Legislative Council

Tuesday, 13 October 1987

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 3.30 pm, and read prayers.

BILLS (7): ASSENT

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills --

1. Acts Amendment (Casino Control) Bill.
2. Legislative Review and Advisory Committee Repeal Bill.
3. Reserves and Land Revestment Bill.
4. Acts Amendment (Corrective Services) Bill.
5. Water Authority Amendment Bill.
6. Motor Vehicle Drivers Instructors Amendment Bill.
7. Gaming Commission Bill.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT ACT

Report Tabling: Extension of Time

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): I table the following notifications of extensions of time for the tabling of annual reports for the 1986-87 year granted under section 70 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985 --

The Minister for Local Government --

Annual report of the Local Government Superannuation Board.
Annual report of the Trustees of the Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park Cemetery Board.

The Minister for Labour, Productivity and Employment --

Annual report of the Department of Services.
Annual report of the Office of Industrial Relations.

The Minister for Agriculture --

Annual report of the Honey Pool of Western Australia.

I table the relevant documents.

(See paper No 365.)

BILLS

Standing Orders Suspension

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Leader of the House) [3.35 pm]: I move --

> That Standing and Sessional Orders be suspended until the adjournment of the House on Wednesday, 14 October 1987, so far as to enable any Bill to be introduced and put through one or more stages at the same sitting.

Mr President, I emphasise immediately that it is the intention, given the passage of this motion, to do no more than carry through Bills which are introduced this week to the second reading speech; that is, to ensure that several Bills which are available for introduction in this House can be second read no later than tomorrow, leaving at least a full week of prior notice for the resumption of debate next week. This is on an understanding that it will not be necessary this week to sit on Thursday when the second reading otherwise would occur.

The PRESIDENT: Before I put the question, I remind honourable members that this vote requires the consent of an absolute majority and if I hear a dissenting voice I will move to divide the House.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: There being no dissenting voice, and there being an absolute majority of members in attendance, I declare the motion carried with an absolute majority.

Question thus passed.

MOTIONS

Resumption of Debate: Motion

HON N.F. MOORE (Lower North) [3.36 pm]: I move --

> That the Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on motion supporting calls by the Prime Minister and the Premier for privatisation of Government assets be made the first Order of the Day at the next sitting and that upon resumption of the debate as herein provided, the question be resolved without further adjournment or suspension.

The purpose of this motion is to see if I can convince the House to debate a motion I moved in this place on Thursday, 10 September, just over a month ago, in respect of the privatisation of Government assets. I sought to have this House express support for the Prime Minister and the Premier in their calls for the privatisation of Australian Airlines, Qantas, and the Commonwealth Bank. I also sought to have this House call on the Premier to provide a list of those Government assets which he considered suitable for privatisation. I thirdly sought to have this House call on the ACTU, the TLC, and the State branches of the Labor Party to support the Premier in his call for, and I quote from a speech he made, "the proper and profitable management of Government assets". So just over a month ago I moved that motion and I spoke at some length on how we as a House should support those views set out in the motion.

As is normal, the Government took the adjournment on that motion and, regrettably, has not seen fit to debate it to this time. Because the motion has constantly appeared on the Notice Paper in such a position that one expects that it will ultimately fall off the Notice Paper, I feel that in view of the circumstances surrounding the whole issue of politics at present, it is very important that we debate this issue. It is an issue of some national significance just as it is an issue of some State significance, particularly as we have a mini-election coming up, and I think people ought to know just where the Government stands on privatisation: Do Government members support the views of their leaders on what is a very important issue?

What I am moving now, having given notice in the last sitting week, is that the Order of the Day which deals with the debate on the motion on privatisation be made the first Order of the Day at the next sitting of the House. Standing Orders quite clearly allow for any member of the House who is in charge of an Order of the Day to seek the approval of the House for that item of business to be moved to some other part of the Notice Paper. It will be argued by some people opposite that this is an attempt to take the business of the House out of the hands of the Government, but clearly that is not the case. Quite clearly the framers of our Standing Orders envisaged an occasion when members could seek, if they got the numbers, to have a particular item of business raised to another part of the Notice Paper -- in this case I am seeking to have it No 1 -- so that it would be debated.

The motion I am moving now also says that in the event of this motion being agreed to, the debate will be resumed and the question will be resolved without further adjournment or suspension. The reason why that is included is simply to ensure that the matter is debated and that the House declares its position on the matter. Of course, it would be simple for the Government to make my motion Order of the Day No 1 and then to have a Government member make an innocuous speech -- not that I would expect most of them to make innocuous speeches, but it could be deliberate on this occasion -- and then to adjourn the debate again, so that like a rock going down a well the motion would descend to the bottom of the Notice Paper and stay there again until the Government decided it was time to debate it further or until the House was adjourned for the Christmas break.

I move this motion today because it is important for members of the House and important for members of the community to know whether what the Premier and the Prime Minister are saying about the privatisation of Government assets is the view of both Governments. I cannot do anything about the standing of the Commonwealth Government on this matter,

although it has made some very enlightened comments about this privatisation issue in recent times. But the matter is important and I have a capacity in this House to ask the State Government whether it supports the Premier in his call for the privatisation of some major assets.

It is interesting that Mr Burke directed most of his comments to Government assets which are, I guess, in the Commonwealth arena, so his comments were not specifically about how he thought the translation of that principle would affect the State arena. That is why I am asking this House to call on the Premier to let us know how he sees the privatisation issue being transposed into the State scene.

I guess I am not the only one in the community who would like a debate on this issue and who would like to know what will happen in WA. In my speech when moving the original motion I quoted comments attributed to Mr Clive Brown, the Secretary of the TLC. I will quote again from *The West Australian* of 2 September, as follows --

> "The debate will sort out those in the Labor Party who are closer to business than ordinary wage-and-salary earners," Mr Brown said.

The article also included the following --

> The secretary of the Trades and Labor Council, Mr Clive Brown -- a member of the Broad Left -- said yesterday that it was clear that some senior ALP officials had been seduced by the trappings available to high fliers in the business community.

Mr Clive Brown is a man of some significance in our community; he is in charge, for all intents and purposes, of the trade union movement in this State. He is a man of some standing within the labour movement and he wants to know who is on what side of the privatisation debate. He asked publicly which members of the Labor Party supported the Premier and which members did not support the Premier. It is important for us to assist Mr Brown in gaining that information. Here is an opportunity for members of the Government in this House to debate this issue which is of some significance so that not just I but also Mr Brown and other members of the trade union movement will know where we all stand on what is a very important issue. I already know where a couple of Government members stand on this issue. I know, for example, that Hon Sam Piantadosi and Hon Tom Butler do not support the sale of Qantas, which was one of the things Mr Burke said ought to be sold. When I spoke last time they both said by interjection that they did not support the Premier on that matter.

I thought it was interesting that when I made that speech, the Press was so enthralled with the disagreement within the Labor Party it gave this information no coverage whatsoever. I guess that is one of the problems of being a member of Parliament trying to get a point across to the people -- one has to rely on the media to pass on what is being said, unless one has the capacity to write to every voter individually. I notice members of the Press are present today and I hope that today they will get a copy of page 3513 of *Hansard* where they will see that in answer to a question from me, "Does Hon Sam Piantadosi support the Premier on Qantas?", Hon Sam Piantadosi says no. I also asked Hon Tom Butler, "Does Hon Tom Butler support the sale of Qantas?", and he also said no. Hon Tom Butler is more important than Hon Sam Piantadosi because he is the President of the Labor Party, and he does not agree with the Premier, who is the leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, on a very important and fundamental issue affecting everyone in WA, namely the sale and privatisation of Government assets. I have already found that there is some dissension within Government ranks and we ought to find out the extent of that dissension.

I was interested the other day, when debating a motion on the ID card, to hear Hon Graham Edwards, a Minister of the Crown, say that he always supports the Premier. I think that is a very commendable position for him to take. I can only assume that the support that he gives to the Premier on the matter of the ID card means that he also supports the privatisation of Government assets. We have reached a position where at least two Government members have made it clear that they do not support the Premier and I think Hon Garry Kelly indicated he did not support him either, but it did not get into *Hansard*. I believe that the Minister, Hon Graham Edwards, who says, as a general matter of principle, that he supports the Premier on the ID card, would also support him on the privatisation of Government assets.

I do not believe we should wait any longer than the month we have waited already to debate this issue. The Leader of the House should agree to this motion to debate the original motion as the first item of business tomorrow. We could then have a full-scale debate on the question of the privatisation of Government assets. We will then know in this pre-mini-election environment where everybody stands on that question. Even if the by-elections were not being held, I would be more than happy to know where everybody stands anyway. However, the matter becomes more important in this election environment because people are making judgments about all of us. Everybody should know whether the Labor Party is split on this fundamental issue. I will be the first to stand on the roof tops and shout, "Good on you" if members of the Labor Party support privatisation because it took a long while for them to get there. If they do not support the Premier and the Prime Minister en masse, the public should know. They should know that the Premier and the Prime Minister are out on a limb and that they are birds separated from the rest of the flock on a very important issue.

If this motion is passed, my substantive motion will be the first item of business tomorrow. The Leader of the House could get his Whip to move for the adjournment of the debate until the next sitting of the House. I think that motion would probably win with the way the numbers are in this House at this time. He could again frustrate my intention to have a debate on this issue. However, I believe that would be unfair to the Press which wants to know where each member stands on it and to the public who take an interest in the proceedings of this place.

I challenge the Leader of the House to debate this issue. I regret moving this motion today. However, it is necessary because it appears the Government does not want to debate the matter. I hope the Leader of the House will not frustrate me again because I think he probably supports the Premier.

The motion is not a hard one to discuss. In fact, I believe it is very complimentary of the Government. It supports the Prime Minister and it supports the Premier. If the substantive motion were passed, it would support their proposal. It asks the Premier to provide information and it asks the House to inform the Trades and Labor Council and some branches of the Labor Party that the House supports the Premier and the Prime Minister because they have at last seen the light that the only way to proceed in this country is down the path of privatisation of some Government assets that are costing taxpayers an arm and a leg because they are unproductive and inefficient.

This is our chance to debate this matter and to make a decision about an issue of great significance. I ask the Leader of the House not to adjourn the motion, but to agree with it and to debate the substantive motion tomorrow to its conclusion so that the public know where everyone stands on the issue.

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Leader of the House) [3.55 pm]: I thank Hon Norman Moore for his challenge. However, I must say at once that it is a challenge I have no inclination to accept. The fact is that there is simply no point to my doing so. A further fact is that Mr Moore's substantive motion which he wants to bring on so urgently is not an urgent matter. Certainly, it is not so urgent as to give it priority over all other business of the House tomorrow.

In response to one of Mr Moore's comments, I assure him that this item will not fall off the bottom of the Notice Paper. I am happy to assure him that it will be discussed this session. However, it will be discussed in due course. When we come to discuss it, Mr Moore will find that many of his assumptions and premises are quite incorrect. Unlike his speech on this motion, I do not think it necessary to anticipate all those reasons at this stage. There was one reason only that Mr Moore advanced in support of the urgent treatment of his motion and that was that it had some purported relevance to the by-elections to be held on 24 October. That has to be seen as a ludicrous proposition, if only because the motion sets out to indicate the support of the House, Government and Opposition members alike, for the Premier's statements.

It is true that the Premier has been misquoted in part, but nonetheless, the Premier is being praised. I really find it difficult to connect that with the proposition that, in some way, the substantive motion has some serious relevance to the by-elections now under way.

In addition to all of that is an argument which Mr Moore himself indicated, but did not accept -- that is, the argument that the Opposition should not see it as its role to take the business of the House out of the hands of the Government. This has been regarded always as a high principle of the proceedings of this House. In all of the time that I have been here -- it is not all that long, only about eight years -- there has been only one such attempt carried through to its conclusion and that was when the Opposition used its numbers to support a motion by Mr Oliver. It ended up with the House making a complete fool of itself. That was the long and short of that effort and I do not see why we should now be encouraged to do the same thing. I have been told by members who have been in this House much longer than I have that they cannot recall a single occasion prior to Mr Oliver's motion on which a motion of this sort has been carried by the House -- that is, a motion in effect seeking to take the business of the House out of the hands of the Government. That was a very bad precedent for Mr Oliver to set. It is bad enough that it happened once; it should not happen again. Certainly it should not happen in circumstances where there is simply no urgency in the substantive motion to warrant it.

On those grounds, I oppose the motion.

HON N.F. MOORE (Lower North) [4.00 pm]: I will not delay the House but I wish to make two points. Hon J.M. Berinson said that this issue has no relevance to the by-elections. I think it has, but that is not the point; if it has no relevance to the by-elections why not debate it now?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Because it does not have the urgency to warrant being put ahead of the other business on the Notice Paper.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am happy to come to this House on more than two days a week and to debate issues of significance and relevance to the community. This House sits for about five and a half minutes a week! I do not mind sitting an extra couple of hours to debate this issue; I will sit tomorrow until 3.00 am on Thursday, if necessary, to debate this matter.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why should we? You do not have the picture -- your motion is not worth it.

Hon N.F. MOORE: This motion, which the Leader of the House says has no relevance to the by-election, relates to a matter of great significance in the community, a matter of such significance that the Premier of Western Australia was prepared to go against his party's expressed policies and take a different point of view. The Premier was prepared to have recorded in the Press --

> That no ALP policy was immutable but conceded that changes would only come in the next year after a controversial and traumatic debate.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member cannot make reference to that in this debate.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I accept your ruling, Mr President. It is a matter of great significance for the Premier to go to that extreme act, and for the Leader of the House to say in argument that it is not a matter of any significance, belies the fact. As far as taking the business out of the Government's hands is concerned --

Hon J.M. Berinson: The urgency of the business.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Everything is a matter of urgency when those sorts of circumstances arise. It is urgent that people should know the answers. Standing Order No 118 states --

> Ministers may arrange the sequence of the Orders of the Day on the Notice Paper as they think fit. The Mover of any Order of the Day may move after notice that such Order of the Day shall be changed to another position on the Notice Paper.

That Standing Order allows me and any other member to do what I am now doing. If the Government has the numbers to prevent this motion being carried, so be it; but the Standing Orders provide for this procedure to happen and I hope that will never be changed. Standing Order No 118 gives any private member an opportunity to seek to have his motion or legislation debated and gives him an opportunity to argue why it should be debated. If the context of that Standing Order is removed a very fundamental right of private members in this House will be taken away.

I hope that Government members -- being anxious for their constituents in the TLC and the Labor Party -- will let their constituents know where they stand on this issue and allow it to be debated tomorrow, which seems a pretty good time for it.

Question put and negatived.

EDUCATION REGULATIONS

Amendment: Motion

HON N.F. MOORE (Lower North) [4.04 pm]: I move --

> That for the purposes of, and pursuant to, section 42(4) of the Interpretation Act 1984 --
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> > The Education Amendment Regulations (No 4) 1987, tabled in the Legislative Council on 8 September 1987, are hereby amended by inserting, as regulations 34A and 34B, the regulations 33 and 34 repealed by the said amending regulations.

This motion relates to the amendment of regulations. By way of background I will explain how the Interpretation Act affects regulations which are tabled in this House. It is possible for this Chamber to disallow regulations and if one Chamber disallows regulations, the regulations are disallowed by the Parliament. However, it is not competent for this Chamber on its own to amend regulations although it is competent for it to pass a motion amending the regulations and seek the agreement of the other House to this amendment. If the other place agrees, the regulations are amended.

On the Table of the House are regulations in respect of corporal punishment in schools. As members will know, the existing regulations -- those which were in place prior to the amendments put forward by the Minister -- provided that schools could use corporal punishment as a means of discipline. Regulations 33 and 34 of the Education Act regulations describe the way in which corporal punishment can be used and the circumstances under which it is appropriate for it to be used. When the Minister sought to change the policy in respect of corporal punishment and to ban its use in schools, he introduced amendments to the Education Act regulations. But, these amendments do not simply seek to remove regulations 33 and 34 and have them deleted altogether; he introduced a regulation which states --

> Regulations 33 and 34 of the principal regulations are repealed and the following regulations are substituted.

He has not just tried to get rid of the cane, but has also introduced new regulations which provide alternative forms of punishment. When I was trying to work out what I should do in respect of these regulations, I had two choices: Firstly, I could move for their disallowance and, secondly, I could move for their amendment. If I moved for their disallowance it would have been like tossing the baby out with the bath water. In order to retain the use of corporal punishment we would have to throw out the new regulations in respect of alternative forms of punishment. I do not believe that is a sensible way to go. The cane should still be available as an option for schools and that is why I have moved this motion.

Hon Tom Stephens: Do you want capital punishment in schools too?

Hon N.F. MOORE: Capital punishment would be a blessing if it were used discriminately on people on the other side of the House.

I support the use of the cane in certain circumstances at the discretion of the principal for particular offences. Having been a school teacher, I know the use of the cane is an effective deterrent and punishment. I do not believe it should be removed from the regulations and banned. I also accept that the new proposition put forward by the Minister is worthy of retention. New regulation 33 states --

> A teacher on the staff of a school may take such physical action as is appropriate to prevent or restrain a child from acting in a manner which places at risk the safety of that child, any other child or a member of the staff of the school.

That is an eminently sensible proposition. When I was teaching everybody was advised not

to lay a hand on any child under any circumstances because they could find themselves in court. There were occasions on which teachers should have used some force to prevent some child from taking certain actions but did not do so for fear of potential court action for assault. That has always been a bone of contention and I commend the Minister on introducing this new regulation which allows the restraint of children under certain circumstances. I have witnessed circumstances under which this sort of restraint was necessary and teachers have taken the risk of being charged for assault by physically restraining very aggressive students. I do not want teachers to lose that option in seeking to discipline wayward students.

New regulation 34 relates to the question of time out, and says --

> (1) Notwithstanding regulations 29, 174, 175 and 192, the principal of a school may, for the purpose of disciplining a child, direct that while the child is at school he be isolated from other children attending the school for a period not exceeding 10 days.

That is a very good idea. It continues --

> (2) A direction under subregulation (1) may provide --
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> (a) that the child continue with such educational programme as is specified;
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> (b) that the child attend at the school at such times as are specified;
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> (c) that the child have such lunch recess and recess in the middle of the morning or afternoon session as is specified; and
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> (d) that the child be restricted from engaging in such school activities as are specified.

A lot of specifications are attached, but the intention is clear: A school may isolate a disruptive child. I commend the Minister for that intention. One of the great problems in schools is that there is a very small minority of students who do not want to be there or who want to ensure, by the way in which they behave, that nobody else wants to be there, and in those circumstances it is eminently sensible and practical for those children who are disruptive and who seek to prevent other children from learning to be isolated from those other children. The basic purpose of schools is to teach children a certain amount of knowledge, but if there are students in schools who prevent other children from learning, then something has to be done about those children.

For those reasons, I agree with time out. I am told it is a punishment which very few children like and that it is unpleasant and effective, so I support the Minister for providing that alternative. However, I do not agree with the removal of the use of the cane.

When the Minister announced that the regulations would be changed and that corporal punishment in schools would be abolished, he used the argument that the regulations were contrary to the Equal Opportunity Act. The old regulations in respect of corporal punishment said in effect that the cane may be used on boy students and on girl students under the age of 12 -- or cannot be used on girl students over the age of 12; I am not sure exactly what the case is. However, the intention is clear.

The Minister said that because the period of time set down in the Equal Opportunity Act for the elimination of discriminatory practices had been reached, it was necessary to change the regulations to bring them into line with that Act. The Minister gave the impression to the community that this was his reason for changing the regulations and that it had nothing to do with his views about the cane or corporal punishment; he had no choice because the Equal Opportunity Act said he had to change the regulations.

That is not correct. For a long time the Labor Party has had as part of its platform the removal of corporal punishment in schools. The Minister was not dishonest, but he was misleading when he did not come straight out and say that he is getting rid of corporal punishment because he thinks it should go and he does not like it. The fact that the Minister used the Equal Opportunity Act was in a sense a subterfuge and gave an impression which was not strictly correct. If one reads the ALP platform -- as I do from time to time to find out what is going to happen to the future of this country -- one will find that it is part of the platform to abolish corporal punishment.

The Minister was prepared to go along to the tribunal that was set up to look at arguments about the Equal Opportunity Act and argue that there should continue to be both male and female deputy principals in our schools. The Minister was prepared to take a case to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal that there should be discrimination on the basis of sex, and was prepared to accept that some teachers ought to be appointed to particular jobs because they are male, and other teachers should be appointed to other jobs because they are female. The Minister took that case up, and won it, and I am the first to support him because I believe there is a role in schools for both male and female deputy principals. There are tasks in schools which are better carried out by people of particular sexes; female deputy principals have much more success in looking after the problems of female students, and male deputy principals have greater success in looking after the problems of male students.

