hope he will be able to rent the premises to obtain a return on his capital and to recover the interest he pays on borrowed money. That is fair enough; but who pays? The person who pays is the consumer who goes through the door of the store. The money has to come from somewhere, and it comes from the consumer. So we have a multitude of unwanted shopping centres, and an economic growth for which the consumer pays, and which the consumer does not really need. That is what the member for Cockburn was talking about when he said we on this side of the House are concerned about the provision of services, and the cost of them to the consumer.

Mr Trethowan: That is not necessarily so. The developers could make big losses.

Mr SKIDMORE: I can put the member for East Melville's mind to rest by referring to Midland Gate. That has changed hands twice, and now it is worth twice the value it had three years ago. As far as I can see, there is no chance of a developer who undertakes a development of this size losing his money in the foreseeable future because of natural developments.

What happens is that during the period of time that the developer is not receiving his return by sale at some future date, the consumer is paying through the nose. What happened with the proposed Midland city development was that the development was the most stupid town planning act one had ever seen. Great Eastern Highway goes right through Midland, and Great Northern Highway heads off at the Midland Town Hall. It splits the town asunder. I cannot get the Main Roads Department interested in doing something about that. However, it was going to split the shopping centre and put a major subdivision between Great Eastern Highway and the railway reserve. There was also a suggestion that Victoria Street, which runs at the back of Centrepoint, would be upgraded, and that would cut off that shopping centre. The idea was to have one-way traffic through Midland. All that was a planning disaster.

The problem with the shopping centre was the proposed establishment of the Midland city development. That was to be a good business opportunity for the business people in Midland. One might say that is fair enough, because competition is a good thing; but if one cannot survive in such a business, one goes down the plughole; and that is not right.

Let us consider the sort of development that took place. There was the splitting of Midland; there was no cohesive plan; there was a complete planning disaster. Several business people approached me and asked me about my attitude to that, and whether I would assist them in developing an objection to the proposed Midland city development. I said I would do everything possible to oppose it because I believed, personally, it was not in the best interests of the shoppers. It certainly was not in the best interests of the consumers in the Midland area.

What has taken place in Midland is a classic example of a small regional shopping centre. There are seven or eight shops in Midland that have become vacant over the last 12 months. They are on Great Northern Highway. The owners have gone out of business. One might say that is just a matter of the economic times. Perhaps some of the blame could be attributed to economic restraints placed upon the businesses.

However, being a member of Parliament, I am interested in the well-being of the people in Midland. I approached the business people and I asked what was the reason for their moving, or closing down, or whatever they did. I wanted to know what had happened to the impulse buyers who walked along the street, saw what was in the window, and went in and bought. Those people are no longer there. I was told they had moved one kilometre up the road to the central shopping area. While that area is doing reasonably well, the small businesses in between have gone broke progressively because they are losing trade.

However, the passing trade is not being catered for at Midland Gate. If we consider the employment situation, dozens of people lost their jobs in Midland because the big shopping centre does not require the staff. In the grocery and food sections and the supermarket sections at Midland Gate, one finds there are no more than 20 or 30 people working. A conglomerate of businesses

moved into that complex, and only 20 or 30 people are employed, when the businesses used to employ 100 people. That sort of thing is wrong.

Mr B. T. Burke: And the prices will not have fallen.

Mr SKIDMORE: Even before I became a member of Parliament, I said that once the big monopolies moved into the trade, the consumer would pay higher prices. That is what the big operations are all about.

The small business people were so concerned about the situation that they held a meeting. At that meeting I was most surprised to see a person called Mr W. W. Mitchell. I wondered why he was there. He came up and spoke to me.

Mr Pearce: He was probably paid to be there.

Mr SKIDMORE: In my innocence, I said to him, "What are you doing here?" He said, "I just came along because I've got a watching brief." I said, "Watching brief for what?" He said, "Oh well, you know, these things are interesting to me." That is all I could learn from him.

During the course of that meeting, the 65 small businessmen in Midland made abundantly clear what they thought about the over-production and over-development of retail outlets in the Midland area. Mr W. W. Mitchell left that meeting with no doubt in his mind that the businessmen did not want such over-development.

At that meeting, the businessmen appointed a small subcommittee. The chairman of the Midland Chamber of Manufactures became the chairman of the subcommittee, and Mr David Hewitt, who has two pharmacies in Midland, was appointed to the executive committee. Two other businessmen were appointed, but their names escape me.

