

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 1 April 1981

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

### PRESIDENT REAGAN: ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION

#### *Message of Sympathy: Motion*

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [2.17 p.m.]: I seek leave to move, without notice, a motion of sympathy in connection with the attempted assassination of President Reagan.

The SPEAKER: The Premier seeks leave of the House to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [2.18 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

This House requests Mr Speaker to convey to the people of the United States of America, their Government and President Ronald Reagan and his family, our feelings of horror at the attempted assassination of the President and our hope for his complete and speedy recovery.

We also express our sympathy to those accompanying President Reagan who have been injured in the course of their duties. We hope they will be restored to good health, although we understand at least one of them has injuries so serious as to cause grave concern.

This House expresses its abhorrence of the incident which threatened the lives of the President and those associated with him, and also expresses its grave concern about the many threats to public safety, such as hijacking and other acts of terrorism, which have become manifest in recent years.

I felt we would be remiss if we in this House did not acknowledge the seriousness of the events of the last few days. By the grace of God the President has not been injured to a point where he will be unable to resume duties—at least, that is the latest medical advice. Nonetheless, the action taken was very serious and was obviously an attempt against the President rather than those accompanying him. As it happens, some of those who have the very onerous and dangerous task of protecting the President have suffered very dearly and in one case there is grave doubt about the future of the person concerned.

I do not think there would be anyone in the world, except some very strange people, who would not have heard with abhorrence of the events that brought about this attempt to assassinate the President. It is a sad thing that the American nation has had a rather unfortunate history with this sort of thing. If my memory serves me rightly, there have been nine assassination attempts on Presidents and four have actually died at the hands of assassins. This is something the American people can explain only within their own country amongst their own people.

One of the main reasons for wanting to record the sympathy of this House is to let it be known we look with abhorrence on these sort of events and events of recent times such as hijacking, which is becoming far too prevalent, along with the threat of terrorism and kidnapping. This sort of action is very ugly and with modern methods of achieving these things they are becoming not only more prevalent but also more frightening. One can only hope that common sense will prevail and that eventually a way will be found at least to overcome to the maximum degree these acts of terrorism, which no nation can tolerate.

I do not want to say too much because the accused person is to be subjected to a trial and whilst it will not be in our country it ill-becomes us to express a view in connection with the accused.

The main reason for taking the opportunity to move this motion and hopefully to receive the support of the whole House was not only to convey our sympathy to the American nation, to the President and his family, and to those who were injured in this unfortunate event but also to let the people know that the Parliament as a whole is not indifferent to the threat to public safety and the dangers of terrorism. We would like to think such actions do not take place in our country, but alas we have on occasions seen some suggestions of them.

I remember the most unfortunate situation which occurred in respect of the late Arthur Calwell. That incident shocked the whole nation and one of the sad aspects of such occurrences is that there is always someone who, because of his mental state or for some other reason, is triggered off by the tremendous news coverage which follows. I hope sincerely this will not be the case in this particular instance.

We are very fortunate to live in a free land and I believe Australia is the freest country in the world. We want to keep it that way.

At the same time however, we express our sympathy to the people of the United States of America, to President Ronald Reagan and his family, and to the unfortunate people who were injured whilst carrying out their duties.

Members: Hear, hear!

**MR O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [2.24 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

**MR DAVIES** (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [2.25 p.m.]: I am happy to support the motion which has been moved by the Premier, although I regret circumstances are such that it is necessary to move such a motion.

I am certain everybody who has thought about the senseless act which took place yesterday in Washington would deplore it. Indeed, I find very little to say which has not been said already through the media, in particular, in the newspapers circulated last night and this morning. Every section of the community and almost every country in the world has expressed regret that this type of incident should occur.

There is no place whatsoever for violence in a civilized community. It is a matter for regret that not only do we need to extend our sympathies to President Reagan, his family, and those who have been injured, but also that we must stand up and declare once again that we are against violence, hijackings, and assassinations. In this community at least, I thought there would not be a need for us to repeat such assertions. However, it probably does not do any harm to reflect on these matters and I am quite happy to support the motion.