I bring that example to the House because it shows that if the Minister wanted to, he could take the old regulations in respect of the use of the cane to the tribunal, and seek an exemption, and he could say, "We do not believe caning a girl over the age of 13 is an appropriate punishment, but we believe there are occasions when it is appropriate for other students to be caned." So the Minister could have sought an exemption and there would have been no necessity to get rid of this part of the regulations. It really comes down to the fact that as a member of the Labor Party, the Minister is opposed to the use of the cane, and whether we had the equal opportunity legislation or not, he would ultimately get rid of the regulations anyway.

I believe it is very important in our schools that principals and other staff have at their disposal the capacity to punish students who transgress the rules of the school. The old regulations are quite specific about the sorts of offences for which the cane can be used. I quote the old regulation 33(2) --

(a) Corporal punishment may be inflicted for offences against morality, for gross impertinence, or for wilful and persistent disobedience.

(b) A headmaster or teacher shall not inflict corporal punishment on a child --

(i) as a general rule, in public; or

(ii) for a failure or inability to learn; or

(iii) for trivial breaches of school discipline; or

(iv) for neglect to prepare home lessons.

The regulations are seen in effect as a last resort, and for transgressions of the most serious nature the principal may inflict corporal punishment on a student. In the case of a girl student under 12 years, corporal punishment is to be inflicted by a female teacher. In fact, the cane is rarely used in schools, and is used in some schools more than in others. In some schools I attended the cane was used quite frequently; in other schools I attended it was rarely used. To a large extent whether the cane is used depends on the general attitude of the student body. Some schools have a preponderance of children who have as their sole aim for being at school the total disruption of the school programme.

Hon Kay Hallahan: What about the ability of the staff to handle the subject behaviour?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am pleased the Minister raised that because if one talks to teachers -- as I am sure the Minister does -- one finds that one of the greatest problems they face today is trying to get children into a learning frame of mind and knowing what to do with a disruptive child in the back corner who persistently and wilfully refuses to do as he is told. We have a situation in some schools where a tiny minority of children -- say five per cent -- take up about 85 per cent of the principal's time and about 75 per cent of the teacher's time. I am worried about the rest of the class, the other 95 per cent of the children at school, who want to learn but are finding that so much of the teacher's time is being channelled into unproductive courses that they miss out. Schools are there for children to learn. If that does not happen, why on earth do we have a formalised compulsory system? Kids would be better off at home, having their parents teach them if they cannot learn at school. Everywhere one goes these days, one finds people are concerned about the quality of education. They are concerned about the discipline in Government schools. There is an exodus of children from Government schools to private schools. If one asks why that is happening, nine times out of 10 parents will say to one, "The discipline is much better in the private schools. My kids will

get a chance to learn in a private school. There is too much disruption in Government schools."

Hon Garry Kelly: That is largely a myth.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It may be a myth but if a kid comes home day after day to his mother and says, "Look, I just couldn't do anything today because Johnny Brown down the back kept disrupting us consistently", Mum gets the view that there is a breakdown in discipline. I know that there are other reasons for parents sending their children to private schools, but one of the major reasons is this question of discipline. I am not saying that the use of the cane is the be-all and end-all in discipline. I am the first to admit that maybe in three cases out of 10 it is counter productive and has the reverse effect, but I know from my own experience that in many cases it is very productive and useful, and it achieves the purpose for which it was used. Many children who get the cane as a last resort learn to mend their ways.

Hon Garry Kelly interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: So what? A good kid can go down the wrong track and unless he is turned back down the right track, he will keep going the same way. Hon Garry Kelly knows that as well as I do. If one can turn good kids back on to the path of righteousness -- if I can use that dreadful expression -- one has done the right thing and a good thing by that child. However if one lets the child keep on going down that path and says, "Look, I can't stop you from doing that because I have no power to do so", one can send a child irretrievably down the wrong path. That concerns me considerably. I know that the cane works best on the best kids but it also works on some kids who are not the best kids, I can assure members of that.

The point I am trying to make is that it should be left in the regulations as a last resort option for the principal to use. If we are prepared as a community to say to the principals of schools, "You can look after our children" -- in some cases up to 1 200 of them for six or seven hours every day for 40 weeks a year -- surely we can say to those same principals, "We will give you the power to decide whether a kid will receive corporal punishment." Surely we can give those people to whom we give this responsibility the power to make decisions about what sort of punishment they consider to be most appropriate in every case. I am asking the House to leave in the regulations those paragraphs which relate to the use of corporal punishment and also to leave in the regulations those new provisions that have been provided by the Minister so that we give to principals and to school staff a greater range of options, which is what they really are, in dealing with the misbehaviour of a very small minority of children in our schools.

My experience over the years has been that this very small minority is actually getting to be a bigger minority. Teachers are facing increasing difficulties in schools and there are increasing numbers of children who are not doing the right thing by the rest of their classmates. I would like, some time down the track, the House to consider seriously the possibility of having children removed from schools for a very lengthy period of time if they continue to disrupt those schools. I think they should be taken away from the education system. We had a debate some years ago on the question of expelling students. Hon Robert Hetherington questioned -- and quite rightly -- "What will happen to children who are expelled?" I thought at the time, "What will happen to them?" and I have come to the conclusion that it is not the problem of the education system. If those children so misbehave that they are no longer entitled to the privilege of attending a taxpayer-funded institution, they should go somewhere else and it should be the problem of somebody else -- perhaps the Minister for Community Services may have to take responsibility for them, I do not know. However, I am increasingly concerned that too much of the time of teachers is taken up trying to keep kids in line and in a position to learn. Too many children are having their education disrupted by children who are not prepared to accept the discipline of a school.

Discipline is absolutely necessary when one has a class of 32, 35 or 40 students sitting in front of one while one is trying to teach them difficult concepts and some things in which they are not particularly interested. While we could argue for some time about the whole question of discipline in schools, I believe that discipline in Government schools appears to have declined in recent times. When I say "recent times" I am talking about the last 10 or 20 years, and the perception that the public have of the lack of discipline has contributed to the movement of students into the private school sector. I think it is time that that perception is changed. The Government school sector has to go into competition with the private school

sector and provide schooling and education of a similar perceived quality. We will only be able to get into that competition when we provide the teachers and the principals of Government schools with the capacity to exercise discipline in the way in which they themselves believe to be the most appropriate. I know that many teachers believe that the use of the cane is an appropriate punishment and one which should be retained as an option.

I ask the House to support this amendment to the regulations. I am quite aware of what can happen when we take a vote on this. We can reject it and the regulations will remain as they are amended. If we are of the view that the motion should be passed, it will go to the other House to be debated. If the other House rejects it, nothing will happen. Somebody might say that I am taking a cynical point of view and putting up a proposition I cannot win, but I would be silly if I were to come to this place and argue that "time out" and the capacity of a teacher to restrain a child in certain circumstances should not be a part of the regulations. It is not in my capacity to write any regulations but I have gone down this path in the hope that the Government might take notice of all those people who have argued that the new provisions are good but that we should hang on to the use of the cane as a last resort option.

While it might appear that my intent is doomed to failure and that I have not sought to use any numbers to achieve a bloody-minded purpose --

Hon Kay Hallahan: Haven't you?

Hon N.F. MOORE: No. I have put up a proposition which I am sure the Minister will understand when she reads section 4 of the Interpretation Act. What I am doing today requires the agreement of the other House and one would expect that I would be unlikely to get that, although I would hope that if we pass the motion commonsense will prevail. There are many teachers in the community who were disappointed when the Minister for Education took the action he took. They are very good educators and are people who are able to discipline children in an effective way, which gives the other kids a fair go. I am concerned about the other kids, not the ratbags. Too often we waste our time worrying about the ratbags and the slow achievers.

Hon T.G. Butler: Maybe we should be teaching them something they want to learn.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I agree with that entirely; I think there are a lot of virtues in what is taking place, but there are some kids, as Hon Tom Butler knows, who are incorrigible. It would not matter whether one gave them "two plus two" or made it "one ice-cream plus one ice-cream" because they would never get it right. Those children would never enjoy being in school and they get great pleasure from disrupting everyone else. I ask the Government to consider this seriously. It is an issue which many teachers have raised, and the union has expressed real concern.

[Resolved: That business be continued.]

Hon. N.F. MOORE: I hope the Government realises that this is not a political exercise. There are people in the Liberal Party who do not support corporal punishment, and people who do. I guess the same can be said about the Labor Party. It is an issue of some significance to me as a former teacher and as a person who is worried about the trend in education in Western Australia. In a sense it is a little thing, but it is representative of a changing attitude towards behaviour within schools, and the removal of the cane to me represents more than just saying one cannot give a kid a whack on the hand; it is changing attitudes towards the capacity of schools to discipline children. I hope that attitude is not prevalent within the members of the Government and that they realise and appreciate the necessity for quite strong discipline in schools to protect the rights and privileges of those children who want to learn. They are the ones for whom the education system has been set up, not those others who do not want to be there. I ask the Government to consider the arguments I have put forward and agree to amend the regulations put forward under the Education Act.

HON D.J. WORDSWORTH (South) [4.32 pm]: I support Hon. Norman Moore in his move to leave within the regulations the ability to cane children. I believe the fear of being caned perhaps is enough to keep many on the straight and narrow path. Certainly it did in my case. It is rather interesting to find when one looks at the Better Schools programme introduced by this Government that it seems to be endeavouring to copy many of the initiatives which have been part of the private school system for a long time. It is all very

well for people to say, "You went to a private school; you should be the last person to get involved with the regulations of public schools."

Hon Mark Nevill: Should we bring back spanking?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I hope it has not gone.

Caning has always been part of the private school system, and I do not think it has ever done any harm. I certainly do not have any permanent ridges on my backside, and I had the cane many times. I am a good sitter in this House, so it has not jeopardised that situation. I think the cane has very much benefited the acceptance of discipline and teaching people to administer discipline, because in my case I went to a school where the caning was not done by teachers but by the head prefect or the house prefect.

Hon Mark Nevill: On the hand?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: No, on the backside when one was in pyjamas.

Hon Mark Nevill: With the lights on or off?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Thank you, Mr President. If anyone thinks that the cane was administered lightly by someone with no great physical attributes I point out that the person who did it in my case was none other than John Landy, the mile runner, and he was pretty fit and administered the cane very successfully. It taught him a lot, as well as everyone else.

Hon Kay Hallahan: John Landy?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes. He had to decide who was to receive it and how serious the offence was, and that duty was not taken lightly.

I see no harm at all in having a system in which the cane can be given. I do not think it is given much in our present school system. I point out that more and more children are remaining at school after the age of 16 rather than go out into the world and be unemployed. These children will be harder to control because they are older, and I think there is some need for something like the cane which the headmaster can threaten them with. I am rather shocked when I go out to the schools to see what is happening to these extra children who are coming back. I went to a school recently and found a large number of children were spending their time doing photography. This is at a time when we are having great difficulty in finding young people with sufficient education to take on existing jobs.

As a result of the Beazley report we seem to have gone into all sorts of ways of entertaining children at school instead of keeping their noses to the grindstone and getting them to learn the three Rs. I believe subjects like photography should not necessarily be taught but should be a hobby which is taught or given as a privilege for good learning and carrying out one's other duties. I support Hon Norman Moore in seeking to retain the regulations on caning, and second his motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Fred McKenzie.

ACTS AMENDMENT (BUILDING SOCIETIES AND CREDIT UNIONS) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion without notice by Hon J.M. Berinson (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Leader of the House) [4.39 pm]: I move --

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill amends the Building Societies Act 1976 and the Credit Unions Act 1979. The Bill reflects progress to date of the working party on building societies and credit unions. Any further recommendations of the working party will need to be considered at a later time.

In response to the deregulation of financial markets and, in particular, the banking sector, the Government decided in October 1986 to establish a working party to review the

appropriateness of current legislation for permanent building societies and credit unions. The terms of reference of the working party were wide-ranging but special emphasis was given to prudential standards, mergers and amalgamations. Some of the recommendations of the working party were accepted by the Government and the industry earlier in the year. I will refer to these in the context of the new ownership and shareholding arrangements for permanent building societies. Despite the constraints of outdated legislation the groundwork completed by the working party has allowed the Government to quickly assess and decide on acceptable options for corrective measures when the situations at the Swan Building Society and the WA Teachers Credit Society emerged.

The proposed amendments in this Bill seek to update key areas of the regulatory framework. The Government has taken the view that permanent building societies and credit unions are functionally similar institutions and where possible the same standards should apply. The essential differences between the two categories of institutions in their ownership and member structures have nevertheless been preserved.

The major aspects of this Bill are --

prudential requirements;

ownership provisions;

the establishment of financial societies as a new category of deposit taking institution;

provisions allowing for amalgamations, transfers of engagements and takeovers by either membership approval or direction of the registrar; and

the introduction of reserve funds.

I shall now deal with each of these areas separately, although they are very much interrelated.

Prudential requirements cover a wide field including --

capital adequacy or minimum reserves;

liquidity; and

any controls on liabilities or assets.

Under the existing legislation permanent building societies were required to achieve by the end of March 1988 minimum net worth of two per cent of aggregate assets -- as at the end of the society's 1986-87 financial year. The proposed amendments will lift the minimum net worth to five per cent of the mean assets for the financial year. The new requirements are to be achieved over three years from 1987-88.

Credit unions will also be required to achieve a minimum net worth of five per cent over three years. The current legislation requires credit unions to maintain minimum reserves of two and a half per cent of aggregate assets at the end of the preceding financial year. Net worth as from 1987-88 will be calculated on mean assets for the financial year.

The existing building society concept of net worth is also to be redefined and applied to both permanent societies and credit unions. The new arrangements will permit up to 80 per cent of the minimum net worth to be in the form of prime net worth; that is, non-withdrawable share capital, undistributed profits and realised reserves and revaluation reserves. The remaining 20 per cent may comprise other approved debt or securities. The spread of items will be considerably wider than has been permitted under the Credit Unions Act.

For permanent building societies the change will mean a tighter definition of net worth. The minimum liquidity ratio will be amended for credit unions. It will rise from seven per cent to 10 per cent. The building societies minimum ratio of twelve and a half per cent will remain the same.

The increase in the credit unions' ratio reflects the increase in the volume of transactions they are now undertaking and the mix of those transactions. The increased use of automatic teller machines means a higher level of client activated funds withdrawals, over extended hours. This is a marked increase in accessibility to withdrawable funds compared to the past.

Liability and asset controls also apply under the existing legislation and their usefulness has been reassessed. The existing liability controls were aimed at retarding deposit growth by

either limiting the extent to which liabilities could increase in any period, as is the case with the present Credit Unions Act, or by tying growth in liabilities to some multiple of items comprising net worth, as applies to the building societies. Neither of these controls is efficient or effective in controlling growth. The proposed higher minimum net worth requirements will necessitate, after the transitional period, five cents for every new dollar of assets being held as net worth. Additional assets or growth can only occur if the assets generate a sufficient margin to service the increase in net worth. Growth in assets will have to be no faster than the maintenance of minimum net worth will permit. On the asset side, building societies have not been permitted to advance or guarantee more than two and a half per cent of aggregate assets to any one individual.

The Credit Unions Act provided the registrar with the authority to set the maximum amount and maximum term for any secured or unsecured loan and the maximum credit limit for any secured or unsecured continuing credit arrangement. Both Acts are deficient and new provisions are provided for in this Bill. The legislation will limit the maximum amount that may be advanced by a permanent building society or credit union to any individual or associated individuals to 10 per cent, or a higher amount if approved, of the institution's prime net worth. Non-withdrawable net worth items are the main resources available to safeguard depositors' funds from any losses. It is logical therefore that prime net worth should be the measure of allowable exposures. The registrar will also have the authority to give directions as to the circumstances in which and conditions on which financial accommodation may be provided and the extent of financial accommodation that may be provided.

Ownership provisions: The move to higher minimum net worth requirements may prove difficult for some institutions. Some building societies and credit unions will consider traditional methods of increasing their net worth as not appropriate in the present environment. Others that are near to or above the new minimum may prefer to continue their reliance on traditional methods of adding to their net worth through retaining trading surpluses. The Government has recognised that the present deregulated environment has produced strong competition, and that margins have been reduced as has profitability. Over time, retained earnings may not provide adequate increases in net worth and access to non-withdrawable shares will need to be considered by the respective financial institutions.

Some institutions have, after consultation with Government officials, moved to issue non-withdrawable shares. In moving to allow the issue of non-withdrawable shares the Government has been cognisant of the ownership and control considerations that can arise. It has been a longstanding policy in relation to banks, that ownership and control should be dispersed. The introduction of non-withdrawable share capital may, if not adequately controlled, permit concentrated ownership and control of State-based deposit taking institutions. Building societies and credit unions are, along with banks, the only institutions permitted to borrow without prospectus.

For historical reasons and their association with the household sector, building societies and credit unions have considerable borrowing power. Dispersed ownership and control provides some protection against the self-interest activities that concentrated ownership and control may attract. This is a particularly important issue for institutions that must retain public confidence to survive. The maintenance of probity is essential and dispersed ownership and control coupled with adequate disclosure provides cheques and balances that might otherwise not exist.

The Government's decision on ownership control and restrictions in respect of building societies was announced on 11 May 1987. The proposed amendments put that decision into effect by limiting any individual or associated individuals without the approval of the registrar to shareholdings that do not exceed --

20 per cent of the subscribed capital; and

10 per cent of the maximum number of votes that might be cast at a general meeting of the societies.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will say this once: Audible conversation is totally out of order and it is rude. I suggest that if honourable members pay the respect to which the Leader of the House is entitled, they will appreciate that they should not be carrying on half a dozen individual conversations while he is trying to explain to them what this legislation is about.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: The amendments also put into place clearer guidelines for the types of non-withdrawable and withdrawable shares that may be issued and the votes attaching to each. Non-withdrawable voting shares will attract one vote per share, while the holders or withdrawable shares will be permitted one vote per shareholder.

Transitional provisions will require the new voting structures to come into effect within one year of the commencement of the Act. Shares not complying with the new requirements may be redeemed to be converted into the new shares. Where the new share ownership and control provisions are contravened, the registrar will have the power to direct that the shares are cancelled and dealt with as a deposit or the shares are converted into non-voting shares. The existing credit union legislation limits shareholdings to 20 per cent of subscribed capital and voting to one vote per member. Those restrictions will remain.

Financial societies: The existing voting restrictions of credit unions, while consistent with the collective ownership philosophy, are not entirely conducive to obtaining non-withdrawable shares. The Bill allows credit unions to convert to financial societies and requires these societies to meet all the requirements of the Credit Unions Act except with regard to voting and share structures. Financial societies will be constrained by ownership and control limitations applying to permanent building societies. In other words, this Bill provides for the establishment of fixed credit unions, to be called financial societies.

Amalgamations, transfers of engagements and takeovers: The amendments provide for a streamlining and reinforcing of the authority of the registrar to deal with circumstances that may evolve in individual building societies and credit unions. The present legislation is unduly restrictive on the registrar's ability to act decisively to correct situations that may arise. It restricts the speed with which decisions can be made and the possible options to maintain depositor confidence when the financial stability of an institution is questionable. In particular, the existing legislation restricts amalgamations and transfers of engagements between the same institutions; that is, between building societies and building societies or credit unions and credit unions. If a like institution was not willing or capable to accept or otherwise assist in fulfilling the engagements, the capacity to protect depositors' funds is diminished. Clearly, the wider the net of possible solutions to particular problems that might arise, the greater the degree of confidence that depositors can have concerning their investments.

The existing provisions, in effect, no longer bear any relationship to the changing market environment. Nor do the existing procedures recognise the extent to which depositors require unfettered access to their financial accounts. It is not possible, without significant disruption to depositors, and potential instability in the financial system, to close the operations of a particular institution for any length of time pending decisions and possible reviews of decisions. The new amendments provide for amalgamation and transfers of engagements between building societies and credit unions. Takeovers of building societies will also be permitted by banks and other institutions approved by the Minister. The provision for the establishment of financial societies will also allow credit unions to convert their ownership structure as a precursor to a takeover. The legislation provides for these events to occur voluntarily or with ministerial approval under direction.