The businessmen suddenly felt concerned. I criticise the Shire of Swan because its attitude is, "Big is beautiful." We all know the attitude, "We'll make something big. We'll develop something great." That seems to be the mentality of a lot of people.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr SKIDMORE: I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

BILLS (8): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Transport Amendment Bill.
2. Acts Amendment (Motor Vehicle Pools) Bill.
3. Door to Door (Sales) Amendment Bill.
4. Acts Amendment (Transport) Bill.
5. Western Australian Overseas Projects Authority Amendment Bill.

6. Electoral Amendment Bill.
7. Wildlife Conservation Amendment Bill.
8. Parliamentary Superannuation Amendment Bill.

**TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 5.29 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Air Transport

1453. Mr JAMIESON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) During the last Parliament, how many members did not make use of all available intrastate air trips?
- (2) During the last Parliament, how many members did not use their one return trip by air to Melbourne?
- (3) During the same period how many spouses did not use their available air fare for interstate travel?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) 46.
- (2) 37.
- (3) 43.

FLORA

New Species

1454. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) In respect of the discovery of previously unknown species of plants and flora, what is the present policy in respect of the naming of new species?
- (2) Will he investigate the possibility of according names which acknowledge the discoverer of new species?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) New species of plants are named in accordance with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature which lays down procedures designed to ensure that each species is adequately described and has only one recognised scientific name which is usually the earliest validly published.
- (2) New species can be given names commemorating the discoverer or another notable person, but the practice is to seek a descriptive term which indicates some distinctive feature of the plant's appearance, or occasionally, the place of discovery.
Plant names which commemorate the discoverer of a new species are usually bestowed as a mark of respect for his scientific or public achievements.

HEALTH: AIR CONTAMINANTS

Rosemount Dry Cleaners

1455. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that certain employees of a bank in Morley have complained that the surface of their motor vehicles are being damaged by contaminants allegedly being emitted from the Rosemount Dry Cleaners' establishment?
- (2) Have these employees been informed by an officer of his department that there is no action that can be taken to remedy the matter?
- (3) If not, what action is being taken?
- (4) When is it expected that the nuisance will be abated?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Officers are investigating and tests are being conducted.
- (4) Not known at this date.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Lorbach and Rye

1456. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is he aware that the Hove Group for intellectually handicapped children purchased a "fun" ball from Lorbach and Rye of 6 Taunton Drive, Cheltenham, Victoria, and that the ball has proved to be quite useless for the purposes for which it was purchased and which purpose was made clear to Lorbach and Rye?
- (2) Is he further aware that complaints have been made to Lorbach and Rye which have not led to any redress?
- (3) Will he cause investigations to be made so that redress may be made to the Hove Group?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes, if details are supplied.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Bibra Lake Site

1457. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Education Department have a site for a primary school in Bibra Drive, Bibra Lake?
- (2) Is it intended to construct a school on this site in the near future?
- (3) If so, when?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) The site has been identified as a provision for future needs. A construction date for the proposed school will depend on a continuing build-up of primary school children in the area and future availability of capital funds.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Kimbolton

1458. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What was the total cost to the Education Department for the opening, operating and closing of the Kimbolton primary school?
- (2) What was the highest enrolment at this school during its operation?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) This kind of collated information about the Kimbolton School is not available.
- (2) Official records show 10 students as the maximum enrolment.

TOWN PLANNING

Commissioner

1459. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Is the Commissioner of Town Planning or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?
- (2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
- (3) What positions does the commissioner or his representative hold?

- (4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (i) Town Planning Board;
(ii) Metropolitan Region Planning Authority;
(iii) Industrial Lands Development Authority;
(iv) Conservation and Environment Council;
(v) Planning and Co-ordinating Authority;
(vi) Perth Cultural Centre Planning Committee;
(vii) Perth Regional Transport Co-ordinating Committee;
(viii) Perth Water and Burswood Island Advisory Committee;
(ix) Urban Works Co-ordinating Committee;
(x) Air Pollution Control Council;
(xi) Noise Abatement Committee;
(xii) Residential Codes Advisory Committee;
(xiii) Regional Planning Committees—Albany, Bunbury, Carnarvon, Esperance, Geraldton, Mandurah and districts;
(xiv) Townsites Development Committee.
- (3) (i) Chairman;
(ii) to (xiv) member.
- (4) Yes.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

Secretary

1460. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is the Secretary of the Local Government Department or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?
- (2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
- (3) What positions does the secretary or his representative hold?
- (4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) and (3)

