

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 30 May 1991

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 10.00 am, and read prayers.

## CONDOLENCE MOTION - MENSAROS, THE LATE HON ANDREW

**MR TAYLOR** (Kalgoorlie - Deputy Premier) [10.02 am]: I move -

That the House records its sincere regret at the death of Andrew Mensaros and tenders its deep sympathy to his family.

I have moved this motion on behalf of Legislative Assembly members, the Premier, who is absent from the State, and my ministerial colleagues. Andrew Mensaros' sudden death is a sad loss to Western Australia and also, I am sure, to this Parliament. Those of us who have been here for some time - and I have been here for just over a decade now, and many members on both sides of the House have been here far longer - would know that Andrew Mensaros was held in high standing. He was a person of great integrity who certainly endeared himself to others because of his approach to legislation and other matters that came before this House. He always put a point of view that was strongly felt and he was also a hardworking person.

Andrew Mensaros had represented the seat of Floreat since 1968. It is interesting to note that he was the first post-War European migrant to sit in any Australian Legislature when we can now look around either House and see a number of members who come into that classification. He also became a Minister of the Crown. Andrew Mensaros set a high standard from a Government and a Western Australian point of view. He played a major role in the development of Western Australia and a major role in this House. He will be sadly missed both as a member of Parliament and as an individual. On behalf of all members I would like to say that this Parliament should record its sincere regret at the death of Andrew Mensaros and tender its deepest sympathy to his family.

**MR MacKINNON** (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [10.06 am]: I support the motion moved by the Deputy Premier. Andrew Mensaros was a member of this House for 23 years who, by the very nature of his contribution, earned the respect of all sides of the Parliament. It is not often that one can say that about a member, one whose value and strength of contribution I think also was much underestimated by the community of Western Australia and, I believe, members of his own party. Andrew Mensaros admitted in his maiden speech, which I read today, that members would have difficulty in understanding him because of his heavy European accent. I believe that led to an underestimation of his ability and contribution in many respects.

The statistics of Andrew Mensaros' personal career are impressive by any standards. He was born in Budapest. He graduated with a distinction in law and practised in Budapest for six years as a commercial lawyer. During World War II he was an active anti-Nazi working hard against the occupation of Hungary. After the War he was equally strongly anti-Communist to the extent that he was forced to leave Hungary in 1949, arriving in Australia in 1950 where he, interestingly enough, qualified and practised as an accountant. He later gained a building qualification and started a successful building career.

Andrew Mensaros was elected to Parliament in 1968 and, as the Deputy Premier said, was the first European immigrant from non-British stock to be elected to a Parliament in Australia, a fact of which he was particularly proud, and rightly so. In 1974, when the Liberal and Country Party, as it then was, returned to Government after the Tonkin Government's term in office, he was promoted to the position of Minister for Industrial Development and Minister for Mines, Fuel and Energy under the premiership of Sir Charles Court. During his years in office from 1974 to 1983 Andrew Mensaros was a senior Minister who made a significant contribution to the development of Western Australia as we know it today. During that time we saw \$7 billion invested in development including the beginning of the North West Shelf project, the biggest resource project in Australia's history. He was one of the key architects of that period of successful development in Western Australia.

Following our return to Opposition, Andrew Mensaros was again, as the Deputy Premier

said, a tireless worker. I come into Parliament House as early as anybody on most days, and the only person who beat me here most of the time was Andrew Mensaros. Government members would have seen Andrew Mensaros being forthright at times, and that characterised his contribution to our party room. Andrew was a quiet man by nature, but certainly not to the extent that he would allow debate on an issue to pass by without the party room and the Parliament knowing what was his point of view. In looking at his career one sees he was very active in trying to promote two fundamental principles for which he stood: Firstly, a commitment to private and free enterprise; and, secondly, a strong commitment to the democratic principles as represented by the Westminster tradition, as members of the Joint Select Committee on the Constitution, which has recently benefited greatly from his input, would know.

It is interesting to note some of the comments that Andrew made in an article in the *Sunday Times* of 21 April because that summed up the things that he held dear and the principles for which he stood - principles that I think are very laudable, and which I would support in their entirety. He stated -

"Too much decision making is being done by the executive - the Cabinet and ministry - and that change is definitely not for the best."

That is not a party political comment but an observation about what has been happening for about the past 30 years and what is happening probably more rapidly in recent times at both Federal and State levels, and Andrew was a strong critic of that trend, right from his early days in this Parliament. In fact, we should bear in mind that comment as we look to the outcome of the Royal Commission in Western Australia and at the implications of that outcome for the improvement of our democratic process. It is not surprising that Andrew had that commitment to the democratic process when we reflect on what he stated in his maiden speech to the Parliament on 6 August 1968 -

Being the only member who has had the misfortune to live under Governments which did not believe in democracy, I can vividly recall that those Governments abolished Parliament for the very same reason that one cannot obtain justice and law there.

Clearly his personal experiences had deeply ingrained in his mind the need to protect the democratic principles and to strengthen, as much as we possibly can, the role of the Parliament in the democratic process. He stated also in the *Sunday Times* article of 21 April that -

"Today much emphasis is put on social benefits, which are not unimportant, but cannot be paid for unless you have an original source."

The point he was making was that without a strong economy, and without the wealth that can be created from the vast riches of this nation, including its people, we will not have the means to provide the social justice and equity programs in which he believed and in which we believe.

The last two matters on which I wish to comment have been raised in the Parliament this week, and they are issues about which Andrew felt very strongly. He said in respect of the public sector -

"Today you have people employed in the public service because of their political allegiance," he said.

"This is a mis-utilisation of resources."

Andrew felt very strongly about that issue as a man of principle. He highlighted that on 21 April, and he spoke out against the politicisation of the Public Service throughout his career.

Andrew also spoke about the question of privilege - that very vexed question, as members well know; we have discussed it over the past couple of weeks. We would all do well to reflect on what Andrew stated in his maiden speech when we as a Parliament now try to grapple with that issue, as difficult as that may be. He stated in his maiden speech in this House -

Any student on comparative constitutional law will have to admit that in almost every other Parliament the rights, privileges, and, especially, immunities of members, are

substantially more extensive. They are more up to date, better facilitate the execution, and more liberally ease the burdens of the increasingly complex parliamentary duties.

It would serve us well to look back over 20 years at what a man who had studied the law had to say about the privilege issue at that time, as we now try to address that issue for the betterment of the people of Western Australia and particularly for the betterment of the Parliament.

In summary, Andrew was a man of intellect, capacity, conviction and integrity, a man with whom I am very proud to have worked, and whom I am proud to have called a friend, and a man who can rest secure in the knowledge that his commitment to the people of this State was singularly outstanding.

**MR CLARKO (Marmion) [10.16 am]:** This is a unique occasion for me because this is the first time since I have been in the Parliament that I have spoken on a condolence motion. I wish to make some comments about my long and close association with Andrew Mensaros. I do not intend to be completely solemn in what I say about my friend Andrew. It was with considerable sadness that I heard the news of his passing last night. I regard Andrew as one of the most outstanding members this House has ever had. I believe it would be impossible to outmatch or even to match his dedication to this place. He was noted for the amount of work that he used to put in, as my leader has just said. In fact, there were two people in the Ministry of the Court Government who were regarded as being the longest workers - Sir Charles Court and Andrew Mensaros. Andrew used to work about 18 hours a day regularly.

I had a close association with Andrew Mensaros outside this Parliament long before I became a member, through my long association with what we call the lay party. Andrew was the secretary of the Curtin division, and I was the president of the Stirling division, and during those times we came in close contact. We were also on the State Council, which is the equivalent of the Labor Party's State Executive, for a long time. I was on it for nearly 30 consecutive years, and Andrew was there before I joined it. He left the council because of his ministerial duties, but he frequently attended at that time, and later. He was a member of the shadow Cabinet until last year, and only my leader and I have been in the shadow Cabinet for the whole of those eight years. I have attended committee meetings with Andrew for over 20 years, which has amounted to thousands of hours.

I have a great admiration for Andrew Mensaros. He was a tutor of mine in a way in the political scene. I found that I agreed with him most of the time but I did not agree with him all of the time; I think we would both be proud of that fact. In addition, Andrew Mensaros was a highly cerebral person. In my opinion he was a true academic. I understand, but I cannot confirm, that he had a dual doctorate in law and literature, and that comes through particularly when we read what Andrew wrote. It did not come over as well, as we all know, when he spoke. That is a great pity because he probably spoke more languages than anyone in this Parliament, but he had a difficulty with spoken English, although not with English grammar; he picked me up several times, quite properly, for my few Australianisms, and for my mispronunciation or incorrect use of words. I was happy to receive that advice.

When I first came to this Parliament in 1974 Andrew, in his gentlemanly way - because he was a man of great manners; perhaps he came from an era which is now past - said to me, "Jim, I have got a beautiful office for you in this Parliament." Of course, I was ignorant at that time of the layout of this Parliament, and the office which he was offering me was downstairs on the northern end, and one could enter from that door and could park one's car in that circular roadway. He said it was very handy for getting in and out of the car, but he never told me it was difficult to get into the Parliament. When I went into the office I found that my companion, a doctor, chain smoked, the office was something like a boiler room, and it smelt like the rear of a bus. The first thing I did when the new Parliament opened in 1977 was to shift from that office, but Andrew, as he always did, meant well.

I was on the education committee for nearly 20 years, and Andrew Mensaros was on that committee for almost all of that time. While he did not have a background in the Australian education system, he was able to give us advice on the broader education scene. He was expected to become the Minister for Education in the Court Government in 1974 - he had been our spokesman on education matters for many years - but at the last minute he took up a

position as Minister for Industrial Development. Later he became the Minister for Mines, and he had a very close association with development in that area during the 1960s and as a Minister in the 1970s. Being multilingual, he had many contacts with people in the mining industry, and as recently as last year he told me that he had been visited by some person prominent in world mining affairs.

Andrew was meticulous in the way he kept up his contacts with people. At the beginning of this session, in my role in handling parliamentary affairs for the Opposition, he wrote me a letter setting out nine Bills relating to legal matters. Legal affairs were handled by the member for Kingsley and the late Andrew Mensaros. In this letter he set out the hierarchical order in which he wanted to deal with them. He asked me to discuss with my colleague, the member for Kingsley, which Bills she wanted to deal with, and he also indicated two which he definitely did not want to handle. He was very definite when he wanted to be, despite his gentlemanly style. I have seen him in this House - and I am sure the Deputy Premier will agree with me - handling five Bills in a row. He was an elderly man and sick at the time, but there was not a flaw in his argument nor in the way he presented it in relation to that legislation.

I could go on for a long time but I will not. However, I would like to tell members a story. Andrew was a man noted for his dress. Anyone looking closely at him would have realised that. He never wore a pair of shoes which were not tailor made. He had cuff links, good ties and everything else to reflect the type of person he was. He came to my home for dinner one evening in January or February when the temperature was 108 degrees. I heard the car arrive, and looked out of the window. Andrew got out in a white suit - and this was before the days of white suits. He had a tie, a handkerchief in his pocket, and all the rest of it. I had to call out to my wife, "Hang on to him for a while so that I can get out of my shorts."

I really believe that Andrew had the true Liberal philosophy which we see as having been espoused by Menzies. He had a belief about communism and freedom which fitted in very well with us. He was a tremendously hard worker, an extremely intelligent man, very loyal to his friends. At one stage some of my colleagues talked about how he had fallen too much into the hands of the bureaucrats in the Water Authority. He was a feeling Minister, and some of us felt that he was pressing the authority's point of view too much. I remember saying to my friends, "Remember when he was responsible for other portfolios he did the driving and the bureaucrats took notice of him. In this case perhaps the bureaucrats are right." He had his own ideas with regard to the conservation of water in this State. He had these many facets to him. We pay tribute to Andrew Mensaros today, but the people of Western Australia should appreciate that this man was a truly great Western Australian and I salute him.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Leader of the National Party) [10.24 am]: It was with great concern that I heard that Andrew Mensaros had resigned from the Parliament of Western Australia. I looked around this place and realised that there were only three other persons in this Chamber who had served for longer than I had in this House. I hasten to add that three other members have served as long as I have in this place.

It was with great dismay that I learned of Mr Mensaros' death late last night, after such a short time in retirement. In the early part of my career in this place I looked upon Mr Mensaros as a very worthy opponent. Although we had very similar philosophical views, we did not share those views on the 1978 Mining Act when that was introduced. The characteristics mentioned by members who have spoken before me in tribute to Mr Mensaros showed through in the passage of that legislation through this Parliament. Although we might have been regarded as an irritant to the Minister handling that Bill, there was never a hint that the gentlemanly, formal approach, and the patience which had to be assumed in taking that legislation through this Parliament made one dent in his capacity to respond in a very quiet and calm way. He responded in a way which indicated that our views were wrong. For the most part the fears we held about that legislation have proved to be incorrect, and the Mining Act as it exists today has proved to be a very workable document; it has made a significant contribution to the development of mining in Western Australia.

It is a pity in many respects that many people regard two of the fundamental requirements for being a member of Parliament as charisma and the ability to communicate in a fashion which leads a number of people to approve what one has said without being able to recall precisely

what the subject of the topic was. I suppose that relates to the capacity to deliver a speech rather than the content of it. There is no doubt in my mind from my association with the late Andrew Mensaros that he was the most articulate person who has ever spoken in this place. It is a pity that members did not go to the trouble of giving him their full attention in order to understand what he was saying. It was too easy for members to find it difficult and therefore not listen. In every instance where I had an association with him, his view was very clearly put, and there would be no misunderstanding about the position he expressed, either personally, or on behalf of his Party. In our later years perhaps time gives us a little more maturity and other qualities which lead us not to be so impetuous. I have had the privilege of sitting next to Mr Mensaros for three years and my original opinion of him has been reinforced. I had the privilege of serving with him on the Joint Select Committee on the Constitution, and I am sure the chairman of that committee will acknowledge that he carried the direction and the main focus of that committee in the work we are doing in the consolidation of this State's Constitution.

Although there was always some contradiction in the fact that people found it difficult to understand Andrew Mensaros, he was able to overcome some of the prejudices which unfortunately exist in society and win preselection for a seat in this Parliament, and win it comfortably. That indicates the vigour with which he was prepared to overcome prejudices, and his contribution will long be remembered.

On behalf of the National Party I feel it a great privilege to join in this condolence motion.

**MR GRAYDEN** (South Perth) [10.30 am]: Many members of this House and many former members would be proud to say of Andrew Mensaros, "He was my friend." All those who have had the privilege of being in that category and those who were in a position to know him as a person or for his work would be dismayed and saddened indeed by his untimely death.

As previous speakers have said, Andrew Mensaros was an extremely able member of this House. He was a man of principle, high ideals, excellent judgment and compassion. He was one of those people who, if he could not say a kind word about a person, would prefer to say nothing at all. As has been mentioned, Andrew Mensaros came to this country from Hungary; he taught himself to speak English and in 1968 he became a member of this Parliament. Politics, without question, was his consuming interest and it seemed that he literally lived for the contribution that he constantly strove to make to this, his adopted country. He made that contribution in his electorate, in the party room, in the work that goes on behind the scenes in politics, and in this House.

Although long afflicted with what he knew to be a terminal illness, Andrew Mensaros kept that to himself and worked assiduously as the representative for Floreat until the very day he resigned from this Parliament. There would be few migrants from other than the United Kingdom who have made the contribution to Australian politics that was made by our late friend and colleague, Andrew Mensaros. Andrew was a catalyst in aiding and improving the relationship between ethnic minorities and Australians, and this State and Australia will be the poorer for his passing.

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [10.33 am]: Unlike previous speakers from the other side of the House I cannot say I knew Andrew Mensaros for a great length of time. As a relative newcomer to this place I had that privilege for only a short time, but in that short time I very quickly came to respect Andrew Mensaros the man.

I worked quite closely with Andrew on the Joint Select Committee on the Constitution. In chairing that committee I spoke to people on this side of the House to get some direction as to how that committee might function. It was very soon pointed out to me that amongst the members on that committee Andrew Mensaros was a man of integrity, someone who would address the issues and therefore someone who would work well on that committee and make a contribution. That advice proved to be very true, because Andrew had a very keen interest in our democratic system, in the Westminster system and the variation that we have here in Western Australia and throughout Australia. In working on that committee he showed his really deep commitment to the democratic system, and while we were on opposite sides of the House and there were many areas where I would disagree with him, I could not disagree with his fundamental belief in the value and the importance of our democratic system.

Andrew had a breadth of knowledge of the European parliamentary tradition which came through in our discussions. He had also travelled through a number of the United States and had a very good background on some of the constitutional systems that operate there. Drawing on that background I found him to be very open to a range of different ideas. He had a breadth of knowledge which enabled him to take up a range of issues and to argue them cogently and put his point of view quite clearly. As has already been mentioned, because of his accent perhaps many of us did not give him our time and listen carefully to the arguments he put in this Chamber, but in the atmosphere of a committee room it became very clear that he had a very good grasp of the issues, and a younger member such as I was able to benefit greatly from his understanding and wisdom. What came through in those discussions also was the respect in which he was held by many other people in this place. He had obviously been a major player in the previous Liberal Government. He had made a very considerable contribution, and his memory enabled him to go back and put together things that had happened at that time and consider how they may or may not be of relevance to the work of the committee.

I respected Andrew Mensaros for his very evident intellectual ability and, as has already been noted, his willingness to get in and do the hard work. For a man who had made a lengthy contribution in this place to dedicate so much time to the Constitution Committee in going through and doing what might be considered the hack work of checking, section by section, to see that the work we were undertaking was done properly indicated very clearly the dedication he had to making our parliamentary system work, and work well.

In the short time I knew him I came very quickly to respect Andrew Mensaros the man and I regret very much his passing.

**MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [10.38 am]:** I join with other members in this condolence motion in mourning the passing of Andrew Mensaros, a truly great Western Australian.

Members might reflect on their contribution to the Parliament and recall the service they hoped to provide to their constituents when they set out on their parliamentary careers; they might each recall, also, the very heady day on which they made their maiden speech. It is significant that the galleries of this place are full on days such as those, and it is even more significant that on an occasion of sadness such as this the galleries should be even more crowded as we record the passing of a great man.

Andrew Mensaros was a person who represented all of the very good things of life. Other members have already spoken of the exceptional qualities and intellect of the man. Andrew was a model member of Parliament. He was always punctual and he was always prepared - always prepared to advance the best argument he could, and always prepared to accept the decisions that were made. Bearing in mind that degree of honesty and integrity, members today should reflect on the contribution made to Parliament by Andrew Mensaros. They should use his contribution as a role model for their own conduct, on whichever side of Parliament they may sit because to the Parliament Andrew Mensaros was a truly great man. He was a personal friend of mine; he opened election campaigns for me. I saw him as a man of integrity and one who possessed the qualities I look for in people. He was not a charismatic person. However, he possessed exceptional qualities of citizenship to which we should all aspire but which very few people are able to attain. Many members will pass through this place and will not receive the recognition that Andrew Mensaros will receive. He may not have been a charismatic person but he was a very good, decent person.

My mind returns to the number of times, both in Opposition and in Government, when Andrew Mensaros presented an argument. I remember the number of times when opposite members - whether Ministers, when Andrew served the Opposition, or Opposition members when he was a Minister - would listen intently to the lucid and careful arguments he would put forward. On a number of occasions it was suggested that he was a secret weapon because while members had difficulty in understanding the full import of his contribution because of his accent, his speeches were magnificent and rarely could they be answered properly. Such was the talent of the man that it was thought the accent was used as part of a subterfuge for members who could not match his debate. The member for South Perth will recall that many persons such as Don May, and other members, had difficulty answering the arguments of Andrew Mensaros.

Andrew made a significant contribution to Western Australia. I join with other members in

saluting Andrew Mensaros for the outstanding contribution he has made to the Parliament and to the State of Western Australia.

**MR COURT (Nedlands) [10.43 am]:** I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this condolence motion. Andrew Mensaros was well known to me long before I came to this House. I knew him as part of the team that worked alongside my father, both in Government and in Opposition. I often saw him at home or spoke with him on the telephone. Andrew Mensaros served the State and the Parliament extremely well; he was a very distinguished politician.

When I came to Parliament, I had the opportunity on many occasions to ask Andrew for advice. Only a few weeks ago I needed to use his experience. He was a person who always came straight to the point and, as the Leader of the National Party said earlier, he was a person worth listening to. It was worth taking the extra trouble to understand what he was saying. I did not always like the advice I received, or the answers to my questions, but he was always straight. In this game, it is a tremendous asset to know that when one talks to another person he will say exactly what he thinks. Andrew Mensaros had a tradition of giving my father a tie for his birthday. We used to think that was a subtle plan to keep my father within 10 years of the fashion.

**Mr Pearce:** It did not work.

**Mr COURT:** No. Andrew used to get great pleasure from clothes. It was a tradition he maintained and we always used to get a laugh out of it. In some of the quiet, more private conversations with Andrew I gained a little insight into his experiences both with nazism and communism. In the party rooms and in the Parliament he always fought vigorously to maintain the wonderful democracy we have in Australia. I remember on issues such as the ID card or the disclosure of personal information he used to argue from a different point of view. It was the viewpoint of a person who had lived in Europe and experienced problems during those difficult years. He gave us a perspective on issues which we need to watch in this community.

Andrew Mensaros was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. He was respected by members on both sides of this House. He will be greatly missed.

**MR WIESE (Wagin) [10.46 am]:** I support the condolence motion for Andrew Mensaros. I express sympathy to his family and friends who have known him longer than I have. I knew Andrew Mensaros for only a short time but it has been a privilege to know him and to work with him. That feeling has been expressed by other members this morning. As a new member, dealing with legislative matters, I often spoke after Andrew on various matters during debate. He was an enormous help to me personally and as a young member by assisting me to come to grips with the workings of Parliament and many of the matters that need to be addressed. Many members who have worked with Andrew would express similar sentiments.

I came to know Andrew Mensaros by working with him on the Delegated Legislation Committee. I speak on behalf of the members of that committee who all agree that Andrew's intellectual ability and his enormous capacity for work impressed people as soon as they began to work with him. Andrew Mensaros possessed an enormous dedication to the preservation of the powers of Parliament. Perhaps that came from his background to a large degree. One could only be impressed by his dedication; indeed one had to agree with him on many of the matters that he spoke about relating to Parliament and the role that members of Parliament play. He impressed on me the importance of the work both of the Parliament and of the Delegated Legislation Committee which considers much of the subsidiary legislation that comes before Parliament. He saw the role of the committee as one of preserving the powers of Parliament.

I express my condolences and those of the members of the Delegated Legislation Committee to the family and friends of Andrew Mensaros. He will be greatly missed.

**MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell - Minister for Lands) [10.49 am]:** When Andrew Mensaros retired from Parliament, I wrote to him to express my appreciation for the experience of being in Parliament with him. I said that in my view he was the classic conservative. I do not think that at any time in Parliament he departed from classic conservative views. However, he had the benefit of living under regimes of the worst totalitarian right and the

worst totalitarian left; that gave him enormous balance and made him recognise that the principles he espoused were more important than his politics, and that was certainly true of the contributions he made in this place. He always thought the substance of debate was the critical issue rather than the politics. I also took the opportunity to say to him in my letter that the fact he came from a European tradition of law and not an English tradition enabled him to have a quite radical approach to the English legal system. Despite those conservative principles, he suggested many beneficial changes to the English system based on the benefit of his European experience.

Without wanting to sound patronising, I would always go to great pains to ensure that I could hear the words that Andrew was using in a speech rather than simply enjoying the content and substance in *Hansard* afterwards. Andrew Mensaros was a man of great courtesy and intellect. He will be sadly missed by the Parliament. He strongly believed in the Parliament - not in the individuals who make up the Parliament, but in the institution and the role it should play in a real democracy. His contribution has added to the stature of this place, and I hope he will be fondly remembered for his courtesy, friendship and gentlemanlike manner. Even more importantly, he should be remembered for the contribution he made on all issues in debate in this place.

**MR WATT (Albany) [10.52 am]:** I make no apology for extending the debate a little longer as I wish to place on the record my appreciation of the friendship I enjoyed with the late Andrew Mensaros. As has been said, he was a gentleman in every sense of the word. He will be remembered for his quiet dignity, his thoughtfulness and his intellect. He was a most intelligent man and members on this side of the House - and as indicated, some members opposite - will miss his wise counsel and the sage advice he offered from time to time. This advice was always valuable and honest.