Reserve funds: As a further component to the protection of depositors' funds, the Government has decided to make provisions in both the building societies and credit unions Acts for the establishment of reserve funds. The precise operation of these funds will be subject to further consultation with the industry.

In conclusion, the amendments I have outlined are fundamental to the future well-being of the State's building societies and credit unions in today's highly competitive environment. The proposed amendments also provide the Government with the flexibility to respond to changing market conditions and to act swiftly and decisively if the occasion arises. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Max Evans.

TRUSTEES AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion without notice by Hon J.M. Berinson (Attorney General), and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Attorney General) [4.53 pm]: I move --

That the Bill be now read a second time.

A trustee is a person who holds an interest in property under an obligation, annexed to that property, which requires him to deal with it for the benefit of another person or for a particular object permitted by law. A wide range of persons and specialised companies are trustees and their skill and capacity vary considerably. Some trusts are created as a result of legal advice and are usually in the form of a written document conferring specific powers on the trustee. In other cases, the trust is created without such advice, or may be created by law without a written instrument. The powers of investment of a trustee are set out in the Trustees Act, although other powers may be conferred in particular instances by the trustee instrument, if any; by other Statutes relating to the authority of trustees; or by the Supreme Court under section 89 of the Trustees Act.

As a result of submissions that investments authorised by the existing Trustees Act were inadequate to preserve the capital of trust funds in inflationary circumstances, or to enable trustees to take advantage of new forms of investment, the former Attorney General, Hon I.G. Medcalf, QC, referred the question of trustees' powers of investment to the Law Reform Commission. The commission issued a working paper in December 1981 and this attracted comment from a wide range of persons and organisations with expertise in the field. The commission presented its report on 10 January 1984. It stated that its principal aim was "to ensure that trustees had adequate investment opportunities under present conditions". It did not attempt to "review in detail every investment presently authorised, nor to make recommendations as to every form of investment which could possibly used". Accordingly, the commission recommended that a specialist trustee investment review committee be appointed by the Attorney General to review periodically the list of authorised trustee investments. It also recommended that a number of substantial issues be referred to that committee concerning possible new forms of authorised investment.

A committee as recommended by the commission was established by the Government and chaired by Mr L.E. McCarrey, then Director General of Economic Development. It included members with expertise in the relevant areas of investment and the law. The committee substantially adopted the commission's recommendations. This Bill puts into effect, with some minor modification, the recommendations of the commission and of the committee.

The Bill preserves the existing structure of the Trustees Act in having a statutory list of authorised investments. To assist trustees who have not had specialist advice and who do not themselves possess relevant expertise, the Bill refers in clause 6 to the general equitable duties of a trustee, to which he must have regard whenever he makes a decision to invest. These include his duty to exercise ordinary business prudence and to act impartially. In clause 6 the Bill also draws attention to the power of the court to authorise an investment in a particular case, and sets out some of the matters relevant to the court's consideration. The major amendments proposed to the existing powers of investment are as follows --

Wider powers to lend on mortgage, provided the loan is insured and was made in accordance with the advice of a licensed valuer.

The power to lend on mortgage to be confined to land in Western Australia.

Trustees will be authorised to invest in land provided proper advice is obtained as to the appropriateness of the purchase of the land, and subject to conditions on the report of a licensed valuer.

Acquisition of bank certificates of deposit will be expressly authorised, as will investment in interest-bearing deposits in any bank.

Debentures need not be quoted on a stock exchange to be an authorised trustee investment, but the requirement that they be public offerings will continue.

There are new restrictions on the ability of a trustee to lend to a company or to purchase a company debenture or note from a third party.

The debentures of wholly-owned Australian subsidiaries of banks will be authorised investments.

Provided proper advice is obtained, the trustee will be able to purchase the rights to shares and convertible notes where the trustee is authorised to purchase the shares or notes themselves.

Subject to conditions as to the acceptance of the Bills and permissible time of maturity, bank accepted and bank endorsed bills of exchange will be authorised trustee investments.

These amendments are canvassed in detail in the commission's report No 34, part V. In addition, the committee made certain recommendations which are implemented in this Bill.

A definition of shareholders' equity is substituted for the existing test of paid up capital, when considering what minimum funds should be held by a company before it can be an authorised investment. The commission was concerned that paid up share capital could have diminished in trading, and considered the use of shareholders' equity as a measure of the net worth of a company. The committee shared the concerns of the commission, and reported that shareholders' equity was capable of being defined with sufficient precision to enable it to replace paid up capital as a measure of worth.

The committee also shared the concern of the commission that investment in securities of other countries exposed trustees needlessly to exchange and funds transfer risks. The Bill provides wide scope for investment in Australia, and accordingly it deletes provision for investment in securities of other countries.

As recommended by the commission, the committee considered the provisions of the Act allowing investment in unit trusts. The width of the existing provisions caused concern. Having regard to the similarities between a share and a prescribed interest in a unit trust, the committee considered that it would be appropriate to apply similar criteria to unit trusts as are applied to shares. Those criteria include a minimum amount of unit holders' equity, a return in the nature of income from the scheme being received by unit holders in the five preceding years, and either quotation on a stock exchange, or a covenant in the deed conferring on holders of interests the right to require the management company to purchase their prescribed interests in a certain manner and time.

The committee also considered the adequacy of present provisions for certifying a building society as one in which a trustee may invest, and whether investment in credit unions could in certain circumstances be an authorised investment. It recommended criteria in both cases which would in its opinion allow a trustee to invest safely in a building society or credit union. Because of recent difficulties experienced in this area it is proposed to further review those criteria to ensure that they are adequate. This Bill, therefore, simply allows the Governor to make regulations authorising investment in building societies or credit unions, so that the committee's recommendations can be implemented to the extent that now seems appropriate.

In addition to these major alterations to the list of authorised investment, the Bill also implements recommendations by the commission to clarify existing provisions, and to remove some now considered to be obsolete. The Law Reform Commission recommended that a specialist trust investments review committee be established to review periodically the list of investments authorised by the Trustees Act. It is the Government's intention at an appropriate time to establish such a committee. The amendments proposed by this Bill will ensure that trustees have available to them an adequate and modern range of investment options compatible with their fiduciary duties.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon G.E. Masters (Leader of the Opposition).

[Questions taken.]

ACTS AMENDMENT (PREVENTION OF ACCESS TO RECORDS) BILL

Second Reading

HON G.E. MASTERS (West -- Leader of the Opposition) [5.19 pm]: I move --

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Leader of the House for agreeing to allow me to make the second reading speech at this time.

The purpose of the Bill I now present to the Legislative Council on behalf of the Liberal Party of Western Australia is to prevent certain information, held by the State Government, from being made available to the Commonwealth Government for any purpose associated with a national identification system or a national register of births, deaths, and marriages. My party is implacably opposed to a national identification system, whether it be in the form of the Hawke Government's Australia Card or under any other guise.

On 23 September 1987, 40 000 Western Australians staged the biggest demonstration in our State's history, all totally opposed to any form of national identification system being introduced into Western Australia. Those 40 000 people represented only a very small part of a community which slowly recognised the Bill for what it was -- the greatest intrusion into individual privacy ever contemplated by any Government in Australia's history.

Hon P.G. Pendal: Hear, hear!

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Those people were demanding that the Burke Labor Government refuse to cooperate in any way with moves to impose this horrendous national computerised surveillance system where every man, woman, and child in Australia is reduced to a number on a card. The Australia Card legislation has failed on a technicality, but the Hawke Government has shown no remorse and is now seeking to achieve its objectives through the back door. We are told the Federal Government intends to set up a national register for births, deaths and marriages as the first step towards achieving its objectives. It is obvious the threat has not disappeared, and the real danger is that the public will be lulled into a sense of false security only to wake up one day to find it is too late. The Bill I present today will ensure this does not happen to Western Australians.

The success of any national system of centralised computer records designed to give the Government access to the everyday dealings and personal details of every person in this nation is entirely dependent upon the cooperation of the States. Much of the information required by the Commonwealth Government is held by the State Government under two Acts of Parliament --

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act, 1961-1975; and

Road Traffic Act, 1974-1986,

and at present can be passed on without any reference to State Parliament.

The Bill before the House will make it illegal for any person to pass on such information to any Commonwealth agency for any purpose associated with a national identification system or a national register of births, deaths and marriages.

In moving the second reading of the Bill I should give more detail of why the Liberal Party is totally opposed to any national identification system, be it known as the Australia Card or by any other name. The Hawke Government has announced that the objectives of the ill-fated Australia Card are to be pursued another way, so we must examine these objectives and the likely result. One must assume the Government intends to give every man, woman and child an identification number, that number to be quoted as was proposed under the ill-fated Australia Card legislation. The circumstances would include --

opening a bank account or a similar account;

beginning the first day of employment;

employing anyone, even for domestic purposes;

collecting interest on investments with Government agencies or a company;

receiving payment for primary production income;

buying or selling land or buying shares or participating on the futures market;

renting a property and collecting rents;

dealing with solicitors;

making a claim on Medicare or social security;

entering an acknowledged hospital as a patient; and even

being a taxpayer.

This enumeration clearly shows that the card, far from being proof of identity only as the Federal Government claims, would be a licence to exist. Given that any form of ID card would be essential for everyday living, it is incredible that the Australia Card Bill 1986 contained no right for an Australian citizen to have a card.

Recent reports of the Federal Auditor General have made it clear that a huge increase in income tax collections from dividends and interests can be achieved without a national identification system. The problem lies, according to the Auditor General, with the administration of the Taxation Office.

A proposed national register will require a massive new office. The official estimate of 2 000 public servants and the setting-up costs of $50 million is, in the view of many, seriously underestimated. The history of inaccurate, malicious, and incompetent record keeping is widespread.

A single unique identifying number for Australians will be linked by computer terminals to all the information held by Medicare, the Taxation Office, the Social Security Department, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and potentially 37 other Government departments which have sought to become linked to the central registration system. The potential for abuse in such a system is enormous. No amount of privacy legislation can provide the protection to which individual Australians are, as a right, entitled.

Writing in *The Age* Melbourne newspaper on 8 September 1987, computer specialist Ian Robinson commented on the vast number of databases which record information about individual Australians --

> The one remaining hindrance to the total compatibility of all these disparate data bases, and therefore the only thing which currently protects our privacy, is the lack of a single identifying key number for each individual, and this is exactly what the Australia Card sets out to provide.

He went on to say --

> The idea of an organisation, be it Government or commercial, being able to quickly and comprehensively cross reference details of an individual's health, education, salary, bank accounts, taxation, travel and employment records through the use of a single key number is abhorrent. The argument that such organisations would not be allowed to do so is irrelevant.
>
> People are not allowed to rob banks, drive above the speed limit, or evade taxation but all of these things still happen every day.
>
> Putting such a mechanism in place that provides for this unique cross referencing of personal details is an open invitation for abuse.

That concern expressed by Mr Robinson is a concern which is shared by the Opposition. No amount of legislation will protect individual Australians from the dangers inherent in such a system.

Frank Costigan QC has described the ID card as an unjustifiable intrusion into the personal privacy of Australians. Mr Costigan told the Federal parliamentary committee that the system was open to abuse and would change the character of Australian society. Introducing an identity card would be like "using a sledge-hammer to crack a nut". Frank Costigan is hardly a lover of tax cheats, yet he is emphatic in his Opposition to the ID card.

Mr President, I urge members to remember one all-important point: The very basis of our democratic system in Australia is that the Government is accountable to the people and not the people accountable to the Government. The people have expressed their will as never

before and cannot be ignored by any responsible democratic Government. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Fred McKenzie.

ELECTORAL (PROCEDURES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 September.

HON P.G. PENDAL (South Central Metropolitan) [5.27 pm]: This Bill is really in the realm of one of those pieces of legislation that can be seen as chipping away until one achieves over a long period what has not been possible to achieve on one occasion. Another analogy might be that in its extensive form before the House the Bill is a bit like the curate's egg -- it is good in parts. A lot of the content of the Bill has been to the House on two or three occasions since the Burke Government came to office four and a half years ago. Indeed, not only has a substantial part of it been before the House, but also a substantial part of it has been approved by the House. Members might recall that on an occasion the matter went to a Conference of Managers only to find that, although agreement was very close between all parties involved, the Bill was aborted because of the intransigence of the then Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, Hon Arthur Tonkin. I intend to go into that a little more later on.

Having made those opening remarks, it is incumbent upon anyone leading for the Opposition in this debate to ask an obvious but so far unasked question: Why has the Bill been introduced into this House?

I have been through the Minister's second reading speech to discover why the Bill has been introduced into Parliament for the first time in this House, when the Minister in charge of the Bill actually sits in another place. In the absence of any explanation offered by the Minister in his second reading speech, I put it to the House that this is an unprecedented action on the part of the Government in introducing into one House a Bill that properly belongs to a Minister in another House. I cannot recall that happening before during the seven and a half years that I have been in Parliament.

One is tempted to ask for a ruling, or an indication from the Minister by way of interjection, whether the Bill is even properly before the Chair in this House. My understanding is that one cannot introduce legislation in this way that results in any sort of a charge on the people. Clearly, not only has the Bill before this House not been introduced by Hon M.J. Bryce in another place, as it should have been but, in my opinion, it will indisputably bring about a charge upon the people or the public purse of this State.

Therefore, I repeat, one is entitled to ask whether the Bill is properly before the House and is constitutionally able to be discussed; or whether it should be cast to one side, and the Government told to introduce it in the lower House, where the Minister sits, which is empowered to introduce legislation that brings about a charge on the people.

For the purposes of this debate I want to highlight one or two claims made by the Minister. I repeat, we are talking about a Minister who introduced a Bill which is not his own, and which has not been debated in another place. One of the first things that the Minister said, and I quote, was that the Bill "aims to provide a better service to electors". There are approximately 80 clauses to this Bill. If one could claim that under a general umbrella those clauses provide a better service to electors, or that even a substantial number of them provide a better service to electors, then the Minister is entitled to claim that the objective of the Bill has been achieved.

In the course of my speech I intend to show the members of this House that it is not the interests of the electors which are being served with many of the amendments but, in fact, the interests of politicians and political parties. One that immediately comes to mind, which I will touch on later at this stage, and more during the Committee stage, is the question of the closure of polls at 6.00 pm on the night of general and by-elections.

No-one in the Labor Party or, for that matter, my own party, has been able to convince me that the reduction in voting hours is to serve the convenience of anyone other than the political parties. A token explanation in the Minister's second reading speech as to why this

provision has been introduced is that it otherwise puts undue stress and pressure on electoral officials on polling day. If that is the best the Government can come up with, it is pathetic. There are many people in this community who, in the course of their jobs, work under far greater pressure for far more days than electoral officials, who have to serve at a polling booth between the hours of 8.00 am and 8.00 pm and, no doubt, an hour or so before and after for setting up and dismantling. That is a contradiction of the Government's own argument that one of the primary objectives of this Bill is to provide a better service for the electors in this State. I will touch more on that later.

Secondly, the Bill is, to a large extent, an impertinence. It is brought in not only to the wrong House by the wrong Minister, but at a time to deliberately take advantage of the fact that the Parliamentary Liberal Party is one person short. If this Bill is still on the Notice Paper after 24 October, and the Liberal Party has retained the seat of South West Province, I suggest that we will not see it being given such a high priority. The Government's interest in the Bill will disappear overnight. The haste that is now being attached to the passage of the Bill is another reason for the public to be concerned.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What haste? Where is the haste?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: There is a great deal of haste and the Leader of the House knows that his party intends to get the Bill through before the by-election on 24 October. If they are not --

Hon J.M. Berinson: It is two and a half weeks since it was introduced.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I ask the Leader of the House: Does he intend to see that the vote is taken? Since he was not here in his place when I posed the questions initially, let me put them again. The first is, does he intend to see the Bill passed in this House after the by-election on 24 October? Secondly, can he tell us why the Bill was introduced into this House and not into the other place where the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform sits?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why not?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: That is a pathetic answer and is indicative of the very point I am making.

Hon J.M. Berinson: A good match for the question.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: To follow the Leader's rather stupid logic, why does not he, the Minister for Community Services and the Minister for Sport and Recreation introduce all of their legislation in the other House? It is absurd for the Leader of the House, and it ill becomes someone of his capacity, to say "Why not?". There is a reason for doing this and I know what it is. I do not intend to spell it out here because it is not a particularly savoury one. In the absence of any explanation by the Minister in his second reading speech, one is entitled to the view that there has been some skulduggery on the part of the Government in wanting to bring this Bill into the House of Parliament where the Minister does not sit.

The second point is that the Government is acting with undue haste to bring about the passage of the Bill through this House, prior to the by-election, for no other reason than that the Liberal Party is one person short. I repeat: If the Bill is still on the Notice Paper in this House or if by some strange chance it needs to come back to this House after the by-election because of something that the Government or someone else achieves in the other House, let us see how serious the Government is about giving it the priority it is so clearly giving it today.

The Bill contains a mishmash of approximately 80 clauses designed to amend not only the Electoral Act but the Referendums Act as well. In the course of my remarks I do not intend to spend any time on the amendments to the Referendums Act, other than to say that my

understanding is that they are of a machinery nature and do not substantially alter that Act. The same cannot be said about some of the changes envisaged by the Government in relation to the Electoral Act.

Let me make it clear that the Parliamentary Liberal Party takes the view that a large number of clauses should be passed because they make a lot of sense; a number of clauses should be challenged; and a number of clauses should be defeated, and we will seek to defeat them. The provisions contain a real mishmash of clauses, nothing is more worrying than the

possibility that some of them will open up the way for, and even encourage, corrupt practices in the electoral system in Western Australia.

By any standard, in its history Western Australia has survived quite remarkably any attempt to subvert its electoral system. That cannot be said of other places in Australia or of other countries. If some of the amendments before the Parliament are passed a situation will be created in which corrupt electoral practices could become the order of the day rather than an exception to the rule. The potential for these corrupt practices is nowhere more evident than in clause 6 which deals with itinerant voters.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is absolute nonsense.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The Leader of the House said that last time.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It was true then and it is true now.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Why does a Government go to so much trouble to not only give so-called itinerant voters such a peculiar position in our law, but also to give an open invitation for unscrupulous people to cart a group of, say, Aboriginal people from one part of the State to another across an electoral border because they want 100 votes transferred from one electorate to another. Why else would the Government put into the Bill a provision that could affect a marginal seat like the South West Province that we are fighting as political parties at the moment -- I hasten to add that I realise that this Bill cannot affect the outcome of that by-election -- the result of which was decided in 1986 by less than 100 votes out of more than 30 000? That part of the State is undergoing fairly rapid industrial change and could require a temporary work force for long periods of time, perhaps for the construction of an aluminium smelter. Nothing would prevent unscrupulous persons from deliberately bringing about a situation in which a group of those people would go to the work force of a particular industrial concern and manipulate the system. Such people could alter the balance of power by putting the work force two miles to one side of an electorate boundary rather than a couple of miles the other side which might have been the preferred spot of the company employing those people. They are the sorts of things that will pave the way to institutionalised corruption of the electoral system in this State in a way that we have never before seen.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Are you suggesting that the Commonwealth system is corrupt?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am suggesting what I want to and I refer those who, like the Leader of the House, want to mouth that the Commonwealth system is beyond corruption, to the actions of the Labor Party in the Nunawading by-election two years ago when the most corrupt forms of activity were perpetrated by the Labor Party.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What has that to do with the provisions on itinerant voters?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It has a lot to do with a number of provisions in the Bill which I claim will pave the way for corrupt practices by those people who have no respect for the electoral system. The Leader of the House can protest all he likes and say that that is not the intention of the Government but people far less scrupulous than he may be about these things will be the first to take advantage, just as his colleagues in the Labor Party did in Victoria leading up to the Nunawading by-election. Their activities led to the by-election being refought.

If that is not enough to sound the alarm bells, I will refer to another possibility: We shall be dealing with a new section 17A. The provisions have been put forward before by the current Government without any explanation. Members on this side have asked for an adequate explanation but it has not been given. I have read the second reading speech and the debates held a couple of years ago on this subject but there is no explanation as to why we should go to these extraordinary lengths to look after almost non-existent people. Proposed section 17A(1) provides that regulations may be made providing that, in prescribed circumstances, a person who is in the State but does not reside in any district, is entitled to be enrolled.