Bodies	Position
Keep Australia Beautiful Council (W.A.) ..	Personally Member
Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Examination Committee	Personally Chairman
Municipal Engineers' Examination Committee	Personally Chairman
Municipal Building Surveyors' Examination Committee	Personally Chairman
Municipal Town Planners' Examination Committee	Personally Chairman
Local Government Boundaries Commission ..	Personally Chairman
Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund Committee	Personally Member
Western Australian Local Government Grants Commission	Represented Member
Local Government Welfare Inquiry	Represented Member
Advisory Committee on Bicycle Policy	Represented Chairman
Cemeteries Act Review Committee	Represented Chairman
Control of Vehicles (Off-Road) Act Advisory Committee	Represented Chairman
Noise and Vibration Control Council	Represented Member
Public Utilities Services Committee	Represented Member
Darling Escarpment Aggregate Resources Committee	Represented Member
Local Government Week Committee	Represented Member

- (4) The secretary or his representatives have full voting status in each case.

1461. This question was postponed.

HEALTH

Commissioner

1462. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister of Health:

- (1) Is the Commissioner for Health or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?
(2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
(3) What positions does the commissioner or his representative hold?
(4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) and (3) As considerable detail is required, the information will be supplied to the member in writing.
(4) Yes.

TRANSPORT

Commissioner

1463. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Commissioner for Transport or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?

- (2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
(3) What positions does the Commissioner or his representative hold?
(4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) to (4) (a) Chairman, Taxi Control Board—full voting status;
(b) member, Land Freight Transport Committee—full voting status;
(c) Chairman, Western Australian Freight Transport Committee—full voting status;
(d) member, National Safety Council of WA Road Safety Division—full voting status.

TRANSPORT

Director General

1464. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Director General of Transport or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?
(2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
(3) What positions does the director general or his representative hold?
(4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) The director general and/or his representatives serve on a number of committees, authorities, councils, etc., in order to carry out the co-ordination and advice duties laid on the director general by the State Transport Co-ordination Act.
(2) to (4) The director general's personal involvement is as follows—

Chairman, Australian Transport Advisory Council Co-ordinating Committee; full voting status.

Chairman, Western Australian Transport Advisory Council; full voting status.

Chairman, Western Australian Transport Users Board (inactive); full voting status.

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Chairman, Regional Ports Co-ordinating Group (inactive); full voting status.

Chairman, Perth Regional Transport Co-ordinating Committee; full voting status.

Member, Metropolitan Region Planning Authority and Transport, Western Suburbs and Central Area Committees thereof; full voting status.

Member, Road Traffic Authority; full voting status.

Member, Planning and Co-ordinating Authority; full voting status.

Member, Urban Roads Advisory Committee; full voting status.

Member, Urban Transport Policy Committee; full voting status.

Member, Commonwealth/State Committee to Study Western Australian Airports; full voting status.

Representatives of the director general serve as follows—

Member, Central Area Technical Advisory Committee; full voting status.

Member, Advisory Committee on Bicycle Policy; full voting status.

Member, State Statistical Requirements and Co-ordination Committee; full voting status.

Member, Metropolitan Region Planning Authority Technical Committees (as required); full voting status.

Member, State Energy Advisory Council Work Party on Transport; full voting status.

Member, Interdepartmental committee on Motor Vehicle Noise; full voting status.

In addition the director general is a member of the Co-ordinating and General Group of Advisers to the Australian Transport Advisory Council and a representative is a member of the Australian Transport Advisory Council Working Group on Energy; both memberships carry full voting status.

COMMUNITY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Director

1465. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the Director of the Department for Community Welfare or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?
- (2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
- (3) What positions does the Director or his representative hold?
- (4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) to (4) The information required is contained in the table following—

Name of Committee	Position of Director or Representative	Voting Status
Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Co-ordinating Committee (State)	Member	Yes
West Australian Consultative Committee on Social Welfare (Comm.)	Member	Yes
State Advisory Committee on Indigent Publications (State)	Member	Yes
Advisory and Consultative Committee on Child Abuse (State)	Chairman	Yes
Committee for Inquiry into the Provision of Social Welfare Services by Local Government Western Australia (State) ..	Member	Yes
Aboriginal Police Relations Committee (State)	Chairman	Yes
Committee of Enquiry Into the Rate of Imprisonment (State)	Member	Yes
Vocational Care Funding Committee (State) ..	Member	Yes
Family Services Support Scheme Management Committee (State)	Chairman	Yes
Community Welfare Research Advisory Committee (State)	Chairman	Yes
Planning and Co-ordinating Authority (State) .	Invitee	No
Counter Disaster Committee (State)	Member	Yes
Counter Disaster Welfare Sub Committee (State)	Chairman	Yes
Residential Child Care Consultative Committee (State)	Member	Yes
Family Policy Advisory Committee (State)	Member	Yes
W.A. Committee International Year of Disabled Person 1981 (State)	Member	Yes

Note: The above list covers only those committees that are established by legislation or with ministerial authority. Other committees of a more informal kind or committees that operate without any Government charter, have not been included.