It has been said that Andrew was the second longest serving member in this House, and perhaps only the President in the upper House has served for a longer period. That is a tribute to Mr Mensaros. I echo what has been said about his migrant status. I see him as an inspiration to all migrants who come to this country because of what he achieved. I do not intend to list his legal attributes or his business successes; however, to be able to achieve such things when coming to a new country with the language difficulties and other inherent problems, is an inspiration to all others. Andrew was a man with not only academic wisdom, but a great natural wisdom; it seemed to come naturally to him, and his advice whenever sought or offered was carefully considered and usually it was right. Whenever the advice was perceived not to be right, it was a matter of opinion rather than fact.

Andrew Mensaros was never presumptuous, and he had the rare quality - especially in this place - of genuine humility. He had a strong commitment, as indicated by a number of speakers, to the institution of Parliament and the Westminster system. Andrew's attendance in the Chamber while the House was sitting could be emulated by many of us; whenever one came into the Parliament, Andrew was nearly always sitting here and that is something that most of us cannot boast.

It may be unknown to the newer members that Andrew had a previous illness from cancer, and this resulted in some serious surgery from which he recovered and appeared to enjoy good health for a period - for which we were all grateful. It was a matter of sadness to us all that the suddenness of his last illness caused him to retire. His untimely death is a sobering reminder to all of us of the transient nature of our time here on earth, and of the need to use our time wisely. Andrew provides an inspirational example to which we may all aspire. I regard it as a privilege to have known him, and he will be sadly missed by all of us.

**MR KIERATH (Riverton) [10.56 am]:** I first noticed Andrew Mensaros in the mid-1970s when I joined the Liberal Party. He came to a meeting as the then Minister responsible for the State Electricity Commission. A great deal of anger about electricity charges was evident at the meeting, but in his cool, calm and rational way he discussed the matter logically and took the heat out of the meeting. Like other people, I have said that I did not always agree with his views. I have indeed been fortunate to cross paths with him in subcommittees within our party room and I grew to like and respect his views and consider them highly, even when different from mine.

He was a man of great intellect and capability unsurpassed by anyone I have met. I had the greatest respect for Andrew Mensaros in his peculiar ways. He was an extremely private



person and was a hard man to get to know; however, I grew to like and respect him. He was a quiet, unassuming person and he never forced a view on others though he would offer his views if asked. He had a deep-seated commitment to private enterprise, and this commitment was not based only on intellect as it was a deep-seated, wholehearted commitment which obviously arose from his background.

I regard him as one of the greatest intellects I have met and have had the privilege of knowing. Over the past few months, amidst really great pain, Andrew Mensaros continued to perform his duties admirably. I understand that the day he went to hospital he was still producing work for his electoral assistant and putting the affairs of his constituents ahead of his own problems. Andrew was devoted to the Liberal Party and to the institution of Parliament. Sometimes he would disagree with my view and make an extremely powerful argument, and in the majority of cases it was so powerful that he convinced me to change my mind. My regret is that while he was alive we could not pay him the tributes and recognition that he so rightly deserved. He was a true gentleman in every meaning of the word, and this is a sad day for the Parliament, and certainly a sad day for the Liberal Party and for me personally. I pay my respects to a great man and salute him.

Question passed, members standing.

### **PETITION - HOMESWEST**

#### *Pensioners Rent Increase Protest*

**MR DONOVAN** (Morley) [11.00 am]: I have a petition in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

That we do strongly protest the exorbitant rent rises instituted by HOMESWEST following each CPI adjustment to pensions and ask that rent increases be indexed to the CPI percentage of the pension increases.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 145 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 59.]

### **PETITION - RAILWAYS**

#### *South West Suburbs Passenger Service Extension Support*

**MR THOMAS** (Cockburn) [11.02 am]: I have a petition in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned support the extension of the suburban passenger rail service to the suburbs of the south west corridor.

This part of the metropolitan area is growing and is widely recognised as one of the most desirable options for the long term expansion of the City of Perth.

Moreover, as recent international events have shown, it is prudent to minimise dependence on oil and environmental considerations support the extension and enhancement of our public transport system.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 34 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 60.]

## **PETITION - ABORTION**

### *Decriminalisation Opposition*

**MR MINSON** (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.04 am]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, are strongly opposed to:

- (a) the decriminalisation of abortion;
- (b) the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code, and its inclusion in the Health Act;
- (c) the funding of an abortion facility for the West Australian Government.

We, the undersigned, urge the government to enforce the Criminal Code for the protection of unborn children, as was its original intention.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 173 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

[See petition No 61.]

## **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION**

### *Report - Extension of Time*

On motion by Mr Kobelke, resolved -

- (a) That the date for presentation of the report of the Joint Select Committee on the Constitution, be extended to 26 September 1991.
- (b) That the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and its concurrence sought therein.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

**MR PEARCE** (Armadale - Minister for the Environment) [11.08 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The necessity for this Bill arises out of a decision of the Supreme Court which places a narrow interpretation on the meaning of the word "pollution". Some members may recall that in September 1989, Palos Verdes Estates bulldozed an unauthorised track about seven kilometres long through natural bush on Crown land on the foreshore of Wilson's Inlet to improve vehicle access to their property. The Environmental Protection Authority, with my full support, prosecuted the company for "causing pollution" by the destruction of bushland, removal of topsoil and general despoiling of the foreshore. The company was also ordered to rehabilitate the area - an order which it refused to carry out. To avoid further damage by wind and erosion, the EPA, with the help of the Albany Shire and the Department of Agriculture, undertook restoration work at a cost of about \$46 000 in the expectation of recovering that expenditure from Palos Verdes.

The prosecution was successful in the Magistrate's Court and the company was fined \$4 000 and costs; hence recovery of the restoration costs appeared assured. Palos Verdes, however, appealed the magistrate's decision to the Supreme Court on two grounds: One, a technical point about proof of my consent; the other that the bulldozing of the bush on the Crown land foreshore was not "pollution". In my view, the activities of Palos Verdes in this case were reprehensible, and if such activities are not pollution in the strict sense of the word, we need either a broader definition of the word or some other mechanism for ensuring that this sort of

wanton destruction of bushland on Crown foreshore is outlawed. Those members who were here at the time may remember that around the time that the Environmental Protection Act was being introduced in 1986 there was a public outcry after it was discovered that someone had blasted reefs in Thompson's Bay at Rottneest in order to improve the mooring for his large pleasure cruiser.

Mr Blaikie: We are still trying to work out who it was. The Royal Commission might come up with the answer.

Mr PEARCE: It may well, but no one supports the blasting of that reef - certainly not me.

No legislation could be found under which to take action; however, it was understood and intended that under the proposed Environmental Protection Act such activities would be classed as pollution and a six month prison sentence was added to the penalty for causing pollution specifically to discourage such activities by even those who might be prepared to pay the \$10 000 fine. Nevertheless we are now faced with a Supreme Court judgment which says that such activities are not pollution. A detailed examination of the reasoning behind the Supreme Court judgment - a judgment made, I might point out, without access to a record of the Magistrate's Court proceedings - suggests that a simple expansion of the definition of the word "pollution" may not suffice to overcome the Court's objections. The Bill therefore, tackles the issue by a different route.

Mr Lewis: Are you questioning the decision of the court?

Mr PEARCE: Absolutely; the decision was a wrong decision. Can I question it more firmly than that? The House made its view known about what it meant by pollution and the court has now redefined that. The court also found that it was not properly proved that I had initiated the prosecution, but the fact is I had initiated the prosecution. We are bringing the Bill before the House to make sure that a decision of that kind does not recur. Even the member for Applecross, who is not one of the environmentally sensitive members of this House, would not support the bulldozing by private citizens of seven kilometres of Crown land.

Mr Lewis: I do not support your criticism of the court either.

Mr PEARCE: Does the member support the bulldozing of Crown land? I am not asking the member to support my comment that the court was wrong. I am asking the member for Applecross and other members of the House to recognise that any environmental law which fails to prosecute people or recover costs from people -

Mr Cowan: Rather than saying the court was wrong, the Minister should say that the legislation did not quite carry out the intent of Parliament.

Mr PEARCE: I would be interested in the member's definition of wrong. If the Parliament says this is what should happen in the law, and the court says, "Yahoo, sucks to you Parliament; this is what we are proposing to do", I would say such a decision is wrong. The Leader of the National Party might say it is misguided, inaccurate or a strange quirk of fate on behalf of the judges involved.

Mr Cowan: All that signals to me is that the Parliament must improve the law.

Mr PEARCE: That is exactly what the Government is proposing.

Mr Cowan: That does not necessarily mean that the court was wrong.

Mr PEARCE: In my view it was, because the intention of the Parliament was perfectly clear at the time.

Mr Cowan: You are entitled to your view, but it is not shared.

Mr PEARCE: It is not shared by the leader of the National Party, but it is shared by many people who believe that when Parliament sets out to create a law to prevent people from doing things like bulldozing a track through seven kilometres of Crown land the law should enforce that.

Mr Cowan: No one argues with that.

Mr PEARCE: The Parliament thought it had made a law to prevent that.

Mr Cowan: Who makes the law?

Mr PEARCE: Parliament does.

Mr Cowan: Who enforces and interprets the law?

Mr PEARCE: The courts should enforce the laws Parliament makes. A very unfortunate tendency has occurred in this country in recent times, following the United States examples, of courts taking the law making function more upon themselves. Although that does not specifically have anything to do with this speech, the issue is important. The Commonwealth court, for example, has made interpretations of the Constitution regarding the external affairs power and other powers which have dramatically changed the nature of our Federal system from what was intended by the makers of the Constitution. Now the State courts are taking the role of making laws more on themselves. All parliamentarians should wish to resist that.

Mr Kierath interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Clearly the debate here is relevant to the broad sense of the Bill, but I suggest that points like this which the Opposition wants to take up should be referred to during the second reading debate. At this point we should get through the second reading speech.

Mr PEARCE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your advice and guidance; it is very wise, as always. However, the fact is that we are dealing with big issues here, not just a simple change to the law.

Mr Lewis: Just because you have inadequate legislation and did not draft the Bill properly, you blame the court.

Mr Gordon Hill: You voted for the legislation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We have been down this path before.

Mr PEARCE: The Bill accepts the common meaning of "pollution" as referring more to discharges of wastes which degrade a portion of the environment. A new concept of "unauthorised environmental degradation" is introduced to cover those other activities which we all recognise as having the potential to contribute to the deterioration of our environment. The type of deterioration outlawed is indicated by the definition of the word "degrade" which is taken to mean directly or indirectly altering the environment to cause, or have the potential to cause, significant harm to living things; to significantly reduce the capacity of the environment to support activities or functions of living things; to significantly disturb, damage or disfigure any characteristic of the environment. The word "significant" has been inserted in the definition to overcome one of the Supreme Court's concerns that even the minutest disturbance of the environment would have been pollution if the original definition of the term had been accepted. It will now be left initially to the Environmental Protection Authority and finally to the courts to determine whether an activity has "significantly" changed the environment.

The Bill then relies on the definition of "degrade" to introduce a new Part IVA concerned with the control of environmental degradation. An offence is created of "Causing unauthorised environmental degradation". This offence parallels the offence of "Causing pollution . . ." under the existing Act. The penalty is the same - \$10 000 and/or six months imprisonment for individuals. The same range of inspector powers and defences to prosecution have been introduced. It is intended that activities such as that undertaken by Palos Verdes, or the unknown Rottneest reef blaster will attract the offence of "Unauthorised environmental degradation". Naturally it is not intended that any clearing of bushland, dredging or other activity which has been approved through the normal planning and environmental assessment processes will give rise to an offence.

Finally, the Bill addresses the other matter raised in the Supreme Court appeal; that is, proof of my consent to the initial prosecution. I can assure the House that I did consent to that prosecution; in fact I actively sought it. However the illegibility of my signature coupled with some administrative problems made it difficult to actually prove my consent. The Bill adds a clause to the Environmental Protection Act which is common in other Acts such as the Conservation and Land Management Act. This clause reverses the onus of proof where there is a dispute as to my consent; consent is presumed unless the contrary is proved. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

**COAL MINING INDUSTRY LONG SERVICE LEAVE AMENDMENT BILL***Second Reading*

**MR GORDON HILL** (Helena - Minister for Mines) [11.15 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The principal Act which this Bill proposes to amend relates to the long service leave scheme for coal miners in Western Australia. It has always been the intention of the Act to automatically cover variation of awards which apply in the coal mining industry for long service leave. However, the Commonwealth Government, which regulates the State long service leave schemes, has advised that previous awards relevant to the Act have not been gazetted. This situation has also occurred in both the New South Wales and Queensland coal mining industry long service leave Acts.

The Commonwealth Government has agreed to the proposed amendments which will validate past payments, ensure ongoing payments can be made and provide for automatic application of the Act to future new awards in relation to long service leave in the coal mining industry.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SUPERANNUATION) AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL***Second Reading*

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell - Minister for Local Government) [11.17 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill provides for the transfer of the current statutory local government superannuation scheme to a private trust deed arrangement. This requires the repeal of the Local Government Superannuation Act and the inclusion of a power in the Local Government Act for a new scheme to be established and apply to all local governments.

This legislation is the culmination of proposed changes to local government superannuation which have been agreed to by union and employer groups and the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. A working party of members of the Local Government Association, the Country Shire Councils Association, the Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employees Union and the Municipal Officers Association, has been preparing the terms for the new trust deed which will be required to comply with the Commonwealth Occupational Superannuation Standards Act.

The benefits of transferring from a statutory scheme to a trust deed are principally of an administrative nature. Amendments and improvements to the scheme will no longer involve the amending of a State Act or the regulations which accompany that Act. The trustees representing the union and employer groups will administer the scheme subject to the terms of the agreed deed. The proposed new section 169 of the Local Government Act will allow the Minister for Local Government to declare the new scheme that will apply for all local governments. The declaration of the trust deed scheme will occur at the time the Local Government Superannuation Act is repealed and the current board ceases its operations.

The Bill includes several transitional provisions to ensure a smooth transfer of operations from the current board to the new trustees. In particular, certain members of the current scheme who are State employees may continue to be members of the new scheme. This includes employees of cemetery boards, the zoo, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council and several other agencies. I draw members' attention to the importance of bringing this legislation into operation as quickly as possible. The new trust deed is proposed to commence from 1 July 1991 and accordingly the Bill requires urgent passage through the Parliament if this is to be achieved. I understand that any delays will result in the new scheme having to wait a further year before its introduction.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

**SUPREME AND DISTRICT COURTS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS)  
BILL***Second Reading*

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell - Minister for Lands) [11.20 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill deals with two matters: The first concerns an amendment to section 32 of the Supreme Court Act 1935 to allow State courts to award interest on damages when they are exercising Federal jurisdiction. The second matter deals with procedures for the expedition of Supreme Court and District Court hearings.

**Interest on judgments:** Section 32 of the Supreme Court Act provides that in any proceedings for the recovery of money the court may order that interest be paid at such a rate as it thinks fit on the whole or any part of the amount in the judgment. That interest can apply between the date when the cause of action arose and the date when the court's judgment takes effect. Section 32 applies also to the Local Court, and the District Court has the same powers as the Supreme Court, so that this amendment will apply also to the District and Local Courts. It is doubtful that section 32 enables interest to be awarded when Federal jurisdiction is being exercised. The Federal Court in the case of *Pavich v Dobra Nominees* expressed the view that section 32 does not empower the Supreme Court to award interest when exercising Federal jurisdiction. This conclusion was based on the view that section 32 does not add to the substantive rights and remedies arising from a cause of action which is created by a Federal law so that the Supreme Court, when determining such an action, cannot apply section 32 to award interest.

Section 51(1)(a) of the Federal Court of Australia Act 1976 does, however, confer power upon the Federal Court to award interest when exercising its Federal jurisdiction. Therefore, when a Federal cause of action is litigated in the Federal Court, rather than the Supreme Court, interest on judgments can be awarded. Uncertainty arises as to whether a State court can award interest when exercising jurisdiction under the Cross Vesting (Jurisdiction of Courts) Act 1967.

In summary, the position is likely to be that a plaintiff can obtain interest when a State court is exercising State jurisdiction and when a Federal court is exercising Federal jurisdiction. However, plaintiffs cannot obtain interest from a State court when it is exercising Federal jurisdiction. The amendment to section 32 rectifies this anomalous situation by making it clear that section 32 confers on the Supreme Court power to award interest in all situations; namely, when the court is exercising State jurisdiction, Federal jurisdiction, or Federal jurisdiction pursuant to cross vesting legislation.

**Expedited hearings:** The Bill also amends section 167 of the Supreme Court Act 1935 and sections 88 and 90 of the District Court of Western Australia Act 1969. Members may be aware that new procedures have been implemented in the Supreme Court to deal with cases which require urgent hearing. The advantages of the expedited lists are already apparent. Although most aspects of the new procedures have been implemented, some require amendment to the Supreme Court Act before appropriate rules of court can be proclaimed. Outstanding matters include the following -

- a requirement that parties deliver signed written statements of witnesses to all other parties before trial;

- acceptance of those statements as the evidence in chief of the witness;

- authority for the court to admit plans, photographs, models, etc, without formal proof if the other parties do not object after receiving notice before trial;

- authority for a referee to conduct proceedings in the manner thought most appropriate and without being bound by rules of evidence.

The amendments to the District Court Act will also give that court capacity to have an expedited list. The Chief Justice and the chief judge of the District Court have, of course, been consulted in relation to these amendments and support them. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

**SUPPLY BILL***Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 29 May.

**MRS EDWARDES** (Kingsley) [11.26 am]: Events yesterday moved me to change the text of my speech on this Bill. I was so moved after receiving answers to questions without notice asked of the Minister assisting the Minister for Women's Interests about the outcome of the inquiry being conducted by the Public Service Commission into the link between the Women's Information and Referral Exchange and the Western Women group. The Premier's response on Tuesday to a question on this matter was that the report would be delayed because other matters needed further investigation. On questioning the Minister assisting the Minister for Women's Interests last night about what these other matters were, the answer was that that Minister could not tell the House any more than that about which the Premier had informed the House on the previous day.

The Government owes it to this House to conduct an independent inquiry and to ensure that both the internal inquiry and the Public Service inquiry make available to the public the information given to them. A date should be set for the further investigation of these matters and for the report to be tabled in the Parliament. Will we have to wait a few days, a few weeks or a few months for that report to be tabled? Will that report not be tabled until after 13 June when this House rises so that members of this place will not have an opportunity to discuss the results of those inquiries until we next assemble in August?

**Mr Wiese**: Or until the bird has flown.

**Mrs EDWARDES**: The bird has flown already. I am concerned about the Government's responsibility and involvement in this matter. The Opposition is not interested in what happened with the Western Women group; that will be taken care of in another forum. The Opposition is interested in what the Government will do in the future about its instrumentalities referring clients and members of the public to only one advisory group, whether to obtain information on financial investments or on legal matters. The Opposition wants to know also why these people whose records were well known in the industry were given such a privileged position. Why was that group the only one to which referrals were made? What was the special relationship? Who did Sandra Leeder, a director of the Western Women group, work for previously? Did she work for Gordon Hill or Gavan Troy as an electoral officer or adviser? What was the relationship with those women?

**Dr Watson**: And what was the relationship between Robin Greenburg and the Liberal Party in South Australia?

**Mrs EDWARDES**: The Minister should tell us. She should not sit there and pass it off. I do not know the woman. I have never met her and have never heard her name mentioned in our party. So often the Government tells us to provide evidence for our allegations. Where is the Minister's evidence? It is fine for the Minister to sit back and act pious and righteous. In the past she has stood up for women who have had bad associations with men and who have suffered from domestic violence and failed marriages; she has stood up for those women who approached WIRE to seek advice; in the past she has stood up for those women who were advised by women to go to women to be ripped off by women, and she is not prepared to produce the report of the inquiry in Parliament to be debated.

**Dr Watson**: I have never said that.

**Mrs EDWARDES**: The Minister said that no date for presentation of the report has been set. Why has no date been set? Will it be presented on Tuesday of next week, or Thursday of next week?

**Dr Watson**: If it is finished before Parliament rises, it will come to Parliament.

**Mrs EDWARDES**: The Minister said that two weeks ago. As the Minister did not answer my questions last night, but is so happy to talk to me now, will she tell me what are the other matters that require an investigation?

**Dr Watson**: They were covered in the answer.

**Mrs EDWARDES**: They were not. I refer members to question without notice 155 and to the reply given by the Minister for Women's Interests. It was clear from her answer that the

task had not been completed and some matters needed further examination and clarification. What are those further matters?

Dr Watson: You will read the report when it is published.

Mrs EDWARDES: That is the point: When will it be published? Is it the case that the Government is embarrassed and guilty because the report highlights a close relationship between members of the Women's Information and Referral Exchange and the Western Women group?

Mr Blaikie: What will happen is that the report will be released after 20 June, when this Parliament is in recess.

Several members interjected.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is the biggest scam I have come across in my short lifetime. Women in the community were referred to an organisation which this Government supported and it must feel embarrassed and guilty about what it did to them. The women have lost confidence in themselves. In the past some of them have been put down by men and now they have been put down by women, and it is even worse that they have been caught out on a financial matter - an area in which some women lacked confidence previously. They gained sufficient confidence to seek advice from WIRE and what did it do? It referred them to one investment adviser only. As a little girl I was constantly told not to put all my eggs in one basket. What was WIRE doing referring women to one organisation only? In other words, it was telling them to put all their eggs in one basket. The knowledge of those women is well known, so what is the relationship?

What facts are being further examined? Is the Government in such a dilemma because the inquiry has pointed to a close relationship between WIRE and the Western Women group? Is it because some of the women who lost their money want to know what the Government will do to recompense them? Is it because of the talk in the community that the women will take action against the Government?

Dr Watson: No.

Mrs EDWARDES: Have secret commissions been highlighted? The Minister assisting the Minister for Women's Interests will not answer that question. Not only does the Opposition want to know the answers to these questions, but also the women who invested their money in the Western Women group want to know. The public has a right to know the answers to these questions.

Dr Watson: And they will have them.

Mrs EDWARDES: When?

Dr Watson: Not many more sleeps for you now.

Mrs EDWARDES: I now understand the language in which the Minister speaks and I will use language that she understands when I ask further questions without notice. I will have to ask the Minister how many more sleeps it will be before a report is made available. Will the Minister be able to respond then?

Mr Minson: She is asleep all the time.

Mrs EDWARDES: I know that members on the other side of the House are forever telling Opposition members to be quiet because we may wake them up.

I find it embarrassing when I speak to women about this issue on the telephone and I am asked about the special relationship between WIRE and the Western Women group because I am unable to give them the answers. I feel even more embarrassed when they ask me why an independent inquiry has not been established. They ask me what the Public Service Commission inquiry will prove. I tell them that the terms of reference of the inquiry are that it will review the policies and practices of WIRE, the on-site and referral services provided by it and the procedures adopted for dealing with inquiries from the public, particularly with regard to financial counselling and investment information. That will not establish any relationship. We want to know what else went on and who had a close link with that organisation. What is the relationship between the Australian Labor Party and WIRE, and who is doing the investigating? Is it a senior person from WIRE and a public servant from the Public Service Commission? We all know about the Public Service Commissioner.



Dr Watson: It is two people from the Public Service Commission and they are doing their job.

Mrs EDWARDES: Can we have their names?

Dr Watson: No.

Mrs EDWARDES: In that case, we do not know who these public servants are, but we do know that the person responsible at the Public Service Commission is Dr Michael Wood, the greatest parachute artist of all. What was his link with the ALP previously? We know that when he was at university he had a close relationship with the ALP. We also know about the close links that the people at WIRE have with the ALP. What sort of inquiry is being conducted? The Opposition wants an independent inquiry to get the answers. At present the Opposition is not getting any answers. An inquiry should leave no doubt in anyone's mind that this sort of thing will not occur again.

The Opposition wants to know why this happened, the relationship that exists between the two organisations and who will accept responsibility. Not only do the Liberal members on this side of the House want to know why the report has not yet been made available, but also the Independent members of this House are concerned about what is happening. We have on the Notice Paper a motion which calls on the Government to table in Parliament a full report of the current investigations, both the internal investigation and the Public Service Commission investigation, in order that the public is fully informed on this matter and the Parliament is in a better position to take appropriate action. The reason the Opposition wants the report tabled in this Parliament by next Thursday is that members will have time to research it and debate it in this House before the recess. If the Government has any feelings for the people who have lost their money and their confidence, that is the right thing to do. Those women have been ripped off because this Government, which supposedly stands up for women's interests, allowed a special relationship to develop and deals to be made for its friends. It is a further indication of what this Government is doing. Time and time again this Government allows special relationships to develop and time and time again the Government falls into a heap and now it cannot even present a report of the Public Service Commission's inquiry, with such limited terms of reference, to this Parliament. The inquiry has had six weeks to prepare its report and now we are not even told what matters need further investigation.