The Bill says that a person can be in this State and on the roll but he does not reside in any district. How can a person not reside in any district? He must live somewhere. Is it suggested that he lives in a post office box? He would be a non-person and perhaps the Labor Party's ID card has had something to do with that. The Leader of the House must agree that a person cannot possibly not reside in any district. Does that raise any suspicion in the minds of members? The Government without explanation is asking us to pass into law

new provisions -- which have been tried and rejected before, thankfully -- for which there may be a perfectly valid explanation but which we have not been given the benefit of on the two or three occasions on which we have discussed this matter.

The Opposition will take different views on different clauses; some will go through because they are of no consequence, some we will bring to the Government's attention and others we will attempt to reject. In general terms I suggest that the Labor Party may rue the day it took off the roll the reference to a person's gender and occupation. Why is that information to be removed? Interestingly, members of Parliament are among the few professions anywhere in the world that have any use for that information. We are among the few who constantly refer to electoral rolls for the purpose of communicating with electors. Anyone in this place knows that it helps to establish whether a person is male or female. Plenty of given or Christian names -- that is another argument to be dealt with later -- are common to males and females. Not only members of Parliament will rue the day that they passed into law a provision whereby the gender and occupation of a person is removed from the electoral roll; I wonder how many times police officers for example take advantage of the electoral roll when trying to track down lost persons or relatives of traffic accident victims? They have access to the electoral roll to determine firstly, whether that person is male or female -- especially where first names are common to both sexes, and secondly, they use the information on occupation to help find the right person.

Hon B.L. Jones: Perhaps they need an ID card to identify them by number.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am pleased to hear that the ID card is alive and well in the member's mentality. Hon Gordon Masters has just finished dealing with this very point. The Labor Party people are running around this State and saying, "Thank goodness it is all over; let us sweep it under the carpet", and Hon Beryl Jones has just put her foot in it by indicating that the ID card is far from dead.

Hon B.L. Jones: That was tongue-in-cheek.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is not tongue-in-cheek for a lot of people on the other side of the House, and if it is for the member, we will presumably see her supporting the Bill that Hon Gordon Masters brought in.

We are not going to go to the barricades on things like gender and occupation on the electoral role, but I put it to the House that the day will come when Labor members of Parliament will say, "We made a blue; someone led us down the garden path; we were ill-informed." Not only will members of Parliament rue the day that this happened, so will other people like those I have already mentioned, including the police.

Perhaps one of the most substantial things impacting on the political system in this State that the Bill is designed to do is to cut down the lead time to hold a general or a by-election. Under the current law one needs a minimum of 49 days -- seven long, dreary weeks -- to run an election. My first inclination is to say, "Thank goodness the Government has seen the error of its ways and is going to change the time back to 28 days, or four weeks." However, let us have a look at the irony of the situation. It was not some rigid conservative Government which put the 49 days into the Act in the first place; it was the current Government. I do not think we have even had a general election based on the 49-day period.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What about the last election?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Yes, and now that the Government has gone through the 1986 election, and particularly after the experience that Mr Hawke had when he ran that long election campaign in 1984, the chickens came home to roost when someone indicated to Hon Arthur Tonkin that the idea of having long election campaigns was not a good one after all. I must say from a selfish point of view that I will be glad to see the back of 49-day elections. I happen to be involved in one of the by-elections which is being conducted at the moment, and I think it is one of the worst positions that people can be in to have an election dragged out for such a long period of time. I repeat that 49 days was not imposed by some rigid, doctrinaire conservative Government but by the very Government that now wants to take it out; thus my point becomes even more valid.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You will agree that experience on both sides has indicated that the earlier change was an error.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I will say a couple of things to that. The Government rued the day in that respect. It may well rue the day, as I suggested in my earlier comments, that gender and occupation are removed from the electoral roll. Therefore, I tell the Government that it is going down the same path. It is serving up stuff for the sake of so-called reform. A lot of what the Government is serving up is quite nonsensical; it does not matter a jot to the people out there; yet it has been dished up -- to use the Minister's words -- to improve the service of the Electoral Department to the electors of Western Australia. The Government cannot have it both ways, which is the difficulty that it now realises it faces.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You do agree that a change to four weeks makes sense?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I would personally welcome it and will probably vote for it, but I would welcome it more if I were on the Leader's side of the House. I have no doubt that the Government is changing the lead time from 49 days to 28 days because short elections are better for incumbent Governments. It has nothing to do with the convenience of voters, nothing to do with the convenience of the Electoral Department, and most certainly nothing to do with the convenience of the Opposition. The Leader of the House has read enough political literature to know that.

Hon G.E. Masters: Even the Minister is battling to keep a straight face.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: One can guess why this Government, which has so much reforming zeal about electoral matters, has not gone the whole hog and given us an amendment for voluntary voting in Western Australia. It is interesting how partisan we can get when we talk about electoral reform. What we do in effect is say, "We want electoral reform, but on our own terms." That is what the Government has said, and I regret to say in other matters it has done that with the active help of the National Party. I suggest the day will come when the National Party will regret that it went down that path and joined the Labor Party in achieving those ends.

Hon E.J. Charlton: We did not join the Labor Party. Why don't you report things accurately?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Would the member prefer me to say that the Labor Party joined the National Party, because either way the situation was the same, and the National Party sold out; it was as simple as that. It is sometimes necessary to remind people of what went wrong because it will cause some difficulties; but they will not be insuperable and we will still talk to Hon Eric Charlton.

I ask why this Government, which is so interested in reforming the electoral system, has never tried to bring about an amendment to delete section 156 from the Act and thereby bring about a position where people could actually make a choice about whether they will vote, as applies in most countries of the world? This would certainly cause huge logistical problems for political parties because, as happens in England and other democracies, we as political operatives would need to spend more time getting people to turn out on polling day in the hope that the rain would not come along and spoil their intentions, or some football match would not divert their attention from going to the polls.

It occurs to me that the Government has set out deliberately over the years to clothe the idea of electoral reform in a cloak of respectability, but on its terms, and it has steered away from anything that might remotely look as though it really does dramatically change the electoral system if it looks as though that is going to be to its electoral peril. The Government is really not reformist at all; its members are the most timid people of all when it comes to picking and choosing which electoral reforms they will put up and which ones they will keep out.

We will be dealing with a swag of amendments and consequential amendments about taking out references to Christian names. I suppose that matter has been debated 100 times in the last 100 years, and nothing new is likely to be uncovered in the course of this debate; but there are a couple of things I want to mention.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is the intention of the Government within the provisions of this Bill to make what many people would call merely cosmetic changes. Other people would say that if they are not cosmetic changes, then they are unimportant. One of the intended changes has been before this House to my knowledge on two or three occasions; that is, the

intention to delete from the Electoral Act the reference to a person having a Christian name and to replace that with the reference to a given name. On the surface, the amendment does not really constitute a major issue in the minds of many people. In the absence of anything the Government has offered us, the argument may be that we live now in a multi-religious society and that, therefore, where people may have in the past regarded the word "Christian" as being applicable to the vast majority of Australians, that term no longer applies.

The argument on the surface sounds very tolerant, big-hearted and big-minded of the Government of the day. In fact, looking below the surface, the point the Government makes is a trivial one. Why is it necessary to abandon the use of the term "Christian name", when there could be an option in the Act to refer to a person's Christian name or given name.

I am the first to acknowledge, particularly in 1987 more than in 1887, that Australia consists of a great number of people who do not subscribe to Christian beliefs. However, that would surely mean when legislating to alter the Act on the mathematics involved; for example, if people who use the term "Christian name" and subscribe to those religious beliefs are now in the minority, a case could be made for expunging that term from the record books. That is not the case, and the Government does not acknowledge there should be an option for those words to remain within the Act.

During the tea suspension I took the time to find out, in the absence of any Government explanation to the contrary, why the Government would want to expunge the words "Christian name" and replace them with "given name". I have not been able to place my hands on the most recent census, but the 1981 census reveals that almost 77 per cent of the Australian population regard themselves as being Christians; that figure answers any critics who say we are no longer a Christian country and who also say it is not proper to keep on the Statute books the reference to Christian names.

I suggest the Government look at the amendment along the lines of making the words optional. I would have no difficulty with that; and the Minister handling the Bill, the Leader of the House, would be the first to point out that he does not have a Christian name. The suggestion I put to the House would accommodate that because it would make provision in the Act for persons to fill out either a Christian name or a given name. The point may be a small one in the minds of some people, nonetheless it is an insult to many others who object to the comments about Australia not being a Christian country. Some people may believe the suggestion could become a self-fulfilling prophecy: If an argument is put often enough and loudly enough, beliefs are recycled, retreaded and eventually people believe in the end what they did not hold to in the beginning.

I do not think the Government has the right to expunge the term "Christian name" from the record book. If in fact the argument could be made that Australia is no longer a predominantly Christian country -- and I have refuted that argument with the 1981 census statistics -- and, therefore, those terms ought not to apply to the Statutes, why does the Government not go one step further and show some courage in the matter? The Government should abolish public holidays created by Christian festivals. I do not hear too many people around Western Australia who are of the non-Christian persuasion grizzling that they get days off at Christmas. I do not hear too many grizzles that people around Western Australia get Easter Monday off -- and in some cases, State Civil Servants get Easter Tuesday off as well. If a case can be made for expunging the word "Christian" from the Electoral Act, I suggest the Government ought to take itself seriously instead of attempting to be trendy in this case. The Government should say we are no longer a Christian nation and therefore we will abolish Christian festivals, which we celebrate by way of public holidays.

The Government cannot have it both ways. The Government has been arguing about consistency in this Act and something needs to be done in this regard. I would hope that when the Minister responds at the end of the second reading debate he will indicate that an amendment will be made which will enable the giving of either a Christian name or a given name. I give notice to the Minister now that in the event that he does not act in that way, I probably will.

I have already touched on what I regard as one of the most unsavoury parts of the Bill before us, and that is in relation to clause 5 which deals with the status that will be given to itinerant voters. I do not intend to pursue that except to say we will deal with it in the Committee stage. Another rationale for the Bill is to be found on page 4203 of *Hansard* where the Minister said --

> The third objective of the Bill is to align State and Commonwealth enrolment provisions as far as is practicable.

I have never been one to mindlessly accept that simply because the Commonwealth Parliament enacts certain laws or brings in certain amendments to its laws we should have to slavishly follow in its wake as though they have some superior wisdom on that side of Australia. That is put forward by the Government inconsistently with some of its stances within this Bill. I remind members that the third objective of the Bill is to align State and Commonwealth enrolment provisions as far as is practicable. That is fine as far as it goes, but one of the provisions sought by the Government in the Bill is to ensure that we have a ticket voting system for the lower House in order to be consistent with the action Parliament took a few months ago in giving us a ticket voting system for this House. That would put us out of kilter with the Commonwealth law. As members know, in the Commonwealth sphere one can vote en bloc or as a ticket for Senate elections, but that provision does not apply for the House of Representatives elections.

Hon J.M. Berinson: And that has doubled the informal vote for the House of Representatives.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: That has nothing to do with the argument that the Leader of the House puts to the Chamber; that is, that one of the objectives of the Bill is to align Commonwealth and State law. It has come through not just in this Bill but in every electoral Bill we have dealt with in this House in the last four and a half years.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You would not want to copy something that has transparently failed?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Many things in which the Government has copied the Commonwealth have been transparent failures.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Like what?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Like the ID card.

Hon J.M. Berinson: We are talking about the Electoral Act.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: No, we are not. We are talking about legislation across the board and I am saying it is not a reason to come here and say we should change an Act of Parliament in order to become consistent with the Commonwealth. Yet that has been the case not only in the last four or five electoral Bills brought into this Parliament, but in this Bill as well.

Therefore the question of whether it solves or does not solve -- and that is a moot point -- a higher level of informal votes is irrelevant to the point that the Minister who introduced the Bill on behalf of the Leader of the House was making.

Those are the reasons that the Opposition supports quite a few of the amendments. Speeches that follow will query other amendments which we do not think are necessarily desirable, and finally we will seek to defeat some of those things without making any apologies at all. The Opposition supports the Bill, but only to the extent I have indicated in a general sense so far.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Central) [7.45 pm]: The National Party obviously views with some concern a number of aspects put forward in the Bill. As has been stated by the previous speaker, there are a number of proposals which look as though they are just machinery or rewording amendments. There are a number about which I will make some brief comments.

The question relating to enrolments and whether people are resident in this State certainly needs to be clarified. If I remember correctly the Bill says something about a person ceasing to reside in the State but having the intention of subsequently resuming residence in the State. That would be a valid point if the person were a permanent resident and was only out of the State temporarily. However, the Bill makes no reference to how long a person may remain out of the State, and that needs to be clarified, as does the reference to a person being related to someone out of the State. What sort of relative does the Government have in mind and how far do we go in that respect? We have means now whereby people who are out of the State temporarily can lodge a vote provided they are still residents of the State. We would want to know how long these people have been out of the State and what activities they are involved in that keep them out of the State.

On the question of Christian names or given names I tend to believe we are seeking to make

change for change's sake. I have never heard anybody quibble or be upset or say they cannot understand when asked to give a Christian name, so I cannot see any real problems with that provision. If the Government wants to incorporate the expression "Christian or given name", so be it. I will not get involved in a discussion about maiden names and why that is to be changed.

The National Party's view of this Bill is that it is centralised around ticket voting. I am a bit surprised that the Government has reintroduced it in the form of these amendments because that matter was debated long and hard when the electoral reform proceedings took place in this House not so long ago, and members clearly stated their opinions as individuals and the views of their political parties. The matter does not need to be debated much further now other than to say that in the case of this House where the names of candidates will be grouped the idea was to simplify the operation in line with the Commonwealth situation. That will give an option to mark the paper by either numbering all the candidates or expressing a preference for a party or an individual.

All members are aware that there will not be any change in respect of Assembly seats. We did not opt for the system of one-vote-one-value. As far as the Assembly is concerned the existing arrangements will continue. Obviously there will be a change to the boundaries and, as a consequence of that, there will be other changes. However, the bottom line is that two, three or four candidates will be named on the ballot paper.

Hon Garry Kelly: The Federal sphere states that there should be two different voting systems.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: If Hon Garry Kelly keeps bringing up the fact that members in the House of Representatives cannot understand that people need to cast a preferential vote under a preferential system, that is too bad. If individuals do not have a preference for whom they want to vote, let us go the whole way and not have compulsory voting. People must have explained to them by both the Government of the day, Opposition parties and the Electoral Commission that when they vote in the Assembly they must cast a vote for every person named on the voting paper. What is difficult about that?

Statistics show that there is a high percentage of informal voting and there is no doubt that it increased the very first time preferential voting was implemented in the House of Representatives. If we are to have compulsory voting on the one hand, and then take away the need for people to vote for those individuals --

Hon Garry Kelly: We are not doing that.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: That need is being taken away. Electors need only cast a donkey vote when there are only two or three candidates on the ballot paper.

Several members interjected.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member must be one of those people who votes informally because he cannot understand the system.

As far as the National Party is concerned, there are obviously many clauses in this Bill which need lengthy debate, but the most important of all clauses is that dealing with the proposal for ticket voting. A number of clauses in the Bill are consequential upon this clause. Whether or not this House supports the clause, ticket voting will have a bearing on many of the clauses in the Bill.

The Bill refers to a change to by-elections. Perhaps the Leader of the House can explain it to me, but I cannot see that there is a need for a by-election on the same day as a general election. Surely if all members of Parliament are elected at the same time this clause really is not relevant.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What clause is that?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I do not have it written down, but I will find it when I have completed my speech. Perhaps the Bill refers to an election which is not a State election. I may have read it incorrectly, but a change is proposed in the Bill.

I could take or leave some of the proposed changes in the Bill. They certainly will not dramatically change the course of events as far as the Act is concerned, but they are important as far as some of the voting procedures are concerned. I refer, in particular, to the

clause dealing with scrutineers. There are arguments for and against the existing situation and it depends on the people who are involved. Many people have made comments to me about this matter and there is no doubt that at some polling booths people are severely questioned about where they live, etc. In other polling booths that does not occur. The National Party cannot see many problems in this regard.

There is a great deal of substance to this legislation. Clause 61 states that the Electoral Commissioner may request a married woman to nominate a surname. Why should it be left to the Electoral Commissioner? I wonder, with the changes proposed by the Government, what it has in mind for the future.

I agree with what has already been said by Hon Phil Pendal about a number of aspects of this Bill. Obviously, the National Party will seek clarification of many clauses during the Committee stage. As far as the referendum procedures are concerned the National Party can see no problem whatsoever. There do not appear to be too many problems with the proposed form of the ballot paper. The form which the ballot paper takes should not be decided by this House.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Would you be agreeable to allow the form of the ballot paper to be set by regulation?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: That is something we previously discussed in this place. I am not in favour of changes by regulation.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You are saying that you do not like to see it set in the Bill. It seems the only other way is by regulation. Frankly, that would give a desirable flexibility to the system which we do not have now.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The only thing undesirable about regulations is that they are often implemented by people who do not know very much about them. To some people, that may not be a valid reason. This Bill was introduced into this House a couple of weeks ago. I did not receive explanations about a number of the comments until today. We have checked the Bill; it is important to have something very clear and concise in respect of an Act as important as this. What the Leader of the House says is relevant and fair, but I am not too keen on it. Obviously he wants to change to a ticket system, and the National Party is opposed to it, so there is not much point in taking that further.

Concerning changes to the Legislative Council ballot paper or ticket voting, correct me if I am wrong, but I think we decided, when the Act was last amended, on regulations being tabled in the Parliament regarding the time limit and so forth. I think that was accepted.

Hon J.M. Berinson: No. The Government argued for that, but in the end the House insisted on putting in a form of ballot paper, and that has now been found to be defective.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: We will debate that a little further in the Committee stage. I conclude by saying that a number of the amendments proposed are very much in the nature of machinery changes; the change of an odd word here and there. We do not have any problems with most of the Bill, but we are opposed to the implementation of some of its provisions, and we will act accordingly.

HON G.E. MASTERS (West -- Leader of the Opposition) [8.03 pm]: I will make my remarks fairly brief because Hon Phil Pendal has covered most of the points I intended to raise. The amendments before us we have seen before. They have either been lost in debate in this House, or dropped by the Government for one reason or another. Members will recall that on one occasion we had legislation before the House and a Conference of Managers was called at which a number of these provisions were to be fully discussed. The then responsible Minister, Arthur Tonkin, refused to discuss any of these matters, even though we would have agreed to two or three of the clauses. Nevertheless, that was the type of man he was. We have seen some of these clauses before; they have been debated before, and on occasions the Opposition has vigorously opposed some of the provisions now contained in this legislation.

The thrust of the Bill seems to be to make enrolment and voting as easy as possible. It appears to me to be as loose as possible. It does not take into account the possible abuse and manipulation which can occur. We must bear that in mind, because it is an important aspect of our voting system. Some people will always abuse the system for one reason or another,

so safeguards must be built in. It seems that we should be asking people to think about and understand the system and to give some thought to what they are doing. With this Bill we are knocking down the barriers and built-in protections which already exist and making the possibility of abuse far too easy.

We should remind ourselves of the closeness of some of the State elections which have taken place in Western Australia in recent years. Elections have been sometimes won or lost by 10 votes or less. I think Mundaring was lost by the Liberal Party on about 10 votes. I will mention that a little later, because some of the abuses there have probably not been taken into account by the Government in this legislation. It is fairly common in our State elections to find differences of 10 to 70 votes. The figure may or may not be true, but I have heard that the Burke Government gained power for the first time with a total of 300 votes. If only 300 votes in critical seats had been cast the other way, the Burke Government would have lost the election. That is an indication of how close elections can be.

I am sure members will agree that the last thing we want to do is to build in incentives to manipulate the system and make it easy for people to behave improperly when the opportunity arises. There are encouragements for people to do this in some of the marginal seats, where very often the difference is only a handful of votes. The election in the south west came into that category. Hon Phil Pendal mentioned there were less than 100 votes in the result -- I think he said 70 votes. If any manipulation occurs there it will influence the by-election.

We should not be making voting too easy in this sort of legislation. We should be making sure of built-in safeguards. If people have to think a little during elections, that is all to the good, because they will understand what they are doing and will not go along like machines putting a number or a tick in a box without really understanding the implications. The last thing we want is to make it as easy to vote as to buy the daily newspaper. If we reach that stage we will have done a disservice to the public generally.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why?

Hon G.E. MASTERS: I will point out later my opposition to the proposals the Government has put forward in respect of the Legislative Assembly ballot papers. It is important to discuss that aspect of the legislation, and that is part of my argument which I shall mention at a later stage.

