

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 4th October, 1979

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

BILLS (3): ASSENT

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

1. Stock (Brands and Movement) Act Amendment Bill.
2. Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment Bill.
3. Honey Pool Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (3): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Builders' Registration Act Amendment Bill.
2. State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Tonkin, and read a first time.

3. Family Court Act Amendment and Acts Repeal Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier), and read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Second Reading

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Local Government) [2.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill seeks Parliament's approval for a number of amendments to the Local Government Act.

Amendments to this Act are a regular feature of parliamentary sessions and I expect that they always will be. This does not imply any basic deficiency in the Act; rather, it recognises that the Act must be kept under constant review in the light of changing circumstances and the requirements of the people who inhabit the various municipalities throughout the State. The fact that the Local Government Act has been amended regularly since it was first enacted is sufficient indication that it could remain static only if local government and the communities it administers were stagnant.

I must say that the Government supports the notion that the legislative structure on which our

system of local government has been built, should provide municipal councils with adequate freedom to make their own decisions for the good rule, convenience, comfort, and safety of their own communities.

This Government is alert to the need to keep the legislation under close scrutiny to ensure that this principle is met. However, I hasten to add that the Government does not intend to abrogate its responsibility to ensure that our system of local government is a sound one and to ensure that it contains the proper and adequate controls which should be inherent in any good system of delegated government. We believe that not only would the public and local government itself want to handle public funds and govern the everyday lives of our citizens under a system that provides adequate checks and balances, but also that controls of an appropriate nature must be clearly seen to be an integral part of that system. I do not think the public would want anything less; nor do I think local government would want anything less.

This Bill contains amendments which indicate my desire to remove requirements for councils to obtain approval which may have been appropriate in years gone by but have become obsolete in this present day. The process of reviewing the need for all the controls presently specified in the Act will continue.

The Bill proposes 17 separate amendments to the Local Government Act. In essence, these amendments cover the following matters.

Firstly, under the existing provisions of the Local Government Act a council may sell land that is no longer required for the purpose for which it was acquired, only if the Governor consents to the sale. The Act sets down the same principle with respect to the lease of council property.

The amendment proposes that councils may, without approval, sell land by public tender or auction, or lease land by public tender. The requirement for the Governor's approval in respect of the sale or lease of council land by private treaty will be retained.

Secondly, following a detailed study of the existing legislation and current trends in respect of caravan parks and camping grounds, recommendations were made to the Government proposing new by-laws to apply uniformly throughout the State.

The Bill proposes an amendment to enable suitable by-laws to be promulgated, to permit the Governor to apply these by-laws uniformly throughout the State or parts of the State, and to

provide certain rights of appeal in respect of matters pertaining to caravan parks.

Thirdly, the existing provisions of sections 174 and 174A of the Act set down the general rule that a member who has a pecuniary interest in a matter coming before his council may not take part in the consideration or discussion of, and may not vote on, that matter. In certain circumstances a member may be exempted from that general rule by determination of the person presiding at the meeting or by resolution of the meeting itself.

However, there is an anomaly between the provisions of these two sections in relation to the manner in which a meeting may exempt a member from the general rule. The amendment proposed in the Bill will remove this anomaly and make it perfectly clear that an absolute majority of the members of the council or committee involved must agree to the exemption of the particular member.

Fourthly, the Act contains certain detailed provisions describing the manner in which councils must deal with their funds. The requirements are considered essential to the proper control of council moneys which, of course, are public funds.

Several councils have sought variations of these requirements to enable them to operate their banking accounts in a manner more suited to their own local circumstances or in keeping with modern business practices. The Act already empowers the Minister to permit some variation, and the amendment now proposed will extend the Minister's discretion to approve other modifications considered desirable.

Fifthly, an amendment is proposed to complement changes made in 1978 to the Pensioners (Rates Rebates and Deferments) Act. This amendment provides for an exemption from the interest penalty on unpaid rates to apply in respect of rates that had been deferred by a person whilst he was an entitled pensioner but who had since lost that entitlement.

Sixthly, a difficulty in establishing ownership has been experienced by councils in prosecutions under the provisions of the Local Government Act concerning parking and other vehicle-related offences. To overcome this difficulty, it is proposed that the Act be amended clearly to define a vehicle owner.

Seventhly, an amendment is proposed which provides for the restructuring of the existing provisions of the Act dealing with the making of uniform by-laws. This amendment does not alter the intent of the present provisions but sets them

down more logically and in a manner consistent with other provisions of the Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Carr.

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (DISQUALIFICATION FOR PARLIAMENT) BILL

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[2.27 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

For many years the law which has the effect of disqualifying for Parliament persons who hold offices of profit under the Crown, or are parties to contracts made with the Crown, has been in an unsatisfactory state. What we have is the inherited former English law restated in our Constitution Act and Constitution Acts Amendment Act.

The law in England developed over the centuries in a technical and rather haphazard way, with the result that the area of disqualification came to include persons whose relationship with the Crown was such that they could not, on any realistic view of the matter, be said to have been made subject to Crown influence at all. The law also became so ill-defined that persons could not direct their conduct with any certainty.

It is possible that some members of the State Parliament may have breached the constitutional provisions in the past without their being aware that they may have done so. This is not a proper or healthy situation.

Now is the right time to put this matter in order, when there is no case involving any member in mind, and it can be considered free of any personal interest or bias. Things were put right in the United Kingdom in 1957 by the enactment of the House of Commons Disqualification Act.

The basic approach of the United Kingdom legislation was to provide that a contract with the Crown should no longer be a reason for disqualification in any circumstances, and that the only offices of profit which would disqualify were those set out in a schedule to the Act.

It then became possible for any person to ascertain whether or not the acceptance of any particular office would prevent him or her sitting in the House of Commons. The 1957 Act has now been replaced by a 1975 Act of the same name, but the general approach is the same..

In May, 1969, the State Government asked the Law Reform Committee to examine the State laws and report as to whether or not any alteration was desirable. The committee delivered its report in March, 1971, and that report includes a statement of the purposes of the relevant law and an explanation of its present defects.

The basic recommendation was for an Act like that in the United Kingdom, abolishing contract as a ground of disqualification and limiting the disqualifying offices of profit to those actually specified in the legislation. However, in some incidental matters, the recommendations differed from and went beyond what was provided for in the House of Commons Disqualification Act, 1957.

In considering the question of legislation to cover this subject, the Government has been mindful of the Law Reform Committee's recommendations and the Bill now before the House reflects the detailed examination made by the committee on this area of the law.

The Bill aims to do away with the old "office of profit" concept and to remove the disqualifying provisions relating to Government contracts. At the same time the opportunity has been taken to consolidate the various provisions with a compact group of sections.

The Bill itself is a fairly technical document; and as most members would regard the subject as a complicated one, explanatory notes on the various clauses are available to assist members who desire to study the Bill in detail or any particular aspect of it. In addition, the Bill was introduced in another place last May for the purpose of allowing members the opportunity to make a detailed examination of the problems and proposed methods of solving them, should they so desire.

Section 32 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act provides that any person who directly or indirectly, himself or by any person whomsoever in trust for him or for his use or benefit or on his account, undertakes, executes, holds, or enjoys in whole or in part any contract agreement or commission made or entered into with, under, or from any person whomsoever for or on account of the Government of the State, shall be disqualified from membership of the Legislature. There are all sorts of qualifications and exceptions.

The removal of section 32 was recommended in the report of the Law Reform Committee. The committee was of the opinion that the disqualifying provisions relating to Government

contracts should be repealed, as has been done in the United Kingdom.

The 1956 Select Committee of the House of Commons pointed out the extreme difficulty of drafting satisfactory provisions to cover all the possible contractual arrangements in which a member may theoretically become subject to the influence of the Government. They also pointed out that the House had inherent power to regulate the behaviour of its members, and any member who abused the position could be dealt with by the House itself by way of contempt proceedings.

The Parliamentary Privileges Act, 1891 of this State gives both Houses equally wide power. An additional safeguard exists in sections 60 and 61 of the Criminal Code relating to the bribing of members of Parliament. Also relevant is Standing Order 195 of the Legislative Assembly which prohibits a member from voting on a question in which he has a pecuniary interest. The Legislative Council, if it wished, could adopt a similar type of Standing Order.

The Bill provides for the repeal of section 32 in line with the Law Reform Committee proposal and following the United Kingdom practice.

It is also proposed to replace section 33 with a statement to the effect that, except as provided, the election of a person as a member of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly shall not be rendered void nor shall such person's seat become vacant by reason of his holding any office of profit from or under the Crown. This is intended to make it clear that the old "office of profit" doctrine no longer applies and that any question as to whether the holding of an office or place debars a person from membership of Parliament is to be determined solely in accordance with the new provisions of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act. This then establishes the principle which is then modified by important safeguards in the succeeding clauses.

The Bill provides that a person is disqualified for membership if he holds any office specified in part I of the fifth schedule or is a member of the Commonwealth or another State or Territory Legislature. Likewise, a member of one House of this Parliament is disqualified from membership of the other. The offices specified in part I of the schedule are those of judges and others holding judicial, quasi-judicial, or arbitral positions. Persons coming within the terms of the proposals to be contained in section 34 cannot become members of Parliament whilst holding their particular offices. If they desire to stand for Parliament, they must resign their offices before becoming members.

The amendment to section 37 of the principal Act is to make provision that if a person holds one of the offices specified in the schedule or is a member of any commission, council, board, committee, authority, trust, or other body as specified and such person is elected to Parliament, he shall on taking the oath as a member of Parliament automatically vacate the office, place, or position referred to in the schedule.

The schedule also includes ordinary members of workers' compensation boards, various arbitral bodies and various State offices, whether statutory or in the Public Service, or in the service of State instrumentalities as detailed in divisions 2 and 3 of part 2 of the schedule. This includes the Solicitor General, Commissioner of Main Roads, Public Service heads, school teachers, and other Government employees generally. All such persons would, if elected to Parliament, automatically vacate their positions on taking the oath of office as a member of Parliament.

Part 3 of the schedule includes commissions, councils, boards, and other bodies, where some or all of the members are Government appointees, membership of which will be automatically vacated on the member of Parliament taking his oath of office.

A sitting member would immediately lose his seat if he became the holder of any office or place referred to in parts 2 or 3 of the schedule. There are, however, safeguards in cases of error, oversight, or misunderstanding where a member of Parliament becomes the holder of one of the places referred to. Parliament may, if the member resigns the office or place, direct that the breach be disregarded. In case the vacancy should occur during a parliamentary recess, proposed new subsection (3) of section 39 will prevent immediate action being taken to fill the vacancy until Parliament has had an opportunity to consider the matter.

Bodies have been included in part 3 of the schedule on the criterion of whether some or all of their members are Government or ministerial appointees. No account has been taken of whether or not members receive remuneration, allowances, or expenses, except in the case of the boards of educational or cultural bodies. Such bodies have been excluded from the schedule unless members receive remuneration or sitting fees.

It was felt by the Government that to aid public and parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill the list of bodies in part 3 should be as comprehensive as possible. However, if a case can be made for the deletion of a body from the list the Government will be quite prepared to give consideration to

that action during the passage of the legislation, subject to a consideration by Parliament of proper principles.

Apart from the aspect of remuneration, another factor is the time which service on such bodies may require.

The section does not apply to a Minister of the Crown who, by virtue of his office but only whilst holding ministerial office, is also a member of a board or other body.

The proposed section 36 applies to persons in the service of the Commonwealth or another State or a Territory and members of commissions, boards, and other bodies appointed by the Commonwealth or another State or Territory. Any such person elected to Parliament must first resign his other position before taking his oath of office; and if he does not do so within 21 sitting days his seat shall become vacant. This alteration in the law was recommended by the Law Reform Committee in its report and, in essence, means that if a person to whom the section applies is elected to Parliament the election is not void, but the person will be unable to take his seat until he resigns from or otherwise vacates the office or place in question.

Because of the all-embracing coverage of the provision, subsection (2) has been included to enable particular offices to be exempted in appropriate cases by Order-in-Council. Such an order would be subject to disallowance by Parliament in the same way as a regulation.

Members will note that the new section 36 will apply to members of the Armed Forces, other than citizen and reserve members. This contrasts with existing sections 37 and 38 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act which exempt all members of the sea and land forces from disqualification.

The present section 39 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act enables any person to recover a penalty of \$400 from a person who sits or votes as a member of Parliament when disqualified from doing so. The Law Reform Committee recommended that this provision should be removed and that the matter be left to be dealt with under Parliament's ordinary disciplinary powers.

The proposed new section 41 gives effect to the recommendation of the committee that the law empower any person to apply to the Supreme Court for a declaration as to whether or not a member of Parliament has vacated his office or his seat. To discourage groundless arguments, the applicant would be required to give security for costs.

The existing section 40 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, which provides that the presence of unqualified persons shall not invalidate proceedings, is to be expanded and reworded to make it consistent with the new provisions. In any event, it would be expected that the greater precision of the new provisions regarding disqualification would greatly reduce the possibility of an unqualified person sitting and voting in Parliament.

It is also proposed to repeal section 41A of the Act which was designed to protect members from jeopardizing their seats by serving as members of Parliamentary committees or Royal Commissions, as Honorary Ministers, or as representatives of Parliament or of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. With the disappearance of the "office of profit" doctrine, this protection is no longer needed.

The office of "Honorary Minister" is at present given statutory recognition indirectly by the existing section 41A. It is proposed that this section should be repealed, but it seems appropriate that statutory reference to the office should be retained.

The proposed section 44A would specifically allow the appointment of Honorary Ministers but would prevent them from being paid more than an allowance for expenses incurred.

The existing section 42—responsible Minister changing his office not to vacate seat—is linked to the "office of profit" doctrine and, of course, will no longer be required.

The proposed section 42 will enable additions and alterations to be made to, and deletions to be made from, the lists of offices and bodies contained in the fifth schedule by Order-in-Council.

These orders will be subject to disallowance by Parliament. Where an order adds the name of an office or body to the schedule, the operation of the order will be suspended for 30 days to enable any member of Parliament, who holds such an office or is a member of such a body, to resign his office or membership and thus avoid losing his seat.

Parts III to IX of the Bill deal with related amendments to the Electoral Act, Alcohol and Drug Authority Act, National Parks Authority Act, Waterways Conservation Act, Cancer Council of Western Australia Act, Constitutional Convention Act and the Salaries and Allowances Act.

Most of these amendments have been dealt with earlier, but some have not, and I will conclude my remarks by referring to these briefly.