TRAFFIC: RTA

Chief Executive Officer

1466. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is the chief executive officer of the Road Traffic Authority or his representative a member of any Government committees,

authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?

- (2) If so, what are the bodies involved?
- (3) What positions does the chief executive officer or his representative hold?
- (4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Road Traffic Authority; Chairman Taxi Control Board; Member Treasury Computing Centre Board of Management; Member National Safety Council; Member Motor Transport Group; Member Hazards Committee; Member Public Utilities Service Committee; Member Schools Crossing Committee; Member Australian Transport Advisory Council Co-ordinating Committee; Member Advisory Committee on Road User Performance and Traffic Codes; Member Off Road Vehicles Advisory Committee; Member Advisory Committee on Bicycle Policy; Member Interdepartmental Committee on Traffic Noise; Member Railways Crossing Committee; Member Transportation of Dangerous Goods Committee; Member Forensic Sciences Co-ordinating Group; Member
- (3) Answered with (2).
- (4) Yes.

- (3) What positions does the commissioner or his representative hold?
- (4) Does he have full voting status on the bodies?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) To (4) The Commissioner of Police or his representative is a member of the following State Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or semi-Government organisations—

Road Traffic Authority	Member	Yes
National Safety Council Board of Management	Member	Yes
National Safety Council various sub-committees (water, road and home safety)	Member	Yes
State Disaster Planning Committee	Member	Yes
Council of Management Police and Citizens Youth Clubs	Member	Yes
Government Department Planning and Co-ordinating Authority	Member	Yes
Noise Abatement Committee	Member	Yes
State Counter Disaster Committee	Member	Yes
Parole Board	Member	Yes
Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (State)	Member	Yes
Sexual Assault Referral Centre Committee	Member	Yes
Good Neighbour Council of WA	Member	Yes
Bush Fires Board	Member	Yes
Pyre Highway Emergency Committee	Member	Yes
Medic Alert Council	Member	Yes
Special Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal/Police Relations	Member	Yes
Aboriginal Affairs Co-ordinating Committee ..	Member	Yes
Aboriginal Aides Inter-Departmental Training Committee	Member	Yes
State Aboriginal Advisory Council	Member	Yes
Aboriginal Aides Education Committee	Member	Yes
Public Instrumentalities Hazards	Member	Yes
Juvenile Action Panel	Member	Yes
Fremantle Counter Disaster Planning Committee	Member	Yes
Fremantle Port Authority Disaster Committee ..	Member	Yes
Kwinana Industries Mutual Aid Group (Emergencies)	Member	Yes
Government Employees Furniture Removal Scheme	Member	Yes
Enquiry into the Rate of Imprisonment	Member	Yes

RAILWAYS

Avon Yards-Merredin Line

1468. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Have Westrail recently carried out tests on the upgraded standard gauge line between Avon yards and Merredin to check if the line has sunk in various sections?
- (2) If "Yes", what was the result of the tests?
- (3) If his answer to (2) states that the line has sunk, who will be responsible to finance the adjustments to the affected sections of track; i.e., Westrail or the contractors?

POLICE COMMISSIONER

Membership of Government Authorities, Boards, and Committees

1467. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is the Commissioner of Police or his representative a member of any Government committees, authorities, councils, advisory bodies, or other State Government or semi-Government organisations?
- (2) If so, what are the bodies involved?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) It is Westrail's normal procedure to conduct track tests at regular intervals both on newly constructed and existing railways to ascertain any imperfections in the geometry of the track profile and this has been done between Avon and Merredin.
- (2) The only incidence of sunken track was at some reconstructed level crossings, but this was very minor.
- (3) Westrail will be responsible for these minor irregularities.