Clause 30 deals with lost and undelivered ballot papers. It seems to be a fairly slack way of dealing with ballot papers which are lost or destroyed. We will be asking the Leader of the House where the safeguards are. People can say they have lost or destroyed a ballot paper when it goes missing. For a handful of votes a seat, or indeed an election, can be lost.

We have a proposal to forgo the requirement to put an initial on the back of a ballot paper. That might sound unnecessary. People will say, "So what? It makes no difference. The ballot papers are given out at the polling booth and there is really no necessity for putting that initial on the back." Referring again to the Mundaring election when Tom Herzfeld lost the seat, six ballot papers were found in a school desk in Herne Hill. They were initialled on the back, so it was obvious that they had been put there after being taken from the returning officer. If there was no initial on the back no-one would have known where they came from; they may have come from outside, from within the polling booth or whatever.

I wonder why that very simple process of the officer in charge putting an initial on the back of the ballot paper should be done away with. I think there is value in it. The finding of a number of ballot papers in a school desk two days after an election, when that election was won by the Labor Party by something like 10 votes, indicates how very careful we must be in all legislation dealing with a voting system and the practices of people casting votes.

My colleague, Hon Phil Pendal, has already raised the matter of itinerant voters. Hon Eric Charlton did the same. I will not go over that ground again. During the Committee stage we will go into some detail about the implications of those provisions. But I do raise them because I think the Leader of the House needs to take note of the Opposition's concern about some of these matters.

It seems that the Government is intent upon extracting the last possible vote from the public regardless of the fact that it might be giving people the opportunity to cheat or abuse the system, and that is the wrong way to go about it. The safeguards are more important than the

odd vote or two that may be lost as a result of more care being taken. I noted the Leader of the House's interjection when he said, "Why shouldn't a vote be as easily carried out as buying a newspaper?" That is his way of looking at it, compared to which mine is a lot more cautious.

I refer the Leader of the House to the electoral roll. Already my colleague has mentioned the proposal to delete the recording of a person's gender and occupation on the electoral roll. I find it hard to understand why the Government would follow this line of action. As Hon Phil Pendal has already mentioned, the names do not necessarily indicate the sex of a person; but I am certainly more concerned about the deletion of the occupation. I have always found it very useful and I would think that other members of Parliament would too, and many other people who have reason to look at the electoral rolls would gain great value from finding out from the roll the occupations of various people. It may well be that people phone a member and say they are in his electorate and need a bit of help. A person may not give his occupation over the phone and the member may have cause to refer to the electoral roll to see what his occupation is.

Members of Parliament very often have cause to write to certain groups of people in the community who they think may be sufficiently interested in something that happened in Parliament or in the community and wish to gain their views. For example, they could be schoolteachers, nurses, or whatever. There may be a particular piece of legislation or something that the Government or the Opposition is contemplating and they want some advice. Many times I, and other members, have written to a number of people who have a certain occupation seeking their views in the community we represent. I would see the value in continuing with that practice.

There is nothing wrong with putting an occupation on the electoral roll and, although in the past those occupations often became outdated, I understand that now, under the Commonwealth process and the recent processes, they are continually updated. It is of value to many people in the community -- it is part of the communication programme that members of Parliament are required to carry out if they are going to do their job properly. I urge the Leader of the House and the Government to think very seriously about accepting the proposal that we will undoubtedly put forward to continue recording the sex, and especially the occupation so far as it is known, of people on the electoral roll.

The Government intends to reduce the notice given for an election from 49 to 28 days. Hon Phil Pendal in his speech said that he would not necessarily object to what the Government proposes because he does not like long election programmes. I would find value in a longer period of time for an election. In my first election, like many other people, I had a number of months in which to campaign. I like an election campaign that lasts a long time, certainly when I am in Opposition. There is no doubt at all that the Government is changing this provision from 49 to 28 days because a four-week campaign is better for a Government. I have never been in favour of reducing that time even though, at some time or another, my party was. I will oppose that provision during the Committee stage.

Hon T.G. Butler: What will your party be doing?

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Perhaps the member does not understand what happens in our party, but I will explain. Hon Phil Pendal is a member of the same party as me but expressed a different view. That is the difference in our party. Not one member on the Labor Party side will utter a word in opposition to the Leader of the House's position -- not one single member will dare say boo. They are caucused and do exactly as they are told. I advise the honourable member that that is the difference between his party and mine. It is the reason I am able to stand up and express a different view altogether from that of Hon Phil Pendal. Does the honourable member not wish he could do the same?

Again there is a proposal to close the polling booths at six o'clock. In all the years I have been in Parliament I have been opposed to closing the polling booths before eight o'clock. The argument has been put forward that a six o'clock closing time would enable the results to get out earlier and it would be less of a load on those people working in the polling booths. I say that polling day is for the public, not to enable the results to get through early or the workers at the polling booths to have an earlier night.

The object is to give the public the maximum possible time to vote at the polling booths. I

accept that there will be a six o'clock closing time because, again, many of the members on this side of the House disagree with me. I happen to represent an area where there are a great number of Seventh Day Adventists, and they have certain religious beliefs and will not vote until sundown. They are very good supporters of mine and I will fight to the death for them. I have always been concerned with their position. Why should they not vote after sundown? Many of them may well vote for Hon Tom Butler's party, but I would still fight for their right to have a vote at the polling booth after sundown if they wished. I accept that the six o'clock closing time has been tried and is a proven practice and that whatever I say it will go through the House.

The Government keeps saying it should be consistent, and that the State should be consistent with the Commonwealth and follow that line.

Hon Fred McKenzie: And other States.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Okay, does Hon Fred McKenzie agree with that?

Hon Fred McKenzie: Yes.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: That is fine, and I am very pleased he does.

Hon Fred McKenzie: It is ridiculous to keep it open until eight o'clock at night. You are way out of step.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Is Hon Fred McKenzie saying we should be consistent and follow the Commonwealth in the way it conducts its elections, and the electoral process, and so on?

Hon Fred McKenzie: I said other States.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: The honourable member said the Commonwealth as well.

Hon Fred McKenzie: Yes.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: So the honourable member is saying the Commonwealth practices are correct?

Hon Fred McKenzie: And other States.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: That is fine. The reason I asked the honourable member the question is that we have to talk about ballot papers and their structure. Hon Fred McKenzie obviously will support me because what I am saying is that the Liberal Party and the National Party, when we debated an electoral Bill some months ago, put forward a ballot paper that closely resembled -- and was almost the same as -- the Commonwealth ballot paper; that is, in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Yet Hon Fred McKenzie's party this very day is putting forward a different proposal.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Yours does not match the Senate's and it will not work in practice.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: I leave that to the Leader of the House. I have a copy here of both the Commonwealth and State ballot papers. I will not pursue the matter now, but in the legislation that we passed previously in this House there is a ballot paper based on the Commonwealth system, and the Government is seeking to change it. What I am saying to Hon Fred McKenzie is that if he is going to be consistent and he says the Commonwealth is following the right line, as are other States, why do we have to be different?

Hon Fred McKenzie: I was not talking about ballot papers.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: The ballot paper form that we put forward in the previous legislation that was passed by this House was appropriate and closely resembled, if it was not exactly the same --

Hon J.M. Berinson: It was not exactly the same, and it was sufficiently different to be impractical.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: The Leader of the House's proposal is totally different. Would he then agree to put forward to this House a ballot form that is identical to the Commonwealth's?

Hon J.M. Berinson: I have not considered that but I think the one we are putting would match that much more closely than the one we already have.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon G.E. MASTERS: This Government is seeking to totally change the type of ballot form, which will cause more confusion in the community. We have had all sorts of argument about the form of ballot paper. We had problems with the Senate and the House of Representatives, where there was a large number of informal votes. It seems now that the community understands the present position and indeed the Commonwealth papers have been accepted by the community. People now understand the ballot papers. I suggest that this State ought to follow the same procedure. If we are to be consistent with the Commonwealth -- and that is the argument put forward by this Government, the Minister and Hon Fred McKenzie --

Hon Fred McKenzie interjected.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Hon Fred McKenzie knows very well that we are talking about the whole electoral system and ballot papers are a part of that.

Hon T.G. Butler: I think you have lost me.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: It is not difficult to lose Hon Tom Butler.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Look, when I ask honourable members to come to order, I expect them to do so. The honourable member should concentrate on addressing his comments to the Chair and he will find he will not get any interjections from this direction.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Thank you, Mr President. I was talking about the ballot paper. If we examine the Commonwealth system, one finds that the Senate system does a number of things and indeed it is proposed in this State that the Legislative Council will follow that system. That is, there is a form which enables people to put in a tick or a figure "1" in a square -- I am not sure what it is now; that is how confused we all are -- and this follows the registered how-to-vote card. The Labor Party or the Liberal Party can register its how-to-vote card and if a person wants to vote for either of those parties, they can mark the appropriate square or they can follow the old practice of numbering down the ballot paper. That is the option they have with the Senate paper. With the House of Representatives, there is a ballot paper but there is no option on a how-to-vote ticket. There is a requirement for people voting in the House of Representatives to vote 1, 2, 3 or whatever as required for their own electorate.

Hon Garry Kelly: That is the problem.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: There seems to be a new problem now.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon G.E. MASTERS: There is a quite proper course of action to take and I am quite willing to have the same procedure followed in the Legislative Council election as occurs with the Senate. However, I think we should be consistent with the Commonwealth and the Legislative Council should have a requirement whereby people place 1, 2 or 3 on the ballot paper. It is not too difficult or too hard for people to work out and there are rarely more than three or four candidates --

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Surely it is not too difficult even for Hon Tom Butler to understand. I come to the point that we need to be consistent with the Commonwealth -- the Government's own words -- and we will need to follow the Senate procedure in the Legislative Council and we will also follow the House of Representatives system in the Legislative Assembly. That is a reasonable proposition to put forward, but instead the Government has put forward this insane proposition of horizontal voting cards and further complications. If members opposite think there are difficulties with the Commonwealth system, they should wait to see what will happen at the next State election. It is just a mad mess.

Several members interjected.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: The proposals put forward by the Government typify the Labor Party's method of doing things. The Labor Party likes to regiment people and it likes to number them, which is what it was going to do with the ID card --

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon G.E. MASTERS: I would say that socialist and totalitarian regimes throughout the world have looked with some envy at the operations of the Labor Party, both federally and at the State level, in Australia. We have to remember that the Labor Party seeks to mass organise, if it can, and that is what they are trying to do with this legislation -- to make things as easy as it can and to make sure that people do what they are told to do.

HON A.A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [8.25 pm]: I have heard a lot of chatter from my left and as the left seems to be taking over the Labor Party, maybe that is where all these inane suggestions are coming from.

Hon T.G. Butler: What sort of suggestions?

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Hon Tom Butler would not understand the statement so I will not repeat it. Inane people completely stump me and the sort of gabbling that has gone on in this corner, without listening to any reasoned argument, seems to outline what the Labor Party thinks about this Bill. The Labor Party is not interested in a fair electoral system.

Several members interjected.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: The Labor Party is not interested. Its members talked a lot about every vote being equal but where are they now, those gilgies? Mention one-vote-one-value, and members of the Government dive for cover.

Hon T.G. Butler: You voted for it.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I did not; I stood in this House and challenged these hyenas --

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the honourable member wants to continue his speech he must cease that sort of comment. I ask other honourable members to stop interjecting because I will not allow this debate to proceed with the constant interjections which are occurring. I will not say it again and if honourable members persist, they will leave themselves open to action that I am quite prepared to take. If Hon A.A. Lewis directs his comments firstly to the Bill and secondly to the Chair, I am sure he will not have any further difficulties.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Certainly, Mr President. I would hate to raise your ire any further, Sir, and I apologise for upsetting you and breaking the Standing Orders of the House. I hope we can go through the Bill without breaking the Standing Orders of the House again. I am happy to speak quietly, Mr President, as you know is my wont. However, certain people have thrown certain pamphlets around outside this place. The political party concerned seems to have thought better of that idea. I will not even name that political party because I know that unless I move some amendments -- and I am considering doing that -- to this Bill to ask the Government to give the electors a fair go, I should not really raise the matter in my second reading speech. I would just refer to the Minister's second reading speech. He talked about a better "service" to electors. What service? What does the word "service" mean? Does it mean to give everybody everything they want?

Several members interjected.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I will ignore that sort of remark because that is what the Labor Party is trying to do to this State with this Bill. The Leader of the House is treating the members of this House and the electors of this State like children.

Hon Garry Kelly: They are trying to make the exercise of the franchise as easy as possible for everybody.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I am glad Hon Garry Kelly made that interjection.

Hon Garry Kelly: What is wrong with that?

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I have no objection to that as long as every elector in this State has to use his or her brains to cast a vote. Frankly, this Bill, as Hon Phillip Pendal said, leads or could lead to the greatest corruption we have ever seen in this State. There are many anomalies in the Bill. I know that this Bill is not the Leader's Bill and I wonder why it was introduced into this House first. I believe that the Labor Party, in introducing it into this House, has shown its absolute contempt for the Parliament. It brought it here first because it knows that the fights will be fought here. It knows it has the numbers in the other place to pass it so it treats the traditions of this House with the contempt that it has treated them with ever since it came to power. The Government could not care less about tradition or about the electors of

this State. Only one thing is uppermost in the Government's mind and that is the control of this State for as long as possible with all of its doubtful deals.

It is interesting to hear not one word from members of the Government.

Hon T.G. Butler: We are not allowed to.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I know, because the Leader of the House has given Government members that well-known frown and Caucus has put the curse upon them.

Let us deal with the Bill's providing a better service. Hon Garry Kelly said that the electoral system should be made as easy as possible for electors to exercise their franchise. Hon Garry Kelly is a good friend and a former teacher. Did he teach his students that way? Did he make exams as easy as possible for them to pass? Is that the way we are to go or is it not? The words "a better service" are very interesting because I believe in the old version of the Bible. I do not believe in all of these new versions because I believe the old version makes people think.

Hon Garry Kelly: Do you believe it should be as difficult as possible?

Hon A.A. LEWIS: No, I do not. However, I do not think it should be as easy as picking apples off a tree.

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I am glad that Hon Tom Butler knows about Adam and Eve because that is as far as he got with his education.

Hon T.G. Butler: That is a bit unfair, isn't it?

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Yes, but so is the member's interjection.

The ease of doing things does not always make it better for people. I am sure Hon Joe Berinson understands what I am talking about.

Hon Garry Kelly: I am not sure you do.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Hon Garry Kelly would not because nobody in the House understands what he is talking about.

I am concerned about ease of voting. The second reading speech also refers to enrolling and voting effectively. I agree with that, but if voting is made too easy, on some occasions it will not be effective. The Leader of the House should consider that. I wonder whether he believes we should make appeals easier or whether we should make the courts more lenient. I understand that a former member of this House had a few words to say about that the other day.

Hon J.M. Berinson: For the moment I believe we should make voting easier.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: More effective and easier?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Correct.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Okay. Does the Leader of the House see any contradiction in making it more effective and easier?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Not at all.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Good. That is the answer I wanted from the Leader of the House. I have been waiting for him to interject because he is the only member to understand my point. I wanted to know exactly where we were going. Why did the Leader of the House say, in his interjections to Hon Gordon Masters, that ballot papers should offer the same options and information to voters for both Houses and should be set out in a similar way to minimise the possibility of confusion? The two are totally different types of votes. Why should ballot papers be set out in the same way?

Hon J.M. Berinson: To avoid confusion. The Commonwealth experience has indicated that is what happens when you have different forms of ballot papers on the same day.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: That is very simplistic.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It is simple, but not simplistic.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I understand that the independent commission, in investigating the

Hawke Government's electoral legislation, found that there would have been that many informal votes anyway because the public were sick of the Labor Party.

Hon Garry Kelly: Rubbish!

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I have forgotten the gentleman's name who reported to the Government, but the Government ran for its life because of that report and now it raises this nonsense about percentages. Let us take as an example the electorate of Collie which no longer has any love for the Labor Party.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It keeps electing a Labor member.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Only by the smallest of majorities. That majority has declined from 3 000 to 300 in six years. That is how much the electors like the Labor Government.

The Labor Party wants it both ways. I believe a decent Labor Party supporter or a decent National or Liberal Party supporter who is upset with his party will vote informal.

Hon T.G. Butler: That is prevalent in the Liberal Party.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I do not know. Hon. Tom Butler would be the expert. He is in Bob Pike's class. He is the expert, in everybody's opinion. Hon Tom Butler will be with Mr Pike very shortly, and I do not believe he should talk about other parties.

Hon T.G. Butler: Why?

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Because I read in yesterday morning's paper about how the Democrats will be helping the Labor Party. Senator Macklin said that he will introduce an electoral system for the whole of Australia that will help the Labor Party in Western Australia. This deal between the Democrats and the Labor Party is fascinating. It is interesting to note the member's own branches, his branch-stacking mates in Victoria and Western Australia, and the problems he has, yet Hon Tom Butler has the hide to talk about the people in the Liberal Party who may be doing it. Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Yes, I did, and voted. I see that the Government Whip is coming to talk to Hon Tom Butler, so I will do his job for him. Hon Fred McKenzie is getting weary and he should stay in his seat. The Leader of the House is giving the nod to his member to keep quiet because he is losing the argument.

Hon J.M. Berinson: We want to hear the argument.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I hope that the Leader of the House can understand it; after his comments earlier, I doubt it. The Leader of the House said that the huge national expenditure of $4 million reduced the informal vote in this State by 0.53 per cent. I am glad he thinks that is huge expenditure -- if the Government had left it alone the informal vote would not have been as high and the expenditure would not have been necessary.

I move to the area of postal votes -- walking in off the street to get one. I wonder whether the Government has gone overboard with giving people a vote. The old business of "vote early and vote often" may arise and we note that in Mundaring votes were recorded from people who are dead. The corruption angle worries me.

The Bill proposes that how-to-vote cards may form an adequate indication of voting intention by an elector seeking assistance. Does that mean that an elector can hand a how-to-vote card to the returning officer, tell him he cannot write, that he wants to vote in such and such a way, and the returning officer fills in the ballot paper and tells him that that is his vote? I want to know whether it reaches that stage if a person cannot write.

Along with Hon Gordon Masters, I have a number of Seventh Day Adventists in my area. I would like a further explanation of a general postal vote because the argument put forward in the second reading speech appears to be contradictory. It refers to a distance of 20 kilometres from a polling place. If somebody with a certain religious belief lives within 20 kilometres of a polling place, can he be classified as a general postal voter or not?

I come now to the easy part -- the proposed additional issuing officers. What will be the cost of these additional issuing officers to the electoral system and the State? If it is known that additional issuing officers are needed, surely the Government will have some idea of how many are needed, where they will be needed, and how much they will cost. I refer again to

the second reading speech in which the Leader of the House stated --

> By the proposed rearrangement of certain of the provisions of section 90 electors may apply orally in person for postal votes with fewer formalities to complete than at present.

Does the Leader of the House really believe that people can be checked with fewer formalities than we have at the moment? I do not know whether he has been present when people have applied orally for postal votes but, having stood beside the person doing this job, it seems to me that the formalities are very few. If the Leader of the House thinks there are too many, would he tell me in what area? I seek some explanation of the formalities that are too onerous for an elector.

I am fascinated also to note that postal votes will be accepted until the Tuesday after the election because Australia Post has changed its sorting schedules. Again, is this making it too easy? Even taking into account that we condense the number of days of an election -- and I do not think we should -- does the Leader of the House really believe that the average voter does not have time to get his postal vote in under the present provisions?

I would like a further explanation of the latest printed rolls and the habitation index. The rolls will go to every political party that has a branch in the area, but two copies of the habitation index will go only to the political parties. Should not the habitation index be split up in the same way as the rolls are and be provided to the branches within that area? That seems the sensible thing to do. Perhaps I have been on the administration side of politics for too long but surely that would be preferable to the three parties receiving a habitation index and then having to split it up into the particular electorates in which it is involved. I know the computer could do this. I ask the Leader of the House to consider this and to indicate whether it can be done and the cost involved. All political parties would appreciate that type of habitation index.

I also ask the Leader of the House why the Government wants to go on with the provision that the returning officer be required to allocate preferences until only two candidates remain, notwithstanding that a candidate has been elected on an earlier count. The answer that the Leader of the House gives in his second reading speech is that this count will assist in the interpretation of election results. Are we here like our good friend Hon Robert Hetherington in his previous career, or are we here to run elections which are satisfactory to all electors at the cheapest possible cost to the State? It seems to me that however far we go in counts and recounts and allocations of preferences, we will never come to a consensus about what has happened.