Members, as distinct from officers, of the Alcohol and Drug Authority and Cancer Council are not included in the fifth schedule and the reference to qualification for Parliament in the respective Acts is no longer required.

The effect of the amendments to the National Parks Authority Act and the Waterways Conservation Act will be that members of Parliament will not be able to be members of the bodies constituted under those Acts as those bodies are included in part 3 of the proposed fifth schedule.

The Constitutional Convention Act was passed to protect members from forfeiting their seats under the office of profit doctrine as a result of receiving certain allowances in respect of attendance at meetings. Since the "office of profit" doctrine is to be done away with, there will be no further need for the Act.

The amendments to the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Act will now include the traditional definition of "Minister of the Crown" and make provision to prevent a newly elected member of Parliament from receiving any remuneration until that person vacates any offices or places as detailed in the Bill.

There is also provision to restrict the payment of remuneration to members who carry out duties on behalf of the Government or a Minister. Such remuneration will not be payable unless Executive Council has approved the carrying out of the duties.

Finally, the Bill seeks to amend section 22 of the Constitution Act relating to the affirmation which may be taken by members of Parliament as an alternative to taking the oath. It is considered desirable that we should bring the wording of our Constitution in this regard into line with that used in other legislation, including the form of affirmation made in the courts.

It is more than eight years since the Western Australian Law Reform Committee reported on amendments considered desirable to some old constitutional doctrines abolished by the mother of Parliaments more than 20 years ago.

The Government considers that these matters are long overdue for reform in our own constitution. The Government appreciates, however, that members of Parliament and members of the public are entitled to a full and careful consideration of the proposals. For this reason, the Bill has been held over for a reasonable time in another place and explanatory clause notes made available.

The Bill should perhaps, be described as a Parliamentary Bill and is commended to the House on that basis.

I have some explanatory notes on the clauses, a copy of which I will make available to the Leader of the Opposition and if other members want copies also I can easily arrange through the Clerks for them to have copies.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Sir CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[2.45 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I should like to preface my remarks by saying I am acting on behalf of the Chief Secretary in this regard.

Until a few years ago it was a long-standing practice of magistrates, in cases where they thought it appropriate, to discharge convicted offenders without penalty, to caution the person involved and, perhaps, order the payment of incidental costs. However, the full court of Western Australia held in the case of *Walsh v Giumelli* that a caution was not a penalty. The court said that, unless authorised by Statute, a magistrate was not empowered to convict without passing sentence and to do that was to fail finally to determine the complaint.

The effect of the full court's decision was to stop the use of the caution in magistrates' courts. As can be appreciated, the caution was used by magistrates and it has been estimated that it could have been used in as many as 10 per cent of the cases dealt with by them.

In the case of persons convicted of drunkenness, it has been estimated that more than 20 per cent of offenders were cautioned.

Members will, no doubt, appreciate that the cautioning power was a useful one, because there are always those cases where, although an offence has been committed, more severe punishment is not warranted, or is inappropriate.

Because the use of the caution was an unauthorised procedure, there were no rules relating to its use and it was simply used by magistrates as and when they thought appropriate.

The practice had grown over many years. One of the solicitors appearing in the full court case indicated to the court that he could recall it being used around 1910.

The matter was thereupon referred to the Law Reform Commission in these terms—

To consider alternative ways of dealing with offenders charged with offences which, in the past, may have attracted a caution.

The commission issued a very comprehensive report which dealt not only with the situation resulting from the case referred to, but also a number of other aspects involving a consideration of various sections of the Criminal Code.

At the request of the Attorney General, this report has been carefully examined by officers of the Crown Law Department. The object was to safely incorporate in the Code such amendments as were necessary to "restore" the caution procedure along the lines indicated in the report, without prejudice to such further inquiries as might be required to be instituted on other aspects of the commission's recommendations.

It was not a simple matter to devise amendments isolating the items in the report which would "restore" the procedure on a legitimate basis from other items of an ancillary nature which required more careful consideration by Parliamentary Counsel.

However, the issues have now been resolved and the Government considers that statutory backing should be given to the practice of cautioning convicted offenders. This Bill seeks to do just that.

In doing so, the Government has been mindful of achieving the purpose without introducing more complications than already exist by making use of sections of the Code already in use and understood by lawyers and the public and dealing with associated matters.

The amendment proposes that, where a person pleads guilty, or a court considers the offence proven, then the court may, having regard for the character, antecedents, or youth of the offender, or the trivial nature of the offence, or any extenuating circumstances under which the offence was committed—

Convict the offender and discharge him without penalty and unconditionally;

or, discharge him without penalty but on any recognisance which is provided for under section 19 of the Criminal Code.

Such options would be available only to the court on a charge of any offence not punishable with more than three years' imprisonment, with or without any alternative punishment, and provided that any previous offence is within the following category—

An offence committed as a child and dealt with in a children's court;

an offence not punishable by imprisonment; or

an offence carrying a maximum sentence of less than six months' imprisonment in respect of which the person has not been sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine.

There is another important reform in the Bill.

* Section 669 of the Code contains a subsection which prohibits any further proceedings being taken for the same cause. Whilst this is perfectly legitimate and proper in the case of criminal proceedings, it is considered unfair and unjust that persons who have suffered loss or injury should be unable to recover civil damages, merely because the offender has had leniency extended to him under this section in relation to his criminal charge.

The subsection is contrary to general principles of justice and fairness. The Bill therefore proposes that, whilst dismissal without conviction, or discharge following conviction, will still be a bar to further criminal proceedings, it will not be a bar to civil proceedings.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram.

APPROPRIATION BILL (GENERAL LOAN FUND)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [2.50 p.m.]: The loan programme for the 1979-80 year was presented to us several weeks ago by the Premier, when he provided us with the usual document of some 21 pages detailing where the money was to come from and how it would be spent. We are very grateful to the Premier for making the document available. However, I might say in passing that he was a little niggardly in making the copies available to my office.

Usually, when the Premier commences to introduce both the Revenue Estimates and the Loan Fund Estimates he makes several copies available but this year he made available only one copy. The media always looks for a comment immediately after the introduction of this type of measure, and it is very difficult, when one is not privy to the papers immediately the Premier commences his speech, to make any comment. It is difficult to assess the document and make some

comment on it. When the Federal Budget is introduced in the Federal Parliament, copies are always made available to my office, which is of great help.

The document we have before us on this occasion is in its usual form, and it is hard to imagine any Government or semi-Government work which is in operation, which is about to commence, which is planned, or which it is intended to plan for, which does not get a mention in the document. It is far-ranging, as one would expect from whatever Government was in office. All Governments, of whatever political colour, want to claim credit for any "progress" that has been made, and they want to "blow their bags" about what is to happen during the forthcoming year.

However, when one reviews the works programme for 1979-80, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the Liberal-National Country Party Government in Canberra is dedicated to pushing unemployment as high as it possibly can. Although the document before us relates to the State works programme, the contents of the programme depend almost entirely on what sum of money the national Government allows the State. Therefore, the ability of the State to carry out works programmes depends on the money made available by the Federal Government.

The national Government, operating through the Loan Council—as we are aware—exercises a very tight control over the amount of money which the States have available to undertake capital works. There is no doubt that argument can be advanced in favour of this central control, in the interests of facilitating proper management of the national economy. But the argument breaks down rather badly—very easily and very quickly—when one considers the economic incompetence of members on the Government benches in Canberra.

The facts are that the Fraser Government in Canberra—the Liberal-National Country Party coalition—has slashed the amount of money made available to the States to undertake capital works. The Fraser Government has cut back on the funds available, in real terms, every year since it has been in office. Every single year there has been a cut-back in the amount of money available, in real terms.

The consequences of those cut-backs have been: Higher unemployment; depression in the building and construction sector; reduced activity in the associated manufacturing industries; a backlog in demand for housing and other community

facilities; and a lower overall economic activity as a result of reduced demand.

We have been told that the cut-backs have been necessary to curb inflation, to cut interest rates, and to lower unemployment in the long term. Curb inflation, cut interest rates, and lower unemployment; those are the three reasons which the incompetent Government in Canberra has put forward as economic measures. I repeat: To reduce inflation, to cut interest rates, and to reduce unemployment. Those are the three objectives.

So the nation, and particularly this State, has suffered enormously at the behest of the Fraser Government. What do we have to show for it? Have interest rates been cut? Has unemployment been reduced? Has inflation been reduced? Our so-called sound economic managers, both federally and State, were to do all these things. They were elected to office on the firm promise that they knew how to handle the economy. They were elected to office on the basis that they knew all about the medicine we had to take as a nation in order to be restored to economic health.

Mr Pearce: The nation has been poisoned.

Mr DAVIES: The sound economic managers were elected to office on the expectation that they could "turn on the lights". The truth is, of course, that the promises which were made were lies; the medicine has been killing the patient and the expectations have been shown to be wrong, and the lights constantly grow dimmer.

Let me remind members in this House of what the Liberals opposite—the Liberal Party—has inflicted on this State. For 1979-80, our general purpose capital funds have been cut by 25.2 per cent, or \$33.4 million in real terms. Our specific purpose capital funds have been cut by 27.8 per cent, or \$45.9 million in real terms. Our overall capital funds are down by 26.6 per cent, or \$79.3 million in real terms. That is what the Liberal Party has done for Western Australia.

When I point out that the total capital funds have been cut by 26.6 per cent, in real terms, that means the physical volume of work we can undertake has been cut by that amount. It means the number of jobs that can be created have been cut by that amount. It means that schools will not be built; hospitals will not be built; houses will not be built; and roads will not be constructed.

Mr Bertram: And no bridge over the river at Mandurah.

Mr Shalders: You are a funny man; you should read the papers.

Mr DAVIES: I ask every member in this House to think about what this means to his or her own electorate. I ask members to think what it might mean to the level of unemployment in each electorate, and then to think about what an additional sum of \$79.3 million would be capable of doing.

It is not only in the year 1979-80 that this State has been sold down the drain by the Federal Government. In the four years the Fraser Government has been blighting this country this State's general purpose capital funds have been cut by 17.8 per cent, or \$69.5 million in real terms.

Our specific purpose capital funds have been cut by 25 per cent, or \$163.3 million in real terms.

Mr Shalders: Tell us how much they cut inflation down by too?

Mr DAVIES: I will deal with that in a moment. Our total capital funds have fallen by 21.8 per cent or a massive \$232.8 million in real terms. That is the Federal Government's record in four years—a massive cut of \$232.8 million.

Mr Laurance: The people of South Australia seem quite satisfied with the latest Federal Budget.

Mr DAVIES: If the honourable member wants to go to the electors next week, we are ready for him.

Mr Laurance: That would be like taking lambs to the slaughter.

Mr DAVIES: We would be happy to face the electors next week, and the member for Gascoyne would be back hitting kids over the head or selling insurance.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Rushton: Don't you go back to Westrail, for goodness sake!

Mr Bateman: The Premier has more brains than to call an election next week.

Mr DAVIES: So we are \$232.8 million down the drain because of the Federal Liberal-National Country Party Government. I read a remark the other day that took my fancy. It was to the effect that anyone who believes Fraser's promises any more would get 11 out of 10 for being a Christian—110 per cent for being a Christian! That remark was made on "AM" the other morning and I thought how true it was.

This \$232.8 million I am referring to is equivalent to 11 000 State Housing Commission homes, 3 300 kilometres of road in the Pilbara—more in closer areas—or 260 primary

schools. Above all, that \$232.8 million is equivalent to hundreds of jobs—jobs that people do not have because we do have a Liberal Government.

Mr Laurance: How much of the poor old pensioners' savings would have been eaten up in inflation?

Mr DAVIES: The pensioners are now two years behind with their increases.

Mr Laurance: You would not care about that—their savings would have been decimated.

Mr DAVIES: Let us hear about some of the protests members on the other side have made in regard to the cut-back in pensions. I have never heard anyone from that side stand up to say that the pensioners should be given a better go.

Mr Laurance: The pensioners' savings would be decimated under your policies.

Mr DAVIES: The honourable member wants to talk about pensioners and people on fixed incomes, but what was the Court Government going to do about a special programme for these unfortunate people? That was one of the Liberal Party promises at the last election.

Mr Laurance: Their savings would have gone.

Mr DAVIES: The Court Government has not done a single thing about that matter. It intended to take action to help these people because of the effects of inflation.

Mr Laurance: What you did to people was cruel. They had saved all their lives and you made their money worth nothing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAVIES: Here we see Government members weeping crocodile tears over the pensioners. Did anyone ever see anything more disgusting than using one of the more unfortunate sections of the community for political ends?

Mr Jamieson: You are not right—the Government did do something. It pigeonholed the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are too many lengthy interjections.

Mr DAVIES: I am only too happy to deal with them, Sir.

Mr Rushton: You have not dealt with one yet.

Mr DAVIES: That is a matter of opinion. At least we woke up the Minister for Transport.

Mr Rushton: You have said nothing concrete yet.

Mr DAVIES: The member for Gascoyne is about to leave the Chamber—he must feel

embarrassed about the whole situation. Two Government back-benchers are fast asleep.

Mr Laurance: You have not looked behind you.

Mr DAVIES: We have woken up the member for Clontarf—he has been asleep.

Mr Laurance: Look behind you.

Mr Skidmore: At least we are all awake.

Mr DAVIES: The debate has not been entirely wasted because I am sure we will hear the member for Clontarf stand up to tell us what a wonderful measure this is. He will say that this is a good Government and he will sit down again. He makes a splendid speech along those lines—we have heard it at least eight times. I am sure the Treasurer is glad that he has the member for Clontarf right behind him—far behind him. So we are the sound economic managers!

Mr Laurance: Who says that? Is that what you are saying?

Mr DAVIES: That is what Government members have said. "We are the sound economic managers. The State is in firm hands—trust us. Leave it with us." In a moment I will refer to a few statistics to show just how good this State Government's promises have been. The figures I will refer to have not been concocted by me—they are figures obtained from papers tabled in this House. However, members will have to wait patiently for these figures, because I would like to deal with matters in their proper order.

I do not believe it is sound economic management to boost unemployment. I do not believe it is sound economic management to depress the building and construction industry or to allow an enormous backlog of work to build up. It is not sound economic management to impose massive cuts in the funds available for job-creating capital works; and yet that is what the Liberal Party Government has done.