RAILWAYS

Burning-off

1469. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware there are many country shires dissatisfied with the arrangements of burning off on railway reserves this summer as per a Westrail direction?
- (2) If "Yes", would he advise what action he intends to take to solve the situation, and if answer to (1) is "No", would he liaise with the country shires' association and the Bush Fires Board of Western Australia to be conversant with the problem?
- (3) Would he inform me of the outcome of discussions, if they are conducted?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Some aspects of the arrangements have been referred back by me to the Commissioner for Railways for his further attention.
- (3) Yes.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Vacancies and Tenants in Arrears

1470. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many--
 - (a) flats;
 - (b) townhouses;
 - (c) duplexes;
 - (d) houses,
 are vacant in the metropolitan area?
- (2) (a) What is the average time that houses remain vacant between tenants;

(b) has this time increased in the past two years?

- (3) How many units will the State Housing Commission construct this year--
 - (a) in the metropolitan area;
 - (b) in the country;
 - (c) specifically for Aboriginal families, as above?
- (4) (a) Has there been an increase in the number of tenants in arrears over the past two years; i.e., since the introduction of market rents;
- (b) what percentage of tenants are now in arrears?
- (5) (a) During the last year how many notices to quit were issued;
- (b) how many tenants left after the notice to quit was issued and before court action was finalised;
- (c) how many tenants were evicted?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) to (5) The information requested by the member will take considerable time to collate. The information will be provided by letter as soon as it is available.

HOUSING

Granny Flats

1471. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

What progress has been made on the implementation of the election undertaking to have an examination of the provision of transportable granny flats on a rental basis?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The question of the provision of granny flats on a rental basis is still under consideration. Discussions between officers of my department and the State Housing Commission are continuing.

AGED PERSONS

Emergency Call Equipment

1472. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

Further to question 313 of 1980 relating to assistance to the aged, can he now advise what progress has been made with the examination of the possibility of providing aged people with electronic

emergency call equipment as promised in the election policy?

Mr YOUNG replied:

Both the use and cost of electronic call equipment are still under consideration.

HEALTH CARE

Extended Programmes

1473. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

What progress has been made in the study being conducted by the Department of Health and Medical Services and the public hospitals on the implementation of extended care programmes throughout the State, including the provision of hostels for the frail aged on a subsidised basis?

Mr YOUNG replied:

Satisfactory progress continues in the full study of extended care services which I have initiated. A report will be made to me when the committee has completed its study in approximately three months' time.

HEALTH: ALCOHOL

The Alcoholic Recovery and Rehabilitation Foundation of Mandurah Inc.

1474. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it a fact that submissions have been made by "The Alcoholic Recovery and Rehabilitation Foundation of Mandurah Inc." to the Alcohol and Drug Authority and the Minister for Health for urgent financial assistance?
- (2) Is it a fact that although the foundation's recovery centre has been operating in a most successful manner since 1977, it never received any financial assistance from the Government prior to the 1980-81 Budget?
- (3) Is he aware that the foundation has by its own efforts over the years raised in excess of \$150 000 to keep the recovery centre operational?
- (4) Is it a fact that the only financial assistance provided to the foundation by the Alcohol and Drug Authority has been a grant of \$3 500 for the purpose of purchasing some furniture?

- (5) Is it a fact that the Secretary of the Alcohol and Drug Authority is on record as saying that the methods used by the Mandurah foundation were such that they would consider and use the concept of the foundation as a pilot operation for other areas?
- (6) Is it a fact that he visited the Mandurah recovery centre and approved of its operations?
- (7) Is he aware that the Mandurah recovery centre is one of the very few "totally dry" recovery centres and not a "half-way" house?
- (8) Is it a fact that the Government has allocated an amount of only \$100 per week to the alcohol and drug advisory counselling service operated by the foundation to cover expenses involved in providing five counselling sessions and follow-up work entailing an average of 1 000 km travelling per week?
- (9) Is it a fact that the Government has in the 1980-81 Budget provided only \$7 300 for the recovery centre which is supposed to cover wages for the manager, a cook, rates, telephone, power, and a shortfall in operating expenses?
- (10) Is he aware that the recovery centre manager, the cook, and the field officer have all worked full time for the centre since 1977 without drawing any wages?
- (11) Since the Premier and several other Ministers have often expressed the Government's concern over the adverse effects of alcohol on the Western Australian community, and in view of the foundation's need for additional financial assistance and its proven record of success, will he give urgent consideration to providing extra funds?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) No.
- (4) No.
- (5) No.
- (6) A brief visit was paid to the Mandurah recovery centre in April 1980. Based on my observations a general agreement was indicated in relation to the work being performed.
- (7) I am aware that the Mandurah recovery centre is "totally dry".