Hon Garry Kelly interjected.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: One does not have to, because somebody has been elected and public money is being used to do the count.

Hon Garry Kelly: It would be marginal on top of running elections.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: If the honourable member calls $100 000 or $250 000 marginal, I can find a school or hospital in my area which could do with that money. I am sure the Minister for Budget Management could find many uses for it; perhaps talking books and things like that. I question the Government's real aim. It should not be in the business of interpreting election results. The Government's aim is to win the election. The way it is going it will lose it, but that is my opinion against that of the Leader of the House. Why would the Government want to know the interpretation of minor party preferences and spend the time and the money counting those preferences?

The reduction in time has been covered by Hon Phil Pendal, but how can a nomination be closed at 6.00 pm? There seems to be no real reason for that. We are told that the Commonwealth does it. Does it?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Yes.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I thought the Commonwealth closed nominations for the last election at midday.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I do not think so, but I will check it.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I happen to think I had a meeting at a quarter past 12 to allocate

preferences. I wonder whether this is correct.

Hon J.M. Berinson: There were other reasons, apart from this, but we will come to that when we look at the clauses.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: This is the Minister's second reading speech, and we must try to answer intelligently. I do not think that the Commonwealth closed nominations at 6.00 pm, and I do not think that the Leader of the House has given, at least me -- and I know I am one of the dumber members of the House -- any reason that we should close nominations at 6.00 pm.

We come to the polls closing at 6.00 pm. I will not reiterate the sort of argument we had in the last Bill, or the Bill before that concerning the 6.00 pm closing time. My view is that the Government has not done enough to provide for those electors of mine who have certain religious beliefs. If the Leader of the House answers the general postal voter provision to my satisfaction, I may be satisfied. I will not say I shall be but I may be.

Then we come to the classic. He said --

> The present 8.00 pm close of polls means a very long day for electoral officials.

And for parliamentarians and for candidates and for party workers and for everybody else. He continued --

> On election night in future we should have much earlier results.

Is this borne out by fact? We will have postal votes to the following Tuesday. With 6 o'clock closing an electorate with a difference of less than 100 at 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock will have postal votes accepted until 9.00 am on Tuesday. There is absolutely no way to get the results any earlier. These are some of the anomalies in this Bill. I know from the Leader of the House's silence that he probably agrees with me. I am sure he will when he answers.

Now we get to the Hans Christian Andersen stuff. I feel embarrassed that the Leader of the House had to read it. For the chief law officer of the State to have to read this sort of rubbish must have crunched him a fair bit. The second reading speech says --

> The Bill proposes the introduction of the offence of misleading and deceptive publication and has been drafted along the lines of the equivalent section of the Commonwealth Act. The provision relates to the publication or distribution of material likely to mislead or deceive an elector in the casting of his or her vote, or that is likely to induce an elector to complete a ballot paper contrary to the directions on the ballot paper.

Come off it! I can see a grin appearing on the Leader of the House's face. Would he like to prosecute one of these cases? As one of the wags in my electorate said when I told him about this, "I wish we could make this retrospective; Burkie would be behind bars." The Leader of the House surely does not honestly think that the sane public will accept that sort of nonsense.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I think you may misunderstand the provisions.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I may misunderstand them, but surely it is the Leader of the House's job in the second reading speech to explain to me; not later, but when he is giving a second reading speech it is his job to explain the Bill in language that every member of this House can understand. The Leader of the House should not throw his hands around.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I am not throwing my hands around; you are.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Yes, I am. The Leader of the House must not come into this House and give a second reading speech which does not explain anything to anybody and then expect people to accept it when he says, "We will get on and explain that later." He never does, because he races over it and says, "We will deal with it in Committee."

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is what we will do; that is what we always do.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: What rot! What the Leader of the House should do, if he does not know it, is to outline things to members of this House in the second reading speech in a clear and concise fashion.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is what the second reading speech did.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: What the Leader of the House does is to try to snow us from start to

finish. He tries to snow this House the whole time. He knows it, because every time he is hoist with his own petard he gets a sullen look and says, "I have been caught out; I should not really have been; it is somebody else's fault." It is a disgrace.

Hon Robert Hetherington: Tut, tut.

Hon. A.A. LEWIS: I agree with Hon Robert Hetherington's "tut, tut"; it is disgusting. I believe that the Leader of the House, despite the fact that I give him a bit of a hammering occasionally, is a reasonably honest sort of fellow -- although not quite as good as Hon Fred McKenzie and Hon Robert Hetherington. Now that the honourable member has taken his seat, I object to him walking past me and telling me to sit down. If Hon Tom Stephens wants to make a comment on this Bill, he can get on his feet at a later time.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: At least they have more members in the House now.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: They have four members now. The Labor Party is very intent on getting this Bill through, and it only has four members in the House. There are just 12 of us sitting in the House, so the Opposition is twice the size of the Government at the moment, as it always is in debate.

Turning now to itinerant electors, this fascinates me because itinerant electors are virtually allowed to enrol, and the comparison is used with the Commonwealth electoral roll and the situation of people being overseas. The Bill talks about people being out of the State. I would like the Leader to tell me why as a member of Parliament I am now not going to be allowed under this Bill to enrol for my electorate because I find that my parliamentary duties confine me to Perth and it is better for me, both financially and administratively, to live in Perth, yet itinerants can live out of the State, or overseas, and still enrol for my electorate. If I swear that I want to go back to my electorate -- as I would love to do -- am I allowed to enrol as an itinerant or am I a member of that one section of the community which is disbarred under this Bill from enrolling in my own electorate? All the people who have jobs as engineers, doctors, shedhands, shearers -- any job one likes to name -- and who work out of the State can be enrolled in my electorate as itinerants, but because of my calling as a member of Parliament, and because I have decided to live in Perth, I am not allowed to be a member of that electorate. I find that situation completely anomalous.

I am not going to discuss the issue of Christian names and given names. I am a Christian and I have a given name, and I think we can argue that issue as long as we like. I believe the majority of people are used to Christian names and I do not know why we cannot use Christian or given names. I think the matter is irrelevant.

Hon Robert Hetherington: I would have thought all Christian names were given names but not all given names were Christian names.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: I want to talk now about deleting electors' occupations from the roll. I wonder what would happen when one is giving an oral vote and Hon John Caldwell comes in and says, "John Caldwell", and there is another John Caldwell, and no occupation is given. The other John Caldwell may be a carpenter, and this John Caldwell is a farmer.

Hon J.M. Berinson: They would be unlikely to have the same address.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: It could easily be a father and son with the same names.

I challenge the fact that the previous amendments added 100 000 names to our roll, as stated on page 14 of the Minister's speech. I think the roll was probably joined with the Commonwealth electoral roll, which already had 60 000 or 70 000 more on the roll; and we have seen the problems that has caused; some of those names should really not have been there.

I agree with the Minister's tribute to Ray Shaw, but I wonder whether the department should be identifying many improvements or whether the electors should be. Are we running elections for the department or running free and fair elections for the electors?

I come back to members of Parliament and their habitat. I believe the Minister should look at the habitation roll in branch areas.

I love the part of the Bill which deals with married women being entitled to use their name before marriage. I conjure up in my mind's eye Zsa Zsa Gabor and Elizabeth Taylor, and wonder which name they had before which marriage. I think the whole matter leads to

confusion and will not help the electors in any shape or form.

I believe there are some major problems in the area of the other new section, section 62(a), and I wonder about that, having dealt with the computer problems of the electoral roll. I do not know whether technology is quite as good as the Government makes out -- and I can understand the Deputy Premier, as Minister for Technology, thrusting this forward -- but I wonder whether all of us may not be in a lot of trouble.

It is interesting to see that the Government is now trying to shorten the time of elections, when up until two or three years ago it wanted longer times for elections. The Government has now changed its mind. I do not care; I will still win my election and the Government will still lose because it has lost all credibility, and this is another Bill in respect of which its credibility goes further out the door. I believe that anybody who has studied the Bill in depth -- and I have not; I have only had a cursory glance at it -- as Hon Phil Pendal has done, would be out to talk on radio or television for hours because of the anomalies in this Bill. It is a disgrace that the Bill should be brought before this House in its present condition. The Bill is a political rort, and I believe the Government only wants to bring it up for political reasons. The Government was quite happy with the previous Bill, as the Leader of the House assured us, yet now it wants to bring more and more into it. I wish the Government good luck with the Bill, and I do not think it is going to get very far. I say very genuinely to the Labor Party that one day it will believe in one-vote-one-value.

HON D.J. WORDSWORTH (South) [9.10 pm]: The Government claims that this Bill is designed, firstly, to provide a better service to electors; secondly, to introduce new initiatives; thirdly, to align certain procedures with the Commonwealth; and, fourthly, to streamline administration. The idea of better services relates to a simplified method of voting to allow ticket voting. To date we have seen ticket voting only in relation to recent Senate elections. It was claimed in the second reading speech that this procedure reduced the informal vote in WA from 9.4 per cent to 3.3. per cent. This led to our Prime Minister putting himself in the embarrassing position of telling everyone that most of the informal vote was intended to be Labor votes. Without doubt one does not have to be very intelligent to fill in a ballot paper under any circumstances. When it comes down to a House of Representatives election there would be no more than five names on a ballot paper, whereas in some cases with Senate elections there may be tens of candidates for a seat. We are told that the introduction of ticket voting for the Senate straight away caused an increase in the informal vote for the House of Representatives. The usual informal vote was 4.25 per cent and it went up to 6.55 per cent. This is the reason the Government feels that we should now have ticket voting for the Legislative Assembly. It is interesting that the informal vote went up despite the fact that the Federal Government had just spent $40 million trying to educate electors on how to complete ballot papers.

I join with others in saying that this is not a bad way of sorting out electors. If they do not have the brains to fill in an ordinary ballot paper, perhaps they should not have a vote anyway. At least this system sorts out some of the mugs. The Labor Party is obviously trying to muster the less intelligent for its Assembly vote, and that is why it wishes to have a ticket vote for the lower House.

When one looks at the form of the future ballot paper which can be seen in the supplementary Notice Paper, one can see that the Government has already changed its mind on the form of the ballot paper. Members should look at the style of the ballot paper which has been passed around for candidates for members of the Legislative Council, because when one looks down one side of the paper one sees provision for the actual names of candidates. Every candidate is given equal space. However, on the other side of the paper provision is made for voting according to party, and these literally look like advertisements in newspapers. The party with the greatest number of candidates will get the biggest advertisement, and it does look like an advertisement.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Not at all.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: There are little ads and big ads; they look just like advertisements.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You could say the same thing about Senate papers. One group has 10 candidates and another is an independent with one name.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Undoubtedly it will give a great advantage to the party with the

greatest number of candidates.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Nothing of the sort.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Is the Leader of the House looking at the form?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Of course I am, and it is a model of clarity.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: This is one of the reasons why one party has a bigger advertisement in the newspapers -- it wants to draw attention to itself.

Hon J.M. Berinson: By all means get your party to nominate 20 candidates.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: The Government is encouraging that.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Of course it doesn't encourage that.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: What chance is the Government giving the individual with this new format? There he will be down the bottom and he will get about half a centimetre.

Hon J.M. Berinson: He also gets his name alongside it and the name of his party.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Great stuff. If the Government is to have a vote for parties, it should at least give all the parties an equal size "advertisement". That is at least what we had before with Senate-type elections. People had a choice of voting Liberal, Labor, or whatever. There were no big squares for big parties and little squares for little parties.

Hon J.M. Berinson: But you had big lists in some cases and smaller lists in others.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, if someone wanted to vote for the person.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Either way the tick box is above the list.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, above the list. It at least had eye-level advertisements and they were the same size. The list went down from it, and above it was where one voted for the party.

The Leader of the House, in his second reading speech, indicated that the Government was endeavouring to make the voting format uniform between Federal and State elections, and this change will definitely be to the benefit of the larger parties. It can be argued that the Liberals will enjoy just as big a section, but I have some sympathy for the National Party and the Democrats. Under this form they would both get rather poor coverage, so they should seriously look at this one.

Hon J.N. Caldwell: We will have to nominate more candidates.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, and thereby add more confusion, because the candidates will not all be elected. Election will be on a quota basis, and the National Party will win only one or two places.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is why parties will limit the number of candidates.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: That is one argument, but the argument on the ballot paper is that a party will be better off with a bigger list.

Hon J.M. Berinson: No.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, because it will get a bigger square for that party. The Leader of the House can see this from across the Chamber; one has a bigger square.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Who do you think would have the advantage, the party with the biggest space or the party at the top of the ballot form?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Strange as it may seem, it will probably be the party with the biggest number of candidates.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is pretty strange.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps the Government can say it is changing the donkey vote into a different form. I think we will find just as much confusion with this proposed ballot paper as we have had in the past. It says, "Vote only in one way: this way or this way". There will be two of these forms, one in pink and one in white; so that people will have to vote in two ways. This will add a little more confusion to the whole thing. Without doubt it is getting harder for the individual to make a contribution to this Parliament. It will depend very much on party allegiances.

This brings in another thing in that in these proposals, if a person belongs to a political party which was not represented in the previous Parliament, he will not be able to get some information from the Electoral Office, information that will be available to a person who belongs to a political party which was represented in the previous Parliament.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Are you talking about electoral rolls?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes.

Hon J.M. Berinson: They can be purchased.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: The Bill says the information will be available only to those parties that are represented in the current Parliament.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That provides for persons and organisations that will be entitled to have those things without charge. You know that anyone can purchase a roll by payment of a charge.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: That is rather interesting because I wrote to the Attorney General, in relation to his responsibility for the courts, suggesting that electoral rolls should be available and was told that they should not be. The Attorney said he would refer the matter to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform. It would be a great electoral reform to make electoral rolls available to the general public. They cannot get them now. I have received requests from electors wishing to get hold of rolls but they have not been able to.

If a member has a history of being a member of a party in this House, he will gain certain privileges not available to others. Only recently have members of this House been designated as members also of a party. Hon Harry Walter Gayfer is stated in the *Hansard* as being a member of the National Party. For a long time he was a Country Party member and was proud that his name appeared in *Hansard* as a member of that party. I presume at the last election someone read an advertisement or two about him and put him down as a National Party member. I do not think he ever declared to that person what party he was a member of. It is stated in *Hansard* that I am a member of the Liberal Party. I do not disagree with that, although I have never stated that I am. At times people prefer to change their party allegiances.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Then the entry is changed.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: It seems one will receive that privilege according to his or her party affiliation as stated in the *Hansard* when the Parliament is finally prorogued. Party affiliations in this House are unofficial. The House does not recognise parties and the Clerk can advise us on that matter when members are sworn in.

Hon J.M. Berinson: But under this Act, the Electoral Commissioner will need to recognise parties because that is the way the voting list will operate.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: That is right. That is why I question how members will be given the privilege in respect of electoral rolls according to party affiliation when this House does not recognise parties. I do not believe it will be as easy as the Leader makes it out to be. I repeat that we are losing a fundamental right to play a part in the electoral system of this State. I suggest that, if we ever have a Bill of Rights, it should state that everyone should be treated equally.

It has been claimed that this Bill will streamline procedures. I believe that the procedures that will be changed are the ones that have given our electoral system a reputation of being honest. Without doubt we have a good electoral system and one that we all consider honest. At times we become a little annoyed, perhaps when we are taken off the roll as happened to me at the last elections. I believe that was an honest mistake. We have a fairly good system. However, once we make it so much easier, I wonder whether it will continue to remain an honest electoral system because I believe that these changes collectively will lead to corruption, and I do not say that lightly.

An elector's sex and address will no longer be included on rolls. He does not even have to live in the State. He does not have to use the name by which everyone knows him and he can apply for a postal vote and can get another one if he loses the first one. He can have his vote counted three days after everyone else's and the vote can be taken from an envelope at

the counting place and declared by any one of 50 or more counting officers. The ballot paper that the elector fills in does not even have to have his electorate on it.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Where did you get that from? Could you give me the clause number? Is it the amendment to section 125?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I am quite sure that, whereas before when one applied for certain votes, one's electorate had to be written on them, that has now been taken out.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What has been taken out is the requirement that the electorate has to be written on the back of the paper. It still has to be written on the front of the paper.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I will accept that difference. I am not sure of the significance of its being on the back of the paper in the first place. No longer does the ballot paper have to be signed, as in the past.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is not right. Do you mean signed by the returning officer?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I must again refer you to the amendment to section 125.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Unfortunately the notes we have been given, in attempting to be simple, have led to confusion. This matter was raised by Hon A.A. Lewis and it will obviously take me time to find it.

Hon Garry Kelly: I think you will find it in clause 53.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: When I was quoting earlier I understood that the ballot paper would be marked with the name of the district and province deleted. The Leader of the House has explained that it is only deleted in one case, and it is still necessary to do it in one other place. I understood from the notes that I had been given that it was not necessary for every ballot paper to be signed by the returning officer.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I will refer to that in my reply.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: It appears that an elector could show a how-to-vote card to an electoral officer, and the electoral officer would be empowered to fill in the card. I admit that this applies only to a certain class of elector.

Hon Garry Kelly: What is wrong with that? What is the alternative?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: If someone can read and understand that they have the right name on the how-to-vote card, one wonders why they cannot read the names of the Labor Party or Liberal Party on the ballot paper.

Hon Garry Kelly: He might not be able to write. He might have trouble writing. I don't know, he could be handicapped.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: It seems odd to me, but it is not really important.

Hon Neil Oliver: That is covered by the returning officer.

Hon Garry Kelly: That is what I am talking about.

Hon Neil Oliver: It has always been covered.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I will continue with the changes. Previously, when a vote was declared invalid, it had to be signed or stamped as such. It would appear that this will no longer take place. There was a very good reason for doing that. At least when it was stamped, one knew it would not appear on someone else's pile of votes and come around again for checking. Attention was drawn to the fact that it had been declared invalid.

I make these points one after the other because although they make the system so much easier, I believe that collectively they may enable corruption to enter our system. I do not say that lightly. There were reasons why these things were done in the past. I once complained that my birthplace had to be put on my passport. Mine was rather misleading -- or I hoped it was -- because I happen to have been born in India. It was explained to me that it is like the digits of a number. There may be another Wordsworth, so they would want to know my Christian name. I would tell them David John and that would help them sort out the Wordsworths. However, there could be another David John Wordsworth and the provision of one's birth date identified fathers and sons who might have the same name.

Finally, they need the birthplace, as it is unlikely two people with the same name and birth date would have the same birthplace. It is like making a three digital figure into five; it gives more things which can be checked to establish a person's identification. We are attempting to remove that. We are going to take off a person's sex and occupation; he will be allowed to change the address, use another name --

Hon Garry Kelly: What do you mean take off the address? Do you mean silent enrolment?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: There is provision for not having the address on the roll.

Hon Garry Kelly: That is only in certain cases. Are you saying there should not be silent enrolment without an address?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I can see the reasons for silent enrolment. I am pointing out that it could lead to false names on the electoral roll. They could easily get there because they appear without the sex, address, or occupation. The person could live in another State. A person might have left his birthplace 60 years before and yet return and claim to be in that electorate.

Hon Mark Nevill: You need an ID card.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: You do.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Now we are getting to what you are really after.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: This might have worked if we had had the ID cards. That is the point. We are told we are not going to have ID cards. It is necessary to keep some of the provisions that were there because one wonders --

Hon J.M. Berinson: This ability not to include the address dates back to the previous Act. It is not being extended.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: It was all right when one's sex and right name had to be included.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You did not know that either. If you did not know the address you did not know any detail other than the name. It only applied to a handful of people who were especially enrolled to be approved in that way.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: It sounds like silent numbers in the phone book to me.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It is precisely analogous to that.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: When the proposition is looked at collectively there could be problems. For example, suppose that in the by-election in the south west, when the votes are counted on Saturday night, each side is within 15 votes of the other. They have then to go through the counting of the postal votes. The postal votes come in. They were applied for orally by people using names by which they are not normally known. A woman could apply in her maiden name which other people would not normally know her as. She could have been married for 40 years and have never used her maiden name --

Hon J.M. Berinson: But they would have to be on the roll.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: They could be using a name by which people would not normally recognise them.

Hon J.M. Berinson: But they are either on the roll or not, and if they are not on the roll it doesn't matter how many bogus votes they put in, they cannot be counted.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I recall the difficulties experienced in the Kimberley with the number of Aborigines who claimed several names. Some made quite honest mistakes.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Are you saying that all those several names of the one person were on the electoral roll?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, there is no doubt about that.