Mr MacKinnon: She will not even tell us who is doing it.

Mr Minson: If she ignores it, it will go away!

Mrs EDWARDES: It will not go away, because Opposition members will not allow that to happen. We refuse to allow this special relationship and these deals to be pushed under the carpet and a whitewash done. We will not allow people in this State to be ripped off, not only financially, but also in relation to their future wellbeing.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They are being misled by this Government.

Mrs EDWARDES: They were misled by this Government, by the Women's Information and Referral Exchange, and by the many people who felt they were doing the right thing.

Mr Ripper: First you ask to read the report and now it seems that you want to write it.

Mrs EDWARDES: That is a damned good idea. The Government should appoint some people to carry out an independent inquiry, and many people are available who could carry out such an inquiry.

Mr MacKinnon: What is the Minister trying to cover up? Who is the Minister trying to protect?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kingsley cannot be heard.

Dr Watson: She can be heard only too clearly!

Mrs EDWARDES: I am pleased that the Minister is listening to me because, if she does so, she will understand that we want some answers and we do not accept her statement that a date cannot be set for producing this report before Parliament rises on 13 June. The Opposition wants a copy of that report and it will not let this matter rest. The people in the

community want to know what happened. If the Minister is interested in attending a meeting to be held in the next few weeks, she should come along and speak to these people because I am sure they would like to speak to her.

The Opposition has asked for a copy of the report, and on one occasion the Minister for Women's Interests said that, although the full report would not be made available to the public, the Government would detail its findings and any Government action prompted by the report. However, no interim report will be issued indicating which matters have been investigated, what facts have been uncovered, the areas of concern which require further investigation, how long that further investigation will take, and when the report will be brought to the Parliament and the findings made public. Why has that information not been made available? By not issuing an interim report the Government gives rise to further questions and adds to those already unanswered. Members of the community will want even more answers from the Government. They want to know about the special relationship and why a privileged position was given to the Western Women group. The Minister said on one occasion that WIRE provided the names of three advisers its clients could consult. If that is the case, who were the other investment advisers?

Dr Watson: You will read that in the report when it is made public.

Mrs EDWARDES: When will it be made public?

Dr Watson: As soon as possible.

Mrs EDWARDES: I have no doubt that it will be made public after 14 June, the day after Parliament rises.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I thought the Government was going to be accountable?

Mrs EDWARDES: There is no accountability because not only are the terms of reference of this inquiry very limited -

Mr Ripper: What is not accountable about carrying out the inquiry properly, making further investigations and preparing a report?

Mrs EDWARDES: Can the Government inform us of the date when the report will be available?

Mr Ripper: Is it only the date you are concerned about?

Mrs EDWARDES: That is not the only area of concern. What other matters needed further investigation and clarification?

Mr Ripper: When you have read the report you may be able to comment on that issue.

Mrs EDWARDES: But when will we receive that report? I can assure the Government that the Opposition will make sure that a full copy of the report is brought before this Parliament.

Mr P.J. Smith: We will, too.

Mrs EDWARDES: No, the Government will not.

Dr Watson: The Minister said yesterday, the day before, and again today that the full report will be made public.

Mrs EDWARDES: In what connection is further information required?

Dr Watson: You will see when you read the report.

Mrs EDWARDES: Does it relate to the special relationship?

Dr Watson: No, it does not.

Mrs EDWARDES: Does it relate to the fact that the Government finds itself in a dilemma and it does not know what to do about it? Does it relate to the fact that the Government does not know what plan it will adopt after the report is made public?

Dr Watson: You will see when you read the report. Some questions were left unanswered.

Mr Court: If it were a truly independent report, it would not have been sent back for further clarification. When a report is independent, it is received and that is the end of it. This inquiry is not independent.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is obviously not an independent inquiry because it is being conducted

by the Public Service Commission, and it involves two public servants and the administrator of WIRE. That information was provided in the Government's Press release. The public servants conducting the inquiry are doing their job but we do not know who they are and, therefore, we do not know whether they have the close links with the Australian Labor Party that other public servants at that level have had in the past.

Mr Shave: They probably have Robin Greenburg as an adviser!

Mrs EDWARDES: Under which alias? This Parliament wants to know why the Western Women group had a very special relationship with WIRE, why it was given a privileged position, what was that position, whether this close relationship has been highlighted in the report - of which we do not have a copy - and which other matters need further clarification. The Public Service Commission should have been given a date by which to report. Since a report has been handed to the Cabinet, as a result of the investigations carried out to date, surely it should be possible for the commission to indicate how long it will take to obtain the further answers sought. Assuming that more time is needed to investigate certain matters, there is no reason why this Parliament could not be given an interim report before Parliament rises, together with an indication of the matters needing further clarification. It would be acceptable to the Opposition if an interim report were provided so that the public and the Parliament were given an opportunity to debate the issue.

I have received numerous telephone calls and letters relating to this matter, as I am sure other members have. I know that the member for Ashburton has taken a keen interest in this matter, as she has received a number of telephone calls and letters in connection with it. A public meeting will be held in the next couple of weeks and I am sure it will be attended by the hundreds of women and men who have been put into their present situation by the Government's support for the Western Women group.

Mr Court: Investors who listen to the Government have had a rough time; they were told first to invest in Rothwells and then to invest with this mob.

Mrs EDWARDES: Certainly the Government does not have a good record on investment advice. The Government supported WIRE and the Western Women group. It allowed that group to publicly declare that it had close links with the Government. It did not take any action in that regard. We in this Parliament want a copy of that report before Parliament rises. In the event that the complete report is not available, because other matters need further clarification, we want an interim report to be provided but not in the last five minutes of the session. We want the opportunity to debate the report. We will not accept this Government's delaying the tabling of that report or making it public until such time as it is too late to debate the matter and it will have to wait until August.

Mr MacKinnon: Do you know why it is being delayed? Because they do not trust the Minister to debate it in this House, in the same way as they do not trust the member for Marangaroo to say anything.

Mrs EDWARDES: Not if she will be talking about "sleeps", that is for sure! I have a letter from a person who has lost money with this group in which a number of questions are highlighted, as follows -

I would like to know -

WHY a Select Committee has not been formed for the investigation.

Why the review does not include all depositors.

WHY WWFS were given an office within WIRE, when no other financial institution had this access. I have since discovered at least two other bodies have a women's specialist area.

WHY women attending WIRE were not advised to seek second opinions in regard to the investing of their total life savings.

I hark back here to the pensioner couple in my area who lost \$186 000. It is absolutely amazing that this Government is not prepared to allow the reasons why that happened to be published so that these people will know why they lost \$186 000 because of the special relationship that Western Women had with WIRE. The letter continues -

What steps are being taken by WIRE to counsel the women in regard to the emotional and financial stress they have had forced on to them.

What involvement the Government had in setting up this group of companies.

Why Western Women were purporting to be the Government's private arm in the representing of Women's Affairs.

Mr Lewis: What kickback did they get?

Mrs EDWARDES: The secret commissions! The questions continue -

Will the results of the outcome be made available to the general public.

We know they may be made available at some stage in the future, but we do not know what and when. We certainly do not know why it is being delayed at this time.

Mr Shave: Have we been told whether Western Women funded the Labor Party?

Mrs EDWARDES: We have not been told that, either. The last question in the letter highlights the dilemma in which the Government finds itself, because if there were any secret commissions or special, close relationships between WIRE and Western Women then this question is relevant -

What action the Government is taking to recompense all depositors.

Those questions are left unanswered. We want to know the answers. We want the final report or an interim report tabled in this Parliament so that the matter can be debated properly in the Parliament, where it ought to be debated. We want matters that need further clarification highlighted. We want to know what has happened, what the Government has found out and what further information it is seeking. We want that information here in the Parliament. The public have an absolute right to know this information as they are the ones who have lost their money, their life's savings in some instances, along with their confidence and self-esteem.

**MR FRED TUBBY** (Roleystone) [11.56 am]: I intend to raise three issues during my contribution to this debate on the Supply Bill. They relate to the Education portfolio in the school renewal document which has been published, disadvantaged schools, and what is happening with maintenance and upgrading of schools. When the Minister announced the committee associated with the school renewal document towards the end of last year I thought the name was a real misnomer. The whole community of Western Australia realised at the time the committee was appointed that it had nothing to do with renewal and everything to do with school closures. The report that came down was a general one, most of it relating to the establishment of procedures to be followed when a school is to be closed and the consultative process to take place at that time.

The consultative process to take place is a rather new initiative for the Government because whenever it has consulted previously with local communities or industry groups that has amounted to Government representatives presenting the Government's proposals and saying, "This is what will happen. Discuss it." That is consultation! There has been no input into the initial process of consultation. The one and only good point in the report was the fact that a clear consultation process has been laid down to be followed in the community and in the ministry. A number of initiatives could be followed regarding the amalgamation of schools, the closure of junior primary schools, and a whole range of other proposals that have been discussed in our party forum and in the community for many years.

The school closure process is not a new one; it has been going on for 50 years. The first school I attended - in "standard 1" in those days - closed after six months. I spent the next nine and a half years travelling 30 kilometres to school on a bus over gravel roads, which was quite an experience. That process has continued ever since we have had State schools, and I see no alternative to that happening. The Government realises this and is trying to find a process, if possible, whereby we can all agree that certain schools must be closed. Populations die away and populations of schools shrink to an extent where not only is it uneconomic to continue operating those schools, but also it is not in the best educational interests of the children attending those schools. Such decisions have been made for many years and will continue to be made. However, when making those decisions a number of matters must be taken into account, particularly in country areas.

The point has been reached with country schools where the communities are further and further apart and where we must seriously consider maintaining nearly all small country

schools because the bus distances to schools at the larger centres are becoming quite horrendous. The only alternative to long bus journeys for small children, sometimes in extremes of temperature, in many of these areas is for them to become part of distance education, which is an expensive option for the State. Therefore we must look seriously at country areas before we consider closing any more schools. The communities in those areas are becoming too isolated, and a school closure has a tremendous impact on the economic conditions in the towns, particularly those under stress at present.

We see changes in density of population related to urban renewal in the metropolitan area. We also see demographic changes due to ageing populations in certain areas where the school populations drop. However, 10 or 15 years later the whole population changes and we see young families moving into these areas and a renewed need for the schools. When considering closing schools in the metropolitan area we must look a long way into the future. We must look at our planning processes and all of the available statistics in an endeavour to decide, with the wisdom of Solomon, whether a school may be required in 20 years' time. This is a difficult proposition. Many ramifications need to be taken into consideration. Quite often it is not fair to place the responsibility to make these decisions, which this report tends to do, on local communities in both country and metropolitan areas.

They are planning and economic considerations and a range of others which really need to be taken into account by a responsible Government. It is a nonsense for the report to state that when a school is closed, the money raised from the sale of that asset will be used within the local school community. That school may be an old school with a decreasing population, in an area where most of the schools have been refurbished or rebuilt, and in that case it would not be equitable to spend the money on the schools in that area. I believe this recommendation is included as a sweetener for the local community, and that in reality it will not work because there are other areas where the schools cannot be closed but are deteriorating and need money spent on them. I believe that if a school needs to have money spent on it, that should be done, regardless of whether another school has been closed within the local community. The money raised from the sale of a particular school should go into consolidated revenue and be used where the need is the greatest, for the benefit of the people in that community.

It disappoints me greatly that the report does not state any agreed criteria for closing a school. That matter has been left very vague and open for discussion. However, when we leave things open for discussion like that, we create a situation whereby a community may fight and be successful in having its school remain open, and a school in a community which may not be fighting quite as hard may have its school closed. There is no equity in that process. We need an agreed set of criteria which will apply across the metropolitan area, and another agreed set of criteria which will apply across country areas. I do not know what that agreed set of criteria should be, but it could include the criterion that when a school population drops below a certain number of children - for example, in the country it may be below 10 - we must consider closing that school. In the metropolitan area the criterion may be when a school population gets to one-third of the permanent facilities which are established on that site. The committee consulted a wide range of people all over the State and should have been able to come up with a set of criteria which everyone could accept, so that we would all know that when a school situation met those criteria, there was a problem and something had to be done.

I am also disappointed that the report did not establish a time frame from when a decision is made to close a school to the actual time of closure of the school. Is the time frame to be six weeks - as was the case with the Carmel school, where the closure was announced in the House and the school was closed within six weeks - or six months or 12 months? It should be stated in the Act that when a school is to be closed, the community must be given a full 12 months' notice of that closure. That would allow the community to make alternative arrangements, and if parents were not satisfied with the arrangements the Government had set up for their children they could transfer their children to another public school, or to a private school, and if all else failed they could sell their homes and move to another location where they would be satisfied with the school conditions. If parents were given at least 12 months' notice that would take a lot of the heat out of the argument, and would take pressure off the community and also off the Government. I do not believe we are any closer now to resolving the situation in a lot of our country towns and in a lot of our urban schools than we were before the report was written. The Government stands condemned for that.

I turn now to disadvantaged or priority schools. I do not know how many members are aware that a disadvantaged school is a school which exists in a very low socioeconomic area. That may be an area where there are a lot of single parent families, or large migrant or Aboriginal populations, or it may be an area in an extremely remote location. The funding for disadvantaged schools comes from the Commonwealth Government, and is given to the Ministry for Education which determines which schools will be priority or disadvantaged schools and allocates funding to those schools. There is no doubt that that funding is much needed in these priority schools because they do not have the capacity within their local communities to be paid fees or to raise funds through the P & C associations, which would be the case in most other schools in the State. Those schools deserve the funding, but in order to obtain that funding the staff are put under a great deal of pressure because they must make comprehensive submissions to the Ministry of Education. In order to prepare those submissions there must be a great deal of consultation with the local community, and a great deal of work must be put in by the staff because the submissions must be presented in a very professional manner.

Some of the programs which are undertaken in disadvantaged schools are within the normal school curriculum, but many of them are not; therefore, the teachers in those schools must undertake a range of functions in addition to their normal teaching functions. Teachers in schools which are not disadvantaged or priority schools would not must undertake those functions, nor prepare submissions. The teachers in those schools also have to continually monitor the programs to ensure that they are achieving their objectives. At the end of the year, they must evaluate the programs and present a report stating that the money has been well and truly spent; which objectives have been met; which objectives have not been met, and what they intend to do about that next year. Therefore, as members can imagine, an enormous amount of work goes into the operation of the priority school program. That is work which those teachers undertake willingly; but it is not undertaken in any other school. Despite that additional work load, those schools do not receive any additional staff. We must remember that these schools are in low socioeconomic areas and that the teachers in these schools have a great many responsibilities which do not exist in other schools. These schools require assistance from the State Government. The State must provide additional teachers so that these teachers do not have to work themselves to the bone for absolutely no additional financial reward.

I have first hand experience of that situation because I have taught in and been a principal of a disadvantaged school. My wife has been teaching at a disadvantaged or priority school for six and a half years, and I know the amount of work she has had to do in that time which she never had to do previously in the other schools in which she taught. That is not just the situation with my wife's work load or at her school; it occurs at all priority schools. The union has approached the Minister about this matter, and the Minister has said that no finance is available and that if schools wish to have additional staff to alleviate the burden, then all teachers must forgo their pay rises. It is not fair of the Minister to use the children and the staff at these schools as bargaining chips in wage cases. Teachers, like everyone else in the community, deserve those pay rises; they have been awarded to them, and they are entitled to receive them. Is a very cynical exercise on the part of the Minister to say that teachers cannot have those pay rises if they want additional staffing in priority schools.

The Government should stand condemned because it is a Government which is supposed to represent the unions. It is supposed to represent the workers. Imagine what would happen if a conservative Minister made that sort of statement! He would be hung, drawn and quartered by every union in the State and by the Labor Party in Opposition, but the Minister seems to be getting away with making deals like that.

These are two separate issues. If teachers warrant a pay increase and it is granted, they get it. The other issue is, do priority schools require additional staffing because of their particular circumstances? I say that they do. The teachers working in those schools say that they do. The union says that they do. The Minister acknowledges that they should, but she wants to make deals on the issue. I realise that the State is not in a very good financial position. I realise that we will be going into deficit. I realise the Government has paid \$50 million out of this year's Budget to help out with the Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd losses. I realise it has spent another \$16 million on the old Swan Brewery which will be demolished and it will go to nothing. It is a question of priorities. Is the Government continually to waste

taxpayers' money on failed ventures such as the PICL plant and the existing situation at the Swan Brewery, and deny disadvantaged and priority schools the facilities and the opportunities they deserve?

It is not that the funds are not there. The Minister and the Government stand condemned for getting their priorities in the wrong order. The Government must rethink where it is going and what it is there to do. It is there to provide good educational opportunities for the children in priority schools. It is not there to work the teachers to death so that they are therefore unable to provide opportunities for the children in those schools who are already suffering a disadvantage. I urge the Government, with the passage of this Supply Bill, to give very serious consideration to providing additional staff to our priority schools, whether they are in the country or in the city.

The next issue is the maintenance and the upgrading of our schools. The regular maintenance and the fault rectification work in our schools now has gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. I do not know whether members of the Government receive the same sorts of complaints that I do. I do not get them from my electorate alone; I receive a copy of every letter which goes to the Minister from every other school in the State. I have drawers and drawers of letters from schools which cannot have simple maintenance and refurbishment needs addressed.

Let us consider graffiti. I went to one of my schools and graffiti was all over the walls. The Building Management Authority sent somebody out to look at it. He said it was not bad enough; the BMA would not touch it. While I was there the principal told me that the same person went to another school that he knows of, and the four letter "F" word was among all the other graffiti.

Mr Kierath: That is one of the schools in my electorate.

Mr FRED TUBBY: Is it? And what did they do?

Mr Kierath: They took the first letter out and left the other three.

Mr FRED TUBBY: That is because they are doing only 25 per cent of the maintenance.

Several members interjected.

Mr FRED TUBBY: That is absolutely ridiculous!

Mr Kierath: That is the art program, is it?

Mr FRED TUBBY: We were told they would rectify only 25 per cent of the faults, but we did not believe that a worker from the BMA would spend half an hour driving out to a school in the member for Riverton's electorate and instead of taking out the entire obscene word, take out only 25 per cent - the "F". What happens next? A smart kid comes along and fills in the crossword, so we are back to the same ridiculous situation. That is what is happening in our schools. Members might laugh, but it creates a problem for the teachers, parents and children at those schools.

Mr Kierath: It brings the graffiti out in other people.

Mr FRED TUBBY: Exactly. Not only that, but we allow our children to go into these schools. Teachers and parents are working very hard trying to encourage acceptable standards. We are continually receiving criticism from the community that the standards in our State schools are falling. How on earth can we achieve decent standards when our kids are confronted every time they go into the schools with this graffiti? They think that what is painted all over the walls in their schools is acceptable. They look at it before school, during recess, at lunch and after school. A subliminal message is being presented to them that no matter what we say about standards, however much we encourage high standards, what we are really saying is that anything goes. I do not think we should be encouraging that sort of attitude in our schools.

I asked in a question on notice to the Minister, how many schools at last week were reported to have graffiti which needed removal? The Minister's response was, 153 schools. Those 153 schools are to be done in the 1991-92 maintenance budget. I can tell members that the 1991-92 maintenance budget will be no more than the 1990-91 maintenance budget, because the economy of this State is getting to the stage where the Government has no extra funds to provide. I cannot see that there will be enough money to do all of the 1991-92 maintenance

plus the backlog of 153 schools to last week left over from last year's budget. The situation is ridiculous.

In some of the classrooms half the globes and fluorescent tubes are blown and the children are working in the half dark. The BMA will not replace the bulbs or the tubes. I thought this story was ridiculous until it happened in my office. About six weeks ago some of the tubes blew, and my secretary could not see what she was doing. She rang the BMA and was told, "We are not replacing fluorescent tubes any more." She said, "I beg your pardon?" They said, "We are not replacing fluorescent tubes any more; we do not have any money." She said, "But I cannot see to work my typewriter, I cannot work in the office." The reply was, "That doesn't matter; your only option is to ring the Premier's department and get an order." If she got a local purchase order from the Premier's department, the BMA said they might consider coming out to fix the tubes. She rang the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, and I tell members what! Because of the publicity the Government would get out of this the ministry could not give us an order quick enough to replace the tubes in my office!

Mr Minson: It is a wonder they did not send a box of carrots!

Mr FRED TUBBY: That is right! Unfortunately, all the 750 schools in the State do not have the same access to the media that I have. They cannot complain that the children sitting in the classrooms cannot see the blackboard because half the lights are missing. Sooner or later those lights will have to be replaced. When will that be done? In next year's Budget? Next year's Budget will have to be a monstrous one for maintenance. It will have to be treble what it was last year.

I put questions on notice to the Minister on 1 May regarding heaters. Members may remember that last year some heaters blew up in Albany and other places. I asked the Minister, "Have all gas heaters in schools in the State received their annual maintenance check prior to the winter months commencing?" It is now the end of May, 30 days later, and I still have no response to that question. That indicates to me that the Government has not maintained those heaters; they have not received their annual maintenance inspection. If they had, the Minister would have been able to say that they had. I asked in that question also, "If you have not, how many schools have not been inspected?" I have waited 30 days and I have had absolutely no response to that very simple question. I suspect the answer is that the schools have not received their annual maintenance inspection on their gas heaters which last year were blowing up because they did not receive last year's annual maintenance inspection. We are putting our children at risk because this Government sees priorities other than spending money on maintenance.

I come now to videos, audio visual equipment and computers. They are breaking down in the schools and collecting dust. Parents and citizens' associations have invested an enormous amount of money in these machines and they are breaking down to become dust collectors. They are not being used for the purpose for which they were intended. The only way schools can have their computers repaired is to pay for it themselves. If they send the money to the Building Management Authority with the computer or agree to pay for it once it is fixed, it will be fixed. What does that tell you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Donovan)? It tells me that we have people sitting in the electronics section of the BMA doing absolutely nothing because these computers are not being repaired unless the schools can pay for it. Those people are going crazy because they do not get any work.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Minister for Construction said two months ago that he was going to close down the BMA. They now have four months left, and we await developments with interest.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I believe these people would prefer the BMA to be closed down rather than do nothing, waiting for some school which is affluent enough to get its own machines fixed. In this climate that is ridiculous. Why should people sit there, doing nothing, while machines in schools need repairs? It does not seem logical, for the sake of the cost of a bit of transportation.

I turn now to refurbishment within the maintenance area. Every time I ask questions about maintenance and long term refurbishments I receive answers about the cleaning of gutters and soak wells, or about a magnificent new administration block which has been established at a school; I cannot get information about old school buildings and when they were last



repaired and repainted. I am beginning to suspect that nobody in the Ministry of Education or the BMA has any idea of the number of schools in this State which have not been repainted or repaired for over 10 years. I put some questions on notice to the Minister representing the Minister for Education, particularly in relation to the Eneabba Primary School, whose buildings are an absolute disgrace. This school is not in my electorate, but I called in there recently when I was passing by. New buildings were built at the school in 1977-78 - I know that, because my father opened them - but the school had a building there at that time which was old then. It is now 12 or 13 years older and members can imagine what it looks like. I tried to find out exactly when that school was last refurbished. I asked a question about the school and the first answer I received was that some minor works were undertaken in 1988-89. I did not ask that question, but that was the answer I received. I then asked a question in a slightly different form, and received an answer that in 1977-78 three new classrooms, one general purpose room, one staff room and a student toilet block were installed at the school. However, I did not ask what new works had been done but when maintenance was last done on the old building. I still did not receive the answer, so I will pose the question again. I suspect the Government does not know the answer.

I also put some questions on notice to the Minister for Construction asking how many schools were constructed before 1981 and are still in operation today. I have the numbers - there are 53 district high schools, 26 education support schools, 494 primary schools, and 77 high and senior high schools. I then asked how many of the schools in these separate categories have not been repaired or repainted since 1981. The response in each case was, "I refer the member to my response to question 775." I could not wait to see the answer to question 775; I was really holding my breath because I thought it would give me the answer. However, this was the response to question 775 -

- (1) A search of records back to 1981 would take considerable time and resources. As this would impinge on normal operations, I am not prepared to allocate these resources.

The questions appear to infer that schools built since 1981 should have received a complete repaint and repair.

That is damned right, they should have. The answer continues -

This cyclic approach is wasteful and results in unnecessary work being carried out.