- (8) The Government, through the Alcohol and Drug Authority, has allocated \$100 per week for the foundation to conduct five specific "AA" counselling sessions at the Mandurah Community Health Centre. It was never intended for this approval to meet the costs associated with follow-up services including travel.
- (9) An amount of \$12 500 has been approved in the 1980-81 budget of the Alcohol and Drug Authority for allocation to the Mandurah foundation. This grant provides for \$5 200 per annum as per (8) above. The remaining \$7 300 is to subsidise the salary of the house manager responsible for the recovery centre, and is not supposed to cover the other operating costs mentioned.
- (10) No.
- (11) It is the policy of the Government to support approved voluntary agencies involved in the provision of alcohol and drug services, to the extent that financial resources allow. An increase in funds above those detailed in (9) above cannot be provided at this time.

HEALTH

Occupational Therapists

1475. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) As to occupational therapists—
- how many are there in this State;
 - how many are registered;
 - how many are members of the Western Australian Association of Occupational Therapists (Inc.);
 - how many are males and how many females;
 - how many are employed;
 - are their services available to all who need them;
 - if "No"—
 - to what extent is there a shortage of occupational therapists;
 - to what extent are persons denied occupational therapy because they cannot afford this care;
 - how many are unemployed or not practising?

- What fees are paid and proposed to be paid to members of the Occupational Therapists Board of Western Australia?
- Who are the present members of this board and who nominated each of them?
- How many prosecutions for—
 - disciplinary;
 - other offences;
 have been brought under the Occupational Therapists Act 1957 and what decision was delivered in each case?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- Not known;
 - 323;
 - 181 as at 30 June 1980;
 - not known;
 - not known;
 - yes, as far as is known, but current financial constraints may pose problems;
 - (i) and (ii) not applicable;
 - not known.
- Nil.
- Miss F. E. Jacob—W.A. Association of Occupational Therapists (Inc.)
Mrs A. Kennedy—W.A. Association of Occupational Therapists (Inc.)
Dr J. M. Penman—Minister for Health
Mr M. Liveris—Council of W.A. Institute of Technology
Dr J. M. Henzell—Commissioner of Public Health
- Nil;
 - Nil.

HOUSING

Lockridge

1476. Mr BERTRAM, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

As to the State Housing Commission dwellings in Rudge Place, Lockridge:—

- when were they built;
- how many are there;
- how many have door locks which can be opened by the same key or keys?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- In 1973;
- 18 units;

- (c) at the time the units were built the contractor was required to fit mortice locks to rear doors and within the limited range of locks available it is likely there would be some duplication of key combinations. As there was a greater selection of key combinations for front door night latches it is unlikely any duplication occurred.

MACHINERY TESTING CENTRE

Merredin

1477. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) When does the Government intend establishing a machinery testing centre at Merredin?
- (2) What has caused the delay in establishing the centre?
- (3) Why has an Animal Breeding Institute been given priority over a machinery testing centre?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) The Department of Agriculture has been unsuccessful in its endeavours to recruit a suitably qualified and experienced person as officer in charge of the project.

In view of this and the overall budgetary pressures the project has been deferred. The timing of its establishment is part of the overall reassessment of priorities currently in progress within the department.

- (3) The same difficulties did not exist with recruitment for the Animal Breeding Institute.

CYCLES

Cycleways: Introduction

1478. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Local Government:

Further to question 1286 of 1980 relating to the introduction of cycleways in Western Australia, what recommendations made by the committee are to be implemented?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Provision has been included in this year's estimates for the implementation

of the committee's recommendations in respect of the development of cycling education programmes, the publication of guidelines to assist councils in planning cycling facilities, and the construction of cycling facilities.

TRAFFIC

Accidents and Infringement Notices

1479. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) In each of the financial years 1978, 1979 and 1980:—
 - (a) what was the total amount of fines paid as a result of infringement notices issued by the Road Traffic Authority in the—
 - (i) metropolitan area;
 - (ii) country areas;
 - (b) what was the amount of fines imposed by the courts for the same areas;
 - (c) how many cautions were issued in each of the same areas?
- (2) In the same financial years as in (1), how many accidents occurred in the—
 - (a) metropolitan area;
 - (b) country areas; and
 - (c) in each area, how many deaths resulted from those accidents?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) (a) The total amount of fines paid as a result of infringement notices issued for the following financial years was—

1978—\$2 212 689

1979—\$3 145 641

1980—\$3 444 571;

Information is not available for these totals to be apportioned between the country and metropolitan areas. However, numbers of infringements are available as follows—

	1978	1979	1980
Metropolitan area	69 779	96 315	90 267
Country areas	55 127	65 920	53 877

- (b) Advice has been received that the Crown Law Department is unable to supply statistics of fines imposed by courts as a result of Road Traffic Authority infringements as the figures are not kept separately from other court-imposed fines.