I want to refer now to some of the cut-backs in specific purpose capital funds; one of the areas that has been very badly affected. First of all I will deal with housing. This year our housing funds have been cut by \$18.3 million or 61.4 per cent in real terms. This brings the total cuts in housing funds since the Government took office to more than \$35 million in real terms. That sum would finance the construction of 1 500 new three-bedroomed homes by the State Housing Commission.

The financial year of 1979-80 is the fourth consecutive year in which our allocation for roads has been cut. This year our funds were cut by about \$5.4 million, or 16 per cent in real terms. In just four years the Fraser Government has

reduced our road funds by \$27 million in real terms. That represents 385 kilometres of highway in the Pilbara or 1 080 kilometres of local roads in the south-west.

I have given two practical examples which are easily understood, I am sure, by all members of the House, of what the Liberal Party's new federalism has meant to Western Australia. There are many more. As I have said more than a few times in this House, this is the new federalism which the Treasurer has defended through thick and thin. It is time the Liberal Party members stood up and started to fight for our State.

Mr Hassell: You don't have any policy at all.

Mr DAVIES: It is time that the Treasurer's colleagues understood that it is not good enough to take it all lying down.

Mr O'Connor: We have not done that.

Mr DAVIES: It is time indeed to get a message through to Canberra. The Minister for Labour and Industry knows that the Government has not stood up to the Fraser Government too successfully or too often.

Mr O'Connor: We did it better than you would have done it.

Mr DAVIES: It is true that every time funds are slashed the Minister concerned returns to Western Australia and protests about it. It is true that the Minister for Transport protested about the cut in road funds. It is true that the Treasurer protests, and it is true that he sends secret protests to Canberra which he leaks to the Press. That practice has stopped lately because it was too patently clear just what was happening.

Mr MacKinnon: I hope you will tell us just what you would do.

Mr DAVIES: For years we have too easily accepted the financial stagnation of the State due to Federal authorities. Give me a chance and I will tell the honourable member what we will do.

Mr MacKinnon: We cannot afford it.

Mr DAVIES: I will not say, as the present Treasurer did, "Give me a chance and I will cure unemployment in six months. I will cure inflation in six months. It can be cured State by State."

Mr Shalders: Has employment increased? Has the number of jobs increased? Of course it has.

Mr DAVIES: What a record the Court Government has. I am quite happy to deal with unemployment.

Mr Shalders: Let us talk about jobs. Have the jobs increased? Of course they have.

Mr DAVIES: The member for Murray is clearly indicating that he has not read the

documents which were tabled when the Budget was introduced.

Mr Shalders: What document?

Mr DAVIES: The member for Murray says, "What document?" I refer to the document titled "The Western Australian Economy, 1978-79".

Mr Shalders: It so happens the Premier tabled two documents. You said "the document" which displays your abysmal lack of knowledge.

Mr DAVIES: Mr Speaker, we are now splitting straws. This always makes the member for Murray happy, because that is about all he can split, and he is enjoying it. The member for Murray should know that there are documents tabled and there is the speech and the Budget papers, and the report on the economy.

Mr Shalders: Why did you say "document" if you knew it to be "documents"?

Mr DAVIES: I said that because this is the document from which I am going to quote. Does the member for Murray have any more questions?

Mr Shalders: When you learn the difference between singular and plural it will be a big help to this Parliament.

Mr DAVIES: If the member for Murray cannot deal with it, I am sorry for him.

Mr Blaikie: The last 20 minutes have been most interesting, because this is the alternative Government's fiscal policy, and it is made up entirely of interjections.

Mr DAVIES: That was a very clever interjection. Now the member for Vasse has it in *Hansard*, does he wish to add to it, because I am sure anyone reading *Hansard* in years to come will wonder what he meant? If the member has finished I will proceed.

We have heard some half-hearted whining from the Premier. However, he does not say, "It is my fault; I organised it." The Premier does say, of course, that he would like a better deal from the Commonwealth and that the Commonwealth is being unfair. However, I do not hear his back-bench members getting behind him. I wonder where is their loyalty to the State, and their determination for a better deal from the Commonwealth Government.

The Liberal Party has sold this State down the drain, and most of its members have stood idly by, watching. If they are not prepared to defend the State, they should get out of the way and let someone in who will defend it.

Where does all this leave our works programme in 1979-80?

Mr Tonkin: In chaos.

Mr DAVIES: We have a General Loan Fund programme amounting to \$157.1 million, as against \$150.2 million last year. In real terms this represents a cut of about \$11 million, or roughly 5 per cent.

In the light of the massive Federal cutbacks, the outcome is a creditable one. It would be churlish of me not to say I thought the State Government had done a reasonable job under the circumstances.

However, it is not such a hard thing for a Government to bolster its works programme in a pre-election year when, over the last three years, it has allowed \$44.6 million in public money to build up in a reserve account.

I spent some time in my speech on the Consolidated Revenue Estimates outlining how this had been done and its consequences in terms not only of jobs which could have been created but also of the facilities which the money could have established. Members might care to read the table I had incorporated in last week's *Hansard* showing the amounts of money over the various years since before this Government took office which were put into the Suspense Account, and how they were dealt with. As I say, an amount of \$44.6 million is available to the Government for distribution in a pre-election year. I do not wish to go over the same ground again today; however, I believe it was the Government's deliberate intention to allow that sum to accumulate.

I remind members this amount is not shown in the Budget papers. We must ask questions about it, because the account is what its name implies; namely, a suspense account. I believe it has always been the intention of the Government to allow this money to accumulate so that it may be made available for spending in a pre-election year. Further, I believe the money remaining unspent from that \$44.6 million will be used to finance election promises. The Government's statements and actions over recent days confirm that view.

I wish to point to some of the evidence contained in the Treasurer's Loan Estimates speech. Referring to the difficulties experienced with Commonwealth funding, the Treasurer said—

If there is not a substantial increase in Loan Council allocations next year we will be faced with a difficult problem in 1980/81 as we will not have the funds to supplement the General Loan Fund to anywhere near the same degree as in the current year. In that event, the problem would be compounded if

peak expenditure on the District Court Building had to be met from severely limited Loan Funds.

Members should bear in mind that at the 30th June last, there was \$44.6 million in the Treasury Suspense Account. Some of this money was earmarked to balance the Consolidated Revenue Fund this financial year, and \$25.5 million has been transferred to the General Loan Fund to bolster the works programme. Of that \$25.5 million, \$7.5 million was for the District Court building.

After all those transactions, there is still about \$10 million left in the Suspense Account, and it is reasonable to expect that the investment of Treasury cash balances on the short-term money market this financial year will earn about \$20 million. This makes a total of about \$30 million.

If it will not be possible to use this money to supplement the General Loan Fund next year to the same extent as this year, and it might not be possible to finance peak expenditure on the District Court building from this source next year, what is going to become of the \$30 million?

The most likely explanation is that the Liberal Party is going to make some very expensive election promises. Still, I find that encouraging, because it is a clear indication the Government is panicking, and justifiably so, because it is very much out of favour in the electorate.

I mentioned earlier that one of the consequences of not having adequate funds for a proper works programme is unemployment. I was invited to comment on this by a member opposite, and I am happy to do so. The magnitude of the unemployment problem hardly needs to be emphasised by me. However, I would like to point out just how serious that problem is in this State, particularly in the building and construction industries. It is the building and construction industries which are most affected by any cut-back in the works programme.

In August this year, there were slightly fewer than 40 000 Western Australians, or 7 per cent of our work force, unemployed. The magnitude of the problem is best demonstrated by comparing the number of people out of work with the number of jobs available. In August there were 41 Western Australians out of work for every unfilled job vacancy.

The figure is worse in Western Australia than in any other State. What this means in practical terms is that it is harder to get a job in Western Australia than in any other State. Nationally, the proportion of the work force unemployed in

August was 6.15 per cent and there were only 21 people out of work for every unfilled job vacancy.

The 100 000 jobs which the Premier promised before the last election have not materialised. In fact, according to the paper on the Western Australian economy prepared by the Treasury and distributed with the Budget, the number of jobs available in Western Australia fell during 1978-79.

Mr O'Connor: They have increased by 63 000 over the last four or five years.

Mr DAVIES: I am quoting figures for the past year.

Mr O'Connor: I am quoting ABS figures.

Mr DAVIES: I think we argued about employment once before and about the number of jobs available and whether the self-employed were part of the total or whether they were people in employment.

Mr O'Connor: We are talking about the total number of extra jobs provided, including the self-employed.

Mr DAVIES: We will argue about that at a later stage. According to the paper tabled, the number of jobs in this State actually fell. The number of people in civilian employment fell by 0.4 per cent; nationally there was an increase of 1.3 per cent. Quite simply, these figures mean that there were fewer jobs available in Western Australia at the end of the last financial year than there were at the start of it.

Where are some of those 100 000 jobs which were to materialise? It is interesting to note that overall civilian employment in this State declined by 0.4 per cent. The number of people in private employment fell by 1.8 per cent.

In 1978-79, employment in the construction industry in Western Australia fell by 8.7 per cent; from about 33 000 people to about 30 000. This trend of falling employment in the construction industry has been apparent throughout the period of cutbacks in public works. The further cutbacks in real terms which have occurred this year will continue and probably worsen.

Between May, 1978, and May, 1979, the number of skilled building and construction workers who were unemployed rose by 13.6 per cent, while the number of unfilled vacancies for them fell by 5.1 per cent. The number of unemployed rose, but the number of unfilled vacancies for them fell.

There were 47 000 people out of work for every vacancy. The building and construction industries are big employers of unskilled labour. In the same period, the number of unskilled manual workers

who were unemployed rose by 10.7 per cent, while unfilled vacancies fell by 21.9 per cent.

There were 125 people out of work for every job vacancy. Cutbacks in the programme, which were brought about by cutbacks in May, only made the position worse.

There is one other factor I shall comment on which will affect the activity of the building industry and this is the building society interest rates. Interest rates represent one more broken Liberal Party policy promise.

In the last Federal election, the Prime Minister promised us a fall of 2 per cent in interest rates within 12 months. There was no maybe about it; it was a categorical promise. He said there would be a fall of 2 per cent in interest rates in 12 months. Now, 22 months later, we are still waiting. But it is more the activities of the State Government in regard to interest rates that I want to deal with here. For a long time the Premier was rightly sceptical about any attempt to reduce interest rates artificially. I do not think I am misrepresenting him in saying his view was that when dealing with interest rates we had to be guided by market forces; we could do only what the market could bear.

I am sorry to say that towards the end of last year the Treasurer deviated substantially from his own maxim and virtually bludgeoned the building societies into making a reduction of one-quarter of 1 per cent in their interest rates.

There is some doubt about whether this was a State Government initiative or a Federal Government initiative; but it does not matter very much, because if one did it there is no doubt the other supported it. Therefore, they must both share responsibility for its failure.

Mr Bertram: Hear, hear!

Mr DAVIES: Last November the State Government approached building societies in this State, asking them to cut interest rates by 0.25 per cent. About the same time the Prime Minister, no doubt deeply concerned about his failure to cut interest rates and his broken election promises, decided something had to be done. Being the man of determination he allegedly is, he took action to get interest rates down for home loans.

Mr Barnett: He promised a 2 per cent drop.

Mr DAVIES: The Prime Minister wrote to all States, asking them to do something and suggesting that perhaps they might like to strong-arm the building societies. No doubt satisfied that he had licked the problem, he left on another overseas trip.

Of course, the State Government approached the building societies, seeking the reduction. The Premier said it was his idea to do so and not the Prime Minister's idea. With respect to the responsibility for this fiasco, I note that in this House on Tuesday last, in response to questions from the member for Balcatta, the Minister for Housing claimed it was his idea.

Mr Ridge: My negotiations with the building societies and other lending institutions had commenced before the Prime Minister bought into the idea.

Mr DAVIES: It was the Minister's idea?

Mr Ridge: That is what I said and what I stand by. It has been quite successful.

Mr DAVIES: So, collectively, the Government has to take the blame for the fiasco.

Mr Ridge: Is it a fiasco to reduce interest rates?

Mr DAVIES: The building societies were coerced to drop interest rates by 0.25 per cent.

Mr Ridge: Not at all, they co-operated with the State Government's initiative.

Mr DAVIES: That is not how the building societies put it to me. They were unhappy about it but felt they had to go along with the Government.

Mr Ridge: The State Government cannot force building societies into reducing or increasing interest rates.

Mr DAVIES: That is absolutely true, but the Government can strong-arm the building societies a little; it can talk to them.

Mr Bertram: Lean on them.

Mr DAVIES: The Government can say that it is in the building societies' interests to do what it suggests. This is what happened. Last November, after letters had gone out, interest rates were reduced by one-quarter of 1 per cent.

Mr Ridge: Are you complaining about the rates being reduced?

Mr DAVIES: I am trying to point out the situation that has developed and the uneasiness and uncertainty which has come about.

Mr Ridge: We have the most successful building societies here in this State. Do you object to their reducing interest rates?

Mr DAVIES: I wish they could do it more often. The building societies protested and said it was dangerous to interfere with the market. In saying that, they were echoing the sentiments of the Premier up to that time. They were saying exactly what the Premier had been saying.

Mr Ridge: What only one person was saying—not the Building Societies.

Mr DAVIES: I can think of at least two people who expressed their concern to me. I do not think I should mention names; they are probably well known to both the Minister and the Premier. Those people said that if their interest rates were forced down artificially, while the rest of the money market was untouched, there would be less finance available for housing. They said that if their rates were to be forced down it would be necessary to force down the rates of other institutions.

The Liberals knew that while they could coerce the building societies, their big business bosses in other parts of the financial market would not like being told to drop their interest rates, so it was left to the building societies.

Mr Ridge: Other sections went along with this; they co-operated with the State Government and reduced their rates accordingly.

Mr DAVIES: Which sections?

Mr Ridge: Various other lending institutions, not necessarily building societies.

Mr DAVIES: Relating to housing?

Mr Ridge: Not necessarily related to housing; but other people related to lending finance generally. We did not concentrate on just the building societies.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister put the thumb on all of them?

Mr Ridge: No; we sought their co-operation and they co-operated willingly.

Mr DAVIES: I cannot recall one other organisation apart from the building societies; but I will take the Minister's word for it. I would be interested to have a list of the others. It might have been all right for some of the minor institutions, but the big financiers would not have liked being told they had to drop their interest rates. The warnings and protests which came to the Government on that occasion have been found to be correct.