What an absolute and utter nonsense! I had also asked what would be the estimated total cost of undertaking this backlog in the coming financial year, and the answer to that question was -

- (2) The total preventative maintenance needs for schools and associated State education facilities is \$37 million.

What an absolute nonsense! I will continue to pursue this matter and will ask questions, school by school, until I receive the answers I want, because we need to know what are our liabilities in the way of capital works in the schools in this State.

**MR KIERATH** (Riverton) [12.26 pm]: I want to raise several issues during this debate on the Supply Bill. One such matter concerns an issue raised yesterday by the Leader of the House, the member for Armadale, on the matter of privilege; another matter is something that same member said on 19 March this year, and I will quote him. He was referring to a researcher on the staff of the Leader of the Opposition and, in his true style in this House of drawing red herrings across the trail, he made some outrageous accusations against that person. The Leader of the House said at that time -

The fact is that amongst the documents the police investigation turned up regarding the ANM was one that revealed that a research officer on the staff of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr David Parker - not our David Parker - was on the mailing list of the Australian Nationalist Movement. If he was not a member, why was he on their mailing list? What did Mr Parker pay to get onto the mailing list of the ANM? What contribution did he make?

Do members see the style there of the Leader of the House, asking semi-questions to try to create some sort of illusion that this person was involved?

Mr Pearce: It is true, too.

Mr KIERATH: I ask the Leader of the House how on earth he knew what was involved in the police investigation in the first place. That is the first question we should ask: How does a Minister of the Crown come to know these things? Secondly, to make such outrageous accusations about a member of the staff of the Leader of the Opposition -

Mr Pearce: It is true - now say what you said.

Several members interjected.

Mr KIERATH: I will come to mine in a moment. I thought what was said at the time was rather unusual, so I took the liberty of providing that person with a copy of *Hansard* and asked him to comment, which he did, and his comments make very interesting reading. In a letter to me dated 25 March he writes -

Thank you for your communication with respect to the comments of the Leader of the House, and Member for Armadale, Mr Pearce.

I have to say from the outset -

And this is important; the letter continues -

- that in no way did I ever consent to, or indeed even solicit, material to be sent to me by the Australian Nationalist Movement -

Mr Pearce: He did get those things from the Australian Nationalist Movement.

Several members interjected.

Mr KIERATH: I will come to that in a moment, because that is what he thinks happened, too. He thinks someone over there put him on the list, too.

Several members interjected.

Mr KIERATH: The Leader of the House should listen. He had a go at this person and should at least have the decency to listen to what is said in reply, because the Leader of the House will find how offensive it is from his point of view for someone even to suggest such a thing. The letter went on -

- a discredited organisation I have no time for, and whose principles and modus operandi I totally reject.

There are no ifs, buts or maybes; he totally rejects them. The letter continues -

As one who has many friends of different nationalities, these unsavoury comments can reflect only upon the maturity of the Leader of the House.

Furthermore, I do hope that given the Premier's commitment to improving the standards of debate in the Western Australian Parliament, -

This is interesting, because these are the same things members opposite raise time and time again, and the Leader of the House is the worst offender in this place. The letter continues -

- appropriate action will be taken by her to ensure that disciplinary measures will be instituted against the Leader of the House so as to ensure that this behaviour is not repeated.

Mrs Beggs: Did you write this letter for him?

Mr KIERATH: No, this came from him personally. He was very offended by the Leader of the House's remarks. If the Minister for Transport knew that person, she would know how offended he was by those remarks.

#### *Point of Order*

Mr MINSON: A private citizen of this State is being impugned by members opposite and the member for Riverton is attempting to use the only way that person has to make reply to some pretty solid things that were said by the Leader of the House. I believe members opposite ought to sit there and at least let these things be put on the record and let the rest of us hear, because what the Leader of the House did is disgusting, and what he is doing now is equally disgusting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is certainly no point of order, other than that possibly some of the interjections might have been a little intrusive.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr KIERATH: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is quite right: The Leader of the House unashamedly stood up in this place and attacked a Western Australian who was doing nothing else but his best. It was outrageous, scurrilous and typical of the member.

Mr Pearce: It was true; he did not deny that he was on the mailing list.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's point has been made. As soon as the member started again, the level of interjections rose to an unacceptable level. It is impossible to hear what is going on. Perhaps if the member addressed his remarks to the Chair and Government members contained their enthusiasm, we might get through this in an orderly fashion.

Mr KIERATH: In typical fashion members opposite do a hatchet job on a person, but they are not prepared to sit and listen to what that person has to say. The member for Greenough was right when he said the only opportunity a person has to reply to such outrageous allegations and to a character assassination is through this Bill.

Mr Pearce: He has admitted he was on the mailing list; he made no attempt to get off that list.

Mr KIERATH: If the member would listen he would hear that he does not admit to being on the mailing list.

Mr Pearce: I know that he is on the mailing list, and I know that he has received mail.

Mr KIERATH: David Parker said -

I have to say from the outset that in no way did I ever consent to, or indeed even solicit, material to be sent to me by the Australian Nationalist Movement . . .

And further on -

I certainly hope that other members of the community are not being subjected to such scurrilous and vindictive attacks from this desperate Government, well and truly in retreat following the commencement of the Royal Commission in to their scandalous activities.

Therein lies the truth. This Government is being held accountable; its actions are being questioned. In true fashion Government members launch a counterattack by trying to carry out a character assassination on a person who is unable to reply. He goes on -

I was also concerned to hear that the Leader of the House has obtained access to documents seized by the Western Australian Police in their investigations into this discredited group.

Mr Pearce: That is not true!

Mr KIERATH: To continue -

I would be grateful if you could follow up with the Minister for Police and the Attorney General as to whether it is common practice for Government members, and indeed Ministers of the Crown in unrelated portfolios to be given access to material obtain by Police in the course of their investigations.

Perhaps the Leader of the House would care to tell this House how he got hold of that information.

Mr Pearce: Certainly. The fact of the matter is that the person was then the President of the Guild of Undergraduates. When he left that office the ANM mail continued to be sent to the guild; it had to be sent to him personally. He made that arrangement himself. That is how I knew. Any other questions?

Mr KIERATH: I will quote *Hansard*. It says, "... amongst the documents the police investigation turned up." How did the Leader of the House get access to that information? I did not ask the Leader of the House about what went on with the Guild of Undergraduates. I asked him how he got access to police information.

Mr Pearce: I did not have access; the fact is -

Mr KIERATH: You said that in *Hansard*! How did you get access to that information?

Mr Pearce: The police seized the mailing list for the ANM when they raided that organisation. A police officer told me that in a private conversation. I was aware that Mr Parker was on the mailing list, or would have received mail.

Mr KIERATH: How were you aware of the police information?

Mr Pearce: I have told you that! When the police seized all of the ANM documentation, including the mailing list, the police officer involved told me that in a private conversation outside a Blue Light disco in Kelmscott last year. I knew they had the mailing list, for that reason. I can deduct things, my friend. From two separate pieces of information I can put together a conclusion which is true. That is something you cannot do!

Mr KIERATH: The Leader of the House has just stated that he can deduct things and put together conclusions to bring them to this House. Yet, yesterday he went on about people putting up evidence. He has double standards - one for himself and one for everyone else. David Parker flatly denied ever being on that mailing list. He went further than that in a conversation with me; he said that if he were on the mailing list, someone else would have put him there. He said that as he has enough enemies on the other side of the House he would not put it past them to have the temerity to put him on the mailing list in order to discredit his character.

Mr Pearce: That shows how you can't think. On the one hand he says he is not on the mailing list and, on the other hand, the Labor Party must have put him there. The statements cannot both be true.

Mr KIERATH: I asked him that question. I said that the member for Armadale claims that he is on the list -

Mr Pearce: And he was.

Mr KIERATH: He said that absolutely no way, through his actions, was he on the list. That is important. I asked him: How could you get on the mailing list? How is it possible that your name was on the list? I asked him, as he was a research officer with the office of the Leader of the Opposition, could it be that someone had written to him and as a result he had written back?

Mr Pearce: Did you ask him whether he received ANM literature? Did you ask him that question?

Mr KIERATH: He said no, he did not.

Mr Pearce: So the stuff forwarded to him personally from the Guild of Undergraduates never reached him? He should complain to Australia Post, in that case.

Mr KIERATH: He has never solicited or made any attempt to be on the mailing list. When I asked him how on earth his name could be - if it is - on the mailing list his answer was that he could only say that someone put his name on the list. During the whole time he has said that he never had any contact with the Australian Nationalist Movement. The member for Armadale came into this House and launched an attack on David Parker's character. I believe that David Parker has done everything asked of him to clear the record. At least the member for Armadale could have the decency to say that he was wrong.

Mr Pearce: Go back and ask him about stuff forwarded from the Guild of Undergraduates. If the member wants to bring another statutory declaration on the matter we will be interested to see it.

Mr KIERATH: The member well knows that Mr Parker was not on the staff of the Leader of the Opposition at the same time that Mr Parker was at the Guild for Undergraduates.

Mr Pearce: Is that your defence now?

Mr KIERATH: No. I am pointing out that the member for Armadale is trying to take two unrelated ideas and piece them together.

Mr Pearce: Do not try to be a defence lawyer. Do not take up the law; you are not suited for it. Let us hear about your statutory declaration and the personal attack you launched on people. I give a warning about the consequences of not telling the truth, before you start on your defence.

Mr KIERATH: I wish the member would take his own warning. Once again he distorts the truth; he does not even have the courage to tell the truth.

Mr Pearce: You tell the truth now! I am not telling hearsay stories about this.

Mr KIERATH: I will come to that. I will read from yesterday's *Hansard*. I realise it is uncorrected and maybe the member will wish to make a few changes, particularly before 4 o'clock. I had to sit here yesterday and bite my tongue -

*Point of Order*

Mr PEARCE: I have corrected that speech in *Hansard*. I correct *Hansard* as soon as I receive the copy. I corrected that one yesterday afternoon, so I am not seeking to make any changes to it that have not already been made. It is a fact that the member is not entitled to quote daily *Hansard*. The member should get the corrected version. I have no problem with his sending one of his troops to ask *Hansard* for a corrected copy to quote. I stand by all the things I have said, and I will prove them, if necessary, in a moment or two. As a matter of general principle, members ought to know they are not entitled to quote the daily *Hansard*.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: On this matter, the Leader of the House is correct; it is not in order to quote the uncorrected daily *Hansard*. Several precedents exist for that. The question raised itself as soon as the member said he would quote the daily *Hansard*.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr KIERATH: I have not quoted the uncorrected daily *Hansard*. To prove my point, I will direct a couple of questions to the Leader of the House. Yesterday, did the Leader of the House claim that police investigators came to see the member for Riverton and asked what he knew about the matter? Did he claim that the member for Riverton first refused to produce the statutory declaration that he claimed to have, and that he refused to name the person who had allegedly given him the statutory declaration?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member is very close to actually quoting the material, although I do not have a copy in front of me. Also, it is not in order to question a member across the Chamber. If a member wishes to direct his remarks to another member, he should do so through the Chair. The member is drawing a fine line between quotation and taking up the offer from the Leader of the House to refer to the general sense of his comments. If the member crosses that line, he will be out of order.

Mr Pearce: Just tell the story.

Mr KIERATH: Even before I get to my feet, the Leader of the House is interjecting. I will not quote the allegations he made. However, he said that a police investigator came to see me about a statutory declaration. He is wrong. It was not a policeman, but a chief superintendent, or someone of that rank, from internal affairs who came to see me.

Mr Pearce: That is a policeman.

Mr KIERATH: Okay, the officer came to see me and said that he had received complaints from a former councillor, Rod Evans, that the statutory declaration was defamatory. The officer did not come to investigate the content of the declaration. I had not forwarded those complaints at the request of the people involved. After I raised the issue in Parliament the people who made the statutory declaration received threatening and abusive telephone calls. They were scared out of their wits.

Mr Taylor: Here we go.

Mr KIERATH: Members opposite do not want to listen to the truth. These people were scared out of their wits, and they asked me not to forward the document to the police - I was going to send it to the Corruption Commission. The officer said that he received a complaint from former councillor Rod Evans that the statutory declaration was defamatory.

Mr Pearce: You refused to produce it.

Mr KIERATH: No; where does the Leader of the House obtain his information? In a private conversation with the officer of the Police Force he did not ask me to provide any further information about the content of the statutory declaration because he did not come to investigate that. Contrary to what was claimed by the Leader of the House, I asked the officer specifically whether that was what he had come to investigate. He said he was not

interested in the content of the statutory declaration; he was inquiring about a complaint from Rod Evans.

Mr Pearce: What about?

Mr KIERATH: Is it not amazing that the Leader of the House is sailing close to the wind in choosing to twist and distort things to suit his purposes, just as he did with the Australian Nationalists Movement debate and the one regarding a former staff member of the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Pearce: Will you confirm the matters I raised yesterday?

Mr KIERATH: The member said that the police came to investigate the matter, but that was not their brief. Wherever he obtained his information - perhaps I should ask - it was wrong.

Mr Pearce: Perhaps you should ask the police.

Mr KIERATH: They did not investigate the matter raised.

Mr Pearce: What did they investigate?

Mr KIERATH: They were investigating a complaint. For the third or fourth time I indicate - the Leader of the House needs to wash out his ears - that they were investigating whether the statutory declaration was defamatory.

Mr Pearce: Why would the police investigate a civil matter regarding whether a person has been defamed?

Mr KIERATH: They had received a complaint from Rod Evans.

Mr Pearce: They hadn't.

Mr KIERATH: The member of the Police Force said to me that he received a complaint from former councillor Rod Evans and that he was following it up. I told the police officer exactly what I intended to do.

On 15 January and 20 February of this year two further people made contact with the people who produced those statutory declarations to indicate that the Press reports were absolutely right and that they had given two further details of involvement. At long last I met in recent weeks with the couple involved. I asked them whether they were prepared to let me forward the information to the Corruption Commission. At long last they have decided not to worry about the threatening telephone calls and are now prepared to forward the information.

Mr Pearce: Move on to the part about the detective sergeant.

Mr KIERATH: The Leader of the House yesterday referred to breach of privilege. I took great pains to tell these people that I would not act on allegations as such, and I demanded a statutory declaration. As I said last year, the Opposition does not have an investigating force at its disposal and when people come to us with complaints and ideas, we must take them at face value. I indicated that if they were prepared to make the allegation, they must be prepared to put their name to statutory declarations and swear that the information was true and accurate. The statutory declarations were provided to me. I see nothing wrong with that. I do not resign from that position. I wish the member for Marangaroo would put his recent statement into a statutory declaration! We might find that a different statement would emerge. At least the couple involved in this incident had the decency to put their names to a statutory declaration, which is more than members opposite do. The couple have done everything asked of them. The fact is that they are scared; they have received a number of threatening telephone calls and I took great care not to name the person who gave the information when I raised the matter last year. However, after I raised the allegation in Parliament, Mr Evans' wife knew exactly to whom I was talking because within a couple of days she rang one of the persons named in the statutory declaration and had a go at him. That person rang the brother-in-law of the couple and abused them; he said, "Watch out!"

Mr Blaikie: Who leaked that information?

Mr KIERATH: It was on the public record - but the name was not mentioned! Through generalisations Mr Evans' wife knew who was being referred to and who made those allegations. That is an ironic twist of fate.

Mr Pearce: If you knew anything about the circumstances, you would know the grievance

which drove those people to make those claims. I knew at the time, yet you used the cloak of parliamentary privilege to make those allegations. That is what I meant by a breach of privilege. A member who does not personally know whether an allegation is true should not raise the matter in this Parliament under parliamentary privilege. That is not what parliamentary privilege is for; it is an abuse of privilege.

Mr KIERATH: The Leader of the House stands condemned by his own statement!

Mr Pearce: I have never raised a matter in this House which I did not know to be true. In the case of Mr Parker I was dead accurate.

Mr KIERATH: The Leader of the House was not accurate at all. In the House yesterday he made further allegations against me. It is a shame I cannot quote his speech for the record.

Mr Pearce: Tell the House about not naming the police person who made the claim?

Mr KIERATH: I can tell the member about the officer - who came to see me. He came to see me and said that he was acting on a complaint from Rod Evans.

Mr Pearce: You said a moment ago that it was to investigate the statutory declaration.

Mr KIERATH: Do not put words in my mouth. The officer came to see whether the statutory declaration was defamatory.

Mr Pearce: That might have been what he said, but that was not what he was investigating.

Mr KIERATH: How does the Leader of the House know?

Mr Pearce: I know. I will reply, my friend, and you will hear a lot about this.

Mr KIERATH: I will wait with bated breath. A couple of policemen went around to see this couple, and it is interesting that they knew who they were because I did not provide the statutory declaration. This is the one reason that these people are petrified because when I raised this allegation in the House, they said, "Do not name us." They asked me not to put their names on record because they feared the consequences. It was the fact that the police knew their names that gave them the courage to act on their convictions. They said that if the police knew their names, it was certain that Rod Evans knew too. Once they knew that the police had their names, they said that it was out in the open, and they had nothing to lose. The consequences they feared might occur, so they were prepared to go the whole hog and make sure that some action was taken and the matter was investigated. I was thankful for that because I had been trying to get their permission to forward this information since I raised the matter in the House last year, but they had been too scared.

Mr Pearce: Those people made an independent approach to the Corruption Commission last year and the matter was investigated and no action resulted.

Mr Lewis: Don't you know that the Corruption Commission has no power?

Mr Pearce: They made claims not only about Councillor Evans but also the Lord Mayor and a number of other councillors.

Mr KIERATH: It is rather interesting that the Leader of the House should mention that, because I raised certain matters on their behalf and received a letter in response, which said that irregularities had occurred in relation to the Swan River Management Trust. They put in an application for a licence to do certain things and the City of Perth held back their application while another application slipped through. The Minister at the time responded to my query about those irregularities and what he proposed to do. He said that nothing could be done, that it was only a technical breach.

Mr Pearce: Reporters from "The 7.30 Report" came to see me about this matter and I very carefully went through the sequence of events with them. They are different from what the member for Riverton is claiming. The fact is that these people have a particular grievance; they are wrong in their belief. They have gone to a gullible, naive, new member of Parliament, like the member for Riverton, who is prepared to lob in and put his side of the case without making a proper investigation.

Mr KIERATH: I am intrigued at why the Leader of the House has compared himself to me. In my case, before I make allegations I try to verify that they are correct. If someone is going to make a claim I ask them to make a statutory declaration. The Deputy Premier came into this place and made an outrageous set of allegations about David Parker, just as he did yesterday with the member for Warren.

Several members interjected.

Mr Taylor interjected.

Mr KIERATH: Members opposite should not tell me what is right and what is wrong. The actions they took yesterday were despicable and disgusting.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Riverton is getting a little carried away. This is obviously a matter of considerable dispute between the two sides but I ask two things: The member should address his remarks to the Chair rather than singling out members on the other side; and if likewise members on the Government side could tone down their interjections we could get to the lunch break without any disasters.

Mr KIERATH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My only defence is that I had to take on three or four interjectors at the same time. I touched a sensitive nerve with the arrogant Deputy Premier when I mentioned the despicable action that he took yesterday against the member for Warren. If he knows anything about the member for Warren he would know that he is a very sincere and honest person who believes in what he is doing. The actions the Deputy Premier took yesterday were despicable.

Mr Taylor: He has only himself to blame.

Mr Pearce: The Speaker was giving him another chance but he was already going out the door.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on both sides will come to order. The member for Riverton has the floor.

Mr KIERATH: I was trying to make a point about the double standards which apply in this place. Members opposite come in and do hatchet jobs on all sorts of people. Mr Pearce may be the Leader of the House, but he is also the Government's secret weapon for character assassinations. Whenever the Government is in trouble it sends in the member for Armadale to attack someone who invariably cannot defend himself.

Mr Pearce: Like your good self. You should get someone else to defend you.

Mr KIERATH: I am big enough to look after myself. I am prepared to take on the member for Armadale any day, so that does not worry me. But there are other people outside the House who do not have that ability.

Mr Pearce: You are making a fool of yourself.

Mr KIERATH: I do not think I am, not at all. I made a very good point, which is that before I come into this place and make allegations I do everything within my power to ensure they are correct.

Mr Pearce: You told the House you did not know whether these claims were true.

Mr KIERATH: If only the Leader of the House abided by the same standards we would not have these problems. He comes in here without any proof. He had to defend the member for Marangaroo yesterday without any proof. If the member for Marangaroo had been prepared to put his statements in a statutory declaration, what sort of statement would we have got then?

Mr Pearce: He put them before the House.

Mr Blaikie: Then the Government crucifies the member for Warren.

Mr KIERATH: Yesterday the Government displayed its double standards. The detective sergeant went on oath so that if he told a lie he could be charged with perjury. The member for Marangaroo does not have the courage to put his comments on oath.

Mr Pearce: If the member for Riverton deliberately misleads the House he could lose his seat.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not find this debate edifying; one reason is perhaps the subject matter, but another reason is that on both sides of the House members are simply talking across the Chamber which is making it difficult to follow the debate. I ask members, if they are to interject, to do so in a slightly more orderly fashion.



Mr KIERATH: I am intrigued with the members' double standards. The Royal Commission's whole purpose is to investigate the terrible standards and dealings associated with some Ministers and former Ministers of this Government, yet members opposite have the gall to come in here and say some of the things they have said.

Mr Pearce: I said that you should stop breaching privilege. Is that what you find shocking? I find it self evident.

Mr KIERATH: I do. It is incredible that someone could come into this place and deliberately mislead this House.

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr KIERATH: The Leader of the House is a past master at that, and in some respects he has been successful because I had some other matters I wanted to raise but obviously I have run out of time. Members opposite should not worry about that, because I will raise them under the Loan Bill so they will not be spared, I will get a second bite at the cherry. The double standards of this Government never cease to amaze me.

I want to raise a matter on behalf of a person who lives in the electorate of the member for Swan Hills.

Mr Pearce: Whom are you proposing to defame this time?

Mr KIERATH: If I am allowed to develop this matter properly I will say some sad things about the trade union movement, a member of this House and a member of the other place. When a constituent approached a Minister in the other place, the Minister advised her constituent that she was sorry but she did not have time to see her.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is a common problem.

Mr KIERATH: I have the letter which this lady wrote to her local member in October 1990.

Mr Pearce: Are you aiming to name this person?

Mr KIERATH: The local member wrote back on 18 March 1991 - that is what I call a prompt response! I will name the person; it is Dawn Bradford. She approached her shop steward - who let her down - the assistant secretary and the secretary of her union, and her local member of Parliament, the member for Swan Hills, and she was referred to the Minister for Employment and Training. The letter from the Minister for Employment and Training thanked this person for her letter, which was dated 27th March, but that due to her heavy parliamentary schedule she regretted not being able to meet with her personally -

[The member's time expired.]

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [12.59 pm]: The arrangement was that I was to respond upon behalf of the Treasurer, because the Treasurer -

Mr Blaikie: If you are going to go to continue after lunch we have a couple of other people who want to speak as well.

Mr PEARCE: There is a clear understanding about this matter -

Mr Blaikie: That we were going to knock off at 1.00 pm.

Several members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Members can do that of course, but they can forget about going home at 4.30 pm; we will stay here until the matters are concluded, so is up to members. I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of this sitting.

Mr Kierath: You have spat the dummy once again.

Mr Blaikie: That is very heavy, that is not like the Leader of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has sought leave to continue his remarks, which will mean that he will be speaking on the resumption of the debate. Is that his intention?

Mr PEARCE: Yes. Arrangements have been made and the Opposition was to have left me time to respond before lunch.

Mr Blaikie: You are breaking the conventions of an agreement.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

[Continued on p 2466.]

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*

**STATEMENT - BY THE SPEAKER**

*Royal Commissioners - Subpoena, Parliament House*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett): Order! I have two letters of which to advise the Assembly; one written by me and the other is a response by the Royal Commission. The first, from me, dated 28 May is as follows -

Dear Commissioner

Thank you for the response of 20 May 1991, by Mr D.F. Wicks on your behalf, to my request for an explanation of how an apparent contempt of the House occurred through service of a subpoena at Parliament House on 16 May 1991. Today I reported your response to the Legislative Assembly and tabled a copy of it together with the transcript of the examination of Detective Sergeant Gillespie.

On behalf of the House, I acknowledge the Commission's unreserved apology and its expression of regret at the incident in question. The swift action of the Commission, both in examining how the incident occurred and also to ensure that there will be no repetition, is appreciated.

I have asked the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to arrange a meeting between the Clerk of each House and Counsel assisting the Commission to brief him on Parliamentary privilege and contempt as it affects the Commission.