Hon Mark Nevill: There was no evidence of any of them voting more than once.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I am not saying there was anything dishonest. I am giving an example of how one individual may have numerous names on the roll. It has caused confusion but that is not to say it has been used dishonestly. There is more chance of confusion when someone can register a vote in his birthplace, next of kin, or that sort of

thing. I can see future elections where votes are being counted, three days afterwards on the Tuesday, in places where one never expected them to be counted. Previously the Chief Electoral Officer had to certify where the ballot papers were. Decisions on extra counting places had to go back to the Chief Electoral Officer. Now the 50 other officers have the responsibility to decide on the extra counting places, which could have been around the corner or anywhere. One would have had little hope of chasing them up and counting them, particularly if one were an individual or a member of a small party.

While each of these points may individually sound good, collectively they can lead to quite a lot of confusion. The feeling is that the system can be corrupted, or that it has been corrupted, particularly when an election is lost as a result of one or two votes. Hon A.A. Lewis brought up the interesting point of habitation. In this State we do not have such a thing as an ID card. When I was made a JP by the Attorney General, I did not put down my Perth address. I suppose someone in his department looked up the phone book and put in my Perth address. Within a month I had a "please explain" note. Obviously many references are followed in the Attorney General's department comparing the address of a JP with his electoral address. I was forced to change my address.

Where does a member of Parliament live?

Hon Tom Stephens: I live in a plane!

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I live in Perth for 165 days in the year. Does that make me a resident of Perth? I would like to think I live in Esperance where I spend 100 days.

Hon Garry Kelly: When a JP is registered, his addresses are listed.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I assure members I received a letter telling me I had to have one place of residence. The matter had to be sorted out. As a member of Parliament I would not spend the majority of my time in one place. A member of Parliament could previously nominate his electorate as his address, and that provision was a good one because our parliamentary duties forced us to be in the city for some length of time. But one should not be prevented from being enrolled in the province or district where one lives.

This matter of maiden names and the ability to change names concerns me. I notice from *Hansard* that we have in this House Hon Harry Walter Gayfer. I happen to be a member of CBH, and I receive letters from a Mick Gayfer who obviously prefers to have different names for different occupations. I do not blame him, but one wonders about this provision. It seems one can use nicknames now under the new electoral system.

I will not continue with these provisions. There are many different ones. Each one sounds all right individually, but collectively they will lead to a lot of difficulty. I shall be happy to go through some of these provisions clause by clause. The difficulty with doing it that way is that we cannot look at the Bill collectively. After having agreed to each clause, which may sound all right on its own, we may end up with a much changed Electoral Act; one which could lead to corruption.

The various provisions were included in the original Act for very good reasons. A person can apply for a certain type of vote on religious grounds. I thought we had been through all this. In the early days the religion of Western Australia was Church of England, or Christian. Now what is a religion? There is nothing to stop me from starting up a new religion tomorrow. How do we define a religion? What are religious grounds? If I say that because of my religion I do not want to go to the polling place on Saturday, will the Leader of the House accept that from me? I know one church which is very strong on that.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What harm would it do?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Groups of people are forced to the polls under compulsory voting and they do not want to vote. They may all come forward and say they do not want to vote, on religious grounds. We can say it is a nuisance to go along to vote, and ask for a postal vote to be sent to us on religious grounds. This provision will make it easy to object to voting on that day on religious grounds. These are the sorts of points one wonders about.

I wholeheartedly agree that members of a religious organisation should not be compelled to vote on a Saturday, but a few others, if they want to, can creep under the provisions. However, those points can be raised in Committee.

HON NEIL OLIVER (West) [9.47 pm]: When one has listened to the debate in the House this evening, one tends to look at this Bill as a Committee Bill. Many members have canvassed specific points in the Bill, and no doubt they will come forward in the Committee stage. I shall be interested to hear the Leader's summing up in his second reading reply --

Hon Garry Kelly: Sit down, then.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: -- because his replies will assist the Committee stage of the Bill.

Electoral reform is a complex issue. It is so complex that it is easy for a political party to claim a cheap political victory. At the same time, when we are dealing with this type of legislation, it must be very disappointing for the back bench of the Government. We have some 17 Cabinet Ministers, three in this House, and a large number of backbenchers on the Government side have very little say in what will occur in the Parliament.

Hon Tom Stephens: Want to bet?

Hon NEIL OLIVER: This development comes from the increase in the role of the Executive in the Parliament. As the Executive becomes larger, the minority in Caucus becomes of very little consequence.

Hon Tom Stephens: What a lot of nonsense. Don't embarrass yourself any further.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: This is certainly the case when one starts taking out Whips, the Speaker and other members with other tasks such as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet.

Several members interjected.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: It is surprising that this Bill should come forward so promptly at this time, following the previous electoral Bill which was passed in the Legislative Council on 10 June. Prior to reading the Premier's comments when that Bill passed through this House, I would like to refresh the memories of members as to the manner in which that very complex piece of legislation was dealt with in the Parliament. It passed through the Legislative Assembly earlier in the session last year, and it lay on the Table of the House for comment. The Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform then circulated various explanatory notes to members.

There were very large and numerous amendments to a very complex piece of legislation. We jumped from clause 21 to clause 80, and backwards and forwards; as Hon Eric Charlton will agree. In fact at times the House was required to adjourn just to catch its breath and ascertain where we were going with this legislation. So we had a very unusual parliamentary practice whereby a very important, complex Bill that affected the Electoral Act in this State was dealt with in this House with major amendments; basically the Bill was gutted. It in no way resembled the Bill that had been adopted previously in the other House and introduced into that House by the Minister responsible for parliamentary and electoral reform. It then fell upon the Leader of the Government in this House almost to assume the mantle of the acting Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, and so we saw that Bill passed.

This is what the Premier had to say on the morning following the passage of that Bill, because when it went back to the other House the Bill was never capable of being debated as a whole. Only the amendments proposed by this House and the third reading of the Bill could be debated there. In my opinion that is deceitful and misleading. I have heard members talk about the opportunities within this legislation for people to use it in a corrupt manner and therefore I do not take lightly the manner in which the Government has indeed managed the process of this legislation. In my opinion it has behaved in a deceitful manner by its approach to one of the most serious pieces of legislation to come before this Parliament.

This is what the Premier, Mr Burke, said in *The West Australian* on 11 June 1987, on pages 24 and 55 --

> NEW electoral-reform legislation will be one of the Labor Government's first priorities when the Legislative Council is reconstituted after the next State election.
>
> The Premier, Mr Burke, made this clear yesterday despite the historic progress of the electoral reform Bill which will be given a third reading today and make significant changes to the WA Parliament.

It was a very interesting statement to make after the Bill had passed through with the cooperation of the National Party, because I am quite certain that Hon Eric Charlton, who led his party's debate on that, did not find any great pleasure in what Mr Burke had to say about the amendments that Mr Charlton's party put forward in this House. Mr Burke commented on those amendments, and the article further stated --

> However, Mr Burke said yesterday that Labor would continue to press hard for a fair and democratic electoral system for WA . . .
>
> Mr Burke said that though the measures agreed to by the Council went some way towards reducing the "notorious unfairness" of WA's electoral laws, they fell far short of what could properly be considered a truly democratic system.
>
> "Under the new arrangements, electors living outside Perth who comprise about 28 per cent of voters will still elect 50 per cent of members of the Council," he said.
>
> "We have not and will never abandon our long-standing objective of giving every West Australian an equal voice in deciding the composition of the Parliament and the government."

So much for where the Labor Party stands and where it intends to go. I do not have them with me in the House this evening, but only yesterday I read the resolutions passed at the National Labor Conference chaired by Mr Neville Wran and what he had to say upon the matters which Hon Tom Butler interjected on Hon Sandy Lewis. I wish I had them in the House so I could read out the resolutions that were passed, but no doubt the opportunity will present itself at some future time.

The next surprising thing, which I call deceitful, is the fact that this Bill, which is the responsibility of the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, has not been debated in the Legislative Assembly. It has been introduced into this House by the Leader of the Government who in no way, so far as I understand, was sworn in by the Governor as having ministerial responsibilities in the area of electoral reform. This same Minister, who happens to be the Minister for Budget Management, when asked any questions to do with dollars and cents, cannot answer them because they fall within the responsibility of the Treasurer.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is not so. That is untrue, Mr Oliver -- I answered a question today.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: Yet this evening a Bill is introduced into this Parliament which is in the area of the Premier. It is the Premier's responsibility, and in answer to any questions directed to Hon Joe Berinson he has stated that they are in the area of the Premier and Treasurer of this State. Yet again tonight, the Leader of this House introduced legislation for which he is not responsible.

Hon Tom Stephens: He is responsible in this House.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: But naturally, Mr President, in guarding and protecting the members in this House, both Ministers and backbenchers, your ruling is that questions without notice may be directed to Ministers only if the questions concern their specific portfolios.

Hon Tom Stephens: What a stupid argument.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: So where are we going to stand? Where will this end? They cannot answer these questions yet the Minister is going to introduce Bills which are not within his portfolio responsibility. Is it because the Premier, who is the Minister responsible, was incompetent when introducing the Bill into the Legislative Assembly? Or is it the fact that he was just not there -- he was in Rumania or some other place? I wonder why it is occurring. Mr President, do you think it may be of some significance that this Bill can be introduced into this House, debated and passed -- possibly with the assistance of the Opposition -- while this side of the House is one member short until 24 October when a by-election is to be held? Would the Government be deceitful enough to ensure that this legislation is introduced in order to be given an assured passage so that when it arrives at the Legislative Assembly it can be rammed through, because there is a certain majority there? Alternatively, is it a test, Sir, of your authority as President? Is the Government throwing the gauntlet down to you to make a decision in this manner and to place the position -- not you, Sir -- of President of the Legislative Council in such a position where it may be ridiculed, which would satisfy the Government?

The Premier of this State has led major attacks on this Chamber in the other place, which is totally contradictory to the Westminster system and has never happened in any other Parliament in the Commonwealth. It is totally unprecedented.

Several members interjected.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: Look at the stupidity of the interjectors who have never bothered to read about it or to even get up and make some logical and sensible comment on it.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon NEIL OLIVER: It must be boring and disturbing to be a backbencher in this Government because they do not count for anything.

Hon G.E. Masters: They are not allowed to speak.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: I know. Before these new members came here I understood they had to have their speeches printed and sent to the Premier for his approval before they could actually speak.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Look, the honourable member has used all but 29 minutes of his time. I suggest that before he uses all his remaining minutes, he ought to mention something about the Bill.

Hon NEIL OLIVER: I am sorry that I touched a raw nerve of the Government members.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon NEIL OLIVER: I did not expect to receive the interjections I received. Most members know that up to and including the 1962 election there was what was often termed in this House a "property franchise." I have already said that this is a Committee Bill. However, up to 1962 there was not a single Labor voice demanding an equal number of votes in the provinces. The reasons for that are very simple and I will explain them to members if they are prepared to listen. Until recent times there was never a proposal for proportional representation. Before 1962 there were 10 provinces each electing three members. These provinces were heavily weighted, or to use the Government's term were "gerrymandered", in favour of the Liberal Party and the Country Party. The Council comprised 13 Labor members, of whom 12 were returned from four provinces, having an aggregate of 85 000 voters. The other Labor member was elected in a suburban province, which interestingly has had two Liberal members. The 17 conservative party members were returned from provinces representing a total of 246 000 voters. To summarise, 85 000 electors returned 12 Labor members and 246 000 voters returned 17 conservative members. This situation prevailed without one cry of one-vote-one-value. Where was the gerrymander then? At the time Hon Ruby Hutchison presented several Bills for a general franchise which were supported by Hon Dr Hislop, and which provided for the boundaries to be equitably redistributed and provided also for a compulsory vote. The Labor Party was ecstatic and Dr Hislop kept his word and promptly introduced a private member's Bill which had the support of both Liberal Party and Labor Party members. The Bill was introduced and incorporated those principles to which I have already referred.

As I have said previously for the benefit of members, because the Bill was passed, without a dissenting voice, the Brand Government implemented the decision of the Legislative Council. It is interesting to note that during the passage of this legislation through Parliament, not a single Labor voice was raised against the Electoral Districts Act, which, according to the Premier, now requires a major reform. Because it required a constitutional majority, the House had to divide and there was no teller for the Noes. Everyone was on the one side. As far as I can research, under the bicameral Westminster system of Government, the manner in which upper Houses are elected differs considerably, if not completely -- apart from the casting of votes -- from the manner in which the lower Houses are elected. In fact I would go so far as to say that in Germany, Italy, France, the United States, and in the federated States within those countries, in Bremen and in Hamburg, the manner of distribution of electoral boundaries and the value of votes differ considerably from those of lower Houses.

This change is not for the benefit of Western Australians. It is a deceitful proposal by which the Labor Party can gain power by political expediency. On the surface a more convenient solution would be that the party with the majority vote should have all its members elected to Parliament. One of the most incredible statements made was that the Legislative Council should not operate under a fixed term for the current term of this Parliament, and yet this is Labor Party policy and will not prevail in this State. In fact all Australians over the age of 18 years -- and Hon Garry Kelly pointed this out -- were in 1985 proposed to vote on whether or not there should be fixed terms of Parliament. Western Australia has moved from fixed-term Parliaments when the Labor Party's policy is for fixed-term Parliaments.

Hon Garry Kelly pointed out that in 1989 they will be required to vote and cast their yes or no as to whether there will be fixed terms of Parliament; that was Labor Party policy and yet in the legislation we have had already it has moved away from that position. Western Australia has moved from fixed terms of Parliament when in actual fact Labor Party policy is for fixed-term Parliaments. I have read in the last four weeks statements made by the Prime Minister of Australia regarding fixed terms of Parliament and proposals he intends to introduce into the Federal Parliament in this regard for both Houses.

I have examined the current proposals before this House in conjunction with those undertaken in the last State election in New South Wales where the Wran Labor Government gained 69 per cent of the seats from 56 per cent of the vote; and I presume that is what is called Burke's democracy.

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Leader of the House) [10.12 pm]: Mr President, compared to the general run of electoral reform debates in this House, the least that can be said about this debate is that it has not been very lively. There is no reflection in that comment on the members who have participated in this debate. The fact is that we are dealing with a Bill which in turn is not very lively. The Bill is very long but it consists in the main of relatively technical questions and, in fact, quite a high proportion of those involve provisions recommended by departmental officers. Hon Neil Oliver is quite right in saying this is a Committee Bill and, although Hon Sandy Lewis in the course of his comments was demanding a detailed reply to the many comments made by the various speakers, the truth is this is not a measure which lends itself to that kind of reply at the second reading stage. Any reasonable treatment of the detailed matters so far raised really does have to wait on our Committee discussion.

I therefore propose to limit myself to only a sample, so to speak, of these issues. Firstly, I turn to the quite remarkable allegation emerging from the speeches of several speakers and, to the best of my recollection, for the first time in any electoral reform debate -- that is, we have a measure here with serious potential to lead to corruption of the electoral system. There is a view apparently that the more minor the changes the greater the conspiracy and all of this amounts to a real attempt to undermine the democratic basis of the parent Act.

If one tries to extract from that generalised comment the individual arguments on which it is based, we find this sort of consideration arising: Firstly, it is said that we are looking to swamp the electoral roll with all manner of people who are not entitled to be on the roll at the moment. These include, in particular, itinerant voters and voters temporarily out of the State. As has been pointed out on numerous occasions and, to be fair, as has been acknowledged by the Opposition speakers, the provisions in respect of itinerant and temporarily absent voters come directly from the Commonwealth legislation and are part of the attempted process to align, so far as practicable, the two sets of electoral laws.

One of the advantages of proceeding on a basis which is looking to parallel provisions, is that we do not have to rely too much on theoretical considerations; we can look to what has actually happened; we can look to the facts on the ground. We find itinerant voters on the Commonwealth rolls are enrolled on precisely the same basis as is proposed in this Bill. There are in the whole of the State 237 such persons enrolled.

In respect of electors temporarily out of the State, there are 159; so we are dealing roughly with 380 to 400 electors in the whole of the State.

An Opposition member: There will be more as the population grows.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Double it, and we are looking at what?

An Opposition member: At an amount of people who can actually change the Government in this State and the Minister knows it.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Of course not. Double it and we are looking at 800; but while we are looking at it, consider something which not one Opposition speaker has put his mind to; that is, the reason is not to swamp the roll, and not to do extraordinary things in particular electorates. The purpose is to ensure that everyone who lives in the State ought to have a vote in the State; if they are on the move throughout the State and are itinerant in the sense that the Bill refers to, then the electoral provisions requiring residence in a particular place for a particular length of time should not apply. It is the principle there that ought to have some concentration rather than the conspiracy theory, and that is the basis on which these provisions are indeed supported.

An Opposition member: How do we know -- they do not have to give an address?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: They do. Itinerants have to indicate the reason why they are unable to give a firm address; but the provisions are quite extensive and cover those problems. Also, in the context of this undermining-cum-conspiracy argument is the view put quite strongly by Hon D.J. Wordsworth and other members; that is, we are making the system too easy. I interjected on a number of occasions to ask what is wrong with that and nobody really got down to saying what was wrong except to suggest in some muted way that we ought to be applying an intelligence or literacy test. The truth is it ought to be easy. What we are doing here is no easier than what applies throughout the democratic world. The only reason why these issues even come to mind in our own circumstances is because unlike every other democratic State we have this particular form of preferential voting, and the simplicity that we are trying to move towards in respect of the marking of the ballot is what applies everywhere else where there is not preferential voting. Voters just tick or cross or put a "1" against the person they want. That is all we suggest here.

An Opposition member interjected.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Or they can mark a symbol. There are some systems where the party or candidate is marked by a symbol in order to identify them. We are not moving towards anything so simple or excessively easy as to threaten the democratic structure of the nation. All we are doing is trying to adapt our fairly complicated preferential voting system to the facilities which apply in almost all other places.

Hon Phil Pendal, who lead the debate for the Opposition, raised most of the points to which I have referred. Surprisingly, he went on at some length on the question of replacing Christian names by given names. He asked why not, if it is to be changed at all, change it to Christian or given names. The answer is that "given" covers both so that it is not necessary to specify both. I might add, in the same context, that what is proposed by this Bill in respect of the change from Christian to given names reflects what is already done in a large number of standard forms, but which normally does not require an Act of Parliament to amend. This is certainly not the sort of provision for which one would bring in a special Act to amend. It is not worth it. That is not the nature of this Bill. The Bill is designed to clear up a number of technical features associated with the electoral system, and it is just a convenient time to do something which brings it into line with what is happening all over the place.

I am not sure whether it was Hon Phil Pendal who raised the question about returning officers not being required to initial the back of the ballot paper. Whether it was Hon Phil Pendal or someone else --

Hon P.G. Pendal: It was Hon Gordon Masters.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I make it clear that returning officers do have to mark the back of the ballot paper with their initials. The only change -- this is the change to section 125 of the Act -- is to the effect that as well as adding their initials the returning officers do not have to write, in their own handwriting, the name of the electorate or province. When I say that, I am sure that some members in this place will be surprised to hear that returning officers ever had to write the name of the electoral province together with their initials on the back of the ballot paper. Members are entitled to be surprised. Although that provision has been in the Act for many years, returning officers have not complied with it. No-one has complained about them not complying with it. Who would want to write "North Central Metropolitan Province" 30 000 times. It was a totally unnecessary and unrealistic provision, and in fact, I am informed that it has been universally disregarded. All this provision is doing is bringing the legislation into line with the practice of many years. I emphasise again, however, that the

returning officer will continue to be required to initial the back of the ballot paper as he does now. Of course, the name of the electoral province will appear on the front of the ballot paper where it really counts.

I think it was Hon Gordon Masters who quoted the third objective as outlined by me in my second reading speech. He said that I had suggested that the third objective of the legislation was to align the Commonwealth and State provisions. He went on from there to produce some --

Hon G.E. Masters: I did not exactly say that.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Hon Gordon Masters did exactly say that because I wrote down exactly what he said and I knew he was exactly wrong.

Hon G.E. Masters: Tell me what I said.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Hon Gordon Masters said that the third objective was to align Commonwealth and State provisions.

Hon G.E. Masters: Did I say anything beyond that, or did I just use those words?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Of course he said a lot more than that, but what he omitted -- I am sure only incidentally and by a human oversight and I am not suggesting there was any deliberate omission -- was that what I said in my second reading speech was that the third objective should be to align, as far as is practicable, certain State procedures and those of the Commonwealth.