I believe it should be a matter of national pride that a similar incident has not occurred in this country. One turns one's mind to the events which occurred at the time of the depression in the 1930s and again in 1975. One might reasonably have expected violence to erupt on those occasions; but we can take pride in the fact that this did not occur. There was a certain amount of verbal abuse, but we should respect the rights of people to hold views different from our own and to express them forcibly if they wish to do so.

As the Premier has mentioned, the only incident which gave us cause for concern was that associated with the late Arthur Calwell. That occurred at election time and the best we can say about it was that the person concerned did not appear to be entirely responsible for his actions.

Following that incident, probably the worst type of behaviour we have seen occurred in 1974 in Forrest Place. On that occasion a considerable amount of verbal abuse and a great deal of jostling occurred. However, we can put up with

jostling and verbal abuse, because if it is the worst that is going to happen in this country, we can cope with it.

There is no need for anyone to try to resort to murder or assassination in an endeavour to subvert the system. In a democracy there are other ways of changing unsatisfactory situations. We do not always agree with what Governments do and such differences are expressed frequently in this place and in Parliaments throughout Australia. However, I hope there will never be a need to use guns as has occurred on this occasion. There seems to be a penchant for the use of weapons in countries such as the United States.

Of course, the shooting of President Ronald Reagan is not the only attempted assassination which has taken place in recent years and many assassinations have occurred in different parts of the world. We have not drawn the attention of the House to each assassination which has occurred, but, because of our close association with the American people, the fact that America is a great power and we abhor violent behaviour of this nature, we have expressed our feelings on this occasion.

The Premier expressed sympathy also to the families of the men who were injured whilst assisting the President. I do not believe there is anything further I need to say in this regard. Perhaps at times like this we should all assess our attitudes and resolve to be a little more circumspect in the types of opinions we espouse, be a little less violent in the language we use, and have a greater consideration for others. If we do not do so, the unfortunate events which have occurred in America may well occur in Australia, despite the fact that we abhor this type of behaviour.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin) [2.29 p.m.]: The National Party joins with all other members of the House in supporting this motion. President Ronald Reagan was elected by Americans in a landslide victory. It was hoped he would restore the self-assurance and confidence of America and its people.

An event such as the recent attempted assassination indicates the great need for the restoration of the confidence of Americans. The strong leadership which is necessary to renew Americans' faith in themselves and in their nation will have to be provided by someone such as President Reagan and we wish him a very speedy recovery in order that he may tackle that task.

**MR JAMIESON** (Welshpool) [2.30 p.m.]: Naturally I do not intend to oppose the motion. However, I wonder sometimes whether such a

motion is wise. My leader mentioned that in recent years there have been a number of attempted assassinations and, indeed, assassinations; for instance, President Park of South Korea, President Marcos and his wife of the Philippines, and many others. Surely if we bring forward motions such as this for one State leader we have the responsibility to do so for every other. The situation may become difficult. I accept that the United States is a trusted ally—it is associated with us.

Mr Williams: It is definitely a trusted ally.

Mr JAMIESON: I said it was.

Mr Williams: Not exactly.

Mr JAMIESON: I ask the member for Clontarf to listen to what I am saying instead of interjecting. If he listened to my words he would be better off.

I am sure if anything happened to Queen Elizabeth we would bring forward a motion in the most sincere terms and, in fact, adjourn the House, because that would be the right and proper course to take.

However, Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that ex-President Ford summed up the situation fairly effectively when he said that in the main problems do not come from violent people, but from "kooks", people who cannot be controlled. No-one knows when such people will come onstream to do these dastardly things.