This week, as we all know, one of our bigger lenders for housing, the Town and Country Building Society, and I think the Perth Building Society, announced their interest rates were to rise again by that one-quarter of 1 per cent by which they were reduced in December. It is expected that the rest of the societies will follow with the increase. However, they were not for it; they had no choice. The Prime Minister, the Premier, and the Minister for Housing have been shown to be wrong. The Premier should have listened to his own advice about the dangers of

trying to achieve an artificial reduction. Let me make it plain—in case the Minister may have thought otherwise—that I am not opposing the reduction in interest rates; especially not for home building. I think the aim of the exercise to reduce the cost of building homes was laudable. I have no doubt that home buyers who benefited from this temporary reduction of interest rates were very grateful, though they are no doubt now disappointed that the reduction proved to be a false dawn.

However, the end result of the Liberal Party's attempt to get itself out of trouble has been to retard the building industry and to ensure that interest rates stay up higher, longer.

In the final analysis the exercise is going to be shown to have made it harder for people to get a home of their own rather than easier. Everyone suffers as a result of this—the prospective home owner, the building industry and the economy as a whole.

In conclusion, I just want to say that the most important comment that can be made about the Loan Estimates is that Western Australia is not getting enough money for capital works. That is not a very far-reaching comment. It is fairly obvious to everyone that the blame for this lies at the feet of the Commonwealth Government, though the Premier, through his espousal of the new federalism, is guilty too, as are all Liberal members for their failure to protest.

Under the circumstances, the works programme which is to be undertaken this year is reasonable, bolstered as it is by a substantial cash input from the Government's carefully hoarded \$44 million election fund. Again we must impress upon the Commonwealth that it is essential that the States get a better deal on capital funds next year.

It is still many months until the next Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council meeting which will determine our allocations for next financial year, but the job of getting the Commonwealth to change its tune must start now—and it must involve all of us. I do not say it involves those of us on this side of the House any more than it involves each and every member on the other side of the House. We should be prepared to speak out loud and clear on these issues so that we can see that this State of ours will not be slipping because of a lack of understanding; because of a lack of appreciation of the need to provide some money for these basic works. We should all speak out on this matter.

As I said, the works programme has presented a reasonable amount of money and we will watch

closely during the coming year to see how the works programme is put into operation. The Premier has said there was no money in the Revenue Estimates for unemployment because there would be a lot more work generated from the loan funds. I certainly will be watching this closely. I will be watching the unemployment figures during the months ahead and I will be much happier to see a drop in unemployment. I hope it drops substantially faster than in other States of Australia. I support the Bill.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [3.35 p.m.]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comments on the Bill. Since, of course, the main debate takes place on the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the Estimates that come with it, I propose that when we have dealt with the second reading of this Bill we will go into Committee and leave the Bill there so that we can come back to it at a proper time when more detailed aspects can be raised. Of course, if any member has a specific query to raise I suggest he discusses it with the Minister concerned or gives notice to the Minister about the matter so that he can obtain any information required for the Committee stages.

I was very disappointed with the speech that the Leader of the Opposition made to the Loan Estimates because they are an important part of the overall budgetary mechanism. One readily concedes that the greatest emphasis is always placed on the Consolidated Revenue Budget with its much greater facility for coming to grips with individual departmental operations. However, the Leader of the Opposition seemed to have a rather distorted understanding of the situation in connection with interest rates.

The simple fact is that against world trends the performance in Australia has been very commendable and I believe reflects credit not only on the Commonwealth but also on the State Government.

Mr Davies: It still has not reduced the rate by 2 per cent.

SIR CHARLES COURT: I am coming to this point. If the honourable member is aware of the situation that is being faced nationally and internationally he will know that there has been a decline in the American economy. This has occurred for a number of reasons; firstly, it is due to the energy situation, but in my own opinion it is more due to the fact that the Americans let go; they thought they were over the hill as far as their check on inflation was concerned. Suddenly the situation ran away from them. Because of this situation that developed the whole world

panicked—and with some justification—about the trend in inflation and its movement upwards. There was a burst of inflation and with it went the interest rates.

If one looks at the Australian situation one will find that the interest rates have been held very strongly. This is commendable when compared with the world situation. Also one has to say that the Australian dollar, undoubtedly, is undervalued today. This is a very satisfactory situation for a number of reasons: Firstly, it has an impact on the export markets where, to a large extent, it gives the Australian manufacturers an edge if they want to compete and, secondly, it secures the Australian currency and protects it against the great run on the Australian dollar that we saw in previous years and which caused so much concern.

Therefore it is very commendable that the situation has held as it has. The Leader of the Opposition was almost distraught about the fact that the Minister for Housing and myself—

Mr Davies: Hardly distraught.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —had allegedly “leaned” on the building societies. I can tell him no leaning went on. It was part of a normal consultation that takes place. There is a very acceptable arrangement between the building societies and other lenders of home finance. There is quite an array of them. There are insurance companies, life companies, mortgage brokers, trustee companies and savings banks. When such matters are under discussion it is the practice for the Minister for Housing and/or myself and Treasury officers and the housing officials to talk to these people. To my knowledge there was only one person—and that was a person speaking on his own—who criticised what the Government was doing, but the association of building societies was very prompt to tell me as the Treasurer and to tell the Minister for Housing that they did not agree with the comments of that one man. It was a very interesting exercise because that man then had a change of heart. I am going on the advice given to me by the building societies when I say that the people who had the reduction of interest offered to them did not accept the lower weekly payments. I think the Minister for Housing will confirm this.

They did not accept the lower weekly payments; they preferred to pay the same amount of money and thereby reduce the term of the loan. I am also assured that under the present arrangement the building societies are offering the reverse situation: they will be prepared to extend the loan if necessary, so that the weekly

payments, particularly in the case of first home owners, will not increase or vary. I think that is commendable. The fact that people were prepared to pay the same amount and get rid of their debt quickly made it a very practical, conservative, and sensible arrangement. It reflects well on the people, mainly young couples, who concern themselves with getting rid of their debt rather than having more in their pay packet.

Mr B. T. Burke: The societies exerted considerable pressure on the couples not to seek a lower rate of payment, didn't they?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Not to my knowledge.

The Leader of the Opposition seems to have a “thing” about the Government's use of the Suspense Account. I believe we have used it sensibly and as the people would have wanted us to use it. The Leader of the Opposition would have “gone for broke” every year and had nothing in reserve. What would have been the result? Just extravagance in government. The Leader of the Opposition knows that if the Treasury does not keep a tight fist on Government expenditure the departments blow their budgets all the time. That is where his money would have gone. Instead, we have been able to put the money into a very commendable works programme. I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition would laud it and say it was sensible housekeeping. He would have “gone for broke” every year, leaving us completely destitute and without a feather to fly with.

Mr Davies: That is completely untrue.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Sibson) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Vote: Agriculture, \$158 000—

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer).

Sitting suspended from 3.44 to 4.03 p.m.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

MR McIVER (Avon) [4.03 p.m.]: The Bill before us contains three amendments. The major

amendment is to allow the Government to purchase equipment for the benefit of Westrail under leasing arrangements. The minor amendments in the Bill are to substitute the word "bylaws" for the word "regulations" in section 23, and to substitute the words "thirty-two kilometres" for the words "twenty miles" in section 82 to comply with the metric conversion scheme.

I would like to indicate that the Opposition agrees with this Bill in principle, but we do want more specific information than is contained in the Bill or in the Minister's second reading speech.

When we consider the overall situation, the word "leasing" is quite ambiguous. There is nothing in the Bill to suggest what financial arrangements the Government will enter into. We know that the Government intends to purchase railcars and trailers under this agreement but we want to know what financial arrangements the State is entering into. We have battled with the Government in an endeavour to find out about the leasing arrangements for the line buses. In fact, as late as last night, the Leader of the Opposition asked questions about this matter and the Minister replied that the information would not be made available.

If we are to debate this measure, we want to know more about it. Are the leasing arrangements to be similar to those the State entered into for the purchase of the State ship *Kimberley*? I trust that the Minister will answer my queries. If the leasing arrangement is to be different from the arrangement entered into for the purchase of the *Kimberley*, we want to know what the differences will be.

We want to know more about the type of equipment to be purchased under these leasing arrangements, and we want to know who will be responsible for the maintenance of that equipment.

Mr B. T. Burke: W. W. Mitchell.

Mr McIVER: As members are no doubt aware, the Government has engaged a firm of consultants from the United Kingdom—Transmark—to undertake a survey of the Midland workshops. No doubt this survey is an endeavour to cut down on the number of employees at the workshops at present. It amazes me that when such a study is undertaken, it always begins at the bottom and not at the top. If anything needs to be looked at, it is the management committee of Westrail. There seems to be an army of top-level employees drawing very large salaries at Westrail, and we do not know

what benefit Westrail obtains from them. Certainly we would like to know this.

It is only natural that employees become a little apprehensive when such a survey is undertaken. The employees at Westrail are most concerned about their future employment. So the Opposition wants to know who will maintain and service the equipment that will be leased.

We know that even though the line buses cost \$130 000 each, the Government will not own them, even after 10 years. Will the same situation apply to the railcars and apparatus to be leased under this legislation? In my view it will be a waste of money to pay to lease this equipment and yet never own it. That point should be well and truly clarified.

This Bill is only small, but it could have far-reaching effects. The main concern of the Opposition is in respect of the meaning of the leasing arrangements. They are ambiguous, and the Minister has not told us much.

With those remarks, I indicate again that the Opposition agrees with the Bill in principle, and trusts that the queries raised will be explained to its satisfaction. I support the measure.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [4.12 p.m.]: I am pleased to hear from the member for Avon that the Opposition supports the measure. It refers to a power which Governments thought they had in the past, and simply ensures beyond doubt that Westrail has the authority to enter into an arrangement to acquire equipment by leasing. The member for Avon has indicated his support for that. I do not think many people would object to the fact that we are embarking upon the acquisition of 10 new railcars. The Bill allows also for the purchase of other equipment.

Personally, I would prefer that Commonwealth funds for our urban programme were increased so that further purchases could be made from grants and fewer purchases made under this sort of funding. That is a matter we will pursue. I trust that when the Commonwealth is able to increase its allocations we will obtain additional funds for this area and, therefore, will not be required to use leasing to secure a programme such as this, which is worth \$54 million over five years. However, this is one way of ensuring progress. I have not heard anyone criticise the Government for embarking upon a comprehensive urban transport programme which will take us from the past into the future; nor have I heard any criticism of the Government's attempts to improve facilities for transport users.

I will give the member for Avon a brief indication of the leasing arrangements. Obviously they are not yet finalised, and they include a great deal of detail which I am prepared to acquaint him with at another time. Currently, the offers received following the calling of tenders are being evaluated, and it is expected a firm order will be placed in December of this year. I am very anxious—as the member for Avon would be—that the order be placed as soon as is practicable.

Acquisition under a leverage leasing arrangement could follow one of a number of options. Firstly, the financier could contract direct with the suppliers for manufacture and supply; secondly, Westrail could contract with the supplier and at a later date, before completion, the financier could take over the contract from Westrail; thirdly, Westrail could contract with the supplier, take delivery of the rolling stock, and then immediately sell it to the financier. In each case Westrail would agree to lease the rolling stock from the financier. It is not possible to predict what will be the final option because tenders for financiers to take up a leasing proposition cannot be called until the cash flows relating to the construction of the railcars, by the yet to be determined contractor, are known. Similarly, the terms of the leverage lease cannot be predicted.

Those are the options open to us, and it is hoped finality will be reached in December.

The member for Avon mentioned certain aspects of the linc buses. He misconstrued the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday; they related to operations and not to finance. The point is—and when he hears this I am sure he will realise I was not resisting simply for the sake of resisting—the Royal Show is in progress; we have had a football grand final and the school holidays; and the MTT has a responsibility to monitor and analyse user figures. The MTT has an obligation also to acquaint me of the results of its monitoring. I want to know just how the system is working in a normal situation. Therefore, as we have had abnormal circumstances in recent times, it is reasonable that the report should be ready in November.

The member also mentioned the matter of maintenance, and referred to the fact that Transmark is carrying out research at the Midland workshops. I have been given to understand that the mechanical side of Westrail's operation is the only area that has not been fully researched. Recommendations were made by Westrail, and the Government accepted them, that we should consider what could be done in

respect of the efficiency of the Midland workshops.

It was recommended that we carry out research to determine what equipment is necessary to enable the workshops to operate more efficiently. I have visited the workshops and spoken to a number of people. I found they are most keen that this research be carried out. I do not know what extra capital would be needed in respect of equipment, but I have been given to understand that the turnaround of maintenance work has become longer and longer, and this is generally believed to be related to the fact that some of the equipment may be outdated.

Mr Skidmore: Come on! It is antiquated.

Mr RUSHTON: I am not saying that some equipment is not outdated. I accept there is a great pride in the work that has been carried out at the Midland workshops. It is generally believed a tremendous amount of skill has been built up over the years. The Government is committed to carry out research in this area. It was recommended that we consult people who are recognised as world leaders in this area.

Mr McIver: From what you have said, I gather the final financial arrangements have not yet been determined.

Mr RUSHTON: That is right.

In respect of Midland, it is our belief that great benefit will be obtained by carrying out research into the adequacy of equipment and methods. It is hoped we will receive a report on this in the not-too-distant future.

I thank the member for Avon for his remarks.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Rushton (Minister for Transport), and transmitted to the Council.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

**APPROPRIATION BILL
(CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)**

Second Reading: Budget Debate

Debate resumed from the 2nd October.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [4.47 p.m.]: As I address myself to the third of the Government's Budgets that have been presented in the short time I have been here, I would like to allude to the situation that occurred when Parliament rose late yesterday evening. I for one must say I was disappointed—possibly even disgusted—with the performance that was put on by certain people who were in the gallery. Perhaps one can understand the frustration felt by people who are not involved in the law-making process; but nevertheless I thought that incident was a most shameful one. I am sorry it took place.

One could link it in one's mind with an incident that happened a day or two ago when the Prime Minister was showered with rotten tomatoes and soup whilst he was in Tasmania. Again, that incident is not one that I or any one on this side of the House would countenance. Australian politics would be far better off without them.

On the other hand, equally shameful were the actions of both the Premier and the Prime Minister when those things occurred. As soon as the Prime Minister was showered by soup thrown by members of the unemployed workers' union or whatever it is called in Tasmania, he ascribed that action to members of the Australian Labor Party. I am told that this morning the Premier ascribed last night's incident in this Chamber to members of the Australian Labor Party.