Hon G.E. Masters: You are being selective.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am sure that now I have reminded Hon Gordon Masters he will recall that there were those two qualifying phrases in the third objective. Now I have reminded him --

Hon G.E. Masters: Mr McKenzie did not agree with you. He seemed to think that we are aligning hours with the Commonwealth.

Hon Fred McKenzie: I was talking about hours. You were very confused.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I do not know whether Hon Gordon Masters was very confused, but he was a bit confused. In any event, I do not think a great deal hangs on that.

I take this opportunity to correct something I said because I believe I was wrong. Hon Sandy Lewis referred to 6.00 pm being nominated as the close of nominations in lieu of the past provision for the closing of nominations at midday. I indicated, by way of interjection, that I thought it brought the provision into line with the Commonwealth provision. In fact, I now think that that was wrong and I can only hope that I am right in saying that. The suggestion that the close of nominations should occur at 6.00 pm is for purposes of consistency with the closing time for the rolls which occurs on the same day as the closing date of nominations under the provisions of this Bill. The real reason for the suggested change to 6.00 pm is to avoid any possibility of those two times being confused and raising the risk of an odd nomination not being received, as a result. In any event, I think Hon Sandy Lewis would agree, as would we all, that whether it is midday or 6.00 pm really does not matter.

I refer to a couple of technical matters arising from comments made by Hon David Wordsworth. As I understood him, he was suggesting that constituents of his who had tried or wanted to obtain an electoral roll were unable to do so. That is not the situation provided under the Act.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: I wrote to you because my electors approached me and said that they could not get rolls from the justices department and they asked if I would write to you.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: The justices department?

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: From Crown Law.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I may not have understood what Hon David Wordsworth said. That is quite a separate matter from saying that they could not get hold of rolls. In fact, section 33 of the Act provides that the latest printed copy of rolls shall be obtainable at the prescribed price. That would be from the State Printing Division. I take it from Hon David Wordsworth's interjection that he was talking about the capacity of the courts to review a roll. In that case, I misunderstood the objection he was making.

While on the question of availability of rolls I point to the other provision of section 33 of the Act which provides that the rolls and supplementary roll for a district or subdistrict shall be open for public inspection, without fee, at the office of the registrar appointed for that district or subdistrict on any week day during the hours that the office is open.

There is another matter of minute importance, but as it seems to have given rise to some confusion I think I should take the opportunity to clarify it. I think Mr Wordsworth raised this question, but other members did as well. I refer to comments that the Bill, among other things, allows enrolment without address. The only case in which that is permitted is for the purposes of the so-called silent enrolments. I do not know how many there are in this State, but I doubt whether there would be a dozen.

I remind members that the provision for silent enrolment which allows a name only and no other details to be provided was introduced into the previous Act at the suggestion and on the request of the Commonwealth with a view to ensuring the security of certain personnel, particularly Family Court judges, about whom there was considerable sensitivity at the time. That was the only case.

Hon P.G. Pendal: I am sorry, that is not so. Section 17A will allow people to be enrolled when they do not reside anywhere. If you do not reside anywhere you cannot possibly have an address.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I do not think that was the nature of Mr Wordsworth's inquiry.

Hon P.G. Pendal: No, but I am taking you up on your comments.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: He was of the view that a very large number of people could opt, even though they had an address, not to provide it. That is not the case. It is not the case for that very limited reason that I have referred to.

It is clear from the course of the debate that members of the Opposition are prepared to support the second reading, and in those circumstances there is no point in carrying this reply any further.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: I draw your attention to the last page of your speech where you said that the State and Commonwealth electoral arrangements should, where possible, be similar.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: That is right; where possible.

Hon G.E. Masters: Only where it suits.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Where possible and where practicable mean much the same thing. Not much hangs on that, though. I was about to say that given the general agreement, the second reading should be supported. It would be preferable to leave more detailed discussion to the Committee stage. I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate and I commend the second reading to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: ORDINARY

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Leader of the House) [10.33 pm]: I move --

That the House do now adjourn.

Vietnam Veterans: Sydney Parade

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan -- Minister for Sport and Recreation) [10.34 pm]: Before the House adjourns I want to convey the fact that I recently had the opportunity to attend the welcome home parade in Sydney for the Vietnam Veterans in this country. It was put on after many years, and took place on Saturday, 3 October, starting with a dawn service at the Cenotaph in Sydney attended by many thousands of veterans. It was a very moving ceremony, followed later in the day by a march attended by something in excess of 25 000 veterans.

Sydney turned out in tremendous support, and reliable police sources told me that in excess of 200 000 people watched this march and gave a tremendously warm reception to this group

of veterans. This reaction was representative of the feeling of most Australians for these people who served their country so well so many years ago.

My purpose in raising this is to record my thanks to the Premier and to the Government of this State, and to extend those thanks to the Perth City Council, to the Mayor, Mick Michael, to the Mayor of Albany, June Hodgson, to the Mayor of Kalgoorlie, Ray Finlayson, and to the many other local government people, and in general to the very generous people of this State who supported the campaign and the appeal to raise funds to send those veterans from this State to that march. Without the support of people like Barry Williams from Mojo, from Wang Computers, from the Commonwealth Bank, from Australian Airlines and from so many other business people in this State, I do not believe that as many veterans as were able to go to Sydney would have got there.

A reflection on the generosity of the people of this State is that in excess of 1 600 veterans from Western Australia were able to attend that most remarkable and significant day in the history of their lives and indeed in the history of this country.

I would also like to convey my thanks to the State coordinator, Arthur Greaves, who put in countless hours of work on a voluntary basis, along with many other people, in order to organise and coordinate the tremendous amount of work which had to be done to get those veterans to Sydney.

This march was attended by our Vietnamese allies, by American allies, by Korean allies and by New Zealand allies. It was probably the most emotionally lifting thing that I personally have ever experienced, and the warmth extended to the veterans was something which had to be seen to be believed. One could not help but be proud to be an Australian on that day.

With those few words I convey my own thanks to the people of this State and to everyone who contributed and helped in making that day possible and in welcoming home our Vietnam veterans.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON NEIL OLIVER (West) [10.38 pm]: I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the previous speaker. I am aware of all the effort put into organising this welcome home in Sydney. It was regrettable that, due to commitments in my electorate, I was unable to join my unit and my comrades with whom I served in Vietnam. Ultimately, after the event, I very much regretted not cancelling my appointments and marching, after seeing the moving moments on television.

The amount of voluntary work which has just been outlined by Hon Graham Edwards is almost immeasurable. Every person who has served in Vietnam is now recorded by a number, almost like an ID system. We all have a computer number which enables us to be called up, not to go anywhere else, I hope, but so that it is known where we are and how we can be contacted in order to meet our comrades.

At the same time, however, I could not help but think of the nature of the war, the difficulties when we were there, and how we felt, because it was the first time in the history of this country when Australian troops were committed in the field -- and without doubt they did an exemplary job -- that some people in Australia physically, financially, and with gifts supported the enemies of Australia. Hon Graham Edwards will appreciate the agonies we felt as soldiers in those circumstances. It is a blot on our history and we do not wish that situation ever to arise again in this country. One can liken it to the counterinsurgency operation which took place in Malaya in 1954. In fact, as my colleague Hon Graham Edwards will assure members, the techniques, handbooks, training, preparation, and embarkation were all based on the experience of the Malayan campaign. It is regrettable in many respects that our allies in that war did not follow the same techniques, strategies, and tactics which had been proved and which had been successful in Malaya.

Unfortunately, politicians played their part in Vietnam also. I do not want to delay the House but I must record that sometimes people underestimate the physical hardships faced by people in war, the sacrifices made by their families, and the distress caused to wives, sons, and daughters by the lack of news about their loved ones.

Last Saturday was a very moving occasion and I am pleased that Hon Graham Edwards was able to be present. I am personally very disappointed that I was not present.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.42 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ROAD: CANNING HIGHWAY
Access

323. Hon P.G. PENDAL, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has the Main Roads Department been approached by the South Perth City Council regarding the provision of easier access from Canning Highway for motorists turning right at the busy South Terrace, Douglas Avenue, and Thelma Street intersections?

(2) If so, did the council's approach include suggestions for --

(a) right-hand turn arrows at the traffic lights; and

(b) right-hand turning lanes for vehicles?

(3) What was the department's response to these suggestions?

(4) Has the department any other plans for providing easier right-hand turning access at these intersections?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) No;

(b) yes.

(3) Road widening involving property acquisition would be necessary. The magnitude of the costs involved could not be justified relative to the many other hazardous, higher priority projects competing for departmental funds.

(4) No.

ENVIRONMENT
Ozone Layer: Damage

325. Hon P.G. PENDAL, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Does the Minister's department monitor or keep abreast of developments concerning damage to the ozone layer?

(2) Is there any data to suggest that damage to the ozone layer has adversely affected crop-growing and/or crop yields in WA?

(3) Does the WA Government have any regular contact with other State and Federal authorities on this vital issue?

(4) Are products or aerosols in use in WA which are known to affect the preservation of the ozone layer?

(5) What action does he propose to ensure WA plays its part in preserving the ozone layer?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) Regular formal contact occurs through the various standing committee structures. Information contact with CSIRO and university scientists is maintained.

(4) Chlorofluorocarbons are in use in Western Australia.

(5) As more information becomes available on the effect of chlorofluorocarbons, Western Australia will actively participate in any national or

international programme to protect the ozone layer. Provision exists under the Environmental Protection Act to ban the use of chlorofluorocarbons if it becomes necessary.

ENVIRONMENT
Ozone Layer: Damage

326. Hon P.G. PENDAL, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

(1) Does the Minister's department monitor or keep abreast of developments concerning damage to the ozone layer?

(2) Is there any data to suggest that damage to the ozone layer has adversely affected crop-growing and/or crop yields in WA?

(3) Does the WA Government have any regular contact with other State and Federal authorities on this vital issue?

(4) Are products or aerosols in use in WA which are known to affect the preservation of the ozone layer?

(5) What action does he propose to ensure WA plays its part in preserving the ozone layer?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1) Through membership of the Australian Environment Council -- AEC -- the Environmental Protection Authority keeps abreast of developments and continues regular contact with State and Federal authorities. Committees of the AEC are examining various aspects of the issue with a view to developing a coordinated national approach. Provision has been made in the new Environmental Protection Act, 1986 to control or prohibit the use of chlorofluorocarbons or other chemicals if such action is necessary.

(2) No.

(3) See (1).

(4) Chlorofluorocarbon products are in use in Western Australia.

(5) See (1).

COMMUNITY WELFARE AGENCIES
Surplus Funds: Disbursement

331. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

(1) Does the Department for Community Services have a policy with respect to the disbursement of surplus funds by a private welfare agency which is in receipt of Government funding?

(2) If so, what is this policy?

(3) Is the Minister aware of any private welfare agency, in receipt of Government funding, which has recorded a financial surplus during a financial year and returned the surplus to the Department for Community Services?

(4) If so, which agency and when?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) That surplus funds will be either --

(a) returned to the department;

(b) retained by the organisation and offset against the next period's grant; or

(c) on application in writing be permitted to be used for "once-off" costs.

(3) Yes.

(4) The department has on a number of occasions received refunds from grants to organisations.

AMERICA'S CUP
Budget Allocation: Expenditure

332. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Budget Management:

The 1987-88 State Budget allocates $841 000 for the America's Cup. How is this to be spent?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The extraction and collation of full details of this information from the Budget papers will take some time, and the member will be advised in writing in due course.

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS
Commuters: Perth-Toodyay

333. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it the intention of Westrail to introduce a commuter rail service from Toodyay to Perth?

(2) If so, when?

(3) What is the proposed timetable?

(4) What is the proposed fare structure?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(4)

In 1985, at the request of the Northam tourist authorities, Westrail conducted a study into a proposal to run such a service. To be viable it was considered some 200 passengers would need to travel each way daily.

It could be three to five years before any surplus suburban railcars became available. However, any proposal would be looked at closely, and if viable would be favourable considered. In the meantime, it has been suggested that the council should explore other avenues for perhaps a mini bus service to test commuter response.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS
Liquidity: Government Assistance

186. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Budget Management:

I draw the Minister's attention to a decision made by him dealing with a subsidy of $50 000 to the Association for the Blind of Western Australia. In advising the association he made this statement --

> While acknowledging the value of the Association's activities to the community, the Government is simply unable to agree to continue special funding contributions for a service which is contributing to the liquidity problems of your organisation.

Does this statement suggest that organisations suffering liquidity problems will receive no Government assistance as from now, regardless of the value and importance of their service to the community?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

No.

HEALTH: DISABLED PERSONS
Association for the Blind: Subsidy Withdrawal

187. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Budget Management:

Was the Minister fully briefed and did he have a detailed report on the service given by the Braille and Talking Book Library before he made the decision to withdraw the $50 000 subsidy?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

May I say two things in answer to that question. In the first place, it is not a question of my making some personal decision in this matter. The decision in respect of this subsidy was made in the context of the Budget preparation and therefore had the consideration of the Cabinet Budget committee, and later of the Cabinet.

The second point I should make is that it is not a question here of the withdrawal of a subsidy. To speak of it in those terms is to encourage a mistaken impression of what has occurred. The position as I recall it -- you will understand, Mr President, that I have to make this subject to correction, given the range of matters which come up in the Budget context -- is that after a number of years in which the society sought a special Government grant for its books project, the Government last year provided a grant of $50 000. That was in addition to the regular annual grant which has been made to the organisation over a number of years, which grant is continuing.

My memory of the situation is that we made a special additional grant last year. It was indicated at the time that this was a particular addition to the normal grant, and there was no indication that it was to be regarded as an amount to be built into the regular subsidy on the assumption that it would be available each year. The regular grant of the society has continued this year, as I recall it, but the special grant made for the first time last year was not repeated.

HEALTH: BLIND PERSONS
Library Services

188. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Budget Management:

The Minister's memory does not fail him in some of the details he gave to the House. Does he know that the State Library Service has no hope of fulfilling the service presently carried out by the Association for the Blind in the way of talking tapes and so on? In view of that difficulty, and with the possibility that the service may have to be reduced or even set aside, would he reconsider the Government's decision, or recommend to the Cabinet that the decision be reviewed with the thought that at least some money should be granted to this wonderful service? I ask him to reconsider the grant of $50 000 for this year, in view of the representations made to him by a number of people.

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The association has provided this specialist service for many years. As I have indicated, the position is that last year the service did attract a Government grant. As to any question of reconsideration, the association, either directly or indirectly, has made a request for reconsideration. That consideration will be given, but members will understand that I am not in a position to anticipate a favourable response.

MR RON ALEXANDER
Government Employment

189. Hon E.J. CHARLTON, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Has Ron Alexander notified the Government of his intention to take up the offer of employment made by the Minister on behalf of the Government?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I have a meeting with Ron Alexander tomorrow. I would not like to say too much more, pending that meeting. I think enough has already been said publicly in relation to Ron Alexander's position.

WEST COAST EAGLES PLAYERS
Government Employment

190. Hon E.J. CHARLTON, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Bearing in mind the activities of the West Coast Eagles, as I have indicated before, is it likely that the Minister will be offering any other personnel from the West Coast Eagles positions in the future?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The honourable member will know that I am the sort of person who does not like to speculate on things; I like to take things as they come. I have great faith that the West Coast Eagles have a great part to play in the future of football as it affects Western Australia. I would not like too much to be read into the offer of a job for Ron Alexander. The bloke has a great deal of ability and experience, and if we can secure his services and put them to work for the benefit of the future of young people in this State, it would be of tremendous benefit to us all.

VICTORIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Television: Country Areas

191. Hon TOM McNEIL, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Following the purchase of the VFL television rights for $30 million by Channel 7 for the next five years, is it the Minister's intention to hold an urgent meeting with Channel 7 in this State, with GWN, and with the Western Australian Football League to overcome the fiasco which occurred this year when, after a number of meetings, no progress was made in making a telecast available to the country regions of this State of Eagles' games being played in Western Australia?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for his continued interest in this matter. I assure him that we continue to look at that situation. Limited as our involvement can be, I am prepared to pursue it to that full, limited involvement. It is not appropriate at this time to take any action, pending some commercial considerations which are being made in relation to either or both the stations to which the member has referred.

COMMUNITY SERVICES
Emmaus Women's Refuge: Funds Misuse

192. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

(1) Has the Minister received a report from her department into the allegations of misuse of Government funds by the Emmaus collective?

(2) If so, will she table the report?

(3) If not, why not?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(3)

A report was done by the department into allegations raised by two people who were dismissed by the refuge. These two cases are, I understand, being heard separately by the Industrial Relations Commission.

The outcome of the report put to me has been that I have ordered the department's auditors to have a close look at the books of the refuge. Until I get that report I cannot give the House any further information.

SOUTH AFRICA
Sporting Competitions

193. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

(1) With the greatly increased involvement of South Africans in the Western Australian goldmining industry, will the Government soften its approach to Western Australian sportsmen and sportswomen playing or competing in South Africa?

(2) Do sporting visits to South Africa by Western Australians assist in developing our trade and social ties with the people of South Africa?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(2)

It is not appropriate that this question be directed to me and I suggest the member direct it to the appropriate area.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
Direction

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has quite appropriately drawn attention to the fact that questions which are inappropriate are being directed to Ministers. I was going to say earlier -- and might I mention also while I am directing this comment to honourable members that I think Ministers ought to pay heed also -- that there are some pretty strict rules in respect of the matters on which questions can be asked of Ministers. Ministers ought not to pick out just the easy ones and say that although they have nothing to do with the department the Ministers administer it is a pretty easy question to answer so they will answer it, but if it is not an easy one they will not answer it.

But similarly, and I am not really directing this to the Ministers, members ought to understand that there are some questions that I find difficult to relate to the ministerial responsibilities of any member of the Government. It relates to some of these sporting questions dealing with things that are not administered by the Government at all. I have always let them go in the vain hope that one of the Ministers one day would say that it is not a matter over which his or her department had jurisdiction. It seems to me that because I let a thing go once it goes on and on and we get batteries of such questions because members take it for granted that they are appropriate questions. I do not know whether members understand what I am talking about.

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Mr President, I do not think this is a point of order, but I just query your statement further so that it is clear in my mind. I assume you are referring to the question I directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and I acknowledge that any Minister is able to say that he or she is not prepared to answer a question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I was not referring to that question.

COMMUNITY SERVICES
Emmaus Women's Refuge: Inquiry

194. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer the Minister to my question 177 of Wednesday, 23 September in which I asked --

(1) Who is conducting the inquiry into allegations of impropriety by certain persons at the Emmaus collective?

(2) When it is expected this inquiry will be completed?

The Minister answered --

(1) A senior member of the Department for Community Services is conducting the inquiry.

(2) We expect to have the report later today, or certainly by the end of this week.

I ask the Minister --

(1) Has she received that report?

(2) If so, will she make that report available?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(2)

What I said before in answer to the honourable member was quite accurate. I have in fact received that report. I will not table it -- it is an internal departmental document. However, as a result of that report I have asked that the auditors of the Department for Community Services examine the books of the refuge to see whether there has been any financial mismanagement or, indeed, misappropriation of funds.

SOUTH AFRICA
Sporting Competitions

195. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Does the State Labor Government take any position with regard to Western Australian sportsmen and sportswomen visiting South Africa?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I am not a spokesperson in this Chamber for the Government's area of policy, I am a spokesperson for the Department of Sport and Recreation.

COMMUNITY SERVICES
Emmaus Women's Refuge: Inquiry

196. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

What is contained in the report that she received from her departmental officers which would require that she have her auditors investigate the accounts of the Emmaus collective?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

For the honourable member's information, there was some indication that the books were not kept in an orderly manner and the senior officer, who did a good job on what he was asked to do, indicated that further, closer scrutiny of the financial matters was recommended. From my reading of the report I agreed with the recommendation, and that is what is now happening.

SOUTH AFRICA
Sporting Competitions

197. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Would the Minister assist in any way sportsmen or sportswomen wishing to visit South Africa?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I do not know whether the member opposite is totally unaware of the responsibilities of the department in this State.

Hon G.E. Masters: I am talking about your responsibilities.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: Our department is one which attempts mainly to offer assistance to sportspeople on a State or national level. If the member really wants to pursue this matter further I feel he should direct it through other means to the Federal Government.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Emmaus Women's Refuge: Auditor's Report

198. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

In view of the fact that the Emmaus collective has received rather large sums of money from Governments, both Federal and State, will the Minister table the report that the auditors make available to her following her request that they investigate the books of that collective?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I will make a decision about that when I have the report.