Today I received the following response from the Royal Commission -

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed by the Honourable Mr Justice Kennedy to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of 28th May 1991, the contents of which have been brought up and discussed at a meeting between the Commissioners and senior counsel assisting the Commission.

I am instructed that there will be no need to trouble the Clerk of the House in relation to the matters of parliamentary privilege and contempt referred to in your letter.

As to the matter of parliamentary privilege, the Commissioners and counsel assisting accept the position stated in the letter dated 8th May 1991 and signed by you jointly with the President of the Legislative Council, namely, that the question of waiver of parliamentary privilege as requested will not be entertained. That being the position, there can be no question that the Commission will at all times work within the law and take such steps to limit its enquiry to ensure that the privilege is not infringed in any respect.

As to the question of contempt, I indicated in my previous letter that I would be issuing a Standing Instruction to all Commission staff on the matter. I have now done so and enclose a copy for your information. In the light of my letter of 20th May 1991 and your acceptance of the Commission's apology in relation to the recent incident in question, the Commissioners see no occasion to pursue this matter further.

Yours faithfully

D F Wicks

Principal Solicitor Assisting

[See paper No 343.]

[Questions without notice taken.]

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL***Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

**MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE - RECESSION**

**THE ACTING SPEAKER** (Mr Donovan): By the appropriate time this morning the Speaker received a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate as a matter of public importance the recession in Western Australia. The Chair has effected a minor change to the first line of the proposed motion so that it is in order. If sufficient members support the motion I am prepared to allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The **ACTING SPEAKER**: I propose to allow 30 minutes to members of the Government, 30 minutes to members of the parties in Opposition, and five minutes to Independent members of the House.

**MR MacKINNON** (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [2.37 pm]: I move -

That this House recognises that Western Australia is now in a state of serious recession, the worst of any State in Australia, due to failed Federal and State Government policies and the tarnished reputation of Western Australia brought about by the WA Inc scandals which have caused a decline in investor business and consumer confidence and calls on the Premier -

- (a) not to look to Canberra for the short term quick fix attempt to bail the State out of its economic problems;
- (b) implement the Opposition's 5 point employment plan to kick-start the economy, engender confidence and stimulate employment in the economy; and
- (c) to again remind the Prime Minister that Western Australia now demands a meaningful commitment - not more rhetoric - to reform Federal/State financial relations.

The Premiers' Conference to which the Premier has now gone is one of the most important in this State's history. That is why it is important for this House today to debate the implications of that conference and why it is important, now more than ever in the State's history, for the Premier to put forward very positive plans both to that conference and to the people of Western Australia.

Mr Graham: That is why you waited so long.

Mr Court: She calls the sittings of Parliament, not us.

Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

Mr BLAIKIE: I draw your attention, Sir, to Standing Order No 157 and ask you to act accordingly. Interjections are not acceptable.

Several members interjected.

The **ACTING SPEAKER**: There is no point of order. I remind the member for Vasse that Standing Order No 157 is unrelated to the point he is trying to make.

Mr Blaikie: Standing Order No 137.

The **ACTING SPEAKER**: The member for Vasse has been in this place a lot longer than I have.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr MacKINNON**: The Premier is attending this conference which has come at the most important time in our State's history. Western Australia is faring worse in this recession than any other State in Australia. That being the case, it is up to the Premier to take much more urgent and positive action than the Premier of any other State in Australia.

I want to examine the reason that Western Australia is faring far worse than any other State in Australia. It is due in part to failed Government economic policies, policies which impact severely on Western Australia. First, Western Australia has a much heavier reliance on primary products, such as minerals and agricultural products, than any other State. As a consequence, this State feels the downturn more severely. Agriculture contributes 7.7 per cent towards the State's gross domestic product, when the average in other States is 4.2 per cent. We are twice as reliant on the agricultural sector than other States. Given the severity of the agricultural downturn, the problem is more severe in this State. The problem is compounded by high interest rates and the inability of the Government to attack the economic issues important to the sector.

Second, we experienced a housing boom in Western Australia which eclipsed almost all other States, aided and abetted by the Government. Now, we are in a housing depression, aided and abetted by the State Government because it has cut back its housing funds severely. To do that at a time of depression adds to the problem. Unlike other States, Western Australia is heavily dependent on small business. The small business sector accounts for a much higher proportion of business activity in this State than any other State. That is the reason the recession affects that sector harder and the reason that high interest rates affect Western Australia more than any other State. The reason the Western Australian State Energy Commission security deposits have such a severe impact is that there are more small businesses and more pernicious approaches to small business - and that has a depressing effect on business activity. That is the reason the rates and taxes imposed by the State Government have more effect on the business community of Western Australia than in any other State. That is the reason, as the member for Nedlands has pointed out, the bankruptcy statistics show that the Western Australian business community is being so seriously ravaged, more so than in any other State, as a consequence of the recession. Western Australia is facing the recession in worse shape than any other State, and experiencing the effects more severely because of a significant lack of confidence in the State. There is a lack of business confidence, and consumer and investment confidence; the huge business failures have shaken the confidence of many investors from outside Western Australia. The WA Inc scandals and the fact that people cannot trust or rely on the Government has severely limited the faith in Western Australia of people from overseas. The singular lack of leadership by the Government has led to a decline in confidence. Measures of confidence, as illustrated in community surveys, indicate that investor and consumer confidence is at its lowest ebb since 1982. The recession in 1982 could be argued by some to be worse in some sectors but the confidence level is significantly lower now than at that time.

The most serious part of the recession is yet to be faced and urgent action should be taken by the Premier to turn the recession around, as well as the confidence level, as it is likely to get worse before it improves. The recession will deepen before it hits bottom, and before the recovery process begins. This will occur for four major reasons: First, the rural crisis has not really hit yet; it is about to hit, bearing in mind that farmers have been living on their wheat and wool cheques for the last year. The farmers now need to sell their wheat and wool from this year's harvest but that will be at significantly lower levels. The flow-on to the economy should begin about now, so the impact of the real crisis is about to be felt by the community in a severe way. The situation will get worse before it gets better. Second, the ludicrous decision of the State Government to go outside the Industrial Relations Commission decision on pay rises will compound the recession. Public servants in this State who will keep their jobs will know that it will be at the expense of several thousand others who will be dismissed as a result of that pay increase. Additionally, the private sector will be significantly damaged as a result of the Government's decision. The pay rises will flow on to the private sector which does not have the capacity to meet those imposts.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The metal unions have already started to campaign.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr MacKINNON: The Minister for Microeconomic Reform should be the last person to interject; he has done absolutely nothing since he became the Minister for Microeconomic Reform, other than to print a letterhead with his name on it.

Dr Gallop: Are you sure?

Mr C.J. Barnett: There are 94 000 people out of work.

Mr MacKINNON: And the Minister contributed materially to the loss of a lot more jobs as a consequence of the Government's lunatic decision to award the pay rise outside the guidelines.

Third, the economy will continue to worsen while the Federal Government continues to persist with its high interest rate policy. Real interest rates - that is the difference between the rate of inflation and interest rate levels - are higher today than 12 months ago. People are paying more for their money today. The member for Applecross is correct, the Minister for Microeconomic Reform is an economic illiterate.

Dr Gallop: The member for Applecross is an education illiterate.

Mr MacKINNON: I will expand on that: The Minister for Microeconomic Reform is an economic and commercial illiterate. The fact is that interest rates are higher in real terms today than 12 months ago. We have a long way to go before those rates decline in real terms. Finally, the State Government has not recognised the need for a fundamental and crucial decision, a landmark decision, some circuit breaker, to ensure we drag ourselves out of the recession and return to a position of growth.

Mr Lewis: We need an election.

Mr MacKINNON: That would help, because were an election held and we were put into Government tomorrow we could implement our five point plan to recreate the jobs that have been lost. Our plan would achieve a reduction of at least two per cent in the level of unemployment in this State; that represents the creation of 18 000 jobs. Such a plan warrants serious consideration. All five points of that plan could be implemented tomorrow. I have mentioned some of them before: First is the fast tracking of capital works funds, and that has been implemented in New South Wales and Queensland. The Deputy Premier can laugh but a Labor Government in Queensland and a Liberal Government in New South Wales have achieved unemployment levels which are significantly better than the level in Western Australia. Members can laugh but the 18 000 unemployed people in this State would rather have a job than hear members' laughter. That is the difference. The Government in Queensland under Wayne Goss and in New South Wales under Nick Greiner understand that people want jobs not cynicism. The Government of this State could implement tomorrow the payroll tax moratorium that I proposed about 10 days ago. For every new job created in this State there would be no payroll tax. That would not cost this State a bean. An indication that the Government is prepared to provide some incentive would be a positive sign to employers to get out and create jobs.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That would be leadership. That would be saying to the business community, "Go out and employ people", but this Government provides no leadership.

Mr MacKINNON: The Government provides a disincentive. This magnificent Minister for Microeconomic Reform, who is also the Minister for Fuel and Energy, asks people to pay thousands of dollars for the privilege of buying electricity - that was the incentive he gave. In order to buy electricity from the Minister for Fuel and Energy employers would have to sack an employee. The third initiative concerns a pledge about taxes and charges for the rest of this year. The fourth initiative, and one of the most important initiatives -

Mr Catania: What was the second one?

Mr MacKINNON: The member for Balcatta should start listening instead of interjecting.

The fourth initiative would ensure that the Government's commitment to the guaranteed minimum wheat price is paid this financial year. No benefit will flow through to the people of this State unless it is paid in this financial year. What is the benefit going to be if those funds are paid over three years? There will be absolutely no benefit. The Opposition has supported the Government's initiative, but it must ensure the money is paid this year. The benefit must flow through to the rural sector because country towns are in desperate need of support.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They have promised finance but they have not delivered.

Mr MacKINNON: Exactly. How can the Government say that it has a commitment to the young people of this State when in the area of training and employment programs it has

presided over one of the biggest cutbacks of technical and further education training this State has ever seen? How can the Government make such a claim? The Prime Minister, Mr Hawke is not leading Western Australia, it is the Government of Western Australia led by Carmen Lawrence which should give a commitment to change the training procedures in this State, to support TAFE and to ensure that our education system is more responsive at the secondary level to ensure that the children of this State who are entering the work force are trained properly. Every one of those five points could be implemented tomorrow. It would not take a lot of detailed work to achieve that, and they would have an immediate impact and effect. It would give a message to the people of Western Australia that the Government wants to do something about employment and it is prepared to help the people of this State. At this stage all I hear the Premier saying is that she will sack public servants - give a few of them a golden handshake - and ask the Prime Minister to help her, but she is not coming forward with any initiatives of her own. While she is at that Premiers' Conference she should ask the Prime Minister to give a real commitment to what he espouses about Federal-State financial arrangements. We have heard from the Prime Minister and the Minister for Microeconomic Reform an awful lot of rhetoric but no action. We hear the Prime Minister talk about Federal-State reforms, but what do we see? Nothing but proposals for more Federal Government bureaucracies. The Opposition wants the Premier to put three issues on the agenda of the Premiers' Conference: A commitment from the Prime Minister that there will not be a Federal environmental protection authority. Why do we need to duplicate at the Federal level what is already happening in every other State of Australia? Why more red tape when we have a perfectly good system in place; one that does need some improvement in Western Australia, but one that does not need duplicating?

Mr Taylor: How would you improve the system in Western Australia?

Mr MacKINNON: I supplied that information on Tuesday if the Deputy Premier had been listening to the debate. I want the Commonwealth Government to give a commitment to get out of the housing area. Why does the Commonwealth Government have a huge department of housing when it does not build any homes? Housing is the responsibility of the States, and the Federal Government should get out of that area and make those funds available to the States so that we can start building the welfare homes that the people of this State and other States are looking for. The Commonwealth should make a positive step in Federal-State relations and get out of housing. The Federal department of housing could be diminished to a handful of people to oversee the delivery of funding.

Mr Fred Tubby: And education too.

Mr MacKINNON: That is another area that could be looked at, but housing is an immediate issue. The third aim would be to rationalise employment services. We have myriad employment programs across the length and breadth of Australia. The Federal and State Governments should sit down at the Premiers' Conference and decide who should assume responsibility; and one of them should get out of it. My preference would be for the States to take over that area and for the Commonwealth to provide the funds for the States to get on with the job without tied grants. The States are much closer to the problem and they know how best to administer those funds. There must be some rationalisation of this duplication; the waste cannot go on. A commitment from the Prime Minister would give a message to the people of Australia that it is committed to the rationalisation of Federal-State relations and that it is not just rhetoric. We want from the Premier, not just talk and pleas to Canberra for more money, but commitments by this Government to this five point plan. That would go a long way to employing 18 000 people, which is our objective. Secondly, we want a real commitment from the Prime Minister to a three point plan for review and reform of Federal-State financial relations.

MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.57 pm]: In the past few days I have heard the Premier talk of asking Canberra for \$150 million to attend to the housing needs in this State and another \$25 million to help retire a certain number of public servants.

Mr Taylor: It is all part of that \$150 million package.

Mr MINSON: It does not matter, because we are talking finance and it is all on paper. The point is that there will be no lasting benefit in employment from the expenditure of that money. I ask members to cast their minds back to the regional employment and development

scheme - the RED scheme - in the Whitlam era under which huge amounts of money were spent employing people. I remember that at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, instead of using weedicide to spray a lawn, the hospital employed people to pull up the weeds by hand, and that took some time. When the money was spent the people did not have a job and so there was no lasting benefit.

Dr Gallop: That is not being proposed.

Mr MINSON: My point is that if the Government proposes to spend this amount of money in that sort of way there will be no lasting jobs at the end of it.

Dr Gallop: We are not.

Mr MINSON: Yes, the Government is planning to do that. I know public housing is required but if \$150 million is spent on public housing, at the end some builders will have made some money but there will be no lasting benefit. If the Government looked over its shoulder at what else could be done with the money it would find jobs would be created if people could buy their own homes. Many industries are in difficulty; for example, we have lost Eagle Aircraft Australia Ltd for the sake of \$4 million. That has gone to Malaysia.

Mr Kobelke: Would you put money into aircraft and not homes?

Mr MINSON: The Government should be looking for places to put the money where it will create jobs so people can buy their own houses; this is where the Government is going wrong. The Government is looking for money for quick fixes which will be of no lasting benefit for this State. Western Australia has lost an aircraft factory which could have, within a couple of years, employed hundreds of people.

Mr Kobelke: Should we have made State investments in Eagle Aircraft?

Mr MINSON: No, the Government should have helped Eagle Aircraft.

Mr Marlborough: How? We gave them land.

Mr MINSON: Yes, but the Government took it back. Had the Government provided infrastructure for that company, it would have been able to survive.

Mr Taylor: What is the difference between giving it money and giving it infrastructure?

Mr MINSON: The Government should talk to Eagle Aircraft and see how much money should have been provided.

Mr Taylor: I will do a question on that next week.

Mr MINSON: That is a good idea. Another company became involved in the proposition and sank the deal. That action guaranteed that Eagle Aircraft went to Malaysia. Some of the money being used for quick fixes should be used to provide incentives for Western Australian industry rather than allow a situation where countries such as Malaysia offer incentives to attract our industries overseas. Apparently, Malaysia has benefited from a number of our industries.

Mr MacKinnon: You can afford \$20 million to build an aquarium in Singapore but you cannot build aircraft here.

Mr MINSON: That is right, the Government could have built the Eagle Aircraft factory five times over with that amount of money.

In conclusion, I will address the areas in which meaningful commitments could have been made by the Federal Government to reform its financial relationship with the State. The Federal Government is so far removed from reality that it is costing Western Australians their jobs. For example, the policy of prescribed payments for subcontractors seems to be an attempt by both the Federal and State Governments to completely destroy the subcontracting industry. Recently, I received a telephone call from a chap in Geraldton who runs a boat building business. One of his subcontractors tendered to do a job for \$24 000. The boat builder had to take 20 per cent out of that \$24 000 which left the subcontractor with only \$19 200 to pay expenses and make a profit. The margin was only a couple of thousand dollars. So, in other words, he will be out of pocket by \$2 800 until he receives his tax return next year. What will happen to that subcontractor and the boat builder? Obviously, both of them will be out of business shortly unless the Federal Government acts with some commonsense to allow the deductions to come out of that \$24 000, and similar amounts,

before it takes the 20 per cent prescribed payment. It is obvious that just about every industry, particularly the building industry, will go well and truly down the tube if this practice continues.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about health. I suggest that the relationship between the Aboriginal medical service, nursing homes and country hospitals be examined. The Federal and State Governments must also examine the way wholesale sales taxes - in other words, a consumption tax - fringe benefit taxes and training levies, and the list goes on, are affecting farmers and the mining industry. I would like those messages to be conveyed to the Premier to raise at the Premiers' Conference. I formally second the motion.

**MR WIESE (Wagin) [3.04 pm]:** I endorse the message we are endeavouring to get through to both the State and Federal Governments via the Premiers' Conference. It is vital that the message concerning the situation in Western Australia be conveyed to the conference taking place in Canberra. It must be understood that Western Australia is suffering as a result of financial relationships between the Federal and State Governments. The Government's policies are affecting the real income earners and the job producers of this State, particularly the mining and agriculture industries. Western Australia relies on mining and agriculture; in fact, so does the whole of Australia. Policies must be put in place which will assist those industries to carry on developing. The proposed Kintyre mine is an example of that. A resource has been identified, it is ready to produce within 12 months and it could be exporting mineral products from this State to earn export dollars. However, due to the Federal Government's policies that mine is not able to get off the ground. That is the type of message that must be conveyed to Canberra.

**Mr Graham:** What would your position be if that mine were located on your farm?

**Mr WIESE:** We need to get the message across that mining must go ahead. If it were proposed to locate the mining operation on a farm and the mining company identified that a resource could be mined without disturbing a farmer's land, and provided the mining company were able to come to some arrangement with that farmer, production of that resource should go ahead. However, that would only occur if an arrangement had been made between the company and the landowner.

**Mr Graham:** That is exactly what happened at Kintyre.

**Mr WIESE:** The situation at Kintyre is vastly different and the member for Pilbara knows that. The labour and wages policies in this country are an absolute disaster and are impacting on the whole community. They are not only impacting on the mining and agricultural industries, but they are also impacting heavily on small business. Small business is the only other producer in this State which employs people.

**Mr Bloffwitch:** Hear, hear!

**Mr WIESE:** Small business needs to be helped and encouraged by the policies of both the State and Federal Governments. Payroll tax, stamp duty and the training levy are placing huge impositions on small business. Look at what is happening with superannuation; the three per cent imposition on all small businesses is hurting. How on earth does the Government expect small businesses to carry that imposition? The one per cent training levy is not necessary because the State's educational system should have done that job. They are the types of impositions being placed on small business in the middle of the worst recession that this State has suffered in living memory.

**MR TAYLOR (Kalgoorlie - Deputy Premier) [3.08 pm]:** I find it strange that the Opposition should seek to move this motion when it knows that the Premier is not here today, but that is par for the course.

**Mr MacKinnon:** She is never here.

**Mr TAYLOR:** The Premier was here yesterday.

**Mr MacKinnon:** We debated the Supply Bill and she did not even come into the House.

**Mr Wiese:** We will probably receive a more sensible reply from you.

**Mr TAYLOR:** Flattery will get the member nowhere. The member for Wagin said that agriculture and mining were the backbone of Western Australia. There is no doubt that is true. One has only to look at the value of the recent mining export figures for Western



Australia which were something like \$10.4 billion. That explodes the gloom and doom statement made by the Opposition.

With only 10 per cent of the nation's population this State continues to contribute about 21 per cent of the nation's export income and that is a meaningful contribution by any standard. I agree with the member for Wagin that agriculture is one of the backbones - that is, if it can have two backbones - of the Western Australian economy. I am surprised that the member is critical of the Government's position on agriculture in Western Australia. This Government has given more credence and support to the rural industry in Western Australia than any Government has done for many years, including the most conservative Governments of the past.

Mr Wiese: I was not critical of your policies on agriculture.

Mr TAYLOR: I thank the member for that, but I will be critical about what the Leader of the Opposition said about the guaranteed minimum price for wheat. The reason for that decision was a recognition of the great importance of agriculture to Western Australia's economy. For the Leader of the Opposition to get up and suggest - the Minister for Fuel and Energy quite rightly described what he said as voodoo economics - that the Government should pay out the full guaranteed minimum price in the year after the harvest of the wheat is absolute nonsense. The payment of a guaranteed price has never worked that way. The guaranteed minimum price gave farmers the opportunity to make the decision to plant a reasonable amount of wheat.

Mr McNee: Your guaranteed minimum price is dishonest and you know it. People are walking off their farms because they do not have any money.

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Moore is not facing up to the truth. He knows full well that a guaranteed price has never been paid out in the year after the harvest.

Mr McNee: Your guaranteed minimum price is a hoax.

Mr TAYLOR: Did the Australian Wheat Board ever pay out its guaranteed price in the year after the harvest?

Several members interjected.

Mr McNee: Yours is a hoax.

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Moore did not answer the question.

Mr Minson: I will answer it for him.

Mr TAYLOR: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has volunteered to stand in for the member for Moore because he does not have the ability to answer the question.

Mr Minson: They always got a guaranteed percentage of the guaranteed minimum price.

Mr TAYLOR: Farmers will receive that when they sell their wheat after harvest. If the price they receive falls short of the Government's guaranteed price of \$150 per tonne they will be paid the difference. That is exactly what has happened in the past.

Before I was rudely interrupted by the member for Moore I was advising the House that the critical issue in relation to the guaranteed minimum price is that it gave farmers the opportunity to plant a crop which will give them the opportunity to create employment for Western Australians.

Talking about a hoax, I will refer to the attitude of the Opposition to pay wage rises and to the extraordinary support it has received from the Civil Service Association on the issue of sacking public servants. It is all right for the Leader of the Opposition to talk about unemployment, but he is happy to have a hit list of public servants who may be Australian Labor Party supporters and to want to put them on the dole queue. In my experience the Opposition, both at a State and Federal level, has never favoured a wage rise for Australian workers.

Mr Court: That is nonsense! You are giving a pay rise while at the same time you are sacking people.

Mr TAYLOR: This Government is not in the business of sacking people.

Mr Court: You go and talk to the CSA.

Mr TAYLOR: I suggest to the member for Nedlands that he talk to the CSA. I repeat that the Government is not in the business of sacking people. It has made a commitment that it will not sack public servants and, in fact, if the Opposition wants to look at the employment figures of the Public Service over the past year it will find that it has hardly moved or has decreased very slightly. We will release the figures in the near future. The Opposition says that it supports workers in Western Australia, but the Opposition does not want them to receive an extra \$12 in their pockets. The member for Cottesloe leads the right wing ruck of the Liberal Party in relation to this issue. Never in his time in politics and never in his time at the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry would he have supported wage rises for workers in Australia. He always says that now is not a good time; Australia is just getting back on its feet; and, it is never time for the ordinary workers of Australia to receive a wage rise. Given that the wages accord has held down wage rates in Australia for a long time, a \$12 increase is reasonable, modest, responsible and proper as far as those workers are concerned. That is the position the Government will put to the Industrial Relations Commission today and tomorrow and in doing that it will be sacking no-one.

I also want to raise the issue of what the Premier will be putting to the Premiers' Conference in Canberra tomorrow because it is an important issue. I find it quite extraordinary that the Opposition should suggest that this package of \$150 million can best be described as a quick fix attempt to bail the State out of its economic problems. It certainly is an attempt to bail the State out of its economic problems, and the Government says that without any shadow of embarrassment. If it could obtain additional funding from the Federal Government for the areas it has stipulated, it would be a major boost to this State's economy. The reason the Premier will be asking for additional funding is that the Prime Minister has put on the agenda an item relating to unemployment. As the Prime Minister has done that one would hope to get some results by way of Federal funding in that area. It is proper that the Government should be putting together a proposal for additional funding. It will allow the Government to spend a good deal of money on housing and for every \$1 million it spends, 37 new jobs will be created in that industry. It will seek additional funds for education, for tertiary and further education and for sewerage development. After all, it was only the other day that the Opposition said that if it were in Government it would sewer the metropolitan area. At the very least it should support that part of the platform.

Mr Minson: Why has it taken you three years to look at this issue and to start to implement it?

Mr TAYLOR: It has not taken three years. As a matter of fact, I was the Minister for Health when the Select Committee was established to investigate effluent disposal. It was set up with my support and the support of the Health Department. Since then the now Minister for Health and others associated with those matters have introduced measures not only in relation to sewerage, but also in regard to better septic systems in Western Australia and in the metropolitan area to improve the situation. The Opposition is conning residents in the metropolitan area by saying that it will not agree with the proposition to ask Canberra for funding to sewer an additional 4 300 homes in the less well off areas of Perth. Only a couple of days ago the Opposition said that that is exactly the approach it would take. The Opposition cannot have it both ways.