At the same time as I say that both those incidents were shameful and should not have happened, I think one must deplore the actions of those who will stoop to using incidents such as those for political purposes. I express my disappointment with the Prime Minister for attempting to assert that the ALP was behind the incident in which he was involved. At the same time, I say to the Premier—I say right to his face—that I express my extreme disappointment in him for suggesting—without any personal reason or knowledge whatsoever—that members of the Australian Labor Party were involved in last night's incident.

I looked around at those who were involved and I recognised a face or two, neither of whom was from the Australian Labor Party. The only political person I could recognise was a former candidate for preselection with the Liberal Party. He was the only person in the gallery to whom I could ascribe a political label. The Premier owes an apology to the Australian Labor Party.

Sir Charles Court: The member should get a transcript of what I said before he starts blowing off his mouth. If he is dissociating himself and saying he is not supporting them, I am glad. My understanding is that they were here in direct support of the attitude adopted by the member for Morley.

Mr PEARCE: That is exactly the point being made. The Premier has to realise there are many people in this State who are opposed to his actions but who are not members of the Australian Labor Party. Such people are opposed to the Premier for a whole range of reasons. It will often be the case when the Australian Labor Party moves in opposition to something that it finds itself in agreement with the attitude of many other groups in the community who are not members of our party. On other occasions these groups might dissociate themselves from us with respect to other matters.

I do not countenance any of the actions which took place last night; but just as I am disgusted with those people so am I disgusted equally with the Premier in trying to secure political points.

Mr Tonkin: Telling untruths.

Sir Charles Court: Weren't they here in support of your views?

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr Davies: They were against the Government.

Sir Charles Court: They were in support of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: The Premier has just proven what I said; he has not added any dignity to the proceedings. The Premier's comments of which I have spoken do not add dignity to this place and again, now, he has done nothing for the dignity of the House.

Mr B. T. Burke: They were free to come here.

Mr Davies: Who was the ex-Liberal leading them?

Sir Charles Court: We don't know him.

The SPEAKER: Order! Would the member please attempt to resume his speech?

Mr PEARCE: I am finding it very hard to get a word in. I believe I have made that point sufficiently clear. One imagines that, as demonstrations against the Government increase, this sort of tactic will be followed more frequently in the future. I believe that this sort of action on the part of the Government is par for the course. It is a disgusting practice and I hope the Premier

will have sufficient sense of his own dignity to desist from it in future.

Mr Rushton interjected.

Mr PEARCE: There are a couple of matters I wish to mention. The most important one concerns the Minister for Transport, because it involves his electorate, so perhaps he will listen with more attention.

During the course of the last Budget debate, and even before that, I raised in Parliament questions relating to the Armadale subregional centre plan which suggested that the whole of the existing centre of Armadale—the townsite—which has been there for many years and all of which falls within the electorate of Dale, should be rezoned for potential commercial development between now and the year 2000.

Last year I made the point in Parliament that, by creating a degree of uncertainty, because the plan had at that stage not been adopted—and in fact it still has not been—

Mr Rushton: It is in the hands of the town council.

Mr PEARCE: It is clear that the Armadale Town Council has a role to play.

Mr Rushton: It is the major part.

Mr PEARCE: I am very critical of the attitude of the council, as the Minister knows. However, the point I made last year was that the uncertainty concerning the district of Armadale placed in jeopardy the 400 or more houses in the area which was likely to be rezoned.

I waited for action to be taken in this matter, and on the Sunday before last it happened. A speculator who, I can inform the House, was in fact Coles K-Mart moved into the area using the salesmen from a Gosnells real estate firm. During the course of an afternoon six of the salesmen from this firm whipped through 40 of the houses in the area proposed for the rezoning and attempted to get the owners of these houses to sign options. Most of the owners are old people who were caught cold by salesmen talking in terms of an option on their houses which could be exercised at any time up to the 30th June 1980, at a price to be fixed there and then on the doorstep. Some people signed the options. They were given \$200 for an option. These options had an automatic extension from the 30th June, 1980, through to the 30th December of the same year on further payment of \$300; but for \$200 the people were being asked to set a price on their houses and sign the option there and then.

I spoke to some of the people concerned, although none of them lived in my electorate. I do

not know why they did not go to the Minister for Transport; possibly some of them did. Many of them were very confused about what they were being offered. They thought they were being given a firm offer for their houses and the company concerned was committing itself to the purchases.

In the confusion and the actions which followed in subsequent weeks as salesmen have gone back frequently to these people—in some cases up to six times—to get an option signed, many people, as a result of the confusion and uncertainty and in the sure knowledge that many of their neighbours were signing the option forms, and being frightened of finding themselves living in the middle of a Coles car park, signed the option forms.

I should like to make two points about the matter. Although approximately 40 houses only were involved in this particular black-Sunday operation, that is one-tenth of the area which is up for possible rezoning under the Armadale subregional centre plan. Therefore, the whole of Armadale in the area designated for the Armadale subregional centre is now open to speculators. Any person who can see an advantage in getting a large tract of land which will be useful for commercial operations can move in and sign up an option at residential rates. If he has a financial backer, he can hang on to that area for a year or two and make a huge profit when it changes from residential to commercial zoning.

If they cannot get a rezoning for the area in the year or so that the options run all they need to do is to let the options lapse and, for a small amount of money—a few thousand dollars—they can escape and leave the householders to carry the burden of what has happened in this particular area.

This situation has come about because of the uncertainties surrounding the Armadale subregional plan and the fact that it has now been 15 months since it was first introduced and no firm decisions have been made.

Mr Rushton: The council has made a decision. It has made a decision to make it optional. That is what I understand from the council. It has decided to make the future development optional to landowners and the zoning is in their hands.

Mr PEARCE: I understand that. I am getting stuck into the Armadale Town Council as much as anybody else.

Mr Rushton: That is where the decision lies. Would you have the council zone it or would you allow the people to stay on there?

Mr PEARCE: The Minister is sufficiently *au fait* with the situation to be aware that the

Metropolitan Region Planning Authority played a big part in producing the original report. The Armadale Town Council feels, in some sense, powerless to make changes to the plan, particularly with regard to road placement in relation to the MRPA.

Mr Rushton: Zoning is in their hands.

Mr PEARCE: I know zoning is in the hands of the council, but the decision as to where the roads should go is not necessarily.

Mr B. T. Burke: He was the Minister when it was being worked on.

Mr PEARCE: He was the Minister at the time and there were some rather shifty dealings.

Mr Rushton: You should not talk about shifty dealings. This comes back to the pressure exerted by the Labor Party at the last election for a plan to be prepared. The Labor Party really put the pressure on to have the report prepared.

Mr PEARCE: If we want to go into the history of the matter, the plan prepared in terms of developing a subregional centre would have created no problems except that the decision was made to centre the development where the houses exist now.

Mr Rushton: It is optional.

Mr PEARCE: It is not optional, because the terms of reference the Minister sent to the MRPA and the planning people, Parry and Rosenthal, stated that a plan should be presented for that area.

Mr Rushton: What you are wrong about is—

Mr PEARCE: I am not wrong about it. I have read these documents in Parliament before and I do not intend to do so again.

Mr Rushton: The group which was the steering committee for the area made a determination.

Mr PEARCE: So the terms of reference which went to the planners were as I have set out.

Mr Rushton: That is not correct. You said I did it and I did not.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister who has just interjected was the Minister who passed on the terms of reference. Therefore, he has some degree of ministerial responsibility for the matter. He can say he was given lousy advice; but if he is given lousy advice, it is his responsibility to ignore it.

The serious and significant point I am making is that anybody can move into this area of Armadale which is up for possible rezoning and make a fortune out of it to the great detriment of the area. This has resulted from the uncertainties which have been created.

I should like to make one other point about this plan and it refers to the fact that the area which has been bought up for the proposed K-Mart development and on which the options have been taken, is suggested for zoning at present for park land or carparking areas in the actual plan drawn up for central Armadale; that is to say, the thrust of where the commercial development in Armadale should go in accordance with the plan is not in that particular area. Therefore, if Coles is allowed to establish a large supermarket in that particular area, because the Armadale Town Council agrees to a rezoning, or because that situation is forced on it by a large company such as Coles which wants to have such a development and which I am sure the town council would favour, this will in fact bias the whole development of Armadale simply because the supermarket is established in that area.

Mr Rushton: They have that independent decision to make.

Mr PEARCE: As soon as the supermarket is built at that point, one might as well tear up the plan—

Mr Rushton: It is a council decision.

Mr PEARCE: —because the development which will take place after that will be totally biased and distorted. If that happens, what was the point of having a plan in the first place? The general movement of commercial development in the area is against the sort of planning principles raised in this report initially. Obviously people who build large shopping centres and car parks need flat areas of land. They will not build on the side of a hill which is where most of the Armadale regional plan lies.

Nevertheless, this kind of speculation has been possible only because the plan has made it very likely that that area will be up for rezoning; and the reason for that is the Minister and his department decided, on whatever advice was given, it had to be the old centre of Armadale which was developed, and no other part.

Mr Rushton: What you are getting away from is the fact that a big majority of the people in the area have suggested that the old Armadale area be considered as part of the regional centre. As we are aware, there are other opinions, but if you put it to the vote as to where people think the regional centre should be, it is clear they would say it should be in the commercial centre of Armadale.

Mr PEARCE: They were the people living in the Minister's electorate. It is not my electorate. There were 400 people concerned. I attended meetings and noted the Minister was not there.

Mr Rushton: I have been to meetings you have not attended.

Mr PEARCE: I have attended meetings with 300 people from that area who have been protesting, and not one of those people has supported the Minister's actions.

Mr Rushton: You are misstating again. They were not my actions, but the council's.

Mr PEARCE: I am sorry, but the Minister cannot say that the council alone is responsible.

Mr Rushton: The council has the responsibility for zoning. It has made the decision. It was a voluntary action and it is dependent on the people coming forward with proposals. So do not distort the situation.

Mr PEARCE: That is a partial statement and partial statements usually are a distortion of what really is happening.

My major concern is not in fact to put a rocket under the former Minister for Local Government. My concern is for the other 360 householders who have not yet found a real estate salesman knocking on their doors on a Sunday afternoon. People were given an offer to sign at their door. The offer was to sign for \$200 and at the same time two of the real estate salesman's colleagues were knocking on each neighbour's door. They were asked to sign an option then and there for a price on the house and they could be held to that price until the end of next year.

That happened two weeks ago in one section of Armadale and it can happen again in the future in other areas if any large commercial body wants to move some of its retail business into a certain area. A firm might want to buy up large areas now and that will create tremendous uncertainty which will be very bad for at least the short-term development of that area. The last thing we want in a place like that is uncertainty; but that is what has occurred.

There has been a logical development from what I stated in this Chamber 15 months ago. I only hope the damage done is repairable.

Mr Rushton: You will always have this sort of thing happening in this industry. There has been so much made of this in that area.

Mr PEARCE: I am well aware of that.

Mr Rushton: There has been so much happening but you are misleading the people in that area regarding the true position. You are trying to distort the situation so that people are unaware of the true position.

Mr PEARCE: The people are aware of what is going on very largely because of my own actions.

Mr Rushton: This was happening long before you were born.

Mr PEARCE: I found out about this on the Sunday afternoon only hours after it had occurred. I myself organised the Willesee programme to come out and talk to the people involved. I alerted the Press to what was happening when I spoke to them on the Monday morning. These were the people in the Minister's area. It was really the Minister's issue. Of course some people signed and were not aware of the consequences and some people signed because it was their own choice. However, I played a very considerable part in warning people of their rights to make sure that no injustice was done. Generally speaking the Minister should have been taking this action because the people involved were from his electorate.

Mr Rushton: You were meddling and you did not need to do that. You are distorting the facts.

Mr PEARCE: I was only too happy to help the people concerned. I was doing what the Minister should have done.

Mr Rushton: It would have been far better if you had not meddled.

Mr PEARCE: Even those people who chose to sign will be up to \$25 000 better off. They will have this money from K-Mart because of my meddling. They will be grateful.

Two other matters have been raised by my constituents. The first is from a 13-year-old named Stuart Hobbs. He approached me three or four weeks ago with the suggestion that something more could be done about rubbish recycling in Western Australia. This young boy did not know that something similar to his suggestion was being done in South Australia. I add that this is something we should have been doing ourselves instead of having it pointed out to us by a 13-year-old. Stuart Hobbs of Station Street, Gosnells, came up with a plan that a deposit should be placed on cans which could be returnable if the cans were taken to a certain area to be cashed in.

Community groups and children are occasionally prevailed upon to go around and clean up these cans and it would be of some commercial incentive if they received a refund. I was in South Australia recently and was told that the same sort of scheme operated there.

It could be a simple operation for, say, a Boy Scout troop to clean up a roadside and at the same time raise several hundred dollars for their group. A deposit of 5c or so on a can could be set as an incentive to return it. I commend Stuart Hobbs for his idea and I will be writing to the

Minister for Consumer Affairs to ask him to take a look at this matter. This is a system that works well in one other State and could be easily implemented here. It is a matter we should have taken up before.

Another interesting idea which was suggested to me by one of my constituents, Mrs Brenda Chapman of Langford, had to do with the very serious problem people face when they are in the process of breaking up a marriage. There is usually a degree of trauma and sometimes even violence in the marital arrangement. Mrs Chapman's suggestion is that one of the difficulties is that there is nowhere that couples or families can go for advice on how to deal with the difficulties in a separating situation.

Basically the suggestion was that there ought to be some sort of agency to which people can turn in these situations, especially for someone to mediate for the parties concerned and try to bring about some sort of reconciliation or to advise on a course of action.

There are already certain agencies to deal with these problems; they are charitable organisations or the Marriage Guidance Council. However, there was a suggestion that some legal force could be given to the operation of an agency of this nature. I will not go into this submission in any great detail. It was really in the form of a petition signed by some 90 to 100 people but it was not in the form which is required for presentation here. However I may be able to submit it so that any interested members may have the opportunity to peruse it.

With respect to my Budget contribution I have spent some time in the last few days deciding whether I should conform with the traditions that seem to apply in this place with the Opposition generally voting for a Budget. Normally, of course, when one votes one accepts that the Government which presents the Budget to the House is entitled to implement its programme for the following year. It is entitled to present it because of the fact that it has a mandate from the people. The Opposition may pass legislation but on the whole it does not overthrow the Government by opposing the Budget.