- (c) Cautions issued for the same areas were—

	1978	1979	1980
Metropolitan area	38 216	41 402	45 027
Country areas	37 569	39 026	39 806

- (2) The number of road traffic accidents reported where either there was a casualty or the total damage exceeded the reporting level were—

	1978	1979	1980
(a) Metropolitan area	27 157	24 819	20 997
(b) Country areas	6 809	6 402	5 895

Note: The reporting level was \$100 until 1 February 1980, when it was raised to \$300.

- (c) The number of deaths resulting from road traffic accidents were—

	1978	1979	1980
Metropolitan area	157	140	132
Country areas	155	167	146

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Kimbolton

447. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

This question is further to question 1458 on today's notice paper in which the Minister advised me, in answer to my question—

What was the total cost to the Education Department for the opening, operating and closing of the Kimbolton Primary School?

as follows—

My understanding is opening, operating and closing all took place within the one year and the school had a maximum enrolment in that year of 10 students.

The Minister advised me also that with regard to costs—

This kind of collated information about the Kimbolton Primary School is not available.

Does the phrase, "is not available" mean the Minister does not intend to tell me, or does he mean the department does not know how much it cost to open, operate, and close the Kimbolton Primary School with its maximum enrolment of 10 students in one year?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The member should know full well the department does not keep costs of that kind and certainly we would not squander public money by asking it to investigate a matter such as that.

Mr Parker: The department could extract them for you.

HEALTH

Nurses: Wage Increase

448. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the estimated \$5 million that the nurses' pay increase will cost this year have to be found entirely from State sources or will the Commonwealth contribute?
- (2) If the Commonwealth is to share the cost, what will be its share and how much will be left for the State to find?
- (3) If the Commonwealth is not sharing the cost, is this not a breach of the Commonwealth-State hospital cost sharing agreement?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) to (3) The budget recently negotiated with the Commonwealth Government under the hospitals cost sharing agreement made no provision for wage increases outside the six-monthly wage indexation decisions. On the basis that the increased cost is contained within the agreed budget, it will be cost shared on a 50-50 basis.

FUEL AND ENERGY: PETROL

Price Disparity

449. Mr GRILL, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Would the Treasurer agree that, in many areas in Western Australia, there

- is a large discrepancy between metropolitan and country petrol prices?
- (2) Would the Treasurer agree that in some areas country fuel prices are 15c and 16c a litre above metropolitan petrol prices?
 - (3) Would the Treasurer agree that the Federal Government's fuel price equalisation scheme is not working effectively?
 - (4) Would the Treasurer accept that this State Government has some responsibility to see that country people are not seriously disadvantaged by high country fuel prices?
 - (5) Would the Treasurer agree also that the State Government has the power to control fuel prices throughout the State in the same manner as the New South Wales and South Australian State Governments have done?
 - (6) Would the Government be prepared to take some action to control fuel prices and, if so, what action?
 - (7) Would the Government be prepared to police fuel prices throughout the State and, if not, why not, as it would appear that schemes to equalise the price of fuel or to control the price of fuel will not work unless they are policed in some way?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (7) I think the member would agree that it would be well nigh impossible to try to answer those seven questions off the cuff. If the member wants a serious answer, I suggest he puts the question on the notice paper.

I do not know whether the member sent notice of the question to my office, but I have not received that advice from him or my office.

Most of the questions can be answered in a formal way, because I think the Government has expressed its attitude on each of the points mentioned at some time or other. However, I would not attempt to answer the questions off the cuff.

PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Salaries Claims: Printed Publication

450. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware of a publication entitled "Salaries Claims—State Public Service—Important Information for all

Public Servants", produced by the Public Service Board and signed by its chairman?

- (2) Is it correct that 5 000 copies have been printed?
- (3) If "No", will he ascertain how many?
- (4) In what manner have they been distributed?
- (5) Will he advise the House of the cost of production and distribution at the earliest opportunity?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (5) I have no recollection of the publication to which the Leader of the Opposition referred; therefore, I could not answer the other parts of his question. However, I will be only too pleased to have the matter followed up with the appropriate authorities.

RAILWAYS

Burning-off

451. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Transport:

Only minimal notice has been given of this question. It is as follows—

- (1) Could he confirm that Westrail intends to institute a new policy in respect of fire control measures for reserves under its control?
- (2) Would he indicate at least some of the differences between the new policy and the old one?
- (3) Specifically upon whom is the permit to burn issued under the new policy?
- (4) To what extent is the new policy to be implemented this year?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (4) I shall answer the last two points first.