Some other matters which have been raised concern the economic condition of Western Australia. I take this opportunity to tell the Opposition that it glories in the difficult times of this country and this State. There is nothing members opposite love better than to see unemployment queues. There is nothing they do better or love more than to give Western Australia a good kicking. If they are going to talk about this State they should at least get out and promote it. This is an opportune time to mention some of the projects under way in this State. The Wagerup refinery expansion is a project involving around \$300 million. It will provide a second alumina train for Wagerup and will see about 85 per cent of the money being spent here in Western Australia. It will have a peak employment figure of 850 jobs. The project is well and truly under way at present. Members would recall Marillana Creek - Yandicogina - mine, the BHP iron ore mine in relation to which an agreement Bill passed through this Parliament a couple of weeks ago and which will involve around \$100 million expenditure. The major part of that expenditure will be in Western Australia. The project has already started and over 100 people are working on site getting the mine ready for development. This project will certainly add to Western Australia's export income. I turn to

the oil and gas area and the extraordinary and continued expansion of the North West Shelf project which is adding enormously to the export income of Western Australia and which is already being seen as one of the leading projects in this nation in its technology and quality.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Are you confident of having unemployment below 10 per cent by the end of the year?

Mr TAYLOR: We will be close to getting it below 10 per cent.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But it will remain around 10 per cent.

Mr TAYLOR: It will still be high, but it has already been mentioned that unemployment lags three to four months behind economic recovery, as the member well knows. As far as I can see things are starting to change, certainly in the housing and construction areas. If one looks at the figures for the number of new connections from the Western Australia Water Authority one sees that they are starting to turn up again. If one looks at housing interest rates and interest rates in general one sees that they are at relatively low levels. Whether things start to move rapidly will depend greatly on the level of confidence of people. These things very much depend on what I, and I always talk positively about these matters, and members opposite go out into the community and say; they should have no doubt about that.

Mr Bloffwitch: We should not kid ourselves. I was talking to the Commonwealth Employment Service boss in Geraldton last Friday and he informed me that things were bad and were getting worse. I am not trying to be negative; I am merely stating a fact.

Mr TAYLOR: I am not trying to kid anyone. Times are tough, but we should not ignore the fact that major projects are progressing in Western Australia. Another project is Hadson Corporation International's gas gathering system for natural gas and condensate. About \$250 million is being spent on that system to connect it to the SECWA pipeline. SECWA has played a major part in ensuring that a commitment of \$250 million is spent. It is committed to a contract for 140 petajoules over 10 years. In addition, there is the proposed expansion to salt projects at Dampier, Leslie and Exmouth. We also have the Hamersley Iron, Brockman Detritals project.

Mr Lewis: What about the Onslow salt project.

Mr TAYLOR: I understand it now has the required environmental clearances.

Mr Lewis: Did you give it any encouragement?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, I gave it a lot of encouragement. I went to a good public meeting with the Minister for the Environment and the member for Ashburton a few weeks ago. Since that meeting the Minister for the Environment has dealt with appeals relating to that project and I understand it should be in a position to proceed - should the company wish to and should it find a major partner, which I think is the major obstacle stopping progress at the moment.

Mr Court: What about the Marandoo iron ore mine?

Mr TAYLOR: I will come to that in a moment. Another project is the Hamersley Iron, Brockman Detritals deposit where about \$50 million will be spent over two years on a new minesite to feed into the facility at Dampier. That is another important part of the expansion of the iron ore industry in Western Australia.

Another major project involves the Kwinana Oil Refinery with about \$60 million to be spent once final approvals are in place. I understand that British Petroleum considers the Kwinana Refinery will be its critical production refinery for South East Asia and for a good deal of Australia. I believe the expansion of that project is just the beginning of the expenditure of vast amounts of money. Work has also commenced at CRA's hi-smelt facility at Kwinana which involves a minimum outlay of \$150 million. That is probably the major research and development project of its kind in Australia. It is something that I am sure, with the assistance of the member for Swan Hills, will lead to an expansion of theiron and steel industry in Western Australia by the end of this decade. This is an important development for Western Australia.

Mr Gordon Hill: That investment shows they have confidence in Western Australia because they say that a high smelt process only has a 50-50 chance of success.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, and in addition they moved the pilot plant from Germany to Western Australia.

Mr COURT: I think the hi-smelt plant is a significant development - not for the money being spent but for the research and development that could come afterwards.

Mr TAYLOR: Absolutely.

Mr COURT: You will not hear any criticism about that but you will hear criticism about things like the Marandoo project delayed unnecessarily because of your hang-ups over uranium.

Mr TAYLOR: There are some difficulties with those developments. I am well aware of those difficulties, as is the Minister for Mines, and we are doing our best to sort them out at the moment. Without giving anything away, we are considering an approach to some of these issues that some people might regard as rather heroic, but we will come to that in a few weeks.

Mr COURT: How will you bypass Labor Party policy on uranium?

Mr TAYLOR: I am not talking about uranium matters. Another important development is the Cossack oilfield where Woodside Petroleum-Shell Development and partners have decided to spend \$300 million in offshore production, which is an important development for this State.

Mr MacKinnon: You have not said one thing about what you will do about reforming the structure of this State for the future.

Mr TAYLOR: After I have finished speaking, the Minister for Microeconomic Reform will be dealing with those issues with a great deal of pleasure. The Cossack development will ensure that in a year or so Western Australia will probably be the largest oil producing State in Australia.

Mr MacKinnon: You must be doing something wrong because 11.1 per cent of people are still out of a job.

Mr TAYLOR: Despite the best efforts of the Leader of the Opposition to put Western Australia down a considerable number of large projects are proceeding in this State, and that is a matter of which he should be proud.

Mr COURT: How are you getting on with Western Mining nowadays?

Mr TAYLOR: Well.

Mr COURT: Have you sorted out the smelting problem?

Mr TAYLOR: We are working on that very hard indeed and I expect to have a meeting on that issue tonight in Kalgoorlie.

Mr MacKinnon: We have heard all about that meeting.

Mr TAYLOR: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition would have heard about that meeting in Kalgoorlie tonight.

Mr MacKinnon: I heard about it on Monday.

Mr TAYLOR: The meeting with Western Mining tonight in Kalgoorlie?

Mr MacKinnon: I have heard about a meeting to be held tonight.

Mr TAYLOR: That is unusual because I arranged it through the Minister for Mines only an hour ago.

Mr MacKinnon: The Deputy Premier is going to a meeting in Kalgoorlie tonight.

Mr TAYLOR: I am going to two.

Mr MacKinnon: Then it is probably the other one I heard about.

Mr TAYLOR: I am going to one at the North Kalgoorlie Primary School and one at the Western Mining Corporation Ltd conference centre, so the Leader of the Opposition has lost me. Western Australia will continue to have a growth rate of around two per cent to 2.5 per cent, the leading growth rate in Australia, and will continue to set the standard in respect of its attitude to economic growth. I do not play down the difficult issue of unemployment in Western Australia, but I assure the House that in Canberra tomorrow both the Premier and I will be giving these messages to the Federal Government and making certain that it recognises the difficulties and that we can work together to overcome the difficulties for the good of Australia and Western Australia.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Minister for Microeconomic Reform) [3.31 pm]: Even though I am a commercial illiterate - and I apologise to the House for that - I was somewhat concerned by the fact that the general theme being pursued by the Opposition in this debate indicated a prejudice that is quite dangerous if we are to solve the economic and employment problems facing Western Australia at this time. That theme was that all we had to do was look at the situation in Western Australia; our problems here were quite separate from the problems in other States, and all that needed to be done was for the State Government to take action, and all would be okay in Western Australia. That is quite a mistaken view.

**Mr Court:** We have missed out something - we have missed out Keating and Hawke!

**Dr GALLOP:** I will come to that question. Western Australia may have the highest rate of unemployment but, as has been pointed out in the past, we have the highest participation rate in the labour market. We also have higher migration than the Eastern States.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Are you aware that since last July the participation rate has fallen in this State, and that interstate migration is the lowest for five years?

**Dr GALLOP:** The participation rate is the highest in Australia. The member is wrong.

Certain structural factors in Western Australia which relate to the building industry, the agricultural sector, and the extent of small business, make it difficult for us to withstand a recession as easily as the other States. Primarily it is an Australia-wide recession, and if any one State is to get out of that recession it will require that State's Government, firstly, to make good policy decisions and, secondly, to link up with other State Governments and the Federal Government to bring about a new approach to Federal-State relations. The Opposition does not seem to understand the importance of the Federal dimension of this issue. That is indicated by the fact that the Opposition has not focused on a very simple fact about the Australian Federal system - a fact which the Premier is trying to address in her economic package; that is, that the Federal Government collects in taxation revenue much more than it actually needs to service its Federal public infrastructure. Indeed, what follows from that is that the Federal Government is always under the temptation to wastefully spend its money, or to tie grants to the States in such a way that the States have to spend money according to the dictates of the Commonwealth.

One of the major issues which the Premier is trying to address is to loosen up the purse strings of the Commonwealth Government so that the balance between the States and the Commonwealth will be directed more towards the needs of the States. The tied grants issue is crucial, not only to the integrity of our Federal system but also to the ability of the States to meet their financial needs. The Premier is saying through this economic package that we need more money from the Commonwealth as part of a process by which the relative power of the Commonwealth in financial terms is reduced and the power of the States is increased, and through that process we will be able to run some very good programs in this State. It is a nationwide problem that requires cooperative effort on the part of the States and the Federal Government, but as part of that solution we must get the right balance between the States and the Federal Government.

The so-called five point plan which the Opposition proposes to use to kick-start the Western Australian economy is really incoherent in economic terms. The Leader of the Opposition said that he will cut taxes and charges, and move away from collecting payroll tax and, at the same time, introduce massive new capital works programs, guarantee the wheat price and pay the guarantee this year, and bring about a fast-tracking of the Capital Works Program. I do not know how he can do that without cutting into recurrent expenditure, given the global limits which are applied at a Federal level. There can be only one answer to the question about how he will cut taxes and increase expenditure: He will sack public servants wholesale, and there will be a massive sell-off of State assets.

**Mr Court:** What about the Asset Management Taskforce?

**Dr GALLOP:** The Asset Management Taskforce is approaching its role in a very rational and orderly way. The question that is posed to the Opposition is how it can cut taxes and charges and increase expenditure in the way it has suggested. It can do that only by a massive privatisation of our assets and a sacking of public servants. Our approach to economic policy is a rational one. We have said we need to take a strong look at the public sector infrastructure in respect of employment levels. We are doing that and we will

continue to do that so that the impact of taxes and charges on the ordinary people and businesses of this State is held down. We need to go to the Commonwealth Government and fight very hard to get the right balance between the needs of the States and the needs of the Federal Government; and getting rid of tied grants is a major issue in respect of that.

Mr Court: You ask for \$150 million, and they will say, "Hang on, you have just lost \$1 billion."

Dr GALLOP: That is an inane statement. We must deal with the problems we have now, and the member knows that. Unless we can solve the problem of tied grants, the integrity of our Federal system and the financial base of the States will be put under severe pressure.

We need to ensure that our public sector infrastructure is efficient so that all the investment opportunities about which the Premier has spoken can come to fruition. One way that I have been able to help contribute towards that process is in the negotiations that took place to reduce the price and tonnages of coal to the State Energy Commission. I find it extraordinary that a reform that was described by the Federal Leader of the National Party as the most significant microeconomic reform in recent Australian history is regarded by the Opposition as an insignificant change. That is why the Opposition cannot break through in the public arena. Despite the difficulties being faced by the present Government, the Opposition has no respect from the public because it speaks voodoo economics.

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [3.39 pm]: I want to take advantage of the five minutes which the Independent members have now been allocated. My colleague the member for Ashburton has indicated that she does not wish to speak, and the member for Darling Range is absent, so I have the luxury of the entire five minutes if I want it; I am not sure whether I will need it.

Mr Court: We will not interject.

Dr ALEXANDER: Members opposite may want to interject once they hear what I have to say.

Mr Nicholls: It is very hard to break those old ties, isn't it?

Dr ALEXANDER: It is not for that reason that I cannot support this motion, but I have had at least three offers for the use of this time so this five minutes is obviously very valuable and I hope I can make some sense of it.

There is no doubt that Western Australia is in a state of serious recession; whether it is the worst of any State in Australia, I am not sure. Certainly the unemployment figures do not stack up too well, but I understand that our compatriots in Victoria are probably in worse difficulties with that State's economic recession. However, I suppose that is quibbling with details. I have some sympathy with the first part of the motion, but probably for different reasons than the Opposition, about the failed Federal and State economic policies. I would not say that all of the economic policies of the State Government or the Federal Government have failed by any means at all, but for a long time now I have had serious doubts about the direction of deregulation and microeconomic reform, and I am very disturbed that the Labor Governments here and federally now wholeheartedly endorse what were, until the advent of the State and Federal Labor Governments in 1983, generally regarded as conservative policies.

To my way of thinking, the deregulation of the banking system in Australia initiated by the Federal Government shortly after its election has been an absolute disaster for the Australian economy. That seems to me to have been one of the driving forces behind the rise in interest rates, along with Federal Government policy, that forced us into this recession. Most people borrowing money from banks went from a situation of being protected in the marketplace to a situation - and I know this from personal experience - where interest rates rose to 17 per cent plus. Clearly that put many people in trouble and it put the home building industry into a serious nosedive.

Mr Bloffwitch: Business rates went to 25 per cent.

Dr ALEXANDER: Yes, and the same applied in the rural sector, where interest rates were crippling and still are, to some extent. I believe the Federal Government has much to answer for in that respect, and one of the reasons I think this high interest rate regime prevailed was the policy of deregulation of the banking industry.

At the State level I know the Minister for Microeconomic Reform is proud of the reforms he is bringing in but, to my way of thinking, while a power station in Collie might be a good idea for the residents and work force in that town, a private power station is not in the best economic or social interests of the State. As well, the motion talks about the WA Inc scandals. There is no doubt that the WA Inc situation has tarnished the economic reputation of the State. That was brought home to me last year when my brother visited the State. He is slightly to the right of my own political position, and he is an investment manager for a company in Hong Kong. We were talking about policies of ethical investment and I said to him, "How is it that you can decide what is and what is not an ethical investment? It seems to me that all investments run the same sort of risk of perhaps being unethical." He said, "Put it this way, Ian. I can tell you for a fact that there is no way in the world our firm will do business in Western Australia or with the Western Australian Government at the moment." I replied, "Point taken." That was from somebody who has been in the banking and finance industry for some time. While I do not agree with his political standpoint I can see the point he is making.

Mr Court: It is very damning, isn't it?

Dr ALEXANDER: It is, and I understand that story is very widespread in Asia and Europe. My time has expired, but I cannot support the motion.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (20)			
Mr Ainsworth	Mr Court	Mr MacKinnon	Mr Fred Tubby
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mrs Edwardes	Mr McNee	Dr Turnbull
Mr Bloffwitch	Mr Grayden	Mr Minson	Mr Watt
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Kierath	Mr Nicholls	Mr Wiese
Mr Clarko	Mr Lewis	Mr Strickland	Mr Blaikie (Teller)
Noes (24)			
Dr Alexander	Dr Gallop	Mr Marlborough	Mr Taylor
Mr Bridge	Mr Graham	Mr McGinty	Mr Thomas
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Grill	Mr Read	Mr Troy
Mr Catania	Mrs Henderson	Mr Ripper	Dr Watson
Mr Cunningham	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr D.L. Smith	Mr Wilson
Dr Edwards	Mr Kobelke	Mr P.J. Smith	Mrs Watkins (Teller)
Pairs			
Mr Shave		Dr Lawrence	
Mr Cowan		Mr Leahy	
Mr House		Mr Pearce	
Mr Trenorden		Mrs Beggs	

Question thus negatived.

## SUPPLY BILL

### Second Reading

Order of the Day read for the resumption of debate from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Taylor (Deputy Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

**LOAN (FINANCIAL AGREEMENT) BILL***Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 9 May.

**MR MINSON** (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.50 pm]: This Bill relates to the economy of this State. It is very significant that this morning during the condolence motion for the deceased former member for Floreat, Mr Andrew Mensaros, the Leader of the Opposition quoted from a newspaper article in which Mr Mensaros said that we needed to have a healthy economy so that we could have social benefits and justice. As the economy shrinks and becomes unhealthy, we must cut back in just about every area of social benefit. The best thing we can do for someone who is in dire straits and unemployed is to give him or her a job. Although we have a good unemployment benefit scheme in this country, the idea of the unemployment benefit is for relief only. This is not designed to sustain families forever without at least some reasonable expectation of securing a job. However, at the moment I am concerned that we are not creating lasting jobs in our economy.

When people become unemployed a couple of things happen: Firstly, they cease to contribute through the taxation scheme, and they become a liability as they draw from unemployment fund coffers and in many other areas; that is, they have access to health care, transport and other things which are either free or at a much reduced rate. Therefore, we must become aggressive about the creation of employment. Secondly, when someone has been unemployed for some months, they seem to catch a disease and do not want to work. A very close friend of mine was unemployed for about five months. He shared with me afterwards the trauma he went through when he eventually found a job. He found it difficult to get up in the morning and to get motivated. In fact, he nearly lost that job even though he searched desperately for five months to find it. At present 11.1 per cent of the population in this State is unemployed and there is little prospect for improvement. It is high time that something was done to address the problems confronting employers so they can provide jobs. This was referred to in the matter of public importance this afternoon in debate on the barriers confronting people seeking to establish businesses, and how those difficulties can be overcome. Payroll tax is one such area and this has received a great deal of airing in the newspapers lately. Clearly, if there is a disincentive to employ people, payroll tax is it.

I referred to the Eagle Aircraft factory during the MPI. I will not go into great detail on that because it is a fait accompli. However, while I was in the United States a few months ago it was my good fortune to meet an employee of the Beech Aircraft Company. We met in Washington but this person invited me to his home town of Wichita to look at the factory. I met the new marketing manager of the Beech Aircraft Asian-Pacific branch and the executive director of the company. I met another executive, but I do not recall his title. We had an interesting conversation in which it was indicated that for legal reasons the company was finding it difficult to manufacture single engine aircraft in the United States. This seems to be a problem peculiar to America, and is based on the fact that contributory negligence is part of its legal system. Not only do people apportion blame, but they look to see who can pay. It appears that if one is deemed to have some money, one can be regarded as a target. I can see the Deputy Premier nodding.

**Mr Taylor:** I am aware of that.

**Mr MINSON:** This has caused enormous problems. Apparently, this adds \$US80 000 to the cost of every aircraft.

I have been handed a note, Mr Deputy Speaker, which reminds me to indicate that I am not the Opposition's lead speaker in this debate. May I have 30 minutes apportioned for my speech so that the lead speaker can have the 60 minute allocation? The member who is the lead speaker has an appointment elsewhere. I should have raised this point before.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I trust that the member has not been demoted! This is an unusual request. As can be seen by the clock, normally the timekeepers assume that the person speaking first is "the Leader of the Government and/or the Opposition or one person deputised by the leader." One assumes that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is speaking in his leader's place. I will accede to the request on this occasion as I am told that a precedent exists. Sixty minutes will be allocated to the lead speaker. However, this should not become a regular practice as it is rather confusing.



Mr MINSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I understand that some inquiries were made on this point previously but that the blessing from the Chair was required. I apologise for not raising the matter previously.

The additional cost of \$US80 000 does not vary whether it is a single engine or a twin engine aircraft. The addition of \$US80 000 on the cost of a single engine aircraft is close to the cost of a twin engine aircraft. Therefore, the companies are having trouble manufacturing aircraft competitively. That is regrettable because the commercial world is crying out for single engine, personal, passenger and training aircraft. While in the factory I suggested that the company might come to Western Australia and set up its operation here as an incorporated Western Australian company. In that case the company could be immune from the American litigation laws. I have received communication from the company since then and unfortunately it would appear that if an American company is a major shareholder and its roots can be traced to America that company will be liable should any of its aircraft return to America. It seems it is very difficult for those companies to shield themselves from litigation in the event of a crash. It is a strange legal system that dictates that if a single engine aircraft falls out of the sky, the crash is the manufacturer's fault for not putting another engine in the aircraft.

I will pursue the question of a large manufacturer like the Beech aircraft company coming here a little further down the track. An option for the American companies may be for three of them - minority shareholders - to set up a joint manufacturing facility together in Western Australia. This leads me to the point that Western Australia has, and had, a unique opportunity to capture a slice of a potentially fairly hungry market, although I know moves have been made to begin manufacturing various light aircraft in some south east Asian countries. It is a pity Eagle Aircraft Australia Ltd will no longer manufacture its aircraft here. I sat in its latest prototype, and as one who is very interested in aviation and has done some flying, I was impressed. I do not know the origins of the Eagle aircraft, but from the early prototypes I rather suspect the company captured a few photographs of the Quickie aircraft from the United States. The development and design of that aircraft since that time is commendable and a credit to the people who have done the work. I noted with some interest that the test pilot's report said something to the effect that it was one of the most stable and best performing aircraft of its type he had ever flown. It is a pity we let that aircraft go. However, the matter should not rest there. An opportunity exists to coax manufacturers to Australia from around the world to set up a manufacturing base in single engine aircraft. Although not of aircraft quality, aluminium is produced here and if the market were large enough something could be done to produce aluminium of aircraft grade. Perhaps we could talk Mr Sarich into manufacturing a version of his engine suitable for aircraft. That may provide a unique opportunity in Western Australia to produce a high performance and low cost single engine light aircraft which could establish the State's reputation in the aircraft market around the world.

I regret that Australia has allowed its aircraft industry to disappear. The Commonwealth Aircraft Factory used to make a variety of aircraft, but mainly of course for defence purposes. Nonetheless, considerable aircraft expertise both technically and in design exists in Australia. Unfortunately, it is some years since the Commonwealth Aircraft Factory operated and Australia now no longer has quite the expertise it once had. Certainly, the cream of those personnel will have left Australia. Perhaps we ought to be aggressive in our efforts to do something about that. I do not think for a minute that we can build an aircraft industry de novo and expect it to work without a long delay. Buying aircraft is a bit like buying Parker pens; people tend to buy for the name. Perhaps an aircraft with a new name would not sell well. However, if one of the major manufacturers in the world like Cessna, Beech, or Piper were connected with that enterprise and were to lend its name to it, we could start an industry here which had credibility. That would also give us access to that company's design and technological expertise.

The people at Beech have indicated they are quite interested in following up the matter, although they do not think anything will happen in the short term. They are interested in coming to a place like Western Australia because it is suitable for their personnel; it is politically stable and the company would not have to worry about losing its assets. The State should give some thought to courting some of the aircraft manufacturers in the world.

To give some idea of delays in the delivery of aircraft at present, a friend of mine in

Geraldton has had a single engine Piper trainer aircraft on order for nearly four years. Not only has it not been delivered, but also the manufacturing has not commenced. What is more, the Piper aircraft factory does not want to manufacture it; it would prefer to manufacture twin engine aircraft. However, if it were to manufacture single engine aircraft it would prefer to provide them to the military or the large airline companies for training. The company believes that if it provides aircraft to those owners, the chances of its being sued following a crash are less likely.

Leaving the aircraft industry, I refer briefly to the Environmental Protection Authority in Western Australia and the fact that a backlog, I understand, of 160 major projects are awaiting approval which, when approved, could significantly help solve some of our employment problems. More than 100 of those projects have been awaiting approval for longer than a year. If the Environmental Protection Authority cannot handle the backlog of work, we should either fund the EPA to expand so that it can handle the work or, preferably, accredit private firms to fulfil those environmental audits. I believe a number of them operate in Western Australia and across Australia. I know one of the people involved in environmental work and I understand work is often sought offshore in South East Asia because of a shortage of work in Australia. As so many projects are awaiting approval, it would be a good idea if private firms were accredited to do that work. That accreditation should be withdrawn only if a firm is found to be carrying out the work unsatisfactorily. An environmental firm would be foolish to present false or misleading reports. To lose endorsement as an accredited environmental surveyor would virtually sound the death knell for a private firm which wanted to operate in that area. Very serious consideration must be given to accrediting private environmental consultants. Perhaps then we will not see these sorts of backlogs.