In my opinion the actions of the Government in this last year raise several questions, especially whether or not the Opposition ought to try to force the Government to an early poll. I must say I was inclined to vote against the Budget, especially when thinking of the situation which led to the 1974 Federal election. At that time the then Liberal Leader of the Opposition, now Sir Billy Snedden, felt he was quite entitled to vote

against the Government's Budget. We all know the consequences of that when some people used their power to force the Government to the poll. I suppose that if enough people voted against the Budget we would be forced to an election because it would be a vote of no confidence in this Government.

Nevertheless, much as I am tempted to do so to demonstrate my reaction to the activities of the Government, reluctantly I will conform to the principle, on convention that Oppositions do vote in favour of Government Budgets. The breaking of tradition could lead to much greater chaos in the long run. Although other Parliaments in this country seem to be prepared to create that chaos when they see the political winds blowing in their direction, at the present stage of my political career I am not prepared to do that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I direct that the papers referred to by the member for Gosnells be placed on the Table of the House for the information of members.

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [5.11 p.m.]: I rise to support the Appropriation Bill (Consolidated Revenue Fund) and I will make some comments on the provisions contained in the Budget.

Before I do so, in passing I would like to make some comments about the words used by the member for Gosnells when he commenced his speech. I think it is commendable that he should have risen to dissociate himself from some of the activities which took place and some of the words which came from the public gallery last night. However, I do not think his words, alone, will convince anyone of the fact that he or his colleagues on the other side of the House dissociate themselves from the sort of people who were involved in that performance last night.

One had only to look around the gallery last night to see the familiar faces which I know the member for Gosnells and his colleagues have addressed on many occasions, obviously as their allies. To try to convince members of this House, or the public generally, that they do not believe in that sort of activity or that they do not associate themselves with those types of people, rings rather hollow.

Mr Tonkin: I did not recognise one of those people, I would like to say, before you tell any lies.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin: I did not recognise one of those people.

Point of Order

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask the member for Morley to withdraw that remark.

Mr Tonkin: So he is allowed to tell lies about me but I am not permitted to challenge him. He knows very well I do not know any of those people.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Morley did use an unparliamentary expression which he explained in magnificent detail the other night. Therefore, I urge the member to withdraw the remark.

Mr TONKIN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I think this is obscene—that a person can get up and make accusations against me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. The member for Morley is aware he cannot qualify the withdrawal of remarks. I again request him to withdraw.

Mr TONKIN: I withdraw the remark.

Debate Resumed

Mr Jamieson: How about the member for Mundaring withdrawing his remarks too, Mr Deputy Speaker? How about that?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If he had used similar words I would have asked him to withdraw them.

Mr Jamieson: He used bad enough words, and you know that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mundaring will continue.

Several members interjected.

Mr HERZFELD: We all know what members are referring to. I suggest that if the member for Morley is so upset the only conclusion I can draw is that the cap fits.

Mr Jamieson: You are dirty and vicious. You have always been dirty and vicious.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Mundaring to continue.

Mr HERZFELD: Obviously, I have touched a particularly raw nerve.

Mr Jamieson: You are dirty and vicious.

Several members interjected.

Mr Tonkin: Well, when you tell lies you do touch a raw nerve.

Mr Jamieson: He is dirty and vicious.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr O'Connor: The member for Mundaring certainly has touched the member for Morley on a raw nerve.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Mundaring to continue his remarks.

Mr Tonkin interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mundaring will continue his remarks, otherwise I will ask him to sit down.

Mr HERZFELD: With your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker, perhaps I can continue.

Mr Jamieson: You poor little fellow!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HERZFELD: It is extremely difficult to speak at this distance from the Chair and try to make myself heard when there is a constant barrage of interjections. The barrage of interjections constantly occurs every time I get up to speak.

Mr Jamieson: You opened up the reason for interjections.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin interjected.

Point of Order

Mr O'CONNOR: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, because of the continual interjections from the member for Morley I cannot hear the member for Mundaring and I have sympathy for him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I specifically ask the House to come to order. The member for Mundaring.

Debate Resumed

Mr HERZFELD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will try again.

The Budget which was introduced some two weeks ago has been welcomed generally by everyone, including the Opposition. It is an extremely good Budget. One can conclude from the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, who had no criticisms to make, that the Budget as presented has the stamp of approval of members opposite. That speaks wonders for the contents of the Budget.

Its main feature is that once again we have a Budget which, for the fifth successive year, is balanced. There has been no need to increase any taxes and, in fact, several concessions have been made.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about interest rates?

Mr HERZFELD: Some of the concessions are worth recording.

Mr B. T. Burke: Tell us about interest rates.

Mr HERZFELD: The first concession worthy of comment is the finalisation of the process of repealing death duties. That is a measure which has been welcomed by the people of Western Australia.

Mr B. T. Burke: That has nothing to do with interest rates.

Mr HERZFELD: It is as well to remind members in this House that, given an opportunity, the Opposition has given notice that it will reintroduce death duties. That threat will not be allowed to go unnoticed.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Opposition has given notice to reintroduce what?

Mr HERZFELD: There has been a further considerable increase in concessions in the payment of pay-roll tax which will be of benefit to small businesses in Western Australia.

Mr B. T. Burke: Very minor concessions.

Mr HERZFELD: I am sure the business people of Western Australia will disagree with the member for Balcatta, and they will indicate that disagreement at the next election.

Mr B. T. Burke: How do you know they will disagree? You are speaking out of the back of your head.

Mr HERZFELD: The people of Western Australia certainly will not be impressed by the Opposition.

Mr B. T. Burke: They are minor concessions. The Premier said he would like to do more.

Mr HERZFELD: The Premier said the people would welcome any decrease.

Mr B. T. Burke: I am glad you are now agreeing with me.

Mr HERZFELD: I will continue, and point out that the Budget provides for the elimination of the gift rate of stamp duty. The Budget also foreshadows an increase in pensioner rebates, something which will be welcomed by those who will benefit from the 50 per cent rebate.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hear, hear! I agree with that.

Mr HERZFELD: The Budget also continues and strengthens the programmes which have been initiated by the Government during its term of office in a wide variety of areas, such as education, health, and so on.

Mr B. T. Burke: And unemployment!

Mr HERZFELD: I will come to that question in a moment. We have been given statistics by members opposite which do not give the correct picture.

Mr B. T. Burke: All your statistics add up to the fact that everybody has work, and it is not true.

Mr HERZFELD: All we got out of the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke was an attempt to make some sort of a case out of very sensible use of investments which the Treasurer had been able to put aside for use in creating employment. His attempts to make it appear something was wrong fell flat. The fact of the matter is some \$25.5 million which would not otherwise have been available was injected into the economy to provide very useful work for those who were unemployed. That in itself is a great achievement. The Treasurer, by way of interjection during the debate, said, "You can only spend money once." That is quite true.

Mr B. T. Burke: The criticism was that the Treasurer was not even spending it once.

Mr Jamieson: He does not do badly at spending it once and a half.

Mr B. T. Burke: To hear you talk, it is as though we are going better now than we have ever gone.

Mr HERZFELD: I will give some statistics to enable the honourable member to make up his own mind. The alternatives he suggests will only make the situation worse. This is the second year running that no alternatives have been provided by the Opposition.

Mr Jamieson: It would be interesting for you to turn up some of the debates in the past.

Mr HERZFELD: A few years ago I said the only way to relieve unemployment was to stimulate the private sector. I still believe that to be the case. According to the ALP it is not a question of stimulating the private sector; it is a question of providing more and more public jobs which temporarily take people off the unemployment market but soon put them back on it. We have only to look at 1974 when the rot started to see what the Opposition's Federal colleagues did.

Mr B. T. Burke: Your Premier has called for selective increases in Government expenditure. So if you want to take him to task, go ahead.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The interjections are too frequent and too lengthy.

Mr B. T. Burke: But fairly sensible.

Mr Wilson: It is helping his speech a lot.

Mr HERZFELD: Much has been said by the member for Fremantle and, only today, by the Leader of the Opposition about the unemployment situation. If we are using figures, it is as well to put them into perspective and in

their right context. I want to draw attention to figures which have been produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, comparing the performance in Western Australia with that of other States. It is far more important to do that than to try to make a value judgment on one State alone. We must realise that the economy of this State is part and parcel of a much wider national economy.

Mr B. T. Burke: You denied that when Whitlam was in government.

Mr HERZFELD: Therefore, it is only by comparing this State's performance with the performance of other States that we can really get some measure of the success of this Government.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is a false premise, so your argument is shot to start with.

Mr HERZFELD: I have some figures which I will seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* at the end of my speech. I believe they bear out my contention that by comparison the performance of this State has been much better than that of any other State of the Commonwealth. The figures compare civilian employment between March, 1974, when this Government came to power, and March, 1979—

Mr B. T. Burke: What about civilian unemployment?

Mr HERZFELD: —a five-year period. The hard figures of the numbers employed are not as significant as the figures showing the increase or decrease in civilian employment and the percentages they represent. During the period I mentioned, in New South Wales civilian employment dropped by 45 000 and in Victoria by 25 000.

Mr B. T. Burke: New South Wales had a net decrease in population in the same period.

Mr HERZFELD: I wonder why.

Mr B. T. Burke interjected.

Mr HERZFELD: I will state why in a minute because it is very relevant.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Balcatta not to interject.

Mr HERZFELD: The member for Balcatta sounds very much like some of the people who were in the public gallery last night.

Mr B. T. Burke: He should be asked to withdraw it. He is a nasty little man.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member resume his seat. I have asked the member for Balcatta on a number of occasions, generally, and once, specifically, to cease interjecting. He will appreciate my position

is such that if he continues to interject I will have to use the processes of this House, which I would not want to do, of course. I ask him to cease interjecting. The member for Mundaring.

Mr HERZFELD: By comparison, over the same five-year period the number of civilian employees in Western Australia rose by 30 000. I repeat the earlier figures: a drop of 45 000 in New South Wales and 25 000 in Victoria. None of the other States shows a significant increase except Queensland, which had an increase of 22 000. That in itself speaks of a very good performance.

The member for Balcatta says we still have an unreasonable unemployment pool, and one wonders why when our performance has been so much better than that of the other States of Australia. The reasons are very simple and they appear in a set of statistics, produced by the ABS, which summarises interstate migration. The figures are extremely interesting. In the period from the beginning of 1974 to the end of the 1978 calendar year, New South Wales lost 57 000 of its population to other States and Victoria lost 41 000.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is why employment fell in New South Wales. People left the State.

Mr HERZFELD: I wonder where they went. Obviously they went to Western Australia, because Western Australia had an increase in population of 34 000. If the member for Balcatta and other members opposite spend any time talking to people in their electorates they will find a considerable number of them are people who came from the Eastern States seeking employment because they realised how much better the opportunities were here. There it is. At the present time this State has in the order of 36 000 or 37 000 people unemployed, and approximately that number of people have migrated to this State from other States in the last five years.

Mr Wilson: You have mentioned only one other State. What about the others?

Mr HERZFELD: I will seek leave to have the figures incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr Wilson: What a weak argument! Why don't you give the full story? You are being selective.

Mr HERZFELD: As I mentioned earlier, the sort of employment we need and which this Government is encouraging is real jobs which have some substance and continuity, not jobs which are created only to reduce the unemployment pool artificially.

Mr Wilson: Unemployed people do not make that distinction.

Mr HERZFELD: It is interesting to note a recent survey by the Federal Department of Industry and Commerce into major projects that are either firmly committed or at the stage of final feasibility studies. The survey was carried out in June of this year, and it showed that projects falling into this category amounted to a total value in excess of \$12 billion. It is of interest to note that half of the mining projects are in Western Australia; that is, projects to the value of \$4 billion.

In regard to the manufacturing sector, only one State has the potential for more investment than Western Australia, and that is New South Wales. By comparison the potential is \$1.2 billion for New South Wales and \$1.1 billion for Western Australia. It was pointed out also that Western Australia and Queensland together account for some 75 per cent of the expected mining investment, Western Australia's share being more than double that of Queensland.

We should be talking about the encouragement of resource projects like these, and not the artificial Government-type jobs—the sham jobs I call them—that the Opposition would like us to believe will solve the unemployment problem in this State.

Mr B. T. Burke: Name one of those types of projects the Labor Party suggested.

Mr HERZFELD: It is only reasonable that we should look at what would happen if we had a Labor Government in power, a Labor Government faced with the responsibility of encouraging resource-type projects. It is a fact, of course, that the Australian Labor Party is hamstrung by its own very fundamental socialist philosophy and principles. It also has trouble with its colleagues in the left-wing dominated Trades and Labor Council and the Australian Council of Trade Unions, organisations which subscribe to the ostrich-type policy of objecting to the mining of uranium; organisations which support policies that will bring the country to a standstill.

Right at the present time we see these certain people are prepared to bring this State to a halt in support of persons convicted of unlawful acts.

Mr B. T. Burke: Why is Mr Fraser meeting about that? He is worried about it.

Mr HERZFELD: The industries in the north of our State have created many jobs for Western Australians and others, and they will continue to create jobs if they are given half a chance to do so. In power the ALP's socialist policies would again drive private enterprise away from Western Australia. There is no doubt about that.

Mr B. T. Burke: Not much is coming now.

Mr HERZFELD: Its commitment to State interference is highlighted by its own platform, part of which contends—

The orderly and rational employment of W.A. mineral resources can only be effectively assured when these resources are controlled and owned by the State.

Can members imagine how many people would even think of investing in Western Australia if there were any chance of members opposite forming the Government?

Mr B. T. Burke: What are you going to do about interest rates?

Mr HERZFELD: The ALP is committed to State ownership and centralised control. This is clearly spelt out in its platform under the heading of "Economic development" where it says—

The State Government should exercise a greater degree of control over the development of Western Australia, to strengthen the competitive viability of existing industry rather than leaving all major industrial development to private (largely foreign) investment, and in order to develop appropriate industry the Government should set up new enterprises—

Again I state that the ALP is committed to nationalisation and socialisation.

Mr Jamieson: There is one thing we would never do, and that is socialise you.

Mr HERZFELD: Going through the Labor Party's policy document, this philosophy is spelt out time and time again.

Mr Wilson: That document seems to fascinate you.

Mr HERZFELD: No Government of that calibre could ever hope to do anything but drive away industry and enterprise from this State. The people of Western Australia will be confronted with a choice in the not-too-distant future, and if I read their minds correctly, once again the ALP—

Mr Wilson: Have you read the opinion polls?

Mr HERZFELD: —will be relegated to the Opposition benches, as it was recently in South Australia.