The Premier mentioned the assassination attempt on Arthur Calwell whose attacker could give only one reason for his actions. He said he tried to shoot him because Arthur Calwell was an important person and he wanted some association with his name. The name of the fellow who a couple of days ago committed the dastardly crime upon President Reagan will live in the history books. We must watch the situation so that we do not pander to those people and let them ingratiate themselves by their actions. We must be aware that we do not prompt the public to think more about such occurrences.

I abhor the kind of violence that has just occurred—everywhere in the world it should be stamped out. However, in this Parliament we must be careful that we are fair in our treatment of State leaders when they are attacked as President Reagan was on this occasion.

**MR B. T. BURKE** (Balcatta) [2.33 p.m.]: It is also my intention to support the motion, but I concur with the general tenor of the remarks made by the member for Welshpool. I think there is one other important fact the House needs to take into account at this time, and that is the fact

we are at present under increasing pressure to relax the gun laws of this State. All members would have received correspondence from different organisations and associations saying that to relax gun laws is to allow responsible people to take control of dangerous and sometimes lethal weapons.

The last set of figures I saw in regard to firearms in the United States indicated that in that country there are nine guns in existence for every 10 residents. It seems to me, although I agree with all those things the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the National Party had to say, that one extra thing needs to be said. If a large number of unstable people exist, and that seems to be true and to have been admitted, then we must as far as possible deprive them of the opportunity to easily acquire guns and, therefore, be able to use them as they see fit.

If nothing else, what happened to President Reagan is a lesson to all of us that we should not give in to the people who support the concept that the relaxation of gun laws will strengthen our society. I am sure the realistic laws we have had in this State, and in this country, for so many years are at least part of the reason we have not had the same sort of experience as other countries have had in regard to attacks on leaders.

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Premier) [2.36 p.m.]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support, and also thank other members, including the leader of the National Party, for their support. I want to say briefly by way of explanation to the member for Welshpool that the line of demarcation as to when we move these motions of condolence or sympathy is very easy. Some nations are part of us by way of our Constitution and others are very close to us because of their support as allies over the years—their proven support. So, it does not make it very difficult at all for whoever is the Leader of the Government to decide when he should recommend to the House that a motion of condolence or sympathy be passed.

Surely the President of the United States is an obvious candidate. Of course, we have motions of condolence or sympathy for other nations, including ones outside the British Commonwealth or not our allies. If my memory serves me correctly, such motions always have been related to a natural disaster affecting a whole nation or part of it. So, the criteria are very easy to define as to whether we should be involved in motions of condolence or sympathy, or leave such things as personal matters and not ones for the Parliament.

As far as the matter raised by the member for Balcatta is concerned, I hope that the events of the last few days are the catalyst which will influence the American people to rethink their attitude towards gun laws. They have historically and traditionally had the belief—they have been almost fanatical in their insistence—that citizens have the right of access to weapons and the right to carry and use them. Maybe this recent event is the catalyst to bring about a rethink of the present situation. I should imagine it would be easier for the legislators of the United States to achieve some reform today than it would have been three days ago.

I was pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Balcatta because he would know, and some members who have been here longer than he would well know, that the Government has been under pressure from time to time to relax the gun laws in this State. For my part I have been insistent that the laws we have are sensible, and are as far as we want to go; we are not prepared to relax them even to fit in with the gun laws of some other States. The events of the last few days will only fortify us in that resolve.

Question put and passed.

## HEALTH: NURSES

### *Accommodation: Petition*

**MR BARNETT** (Rockingham) [2.38 p.m.]: I have a petition which is addressed to the Hon. the Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly of State Parliament assembled.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member will resume his seat. Is that the same petition which you sought to present to Parliament yesterday? If it is I ask you to abide by the request I made to you yesterday, and that is simply to precis the content of the petition. If it is not the petition you sought to introduce yesterday then you may read the text of it.