Before I leave environmental matters, I again refer to the Mt Lesueur project, not to resurrect the debate on whether it should or should not be a national park, but to refer to the fact that CRA Ltd spent in the vicinity of \$30 million doing environmental work. CRA and private environmental firms came up with an incredibly good document that was not accepted by the Environmental Protection Authority, and the Department of Conservation and Land Management did a separate one. It would have served this State better if we had accepted the report. A decision could then have been made before that money was spent on deciding whether Mt Lesueur should have been turned into a national park. That \$30 million could have been used to create jobs in other areas. The amount that was spent there could have kept Eagle Aircraft Australia Ltd alive six times over. That is a sobering thought.

On the subject of creating jobs and getting in the way of industry, I refer briefly to the emu farming industry which I thought would have grown much faster in Western Australia than it has. A friend of mine involved in the industry came to me a long time ago lamenting the fact that he had to deal with approximately 13 Government departments just to run a couple of hundred emus. I thought that was a little ridiculous because he was so tied up in red tape that he did not think he would be able to make any progress at all. I am aware that one of the problems confronting the emu industry is that it cannot get stock from which to breed. Consequently the number of emus has taken so long to increase that the industry has been stifled. Although growth is occurring, it is not increasing at a rate anywhere near that which should be occurring. When the figures were originally done, no room was left in the calculations for the diseases that affect these birds or the stress on the birds when run in captivity. Emus are quite susceptible to disease. I understand that a number of farmers have not been able to increase their flocks, despite the fact that they are able to breed, because they were losing so many birds. It has occurred to me that we should be taking more of these birds from the wild in the initial stages of this industry. Restrictions were placed on the number of birds that could be taken from the wild to prop up an Aboriginal project. As commendable as that is, the industry has been held back to a large extent. This chap I am talking about farms about 60 or 70 kilometres from the vermin proof fence. A few years ago the Agriculture Protection Board was subsidising the purchase of ammunition to destroy emus only 60 or 70 kilometres from that farm. It is ridiculous that people cannot trap some of these birds to get the emu industry off the ground because no other country in the world can become involved in this industry. I do not think that would mean a great depletion of emus that exist in the wild. In view of the fact that the Government was actually subsidising the destruction of these birds a few years ago, it is possible to trap thousands of these birds

for breeding purposes. I do not think anyone would want to do it for more than a few years because when genetics and modern breeding techniques are applied to the breeding of emus, the stock will improve so quickly that, after a few years, the wild stock would be so inferior nobody would want to trap it. However, to get the industry going, there is no reason why a few thousand birds could not be trapped.

I have also noted with some alarm that little work is being done about establishing a large wood based pulp mill in this State. I am aware that some people think there should be no pulp mill in Western Australia. Most members who have read the Green Paper which I have prepared will remember my comments. Those views are shared by a number of people, including the Director of CALM, Dr Syd Shea, who has told me there is no reason that we cannot, on a renewable and sustainable basis, support a large pulp mill in Western Australia and also maintain the chip export industry. That was very surprising. I would have been happy to stop exporting the chips and to manufacture paper for our own needs in this State or, if we manufactured more, to export it to other parts of Australia and overseas. However, I am sure that there is enough waste and residue in the forests that are now managed for timber production to feed not only a large pulp mill but also to maintain the existing chip export industry. While the River House group is working on the establishment of a straw based pulp industry in the agricultural areas, very little appears to be being done in other parts of the State to commence a wood based industry. Something should be done about that in the near future because there is a potential to employ many people.

I want to use the time I have left to stress to this House the necessity to do something about the problems that confront industry because industry and small businesses are the employers of this State. In the last financial year, approximately 10 000 businesses went to the wall in Australia. That is alarming. In Western Australia, approximately 1 500 went to the wall which should tell us a story because, although we have about one-sixteenth of the population, the 1 500 businesses that have gone broke in this State equal approximately one-sixth of the total number of businesses that went broke in Australia. That is an extremely serious situation which should call for drastic action by this Parliament. However, that action will not take place. Bankruptcies do not just affect the businesses that go bankrupt or the families that depend on them. They have the same effect as a pack of cards falling over. I guess many of us have seen a slogan on the wall of business premises which says something like "Please pay me so that I can pay him so that he can pay them and they can pay you so that you can pay me." If somebody goes broke, unfortunately, they are likely to send another industry or business down the tube with them. The flow-on from bankruptcies is having a disastrous effect in Western Australia. It disappoints me, as a member of Parliament and as the member of a party which pays attention to businesses, that very little of a meaningful nature is being done to help those people. I look forward to some action being taken in the very near future. It would be unwise of me to launch into the next chapter of my speech, with less than one minute left. Perhaps I should have taken an hour when I had the opportunity!

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Strickland.

*House adjourned at 4.22 pm*

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## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### BICYCLE HELMETS - LEGISLATION

#### *Schools Policy*

476. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) When does the Government plan to introduce legislation to make it compulsory to wear cycle helmets?
- (2) Is it Government policy to allow schools to determine the type of helmet that children have to wear?
- (3) If so, why?
- (4) How is it expected that the compulsory wearing of cycle helmets is to be policed and by whom?
- (5) Will the Government consider phasing in the wearing of cycle helmets over a 12 month period to allow people in less than favourable financial circumstances to save sufficient funds to buy the helmets?
- (6) If not, why not?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Spring session 1991.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The offence will be policed by all members of the Western Australian Police Force.
- (5)-(6) Nine months' notice has been given of the intention to introduce legislation. For commercial bike hirers the implementation date is an additional 12 months. The Government is of the view that the community will benefit from the legislation sooner rather than later, but will be open to persuasion on that matter during the passage of legislation through Parliament.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT - CANNING CITY COUNCIL

#### *Commissioner's Payments and Property Ownership*

597. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Further to question 432 of 1991, would the Minister advise the cost of any superannuation entitlements or allowances to be paid to the Commissioner at the Canning City Council?
- (2) Further, has the Minister made any arrangements, contracts or other monetary payment to Globe Meats, to obtain the services of the Commissioner?
- (3) (a) Does the Commissioner own any property in the City of Canning;  
(b) if so, where are these properties located?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (1)-(2) No.
- (3) (a) No.  
(b) Not applicable.

### HOSPITALS - PRIVATE HOSPITALS

#### *Building Programs - Assistance With Interest Payments*

637. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

What State Government funding, in excess of \$100 000, as assistance with interest connected with building programs was received by individual private hospitals in the months 30 June 1990-30 April 1991?

Mr WILSON replied:

\$1 794 790.95. This assistance with interest payments arises from loans provided by the previous Government in 1978 and 1980.

Hospital	Date of Payment	\$	Loan Number
St John of God, Subiaco	1.9.90	31 365.11	15
As per above	1.9.90	117 456.21	55
As per above	1.10.90	497 219.59	25
As per above	1.12.90	30 012.91	15
As per above	1.12.90	112 097.55	55
As per above	1.1.91	458 332.71	25
As per above	1.3.91	27 016.69	15
As per above	1.3.91	101 526.17	55
As per above	1.4.91	419 764.01	25
TOTAL		1 794 790.95	

#### SUPERANNUATION - AUST PTY LTD

##### *Deed of Adherence*

641. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) Has the Minister signed a deed of adherence to a superannuation fund known as AUST Pty Ltd?
- (2) How many employees, and to whom, does the deed of adherence apply?
- (3) Does the deed apply to non-temporary employees?
- (4) What is the operative date of contributions and what are the levels of contribution?
- (5) Do the retrospective payments apply on behalf of people who terminated prior to the Government's participating in AUST Pty Ltd?
- (6) What is the total cost of the contributions?
- (7) Is AUST Pty Ltd not an award-based superannuation scheme approved by either the Australian Industrial Relations Commission or the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission?
- (8) Will the Minister advise whether the retrospective superannuation payments now payable by the Government satisfy the state wage case principles?
- (9) Is it known that the trustees to AUST Pty Ltd can increase contributions at any time and have frequently done so?
- (10) Will the Minister advise what is the longest period of time that a temporary metal trades employee can be engaged for and what currently is the longest period of employment of a person employed on a temporary basis by any of the employers bound by the deed?
- (11) Will the Minister advise whether the Minister is aware of any other State or Federal Governments of Australia participating in AUST Pty Ltd and, if so, which States?
- (12) Will the Minister advise how a \$40 payment per week to AUST Pty Ltd has been determined?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) On a nationwide basis 83 000 employees are members of the scheme. I am unable to advise to whom the deed of adherence applies because the trustees will not release the names and details of all the employers and employees bound by the deed.
- (3) Yes.

- (4) The date of inception of the scheme was 1 January 1984. The present levels of contribution are \$40 per week, effective as from 1 May 1991.
- (5) No, not in relation to Western Australian public sector participants.
- (6) Unable to advise because the trustees will not release the names and details of all the employers and employees bound by the deed.
- (7) It is not an award based scheme but has been approved by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Refer to question (5).
- (8) Not applicable.
- (9) Contributions can only be increased if union and employer trustees agree. If not, then a decision is made by a panel comprising an equal number of union and employer representatives. Five increases have been made since the scheme's inception in 1984.
- (10) Unable to advise, because the trustees will not release the names and details of all the employers and employees bound by the deed.
- (11) Unable to advise, because the trustees will not release the names and details of all the employers and employees bound by the deed.
- (12) Refer to question (9).

# RAILWAYS - METROPOLITAN RAIL SYSTEM

## *Fares*

680. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Would the Minister provide monthly revenue figures from the collection of fares on the metropolitan rail system for -
  - (a) the six months prior to guards ceasing to collect fares;
  - (b) each month since guards have cease to collect fares?
- (2) Would the Minister indicate the total amount collected in fines for travelling on a metropolitan passenger train service without a valid ticket for -
  - (a) the six months prior to guards ceasing to collect fares;
  - (b) since guards ceased to collect fares?
- (3)
  - (a) How many ticket inspectors were employed during the six months prior to guards ceasing to collect fares;
  - (b) how many man hours were spent inspecting tickets during this period;
  - (c) how many ticket inspectors are currently employed;
  - (d) how many man hours have been spent inspecting tickets since guards ceased to collect fares;
  - (e) what other duties are inspectors required to perform?
- (4) Would the Minister provide any estimates of fare evasion levels relevant to the past 18 months of operation of the metropolitan passenger train service?
- (5) Would the Minister provide monthly figures for the servicing of the ticket vending machines since their introduction?
- (6) Would the Minister indicate the cost of vandalism associated with the ticket vending machines since their introduction?
- (7) What was the capital and installation cost of the vending machines?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)	(a) <u>Four Weeks Ending</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>\$'000</u>
	30.06.90	370
	28.07.90	411
	25.08.90	388

		22.09.90	355
		20.10.90	302
		17.11.90	413
(b)	<u>Four Weeks Ending</u>		<u>Amount</u>
			<u>\$'000</u>
		14.12.90	373
		12.01.91	335
		09.02.91	403
		09.03.91	358
		06.04.91	376
		04.05.91	377
(2)	(a)	* Fines imposed by Court	\$140
		* Costs awarded by Court	\$162
		* Infringement Notices paid without Court action	<u>\$4 530</u>
			<u>\$4 832</u>
	(b)	* Fines imposed by Court	\$150
		* Costs awarded by Court	\$154
		* Infringement Notices paid without Court action	<u>\$3 530</u>
			<u>\$3 834</u>
(3)	(a),(c)	Ten were employed so that six or seven may be used at any one time.	
	(b),(d)	The duties of inspectors cover a wide range of tasks as outlined in part (e) of the question and no records of the hours allocated to individual tasks are maintained.	
	(e)	Promotes a high standard of customer relations by ensuring safety, comfort and satisfaction for passengers on the suburban system.	
		Attends to complaints and inquiries, enforces regulations and job requirements, submit reports on adverse performance and make recommendations as necessary.	
		Assists with crowd control at special events and monitors disbursement of extra trains and ticket staff.	
		Supervises guards, ticket examiners and porters connected with suburban train services to ensure high standard of performance.	
		Observes condition of suburban stations, platforms, pathways and facilities and also the condition and appearance of railcars.	
		Submits timely and accurate reports on any irregularities on suburban operations including overcrowding, late running, breach of regulations, discipline and any matter conflicting with the overall job objectives/suggests improvements.	
		Ensures economical operation of the service and protection of departmental property.	
(4)	A recent study shows this to be approximately 0.5 per cent.		
(5)	November 1990	\$3 900	
	December 1990	\$9 800	
	January 1991	\$11 300	
	February 1991	\$12 600	
	March 1991	\$14 500	
	April 1991	\$18 100	
(6)	\$142 000.		
(7)	\$6 113 000.		

**SPORT - WOMEN IN SPORT**  
*Government Allocation*

713. Mr BLAIKIE to the Minister representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Would the Minister provide full details of recipients of Government financial allocation to Women in Sport?
- (2) Further to (1), what has been the expenditure to date and does the Government intend to fund the program in the 1991-92 financial year?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

(1)-(2)

Since its establishment in October 1989, the Women in Sport Advisory Council has approved the following grants to community groups under two separate categories -

<u>Child care facilities (CSRF)</u>	\$
Shire of Laverton	22 500
City of Melville	9 000
City of Gosnells	7 387
City of Gosnells	15 000
Town of Kwinana	15 000
City of Wanneroo	15 000
City of Stirling	3 000
Town of Narrogin	15 000
City of Cockburn	12 970
City of Wanneroo	15 000
Shire of Harvey	15 000
Shire of Menzies	20 000
Shire of Roebourne	2 625
Quairading Golf Associates	450
Gingin Tennis Club Inc	1 128
Floreat Park Tennis Club Inc	13 208
ACRA WA Inc - Armadale Rec Centre	3 000
YMCA - Eastern Goldfields	2 293
Busselton Tennis Club	1 000
Scaddan Country Club	10 000
Shire of Leonora	22 000
Derby Rodeo & Horseriders Assn	14 200
Perth Netball Assn Inc	10 000
Willetton Basketball Assn	15 000
South Suburban Badminton Assn (Inc)	5 320
Condingup & Districts Recreation Assn	15 000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>280 081</u></b>

Women in Sport Project Grants specifically to promote women's participation in sport -

**WOMEN IN SPORT PROJECT GRANTS FUNDED FROM OCTOBER 1989**

**March 1990**

Individual

Lyn Foreman	1 500
Amy Petersen	2 000
Natalie Fuhrmann	2 000

Organisations

Aerobic Leaders Eastern Goldfields YMCA	1 320
Badminton for Beginners	1 500
Badminton for Women (Geraldton)	1 500
Women's Golf Coaching Clinic (Wyalkatchem)	500
Squash Rackets Assoc. of WA	1 500



Sports Medicine Course for Nurses	3 000
Sports Trainers Course for Women	2 500
Wheelchair Sports Assoc.	2 500
<u>Research</u>	
Australian Sports Medicine Federation	2 250
June 1990	
Shelley Taylor-Smith	2 000
October 1990	
<u>Individual</u>	
Lyn Johnson	1 500
Karen Gobby	2 000
Margaret James	1 000
Zoe Goss	500
<u>Organisations</u>	
Business & Professional Women's Assoc (Leschenault)	1 500
Girls & Physical Activity Course	3 684
WA Volleyball Assoc.	2 000
Surf Life Saving Assoc.	3 500
WA Touch Assoc.	750
WA Table Tennis Assoc.	2 000
Girl Guides Assoc.	2 000
WA Women's Cricket Assoc.	500
Amateur Rowing Assoc. Women's Seminar	1 000
Australian Women Pilots Assoc.	2 000
WA Junior Elite Gymnastics Coaches	2 400
WA Netball Assoc.	2 500
City of Stirling	1 500
March 1991	
<u>Individual</u>	
Vanessa Grant	750
Michelle Timms	5 000
<u>Organisations</u>	
WA Women's Cricket Assoc.	970
Hedland Squash Club	1 000
Women's Affairs Committee (Basketball)	3 000
Mandurah Ladies Badminton	1 000
WA Women's Hockey Assoc.	1 095
WA Women's Lacrosse Assoc.	1 000
Australian Sports Medicine Federation	1 000
South West Region Women in Sport Committee	1 500
Geraldton Mid-West Women in Sport Committee	1 500
South West Ladies Golf	1 390
<u>Research</u>	
Carolyn Rooke	400
Total individual grants	18 250
Total organisations grants	53 109
Total research grants	2 650
Totals	74 009

The Government allocation to women in sport over the two years 1989-90 and 1990-91 has been -

1989-90	\$169 974.84 - for grants, administration costs of committee
	\$250 000 - child care facilities grants (CSRFF)
1990-91	\$190 000 - for grants, administration costs of committee

**\$250 000 - child care facilities grants (CSRFF)**

The Government intends to maintain the same level of funding in 1991-92.

**HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM - FEDERAL-STATE FUNDING**

723. Mr NICHOLLS to the Minister for Health:

In relation to the Home and Community Care Program -

- (a) what is the agreed funding arrangement between the Commonwealth and State Governments;
- (b) how much in total has been contributed by the Commonwealth and State Governments for each financial year since inception and to date this year;
- (c) in the previous three years, has the Commonwealth Government offered any funds which have not been taken by the State Government;
- (d) if so, why?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (a) The home and community care program is a cost-shared program between Commonwealth and State Governments. The Commonwealth matches the State's allocation of funds to the program according to an agreed ratio, which is currently 57.9 per cent Commonwealth and 42.1 per cent State funds. In addition, the Commonwealth provides unmatched funds which are used to develop innovative models of service delivery.

- (b) Commonwealth and State Government contributions to the program since its inception have been as follows -

1985-86 : \$8.187M State, \$10.195M Commonwealth, total \$18.382M  
 1986-87 : \$11.510M State, \$15.612M Commonwealth, total \$27.122M  
 1987-88 : \$12.849M State, \$17.392M Commonwealth, total \$30.241M  
 1988-89 : \$13.972M State, \$22.548M Commonwealth, total \$36.52M  
 1989-90 : \$16.485M State, \$23.650M Commonwealth, total \$40.135M

1990-91 allocations to the program are -

\$18.636M State, and \$28.405M Commonwealth, total \$47.041M

- (c)-(d)

The Commonwealth matches, according to the prevailing ratio, the amount allocated to the program by the State each year, to a maximum of a 15 per cent increase nationwide in the matched program. Prior to 1989-90 the maximum nationwide increase available from the Commonwealth was 20 per cent.

Competing demands for health services mean that Western Australia has been unable to avail itself of the full 15 per cent indexation in the last two financial years. The actual percentage increases in the matched program for the previous three financial years are as follows -

1988-89 : 19.3 per cent  
 1989-90 : 9 per cent  
 1990-91 : 12.5 per cent

These increases are well in excess of CPI increases, and represent a substantial increase in the resourcing of home and community care services in Western Australia.

**TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT**

*Former General Manager's Retirement Benefits Payment*

751. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) With reference to the Auditor General's report on the Totalisator Agency Board why was the former general manager paid "markedly greater benefits on his retirement . . . than generally provided in the Trust Deed for this Fund" (p26)?

- (2) Has the Minister caused an inquiry as to whether the payment was -
  - (a) illegal;
  - (b) improper?
- (3)
  - (a) If no to (2), why not;
  - (b) if yes to (2), what action has been taken as a result of that inquiry?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(3)

The former general manager received those benefits he was entitled to under the trust deed. This was in accordance with a decision taken by the board/trustees in 1986. As the payout received was covered by the trust deed and approved by the board/trustees I had no legal cause to inquire.

**TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - STAFF RETIREMENT FUND**  
*Supplemented Benefits - Shortfall Case*

752. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) On how many occasions has the Totalisator Agency Board supplemented the benefits of retirees so that retirees have been paid the full benefit?
- (2) What was the supplementary amount paid by the TAB in each case?
- (3) Why did the TAB decide not to make up the shortfall in only one case, that being a member who retired in September 1990?
- (4)
  - (a) Was the retiree referred to in (3) told at the time that his was the only case where a reduced benefit was paid and that the reduction in his benefit was \$14 000;
  - (b) if yes, what were the reasons given to that person for being treated differently from all other cases?
- (5) Did the TAB act correctly in reducing his benefit while using TAB money to ensure that no other retiree had a reduced benefit?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) The Totalisator Agency Board has never supplemented the benefits of RETIREES in order that they receive their full benefit.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3)-(5) The member referred to RESIGNED and did not retire in September 1990. He has subsequently received his full benefit.

**TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - STAFF RETIREMENT FUND**  
*Loans*

757. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Did the Totalisator Agency Board staff retirement fund ever lend money to -
  - (a) the chairman or any employee of the TAB;
  - (b) a friend or business associate of the chairman or any employee of the TAB?
- (2) Did the fund ever lend money to any of the companies that were either owned or part-owned by -
  - (a) the TAB;
  - (b) the chairman or any employee of the TAB?
- (3) If yes to (1) or (2) -
  - (a) has the money been repaid in full;
  - (b) what was the interest rate;

- (c) was the loan properly authorised;
- (d) were all members of the fund told that such loans were being made?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) From the records available I am advised of the following -
  - (a)-(b) No.
- (2) (a)-(b) No.
- (3) Not applicable.

**TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - STAFF RETIREMENT FUND**  
*Assets and Liabilities, 1987*

763. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

What were the assets and liabilities of the Totalisator Agency Board staff retirement fund on -

- (a) 1 October 1987;
- (b) 1 November 1987?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (a) Net assets \$2.023 million.
- (b) Net assets \$1.560 million.

**TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - STAFF RETIREMENT FUND**  
*Employee Contributions - Employee Non-Contributions Benefits*

767. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Have all members and beneficiaries of the Totalisator Agency Board staff retirement fund also been contributors to the fund?
- (2) If no, how many persons have or are entitled to receive a benefit without having contributed and what has or is estimated to be the benefit in each case?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) All members and beneficiaries have been contributors to the fund.
- (2) Nine members of the fund have had their contributions paid by the employer for several years. They are entitled to the full benefits prescribed in the deed.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT - MORBIDITY PROGRAM**  
*Hospital Statistics Requirement*

772. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it compulsory for hospitals to provide statistics to the Health Department of Western Australia under the department's morbidity program?
- (2) Do private hospitals fulfil their obligations in respect of this requirement?
- (3) How many codes are used by the department when compiling the information obtained?
- (4) What aspects of the information have specific codes?
- (5) Are the coded statistics examined periodically for the purpose of eliciting useful information?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1)-(2),(5) Yes.
- (3) Approximately 13 000.
- (4) Demographic data and diagnostic/procedural data.

POWER STATIONS - REVIEW COMMITTEE ON POWER OPTIONS FOR  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA RECOMMENDATIONS

*Government Decision*

787. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Apart from the principal recommendation about the next base load generating plant - which was announced last year - has the Government made a decision regarding the other recommendations of the Review Committee on Power Options for Western Australia as enumerated on pages IX and X of the report?
- (2) If so, would the Minister list these recommendations and inform the House about the Government's decision on that?

Dr GALLOP replied:

General

(1)-(2)

The recommendations on pages ix and x of the report cover a wide range of issues. A number of the recommendations were already being implemented by SECWA at the time of the committee's review. The list is reproduced below with appropriate commentary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All cross subsidies should be reviewed to assess their efficiency and equity. (3.5)
2. Electricity consumers should pay a price for electricity which as far as possible reflects the cost of supply. (3.5)
3. A public information program should be put in place with the tariff restructuring program to fully inform the public of the issues involved.
4. In future any subsidies should be paid for by taxpayers as a whole by explicit budget allocation and be fully transparent and accountable in terms of the Government's commitments in the White Paper *Investing for the Future, Financial Guidelines for Development, September 1989*. (3.5)
5. An important ingredient of tariff restructuring should be an allocation of costs based on contribution to the summer peak. (3.5)

All of the above recommendations have been considered in a review of energy pricing policy and tariff setting which is currently being considered by Government.

6. Further steps should be taken to improve the efficiency of operations and maintenance in SECWA power stations including the use of outside contractors. (3.5)

Efforts to improve the efficiency of operation and maintenance in SECWA power stations is ongoing. Power plant availability has improved steadily over the last four years. In 1989-90 it was 84.9 per cent. SECWA will continue to negotiate with unions to increase the use of outside contractors on maintenance work, where economies can be achieved.

7. A rate of return on capital requirement should be put in place for SECWA. (3.5)

SECWA has entered into a performance agreement with the Government, which is reflected in SECWA's corporate plan. Targets have been established for return on revenue, rate of return on assets employed and a range of other requirements.

8. Greater use should be made of end-use analysis in SECWA's forecasting, in particular for assessing the contribution to summer peak load. (4.4)

End use analysis is used by SECWA in forecasting. Its use is being refined and extended.