Mr B. T. Burke: Is that what you thought when you joined the Labor Party?

Mr Jamieson: Proselytes are always the same!

Mr HERZFELD: I would not be too worried about what the member opposite thinks.

Mr B. T. Burke: When you joined the Labor Party—

Mr HERZFELD: I think the Labor Party has real problems ahead of it. It could not even find anyone to stand for the Mundaring electorate in the first place, and the second time around the only choice was a person totally opposed to its policies.

Mr Jamieson: That is wrong you know.

Mr Young: What about all the fancy footwork behind closed doors?

Mr Jamieson: I am talking about his first remark. There was one person nominated, but he withdrew afterwards.

Mr B. T. Burke: Tell us a bit about when you joined the Labor Party. Tell us about that. It had a worse policy from your point of view when you joined it.

Mr HERZFELD: The member for Balcatta would know nothing about it.

Mr B. T. Burke: You contributed money to the Labor Party at a time when nationalisation was in the first paragraph of its policy.

Mr HERZFELD: How wrong can anyone be?

Mr Jamieson: He is not very wrong.

Mr B. T. Burke: Are you saying you did not join the Labor Party? Is that what you are saying?

Mr HERZFELD: Mr Speaker—

Mr B. T. Burke: This is incredible!

Mr HERZFELD: —I now turn to another matter because time moves on.

Mr B. T. Burke: You don't need sound reinforcement, you need spine reinforcement.

Mr Jamieson: He always was a yellow cur.

Mr HERZFELD: I am sure the House will be more interested in the matter I want to refer to now. Over the years I have been a member of this place the Opposition has tried constantly to discredit the Government about the increase in the cost of services provided by public utilities. The Opposition has harped on this matter, trying to make some capital out of it. I notice that this year the Leader of the Opposition has not fallen into that trap; he realises no case can be made.

When we look at what has happened in regard to the cost of services over the last decade, we realise that the people of Western Australia have been served very well by these utilities. Despite the fact that there have been increases in charges, if one compares the increases with the increase in wages generally the picture is quite different. I can illustrate this with a simple calculation.

In 1969—10 years ago—the consumer who used 2 000 units of electricity per quarter paid

\$38 for that service. For the same amount of electricity at today's rate he would pay \$99.80. That seems to be quite an increase, but if we relate it to the increase in the average earnings or even the increase in the average minimum weekly earnings over that period, the proportion of a person's pay packet needed to buy that amount of electricity has been reduced 17½ per cent over the 10-year period. In other words in real terms the price of that commodity has decreased by 17.5 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: Will you do that sum for the period your Government has been in office, and see what is true in that case?

Mr HERZFELD: Indeed, I have done that; but I will leave it to the member for Balcatta to make the calculations for himself.

Mr B. T. Burke: Carry on, son; tell us all about it.

Mr Wilson: In other words, you have been selective.

Mr HERZFELD: I was not selective at all; I carried out the same exercise in respect of water, sewerage, and drainage; and in each case the result is the same.

Mr B. T. Burke: For the last six years?

Mr HERZFELD: It does not matter what period one uses.

Mr Wilson: You just happened to pick the one that suited you.

Mr HERZFELD: If one does what I have done and analyses the costs, one finds they show a remarkable record of performance for which a great deal of credit should be given to—

Mr B. T. Burke: The Tonkin Government.

Mr HERZFELD: —those who are charged with the responsibility for such matters. The same can be said about costs associated with land ownership.

Mr B. T. Burke: Such as interest rates.

Mr HERZFELD: It is necessary to remind the House that it was the present Government which reduced land tax—

Mr B. T. Burke: But not interest rates.

Mr HERZFELD: —so that no landowners other than those holding five acres or more would need to pay land tax. Therefore, the Government has achieved a considerable reduction in the overall cost of owning and living on land.

Mr B. T. Burke: As long as you don't want to live in a house on your land.

Mr Pearce: If you are a speculator you are all right.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about interest rates? You have avoided them like the plague.

Mr HERZFELD: What about interest rates?

Mr B. T. Burke: Tell us your performance in respect of interest rates.

Mr HERZFELD: What has my performance to do with it?

Mr B. T. Burke: Don't be silly.

Mr HERZFELD: Why does not the member for Balcatta ask someone to teach him something about that matter, instead of making inane interjections?

I have already mentioned that the employment record of this Government is particularly good, despite the fact that many people are still unable to obtain employment.

Mr Wilson: How many?

Mr HERZFELD: The situation will not improve until such time as encouragement is given to industry to risk capital investment in this State.

Mr B. T. Burke: Demand should be stimulated.

Mr Wilson: Why haven't you been doing that for six years?

Mr Jamieson: When was the last time unemployment declined in this State?

Mr HERZFELD: Last month.

Mr Jamieson: I am talking about a decline over a period, and not an occasional thing.

Mr HERZFELD: Members opposite have done nothing to contribute to the alleviation of the situation.

Mr Jamieson: Look at the history of the Tonkin Government.

Mr Grewar: It was a blueprint for disaster.

Mr B. T. Burke: If you want to talk sense, tell us how to stimulate demand.

Mr O'Connor: Some industry would help a lot.

Mr B. T. Burke: If you stimulate demand, it will attract industry.

Mr HERZFELD: I have indicated my support for the measures adopted by the Government in respect of its fiscal policies. I pay tribute to the Treasurer for providing an imaginative—

Mr Wilson: Imaginary.

Mr HERZFELD: —Budget at a time when circumstances beyond his control have dictated severe restraint.

Mr B. T. Burke: I thought nothing was beyond his control.

Mr HERZFELD: I am sure the people of Western Australia recognise that and will indicate their support for the Government and their rejection of the policies of the Opposition when the appropriate time comes.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Skidmore.

House adjourned at 5.45 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

RAPE CASES

Number

1684. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) How many cases of—
 - (a) rape;
 - (b) attempted rape;
 - (c) other sex related offences,
 were reported to police in the latest year for which statistics are available?
- (2) Would he also give the same statistics for each of the preceding ten years?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr O'NEIL) replied:

	(a)	(b)	(c)
(1) 1.7.78 to 30.6.69	86	8	727
(2) 1968-69	92	6	703
1969-70	89	4	730
1970-71	71	Not recorded	870
1971-72	94	Not recorded	830
1972-73	92	Not recorded	874
1973-74	87	Not recorded	761
1974-75	83	Not recorded	773
1975-76	63	Not recorded	859
1976-77	9	Not recorded	671
1977-78	5	Not recorded	725

WIRRINA DRIVE-IN CINEMA

Relocation

1685. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Has she received an appeal against the decision by the Council of the Shire of Bayswater not to allow the Wirrina drive-in cinema to be relocated in Beechboro Road, Morley?
- (2) Is it a fact that there is a great deal of concern amongst residents of the area as to the noise and traffic nuisance such a development would occasion in a quiet residential area?
- (3) When does she expect to make a decision?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Correspondence to this effect has been received in my office.
- (3) No appeal has been received.

LAND

Swan Shire: Community Facilities

1686. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Has a sum of \$46 000 from the Urban Land Council been set aside for the development of community facilities by the Shire of Swan?
- (2) (a) Is it a fact that this amount needs to be approved for distribution by her; and
(b) if so, that she has not granted such approval?
- (3) If so, what is the reason for the delay?
- (4) When will this approval be given?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) The Urban Lands Council has developed land in two subdivisions in the Shire of Swan, both of which are subject to town planning schemes—town planning schemes No. 7 and No. 2A. As the schemes are the administrative responsibility of the Shire of Swan, I would suggest that the member address this question to that shire.
- (2) to (4) No.

DROUGHT

Shire Areas

1687. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Which shire areas, whole or part, have been drought declared in the past 25 years?
- (2) On how many occasions in this period has each of these shire areas been drought declared?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr OLD) replied:

The information requested by the honourable member on the shires which have been declared drought affected and the years in which they were declared is as follows—

Albany 1969, 1970
 Beverley 1969
 Brookton 1969
 Broomehill 1969
 Bruce Rock 1969, 1977
 Carnamah 1969, 1976, 1977, 1979
 Chapman Valley 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978
 Coorow 1969, 1976, 1977
 Corrigin 1969, 1977
 Cranbrook 1969
 Cunderdin 1969
 Dalwallinu 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979
 Dandaragan 1969
 Dowerin 1969, 1977
 Dumbleyung 1969
 Dundas 1969, 1977
 Esperance 1969, 1970, 1977
 Gingin 1969
 Gnowangerup 1969, 1970
 Goomalling 1969
 Greenough 1976, 1977, 1978
 Irwin 1976
 Katanning 1969
 Kellerberrin 1969, 1976, 1977
 Kondinin 1969, 1977
 Koorda 1969, 1976, 1977, 1979
 Kulin 1969, 1977
 Lake Grace 1969
 Merredin 1969, 1976, 1977
 Mingenew 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979
 Moora 1969, 1977
 Mt. Marshall 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979
 Morawa 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979
 Mukinbudin 1969, 1976, 1977, 1979
 Mullewa 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979
 Narembeen 1969, 1976, 1977
 Narrogin 1969
 Northam 1969
 Northampton 1969, 1976, 1977
 Nungarin 1969, 1976, 1977
 Nyabing-Pingerup 1969

Perenjori 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979
 Pingelly 1969
 Plantagenet 1969
 Quairading 1969, 1977
 Ravensthorpe 1969, 1970
 Tambellup 1969
 Tammin 1969
 Three Springs 1969, 1976, 1977, 1979
 Toodyay 1969
 Trayning 1969, 1976, 1977
 Victoria Plains 1969
 Wagin 1969
 Westonia 1969, 1976, 1977
 Wickpin 1969
 Wongan-Ballidu 1969, 1976, 1977, 1979
 Woodanilling 1969
 Wyalkatchem 1969, 1976, 1977
 Yalgoo 1976, 1979
 Yilgarn 1969, 1976, 1977, 1978
 York 1969.

ANIMALS

Deer and Fox Farming

1688. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Under what security regulations including details of fences and enclosures, will—

- (a) deer farming;
- (b) fox farming,

be allowed in Western Australia?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr OLD) replied:

- (a) Security conditions for the farming of deer will be considered at the meeting of the Agriculture Protection Board scheduled for the 23rd October, 1979.
- (b) The question of fox farming is at present being reconsidered by the board.

DROUGHT

Debt Moratorium

1689. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Premier:

- (1) As the drought situation is becoming increasingly worse in the north and north-eastern wheatbelt, will the Government give consideration to declaring a moratorium on all debts in a drought declared area until such time as the drought breaks?
- (2) Will the Government extend a moratorium in the drought declared areas to include machinery dealers, agents and small business houses?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) As the member for Mt. Marshall is aware, the Government has taken steps to re-structure and defer debts arising from past drought relief measures to ensure that farmers who have experienced several years of drought are in a position to take advantage of further assistance in the current financial year without incurring an insupportable burden of debt. Moreover, the Government is continuing to watch the position of farmers in the drought areas closely as it is our intention to ensure that no-one is forced off their farms for lack of realistic assistance measures.

Debts owing to the private sector are a different matter as it is very doubtful whether this Parliament has the power to intervene in private contracts even if it were considered ethical for us to do so.

I would be surprised if the member is not aware of the reasons that there is a great reluctance on the part of most farmers to advocate total moratorium on all debts, as he now proposes.

Moreover, the private banks and stock firms are, I understand, taking a sympathetic and realistic attitude to farmers' problems and I am confident they will come to reasonable arrangements in cases of real need.

DROUGHT

Pay-roll Tax

1690. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Premier:

On application and proof a country business affected by drought can obtain a refund of payroll tax contributions:

will the Government consider making provisions whereby a country business may waive its payments of the tax equal to the amount that a refund will provide?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

There is no provision in the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act which enables the Government to waive payment of the tax by any business and it would not be appropriate to amend the Act to meet special and transitory situations such as a drought.

Consequently in all appropriate cases the practice is followed of requiring payment of a Pay-roll Tax as provided in the Act and making a refund from funds appropriated by Parliament for the purpose.

If the member knows of any hardship caused by the present practice, I would appreciate specific cases because I cannot recall any such cases being referred to me.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Australian Conservation Foundation and Western Australian Environment Centre

1691. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is it a fact that in the Federal Budget provision was made for grants—
 - (a) of \$100 000 to the Australian Conservation Foundation; and
 - (b) \$13 300 to the Western Australian environment centre?
- (2) Do either of these bodies work in conjunction with or provide any assistance to the State Department of Conservation and Environment or the Environmental Protection Authority?
- (3) Does his department consider that the grants made by the Commonwealth Government will further the cause of proper and balanced environmental protection in Western Australia?

- (4) Does his department further consider that either of the bodies mentioned provides a balanced and reasonable approach to environmental questions in Western Australia?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Any grants made by the Federal Government to conservation bodies are made directly and without reference to the State Government; however, I notice from the newspaper report that such grants have been made. I would prefer notice of this.

Mr Skidmore: Have a look at the Commonwealth record.

Mr O'CONNOR: As I say, I would prefer notice, because it is important.

- (2) Neither of the two bodies mentioned work in conjunction with the State's department, although both regularly make submissions on matters which are of public interest and environmental review and management programmes which are assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority.
- (3) and (4) The grants are made by the Federal Government and I do not consider it is the prerogative of my department to comment.

FUEL: OIL

Shale: Deposits

1692. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Are there any known oil shale deposits in Western Australia?
- (2) If "Yes"—
- where are these deposits;
 - what are the estimated reserves;
 - have any studies been undertaken on possibility of extraction of this oil;
 - how would the cost of this oil compare with the price of crude from other geological structures?
- (3) (a) Is any exploration currently being carried out by the Government or private companies;
- (b) if "Yes" where and by whom?
- (4) Where in Australia are the large oil shale sediments referred to in the media recently?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2)(a) A deposit variously referred to as oil shale, carbonaceous shale and brown coal was encountered in bores drilled near Coolgardie between 1892 and 1900. It occurs in an ancient drainage channel and similar material is likely to occur elsewhere in the eastern goldfields area.
- (2) (b) to (d) Until the area has been adequately explored it is not possible to make reliable estimates of reserves or to undertake realistic studies on the feasibility of oil extraction and the costs that would be involved.
- (3) (a) and (b) No, but applications have recently been received for six exploration permit areas made available under the Petroleum Act in the eastern goldfields region, and permits are expected to be awarded there in the near future.
- (4) In the Rundle area near Gladstone in Queensland.