Where Westrail is involved in the burn, the permit will be issued to that body.

As far as the policy this year is concerned, firebreaks are to be installed where required, as has been done in the past, and the staff will participate in communal burns.

As to the suggested policy changes for next year which have been put forward by Westrail, I am aware they have caused quite a deal of concern to local authorities.

I have asked the Commissioner of Railways to review the policy with regard to a number of items that have caused concern to the local authorities and have asked him to report back to me with his recommendation as soon as possible.

HEALTH

Nurses: Wage Increase

452. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Minister use his good offices and arrange for a date for three members of the Opposition to confer with the Under Treasurer with a view to finding ways and means to pay the nurses their lawfully determined salaries without it becoming necessary to sack any hospital staff?
- (2) If "No", why?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) The answer to the last part of the question is very simple and that is: Because the Opposition will have an opportunity to prove that it ought to be the alternative Government in 1983, and not before. It is not the Government at the moment. In answer to the first part: That is answered by my comments on part (2).

DROUGHT

Unemployment Relief Funds

453. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Premier:

Many shire councils in drought declared areas are anxious to know of the availability of funds for unemployment relief. Has the Government completed arrangements whereby councils affected can make application for the now urgent assistance?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The main thrust of the Government's drought assistance programme is aimed

at concessional loans which will provide a spin-off to the local community, helping towards the retention of farm and town workers.

In addition, the freight subsidy scheme and schemes in relation to wind erosion problems and the development of farm water supplies are relatively labour intensive and should help to retain workers.

In view of the wide range of drought assistance measures currently available to primary producers and small businesses, the Government has not re-introduced the unemployment relief scheme through local authorities at this stage. However, the position is under review. Some requests have been received and will be assessed to determine their value in generating employment as previous experience showed that Government grants in this field did not produce the results expected.

HOSPITAL

Kalgoorlie Regional

454. Mr E. T. EVANS, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are any retrenchments contemplated at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital?
- (2) If "Yes", which categories will the retrenchments affect?
- (3) How many will there be in each category?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) to (3) As I advised the members of the Legislative Assembly yesterday, the options available to the Government at this stage have not been determined. Therefore, no final determination has been made in respect of who might be dismissed from where. I am very close to putting that recommendation to the Government.

NOONKANBAH STATION

Drilling Rig: Dismantling and Removal

455. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Will the Government hold itself responsible for the dismantling and removal of the rig from Noonkanbah in whole or in part?
- (2) If so, what is the estimated cost of such work?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) My understanding is that the dismantling and the transportation of the rig to another location is the responsibility of the people who own the rig and who have the contract for its use.

HEALTH

Nurses: Wage Increase

456. Mr HODGE, to the Treasurer:

Is the Treasurer aware that the recent pay rise awarded to nurses was in fact within the wage indexation guidelines?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I do not quite know the point the member for Melville is trying to make. The Government made the position very clear in its Budget speech. We said we had budgeted for the estimated increases that will be awarded as a result of national wage cases. This has been spelt out very clearly and we went to a great deal of trouble to obtain the best advice we could from the Commonwealth to ascertain what the increases were likely to be.

Provisions were made in the Budget for those increases—

Mr Barnett interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have made it quite clear that anything outside the national wage case is not provided for in the Budget and has to be compensated for by economies within the department.

Several members interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: We are talking about the national wage case decision and this has been spelt out loud and

clear. In answer to the member for Rockingham, to the best of my knowledge the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal has stuck religiously to the national wage case decisions when determining parliamentary salaries..

FLORA

New Species

457. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

My question is a follow-on to question on notice No. 1454. The question was provoked by a constituent who came to me and said he was refusing to pinpoint the location of a plant he had discovered because he found that in previous cases plants were named after the botanists in the department who were dealing with the matter.

I asked whether the Minister will look into that matter to ascertain whether that is the case and ensure that the matter is followed up by the people in the department.

Mr OLD replied:

I would suggest that the member write to me personally and provide me with the facts of the case so that I can look into the matter for him.

HOSPITAL

Kalgoorlie Regional

458. Mr E. T. EVANS, to the Minister for Health:

As the Minister is aware of the position regarding the possible retrenchment of staff at the Kalgoorlie Hospital, can he give an assurance that he will be able to give a decision before Parliament rises this session?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The way I read the progress of the Parliament at the moment, I think that would be absolutely certain.