9. Demand management should become an urgent priority within SECWA and the Government and a far more aggressive approach should be taken to encourage energy conservation and the efficient use of electricity. (5.8)

SECWA has recently established a Demand Management Branch and the Government has established an Energy Conservation Unit. A number of initiatives are currently being developed and will be announced later in the year.

10. The Government Energy Conservation Strategy should receive priority in implementation. (5.8)

The Government has established an Energy Conservation Unit within the Energy Policy and Planning Bureau to address the strategy.

11. SECWA should investigate the costs of switching mechanisms for new solar water heater installations, particularly for those areas which are not likely to be reticulated with gas. (6.3.1)

Such switching mechanisms are being considered by SECWA as part of an overall review of customer metering and control equipment.

12. SECWA should encourage cogeneration projects and should adopt and advertise this policy. (6.7)

SECWA has always encouraged cogeneration, when commercially sensible. A more formal cogeneration policy will be announced within the next few months.

13. SECWA purchase prices from the partial supply categories of private power generations should reflect costs and benefits to SECWA in terms of both energy costs and capital costs. (7.2.2)

The recommendation reflects SECWA's current policy. Details of costs and benefits are a matter for close examination in individual cases and categories.

14. A BOO option should be considered for a gas fired, combined cycle plant.

This option was considered, in general terms, as part of SECWA's generation option assessment procedure. If further gas fired plant is required by SECWA, BOO will again be one of the options considered.

15. Before any decision in favour of Jurien over Collie for the location of a future coal fired power station is made, the present value of the net benefit of Jurien over Collie should be determined and this should be used to assess the cost of disturbing the Mt Lesueur area. (8.2.4)

No longer applicable.

16. Any advantages of a private (BOO) combined cycle gas turbine power station compared to a SECWA financed and operated station should be determined through a tender process.

17. SECWA should seek to use tenders to obtain gas at the lowest cost. (8.6)

These recommendations have been noted for future reference.

## JUVENILE REMAND CENTRE - FORRESTFIELD PROPOSAL

### *Established Cost*

792. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Community Services:

What was the established cost of the proposed juvenile remand centre which was to be constructed at Forrestfield?

Mr RIPPER replied:

Costs were never finalised for this proposed site.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT - LONGMORE

*Removal Consideration*

795. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Was consideration given to removing the detention centre from Longmore?
- (2) If so, why was that proposal rejected by the Government?

Mr RIPPER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

## PETROL - RETAIL PRICE REVIEW

*Petrol Retail Traders Rights and Liabilities Act - Interpretation Doubts*

796. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Will the Government's review of petrol retailing practices take into account the doubts which relate to the interpretation of the Petrol Retail Traders Rights and Liabilities Act 1991, section 4 (1)?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The matter is presently the subject of an appeal to the Supreme Court. Should the appeal be unsuccessful I will seek to amend the legislation to remove any doubts as to retailers' rights to purchase up to 50 per cent of their fuel supplies from another source.

## BUSES - MANDURAH BUS SERVICE

*Operating Cost - Fremantle or Kwinana-Mandurah Service*

803. Mr NICHOLLS to the Minister for Transport:

Referring to question 227 of 1991, is the service cost - \$443 000 - for the service from Fremantle to Mandurah or Kwinana to Mandurah?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

The service costs quoted in the answer to question 227 are for all Transperth services operating to Mandurah whether from Fremantle or Kwinana.

## STATESHIPS - DEFICIT

*Government Funding*

809. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

Would the Minister outline and cost that part of Stateships' deficit which would continue to be a claim on Government funds even if Stateships ceased to operate?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

Superannuation payments for retired employees and interest payments on long term debt are the main items which would continue to be a claim on Government funds if Stateships ceased to operate. These non-avoidable elements, which are currently estimated at around \$3.5 million, represent a significant proportion of the annual Stateships' deficit. If Stateships ceased trading it would also be necessary to seek alternative arrangements for the three new ships and to continue to fund the current lease and rental expenses associated with the new ships. In total Stateships' ongoing rental and lease liabilities to the year 2000 average \$6.7 million per annum in current values.

In addition to these ongoing payments, there would be a number of substantial one-off claims on Government funds if Stateships ceased to operate such as those associated with redundancy payments and redeployment costs. Furthermore, there would be a loss of revenue to other Government agencies as indicated in my answer to question 1208.

**STATESHIPS - FREIGHT EARNINGS**  
*United States Dollars Payment 1989-90*

810. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

What was the total freight earned by Stateships which was paid in United States dollars in the financial year 1989-90?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

All southbound freight in Stateships' South East Asia trade, other than cargo related to Cocos and Christmas Islands, is quoted and charged in US currency. The value of freight in this category in 1989-90 was \$A2 664 033, which converted at the current rate of 0.7657 to \$US2 039 850. This is the \$US revenue which now assists in providing a natural hedge against currency fluctuations on charter payments, as indicated in my answer to question 44.

**MV GORDON REID - SECOND VOYAGE**  
*Cargo Tonnage - Freight Earnings*

811. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

With reference to the second voyage of the *MV Gordon Reid*, how many tonnes of cargo were carried and how much freight was earned on -

- (a) the northward passage;
- (b) the southbound passage?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

In the context of the definition of tonnes detailed in my answer to question 678 -

**Northbound**

Tonnes @ 1 000 kilograms	-	396.6
Tonnes @ 1 cubic metre	-	1 002.2
Freight \$54 650		

**Southbound**

Tonnes @ 1 000 kilograms	-	162.9
Tonnes @ 1 cubic metre	-	495.0
Freight \$18 304		

**AIRLINES - DEREGULATION**  
*Internal Airline Licence Application*

822. Mr COURT to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Government received an application for a licence to operate another internal airline in Western Australia since announcing the deregulation of the intrastate jet routes to all comers?
- (2) If yes, who has applied for a licence and has it yet been granted?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) TransContinental Airlines of Australia. A licence has not been issued. Further information is required to be submitted by the airline.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT - PROSECUTIONS**  
*Electoral Law Breaches - Pecuniary Interests*

825. Mr COURT to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) How many prosecutions have there been in relation to the breaches of the electoral laws for local government in the years -
  - (a) 1989;
  - (b) 1990;
  - (c) to date in 1991?



- (2) How many prosecutions have there been in relation to pecuniary interests in local government in the years -
- (a) 1989;
  - (b) 1990;
  - (c) to date in 1991?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (1) The Department of Local Government does not keep a record of breaches of the electoral laws. It is the responsibility of the returning officer of each municipality to take appropriate action with respect to breaches of the electoral provisions.
- (2) There have been no prosecutions initiated as a result of inquiries conducted by the Department of Local Government since 1988. The department does not maintain records of prosecutions which may be initiated by private individuals.

#### MINES REGULATIONS ACT - AMENDMENTS

827. Mr COURT to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Will the Government be introducing amendments to the Mines Regulations Act 1946?
- (2) Are further legislative changes required to enable improvements in work practices as recently carried out in the coalmining industry?
- (3) Will any legislative changes be introduced this year to amend hours of work and days of work underground?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1)-(3) There is a need for further amendments to the Mines Regulations Act 1946. These will be introduced when the precise requirements have been determined and agreed upon.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### ROYAL COMMISSION INTO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER MATTERS - BRYCE, MR MALCOLM *Legal Representation*

174. Mr COURT to the Acting Premier:

- (1) Has the Government agreed for two, and sometimes three, legal officers to represent the former Deputy Premier, Mr Bryce, at the Royal Commission?
- (2) Is the Premier aware that those officers have had very little involvement in the commission's proceedings and that that degree of representation is not necessary?
- (3) For how long will this level of representation be provided?
- (4) Who is responsible for overseeing the costs and the level of legal representation provided at taxpayers' expense?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1)-(4) I am not sure how many legal officers are representing Mal Bryce in his appearances before the Royal Commission; nor am I sure how many legal officers are representing other people who are currently being questioned by the Royal Commission. However, I find it strange that the member for Nedlands considers himself an expert about what degree of representation people do or do not need when appearing before the Royal Commission. When people's reputations are on the line they are entitled to sufficient legal

representation. The Royal Commission is dealing with issues of great consequence and former Ministers are involved in the investigations associated with Government business activities. These people are properly entitled to a degree of legal representation which legal firms involved consider is necessary, and in association with the Crown Law Department officers who give us advice on these matters. I am convinced that the public consider it fair and reasonable that people receive a level of representation that is in keeping with the matters before the commission. That has my endorsement as Deputy Premier.

#### RACISM - LETTER

##### *Commonwealth Bureau for Community Relations*

175. Mr CATANIA to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

Is the Minister aware of a letter being circulated within the community claiming to be from the Commonwealth Bureau for Community Relations?

Dr WATSON replied:

I thank the member for his question. Once again a number of disturbing bogus letters have been circulated in the community. In my view, and in the view of people to whom I have shown these letters, the perpetrators are racist. The letter looks official and it claims to inform an Australian family that a Vietnamese family will be coming to live with them for a few months. The tone of the letter and the information the letter purports to provide can be described only as racist. It is an attempt at a cruel trick not only on the recipient but also on the Vietnamese people and all other migrants. Anyone who receives such a letter should either consign it to the rubbish bin or send it to the police.

In that context I was interested in a report recently published by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission on racist violence. Its terms of reference are essentially directed to migrants and to racism directed against migrants. The findings of the commission clearly demonstrated that racism against identified migrant groups is a cyclical aberration in our community. However, it also found that racism against Aboriginal people is endemic and that Aboriginal people live with racism every moment of their lives. Racism is a challenge for all of us in the community and in this House. It should be condemned.

#### SCHOOLS - SCHOOL RENEWAL REPORT

##### *Submissions Extension*

176. Mr AINSWORTH to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

In view of the fact that school parent bodies generally meet monthly, or even less frequently, will the Minister undertake to extend the period for submissions in response to the schools renewal report to significantly more than the one month currently allowed?

Dr GALLOP replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Education has provided the following answer -

While it is accepted that parent bodies generally meet monthly, they often meet more frequently than this to deal with issues of particular interest to them. It is hoped that this will be the case with the school renewal report. A significant degree of consultation over the school renewal process has occurred already. Consultation with a large number of local communities was undertaken during the development of the report by the chairperson of the school renewal steering committee. In addition, the peak parent body, the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations was represented on the steering committee. The school renewal report was released on 8 May and the Minister for Education invited members to encourage responses from their constituents by Friday 14 June. The compilation and summary of responses

will begin after that date. However, the Minister has indicated that responses which do not meet the deadline exactly, but are received by the end of June, will be given full consideration. Responses are being sought to the principles and processes of school renewal as set out in the report. Parent organisations are not being asked to prepare responses to possible renewal programs for specific schools.

#### UNDERWATER WORLD SENTOSA, SINGAPORE - GOVERNMENT SALE

177. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister assisting the Treasurer:

Is the Government moving ahead with its plan to sell the Western Australian Development Corporation's Underwater World project in Singapore, considering its success since its recent opening to the public?

Dr GALLOP replied:

If I were a member of the Opposition, perhaps I would bring in that lovely set of photographs which were provided to me from the opening, or the postcard which was sent to me by one of my colleagues who attended after the opening.

Mr Court: Who did the opening?

Mr MacKinnon: Fancy the Western Australian Government being proud to go to Singapore to open a tourist project -

Dr GALLOP: Let me finish the story. The Leader of the Opposition has no political future.

Mr MacKinnon interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Donovan): Order!

Dr GALLOP: Perhaps the member for Nedlands could tell the House how his program of undermining the Leader of the Opposition is going.

Mr Court: Perhaps you could tell us who went up there to open it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I know that Acting Speakers do not often occupy this chair during question time. However, that is not an appropriate reason for members to take liberties that perhaps they would not take with Mr Speaker. I insist that question time be conducted with the same sort of order as would otherwise be the case. Otherwise, I will be forced to take the same action as Mr Speaker.

Dr GALLOP: The Western Australian Development Corporation's aquarium on Sentosa Island opened its doors on 13 May 1991 after construction delays postponed its original forecast opening date in 1990. In the period of just over two weeks that the aquarium has been open to the public, 74 000 people have visited the facility. On current attendance figures, it is expected that the gross receipts will top the \$S1 million mark, which is equivalent to \$A750 000, by the end of this week. Nevertheless, the Government is proceeding with its plan to sell the Sentosa attraction. With the Sentosa project now completed and operating, potential buyers will be able to see what they will be getting for their investment. Efforts by this Opposition to try to force this Government into a fire sale last year failed miserably. To facilitate the Government's plan to sell the project, a WADC officer will visit Singapore next week to engage an agent to handle prospective sale negotiations. The prospects for a sale undoubtedly have been enhanced by the Singapore media coverage and the tremendous support the attraction is receiving from locals and travel tour operators. The cost of the Sentosa project was about \$A20 million. The Government will be aiming to recover that investment and achieve a profit for taxpayers of this State.

Mr Court: Do you know why the Deputy Premier was not there? He was working on Southern Processors.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Donovan): Order! I do not know whether members look up at the gallery from time to time, but I can assure them that they are well observed and it might pay them to remember that.

**HOMESWEST - GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
*Annual Reports 1989-90 Tabling*

178. Mr C.J. BARNETT to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Will the Minister advise why, after 11 months, it has not been possible to table the 1989-90 annual reports for Homeswest and the Government Employees Housing Authority?
- (2) Does the Minister regard an 11 month delay as acceptable?
- (3) When will these reports be tabled?

Mr McGINTY replied:

(1)-(3)

I am happy to find out the answer to the question and I will inform the member later today of the reason if the 11 month delay which he suggests is correct.

**BUNBURY - MARINA PROPOSAL**

179. Mr P.J. SMITH to the Minister for South-West:

With reference to the article in today's *South Western Times*, will the Minister arrange for the Bunbury harbour city community consultative group to assess the latest proposal from the Department of Marine and Harbours for development of a marina in the outer harbour area?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

I thank the member for Bunbury for the question and congratulate him for his ongoing interest in the progress of Bunbury and the amenities for his constituents. Members will be aware that part of the redevelopment of Bunbury being encouraged by the State Government is what is known as the Bunbury harbour city plan. A very important part of that plan is the development of a marina and associated facilities in the breakwater area of the old Bunbury harbour. That plan has been prepared by the Department of Marine and Harbours and my understanding from it and the Minister for Transport is that the money to undertake those works has a very high priority in the department's Budget bid.

The problem is that the plan developed by the Department of Marine and Harbours has given rise to some community concern and the member for Bunbury expressed some of that concern in today's *South Western Times*. I can assure him that the concerns that he and the community have expressed will be taken into account by the management committee for the project and by the working party which includes all the members of the Bunbury City Council. Indeed, the final harbour plan will be referred to the community committee which the member for Bunbury chairs. All of its comments will be taken into account before any work starts on the project.

**ITALIAN INTERNEES - DINNER ARRANGEMENTS**

180. Mr STRICKLAND to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

With respect to the proposed dinner or function to honour Italian internees will the Minister advise the House -

- (1) What progress has been made and what arrangements are in place?
- (2) How is the dinner to be funded?
- (3) Have any members of Parliament or outside organisations been approached for funding assistance and, if so, who?
- (4) Will there be bipartisan representation of Parliament at the dinner?

Dr WATSON replied:

(1)-(4)

I may have to provide a detailed answer to the question, but I can assure the member there will be bipartisan representation of Parliament at the dinner. A date has been set aside in August for the dinner, but I do not know the exact date. Arrangements are being made by a committee of interested people, including my colleagues, the Premier, the member for Balcatta and Hon Sam Piantadosi. The committee is chaired by Sonia Turkington who was one of the people who made representations to Government about this function.

Mr Strickland: How is the dinner to be funded and have parliamentarians and others been approached?

Dr WATSON: A number of people have been approached and there have been a number of private sponsors. If the member is feeling generous, we will approach him.

### DEFENCE - REORGANISATION

#### *Western Australia - Effect on*

181. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for State Development:

Has the Minister received any details of how Western Australia will be affected by the reorganisation of Australia's defence forces?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

I understand that today in Federal Parliament the Minister for Defence, Senator Ray, put an end to any lingering doubt about the long term role of Western Australia in naval operations. In confirmation of the two ocean policy, half the Royal Australian Navy fleet will be stationed in Western Australia, bringing with it not only greater security to the Indian Ocean region, but also major economic benefits to Western Australia. Senator Ray said that all the new submarines will be stationed in Western Australia, together with many of the new Anzac ships and the new patrol boats, some of which we hope will be built in Western Australia. From 1995 onwards the steady build-up of RAN operations in Western Australia will have considerable economic impact and result in something of a boom in the Rockingham area.

Mr Minson: Will they repair anything here?

Mr TAYLOR: I shall come to that. Studies by the Department of State Development suggest that, as more of the fleet moves across to Western Australia, the number of RAN personnel stationed locally can be expected to double. At present approximately 1 600 RAN officers and crew are working in the State, and they have approximately 3 000 dependants. When the build-up is completed towards the year 2000, the number of RAN personnel is expected to top 3 000 and their dependants 6 000, or more. That will provide a considerable impetus to the local business community in a town such as Rockingham and it will provide new stimulus to the building industry in that area. In addition, many other sectors of the economy can be expected to benefit.

The local shipbuilding industry is now in a stronger position to bid for defence work, and I am confident that local companies will put on a good showing when tenders are called for the new coastal patrol boats and mine hunters. More immediately, the State Government will be lobbying hard for local industry to take part in a defence project which is expected to be announced before the end of next month. It will offer considerable scope for some of our local hi-tech companies, and I believe the time has come for them to turn their attention to the new opportunities that an enlarged naval contingent will offer to Western Australia.

**ELECTRICITY - TARIFF REDUCTION**

*State Energy Commission of Western Australia - Union Negotiations*

182. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Will the Minister report on the progress of the State Energy Commission's negotiations with the SECWA unions at Muja and Kwinana, with regard to the 15 per cent improvement in productivity which the Government requires in order to implement the tariff reduction?
- (2) Will the Minister assure Western Australians that power tariffs will be reduced for all energy consumers in Western Australia on 1 July?

Dr GALLOP replied:

(1)-(2)

In answer to the second part of the question, as I have said in the Parliament previously, I can assure the people of this State that there will be a real reduction in the price of electricity from 1 July.

In reply to the first part of the question, two processes are occurring within the SECWA system on the industrial relations front. The first relates to the proceedings that were before the Industrial Relations Commission last year, and discussions are continuing in respect of restructuring within SECWA under the umbrella of that process. Secondly, in some of the negotiations that took place with respect to the power station, agreement was reached with the unions in relation to an award restructuring that would lead to productivity improvements within SECWA. Discussions have been held between SECWA officials and the trade unions concerned. They have agreed upon a framework that will allow the process to reach a conclusion. Already the initial training part of the program has been undertaken by some of the workers at Muja and Kwinana. I hope it will be in full swing very soon, so that the negotiations can lead to proposals to bring about the productivity improvements to which the member referred.

**STATESHIPS - CLOSURE**

*Confederation of Western Australian Industry's Request - North West Response*

183. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Transport:

What reaction, if any, has she received from the people of the north west in response to the Confederation of Western Australian Industry's call to close down Stateships?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

I have received a number of letters and faxes from people in the north who are alarmed at the prospect of Stateships being closed. I do not want to be too critical of the Confederation of Western Australian Industry's assessment of the sorts of things we should do in a hard budgetary year. However, after having a discussion on radio this morning with Mr Lenzo from the Confederation of Western Australian Industry I can understand why he has made some classic errors in his Press release and assessment of Stateships because he said then that Stateships loses \$30 million a year, which everybody in this House knows is incorrect.

Several members interjected.

For the information of members on this side of the House and the education of members on the other side - who should shut up and listen because they purport to represent people in regional areas, and if they listen they might learn something - people in regional areas value the service of Stateships. As I was saying, I have received many letters and faxes from people in the north west about this matter. I hope that when I table copies of the correspondence I have received members opposite will be gracious enough to acknowledge that perhaps these people should be given consideration.

Mr Court: You just like smashing the bottle on the bow of the ship.

Mrs BEGGS: I have not smashed one bottle on one bow.

Mr Court: That was back luck, was it not?

Mrs BEGGS: No, I invite other people in the community to do that including the former Governor's wife, Mrs Reid, because one of the ships is named after Gordon Reid. The letters to which I have been referring have come from the Broome Chamber of Commerce; W.N.M. MacDonald Pty Ltd, Fossil Downs Station; K.G. Wright; the Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories; and the Geraldton Building Company. Perhaps the member for Geraldton would be interested in the last one mentioned. The salient point of those letters is the fact that Stateships provides a reliable and efficient service and acts as an inducement to keeping down freight rates.

Mr Bloffwitch: Get them to call into Geraldton and get rid of some of the containers. Will the new ships call at Geraldton?

Mrs BEGGS: So members opposite want the ships, do they?

Mr Taylor: The member for Geraldton stood in this place yesterday and said he wanted the ships to call into Geraldton, so the member cannot have it both ways.

Mrs BEGGS: That is correct.

Several members interjected.

Mr Bloffwitch: Are Stateships going to call at Geraldton?

Mrs BEGGS: Yes.

Mr B offwitch: When?

Mrs BEGGS: Just let me -

Mr Kierath: You don't know where they call.

Mrs BEGGS: I do not actually do the logbooks for Stateships as to when they go or where they call. They call on a basis of need. The member for Geraldton knows that, because he has made a representation on behalf of some people which has been successful. As I said, I will table these letters, but the letter from the Broome Chamber of Commerce is an important one because it says that in the past 12 months the road freight operators have increased the Perth-Broome consignment charges by approximately 21 per cent and freight charges by 38 per cent. It goes on to say that freight increases are almost identical between the different transport companies, which the chamber believes smacks of collusion.

The Geraldton Building Company has critical contracts with the Christmas Island resort development and relies on Stateships for the transport of Western Australian materials and manufactured goods to Christmas Island. Members can read the content of the letters, which are interesting, particularly the one from the Broome Chamber of Commerce.

Mr Court: If you are losing \$15 million I hope you have competitive rates.

Mrs BEGGS: The amount is \$11 million. It is important for us to listen to the opinions of the Confederation of Western Australia Industry about many matters because it represents the business community. However, it is more important for people with an interest in regional development to listen to the views of and wishes of people living in regional areas.

#### ELECTIONS - BALLOT PAPERS

##### *Ticks or Crosses Meaning - No Alterations Assurance*

184. Mr READ to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

Will the Minister assure the House that the Government has no plans to alter the meaning of the ticks or crosses marked on the ballot papers?

Dr GALLOP replied:

Mr Acting Speaker -

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I wonder if members would mind terribly if we could hear the Minister's reply?

Dr GALLOP: Tampering with the electoral system for party political advantage or to inhibit the full exercise of the democratic vote by selected groups are hallmarks of the attitude of Liberal Governments. Prior to the recent New South Wales election the Greiner Liberal Government reversed years of New South Wales practice by declaring informal any Assembly vote marked only with a tick or a cross. The Government was told clearly that this change would dramatically increase the informal vote. No sustainable criticism was made of the old system which had operated well at previous elections. The change was illogical and unjustified. The likely effect was predicted. A Statewide informal vote on Assembly ballot papers of approximately 10 per cent was expected. In some places this figure reached 20 per cent. As a consequence the legitimacy of the election is now to be questioned in court. Political bias has been revealed in the effect of the change. The Labor Government in this State believes that a tick or a cross is a clear indication of the voter's choice. Any change proposed to our electoral law by this Government would seek to assist more voters to have their votes counted, not fewer.

#### FAUNA - INDIGENOUS FAUNA *Protection Commitment*

185. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Is the Government sincere in claiming a commitment to the protection of indigenous fauna.
- (2) If so, how does he reconcile this commitment with the fact that according to a 1986 census there are 9 510 persons in the Kimberley electorate alone who are now exempt from most of the provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Act and who may take protected fauna for food purposes every day of the year if they so wish when not a single one of those persons is dependent for subsistence on such fauna?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1)-(2)

The Government is sincere in its efforts to maintain wildlife. At the same time the Government is not proposing to change those sections of the Act which deal with the capacity of Aboriginal people to have access to traditional food sources. We do not see those two things as necessarily being in contradiction. If they are in contradiction, and if there is a species which would be endangered by eating, as was discussed the other day, there are provisions in the Act to enable me to declare that species protected and prevent those people from eating it, not just every day of the year but on any day of the year.

Rather than argue the theory of what might happen, in practice not one species in this State is in danger as a result of eating. If any species were endangered in this way, I have the power under the Act to take action to ensure that that danger stops by stopping the eating. Eating is preventable in these circumstances. If the member wants to draw my attention to a species which is disappearing through people's teeth, I am prepared to take appropriate action.