ROADS

Roe Electorate

1693. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) In the year ending 1978-79 how much money was spent on—
- town roads;
 - rural roads,
- in the shires of Esperance, Ravensthorpe, Kent, Lake Grace and Gnowangerup?
- (2) How much of this expenditure originated from—
- rate collection;
 - Main Roads Department and other sources?
- (3) What was the total expenditure by these shires during 1978-79?
- (4) How many ratepayers are there in each of the shires?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) to (4) The records of the Department of Local Government do not contain statistics in the detail requested. However, if the honourable member

approached the councils concerned, I believe they will be able to provide him with the figures.

POLICE

"Speakers' Corner"

1694. Dr TROY, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Does his department not consider that the purpose of a "speakers corner" is nullified by the police practice of taking the names of speakers?
- (2) Is it a fact that such a practice would tend to intimidate people and thus prevent full freedom of speech?
- (3) Is it also fact that a local government council is prevented from granting permission to hold a meeting in a park under the control of the council?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr O'NEIL) replied:

- (1) It is not a practice.
- (2) No.
- (3) No, although a permit would be required by section 54B of the Police Act if the meeting be a public meeting and the particular park a public park.

Mr Skidmore: What do you reckon it is—an enclosed auditorium?

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Staff

1695. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is it a fact that discussions have been under way for several months between the Public Service Board and the liquor trades union concerning the introduction of an industrial award or agreement to regulate the conditions of employment of staff employed at Parliament House?
- (2) Why has the Government introduced legislation that is designed to deny to Parliament House staff the right to have their conditions of employment determined by an independent umpire—the WA Industrial Commission?

- (3) Does the Government believe that staff employed at Parliament House should have inferior wages and conditions of employment to other workers employed in Government departments and private industry?
- (4) Is it a fact that current conditions of employment at Parliament House for attendants, waiters, kitchen staff, cleaners, and bar staff are greatly inferior to conditions enjoyed by employees covered by hotel and catering awards, particularly in respect of overtime and penalty rates?
- (5) Is the current amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act designed to ensure that the conditions of employment of Parliament House staff remain at the present level?
- (6) Is the current amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act designed to discourage staff employed at Parliament House from joining the liquor trades union?
- (7) Does the Government intend trying to prevent staff employed at Parliament House from joining the liquor trades union?
- (8) Should an industrial dispute ever arise over conditions of employment for staff at Parliament House, what procedures will be available to have the matter settled by an independent arbitrator?
- (9) (a) Does the Government still have confidence in the Western Australian Industrial Commission;
(b) if so, why is it legislating to remove staff employed at Parliament House from its jurisdiction?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The Government's view is that Parliament as the supreme legislative authority has the right to manage its own affairs and not be subject to directions from any other outside authority.
- (3) to (7) No.
- (8) Disputes over conditions of employment for staff at Parliament House will be dealt with through internal procedures in Parliament.
- (9) (a) Yes.
(b) Answered by (2).

MEAT: LAMB**Marketing Board**

1696. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the price paid to producers by the WA Lamb Marketing Board for the various grades of lamb in cents per kilo?
- (2) What are equivalent prices being paid to producers selling at auction in Adelaide, Sydney, and Melbourne?
- (3) What tonnage of lamb did the WA Lamb Marketing Board contract to sell to Iran and other Arabian countries this year?
- (4) What was the price in cents/kilo at which the contracts were written?
- (5) What tonnage will be supplied from Western Australian sources?
- (6) Where will the balance of the supplies be drawn?
- (7) What is the price being paid to Eastern States producers to fill the deficiency of the contract?
- (8) Is his department satisfied that Western Australian producers are not subsidising the Eastern States' purchases?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr OLD) replied:

- (1) The prices paid to producers by the Lamb Marketing Board for various grades of lamb are published weekly in several newspapers.
- (2) Since the lamb board prices are paid for all lambs of that grade presented to it, direct comparison with published prices in other States is not possible. Prices paid to producers for lambs sold at auction in Adelaide, Sydney, and Melbourne are published weekly in the *Western Farmer and Grazier* and in *Market Notes* published by the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation.
- (3) The board's contract with Iran is 10 000 tonnes, plus or minus 10 per cent at seller's option. Other contracts to Arabian countries amount to approximately 3 500 tonnes.
- (4) Details of f.o.b. prices are confidential for trading reasons.
- (5) Approximately 10 000 tonnes.
- (6) From the Eastern States.
- (7) The board is not purchasing live lambs in the Eastern States. All interstate purchases are carcasses on an f.o.b. basis.

- (8) I am satisfied that the Board is marketing the State's lamb production in a responsible manner.

SNAILS**Control**

1697. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has any progress been made in research on the Californian predator snail, as a possible means of control of the Italian white snails in coastal limestone areas of Western Australia?
- (2) If results are encouraging when will consideration be given to their possible introduction into Western Australia?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr OLD) replied:

- (1) Commonwealth quarantine authorities have on a previous occasion denied the South Australian Department of Agriculture permission to import the Californian predator. I am advised that a case from Western Australia would be considered only after an investigation of alternative target snails in California. Basic population studies are being continued to obtain necessary data in case introduction finally proves possible.
- (2) This is dependent on an import permit from Commonwealth quarantine authorities.

DROUGHT**Loan Applications**

1698. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Why was the 26th October set for the closing date for loan applications by businesses in drought declared areas?
- (2) Would the date be extended for those unable to comply by that date because of pressure of work on accountants?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The Government did and does consider that any relief given to drought affected businesses is effective only if given expeditiously. Hence the reason that the 26th October has been set for closing date for applications so that they can be processed and eligible cases quickly granted.

- (2) It is considered that almost a full month should be sufficient to submit applications, particularly if the applicant is in real need.

As a general comment I could add that as new areas are declared "affected" they will be automatically included and the closing date(s) for their applications will be extended appropriately. The Government has no intention of being unreasonable about the time to receive applications, but it is anxious to establish quickly what the real needs are and how the parties may be best assisted.

- (2) Were the State Shipping Service offices in Fremantle holding any cargo for Port Hedland prior to the MV *Kimberley's* departure on its maiden voyage?
 (3) If so, how many tonnes?
 (4) Was the MV *Kimberley* fully laden when it departed from Fremantle on its maiden voyage?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Insufficient cargo to justify a call.
 (2) Yes.
 (3) 25 tonnes.
 (4) Yes, in terms of space available.

WATER SUPPLIES

Geraldton: Allanooka Basin

1699. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

Is any form of financial assistance available to farmers forced to deepen bores and wells because of the drop in water level in the Allanooka underground basin which supplies the town of Geraldton and from which they normally draw their household and stock water supplies?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Royal Show

1700. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

Did Royal Show advertising of buses also advertise the possibility of using trains on the Midland and Armadale lines to travel to Perth, and catching buses from Perth to the showgrounds?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Yes.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Interstate: International Flights

1702. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it fact that Qantas have up to 600 empty seats per week in each direction on their international flights across Australia through Perth?
 (2) Has the State Government approached Qantas and/or the Federal Government to ascertain whether it is possible for interstate passengers to use the spare seat capacity on Qantas?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.

RAILWAYS

Midland-Perth: Ticket Collectors

1703. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has there been an increase in the number of ticket collectors and/or inspectors on the Perth-Midland line?
 (2) If so, how many?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) Five ticket examiners.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PAY-ROLL TAX

Exemption: Ceiling

SHIPPING: STATE SHIPPING SERVICE

MV "Kimberley"

1701. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Why did the maiden voyage of the MV *Kimberley* not stop at Port Hedland?

1. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

I phoned this question to the Treasurer's office this morning. The question is as follows—

- (1) What would be the cost in a full financial year of increasing—
 - (a) the basic level of annual exemption—or deduction—from pay-roll tax from \$60 000 to \$80 000 and the maximum level of diminishing deduction from \$109 500 to \$140 000;
 - (b) the basic level of exemption—or deduction—from pay-roll tax from \$60 000 to \$90 000 and the maximum level of diminishing deduction from \$109 500 to \$150 000;
 - (c) the basic level of annual exemption—or deduction—from pay-roll tax from \$60 000 to \$100 000 and the maximum level of diminishing deduction from \$109 500 to \$160 000?
- (2) How many additional small businesses would be exempted from paying pay-roll tax in (a) to (c) above?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) There is no statistical information readily available to give precise answers to the question and it would take a considerable amount of time to examine existing records and prepare estimates.
However, based on information prepared for the amendment proposed in the 1979-80 Budget, it would appear that the cost in a financial year would be in the order of—
 - (a) 1.8 million;
 - (b) \$2.6 million;
 - (c) \$3.4 million.
- (2) (a) 1 139;
(b) 1 344;
(c) 1 533.

WATER SUPPLIES: METROPOLITAN WATER BOARD

Work Force: Public Holiday

2. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is he aware that the Metropolitan Water Board yesterday distributed a

circular stating that workers will not be allowed to take a day off in lieu of work done on a public holiday?

- (2) If "No", will he inform himself on this matter in view of its deliberate provocation, its attempt to reduce working conditions, and the possible industrial unrest it will create?
- (3) Is he aware that the MWB's actions are in breach of the award?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) As I have not seen the detail of the award, I would not be prepared to comment on this until I have had time to consider the matter.

FOCAL INTERNATIONAL

Activities

3. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:
 - (1) Is he aware of the activities of a group known as "Focal International" or "Focal", featured on Terry Willesee's Show on Perth Channel 9, on Friday, the 28th September and subsequently on Monday, the 1st October, 1979?
 - (2) Has an inquiry been made into the activities of this company?
 - (3) If "Yes", is it a fact that the past and present directors of Focal International were the principals of the pyramid selling group "Holiday Magic"?
 - (4) Is it a fact that financial backing for this company has or had come from an Australia-wide air cargo firm?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The reply is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Since no complaints have been lodged at the Bureau of Consumer Affairs concerning "Focal" or "Focal International" it has not been considered warranted to undertake inquiries into the activities of these organisations.
- (3) and (4) Not known.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Employees: Annual Leave Loading

4. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is he aware that Public Works Department employees have been advised that they will receive a 17½ per cent leave loading on their basic wage only and not their total wage, and that they will be no longer eligible for sewerage allowances?
- (2) Is this part of the latest attempt by the State Government to promote and provoke industrial confrontation in order to make industrial unrest an issue at the next election, in view of its previous failures in preventing inflation from developing?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) If the member is referring to the problems that have developed in the north in recent times, 16 claims only were made by the union. I am aware that one of the bases for negotiations was a submission made by the union. I am of the understanding that, while the department has offered a certain amount, it is still open to go to arbitration if the union is dissatisfied with the issues involved. Altogether there are about 16 matters, and that is only a small part of the whole issue.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Rents: North-west

5. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Can the Minister state what the effects of improving industrial relations in the north have been of the Public Works Department threats to double rents for Government employees in the north-west?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I cannot answer off the cuff. I know some rents were extremely low—as little as a few dollars a week—and if the member would place his question on the notice paper I will give him a considered answer.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

CSBP: Gypsum Waste

6. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is it a fact that CSBP is now dumping its gypsum in a swamp just off Wellard Road?
- (2) Is this gypsum the same or a similar waste product containing mercury and cadmium as that which was previously being dumped in Cockburn Sound?
- (3) What precautions have been taken by CSBP to ensure no leakage of cadmium or mercury into the water table takes place?
- (4) Is the Environmental Protection Authority aware of the company's actions?
- (5) What is the EPA's attitude to the company's actions?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question, although he would have realised it was fairly brief notice. The answer is as follows—

- (1) No; not to my knowledge.
- (2) and (3) Answered by (1).
- (4) There have been discussions between the EPA and the company in connection with the future dumping of gypsum. It is considered inappropriate to dump any more in the Cockburn Sound area. Other methods have been looked at.
- (5) The EPA has been working in conjunction with the company to see where a suitable dumping point would be. Anything to be dumped in an area chosen would have to be appropriately lined so as not to affect any underground water supplies and such like.
In conclusion, the work between the company and the EPA is ongoing.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Royal Show

7. Mr NANOVICH, to the Minister for Transport:

In view of the record crowd estimated at the Royal Show on Saturday, the 29th September, could he advise—

- (a) the number of people who used bus transport to and from the show;
- (b) were there any problems in transporting these numbers?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

In answer to the question of which some notice was given, I have been advised by the MTT as follows—

- (a) 26 800;
- (b) None at all.

POLICE

Aboriginal Children Incident

8. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Mr Speaker, I realise the Minister is not present, but the Premier has the answer to my question, which is as follows—

Adverting to my previous question concerning an incident involving Aboriginal children outside the Perth Railway Station, could he now advise—

- (1) Is it his intention to request a full report on this matter?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) In view of the public interest in this matter, will he table the report or alternatively make a detailed statement to the House re this issue?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr O'NEIL) replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) This matter is subject to internal Police Department investigation.
- (3) Answered by (2).

FASTNET RACE TRAGEDY

Appeal

9. Sir CHARLES COURT (Premier):

Mr Speaker, on the 3rd October, the member for Canning asked question 1640 as follows—

- (1) With reference to my question 1167 of 1979 regarding the amount of taxpayers' money which was donated to the Fastnet race disaster, the amount being \$5 000 for Western Australia and \$25 000 from the Federal Government, has the Fastnet race appeal closed?
- (2) If "Yes" what other countries donated money to the appeal?
- (3) If "No" would he endeavour to find out?
- (4) If not, why not?
- (5) If answer to (1) is "Yes" what was the final amount raised by the appeal?
- (6) What person or organisation is administering the appeal?

I advised that information was being sought from the United Kingdom regarding the Fastnet race appeal. The information is now with me, and with your permission, I wish to provide the following detailed reply—

- (1) The Fastnet appeal has officially closed, but contributions are still being received; the most recent being a collection raised at a memorial service at Cowes, Isle of Wight.
- (2) No overseas country other than Australia made donations, but some overseas yacht clubs sent money for the appeal.
- (3) and (4) Not applicable.
- (5) The present sum exceeds £22 000 sterling.
- (6) The appeal is being administered by the Lord Mayor, the City Treasurer and the Assistant Town Clerk of the City of Plymouth.
I believe every close dependant, parent or wife, has received £250 sterling—in one case of extreme hardship £500 sterling. The balance is to be distributed, based on family case histories, the last of which was received on the 2nd October.
A meeting is to be convened, possibly next week, to determine final allocation of funds. A Press statement will be made by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth following that meeting.