**Mr Tonkin**: Petitioners have the right to be heard.

### *Speaker's Ruling*

The **SPEAKER**: I will respond to the interjection of the member for Morley. Yesterday I sought the co-operation of several members in their presentation of a number of petitions that obviously were identical. Those members complied with my request. It is a request I have made on a number of occasions. However, the member for Rockingham chose in my view to make something of a mockery of this office by not complying with my request. That in fact may not be the opinion of some members of the House but it is my opinion. I simply am saying to him

that if he wants to present that petition he must do so in compliance with the request I made yesterday, otherwise it will not be presented.

### *Petition Resumed*

**Mr BARNETT**: Of course, I will concur with your ruling, Sir, otherwise my petitioners will not have the opportunity to be heard. However, I want to say in presenting it that I feel it entirely unfair of you to rule that 367 people living in my region are unable to have a petition, which some of those people went considerably out of their way to sign, read to the House.

**Mr O'Connor**: Has been read.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member will resume his seat. There is absolutely no discourtesy intended by me towards the people who have signed the petition; on the contrary, there is some discourtesy being displayed by the member for Rockingham towards the authority of the office he occupies.

Several members interjected.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! That is the position I hold and I simply ask the member for Rockingham, if he wishes to debate whether or not my ruling is sound, to move to dissent from my ruling. Otherwise, he should ask for the right to present the petition in the way he was asked to present it yesterday.

**Mr BARNETT**: Mr Speaker, a petition was presented to the House yesterday along the lines that young trainee students in hospital accommodation were being refused the retention of their accommodation. That petition was followed by a number of other petitions where some 4 000 or so people were complaining—

**Mr B. T. Burke**: I am interested to hear the words of the petition.

**Mr BARNETT**: —that the Government was not giving the matter due and adequate consideration.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member will resume his seat. The member has not attempted to comply at all with my wishes.

**Mr Barnett**: I am! I was about to—

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member will cease interjecting whilst I am on my feet. If the member does not, I will take the appropriate action. The member knows he is being a smart aleck and attempting to defy the authority of this Chair. The member continues in that manner, I will name him.

**Mr DAVIES**: I protest about the use of the words "smart aleck", from your high position, Sir

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Are you asking for a ruling?

Mr DAVIES: Are you ruling, Sir, that the member is not allowed to read the petition?

The SPEAKER: Indeed.

### *Dissent from Speaker's Ruling*

Mr DAVIES: I move—

That the House dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

We are always referred to the Standing Orders and I take the opportunity to refer to them because they have been mentioned from the Chair on many occasions.

Mr Nanovich: You didn't stand up for that reason!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAVIES: If we are to have order in this House, and someone insists that we should comply with the rules of debate, I believe you, Sir, are duty bound to allow the Standing Orders to run.

I can understand your feelings, Sir, and indeed I have some sympathy for you in the situation which has developed. However, the fact remains that you have to comply with Standing Orders and you have no option but to do so. When we refer to Standing Order No. 97, we note that it deals with the way in which petitions shall be presented to the Parliament. I quote Standing Order No. 97 which reads—

Every Member offering to present a Petition to the House, not being a Petition for a Private Bill, or relating to a Private Bill before the House, shall confine himself to a statement of the parties from whom it comes, of the number of signatures attached to it, and of the material allegation contained in it, and to the reading of the prayer of such Petition.

Now, that is precisely what the member for Rockingham sought to do. However, you, Sir, sought to shortcircuit the procedures. I can understand, and sympathise with the reasons for your action, Sir, but you were trying to save the time of the House by asking the member to refer to what was said yesterday.

If the member does as you requested, he is not complying with the Standing Orders; he is confining himself wholly and solely to the statement of the number of signatures, from whom comes the allegation contained in the petition, and the prayer. Indeed, if he had been

able to do that, we would have all laughed about the matter instead of getting too serious about it. We could have then proceeded promptly with our business.

If the member for Rockingham was, as you said, trying to be a smart aleck, then I do not like that kind of language being used in this House.

Mr B. T. Burke: Especially by the Speaker!

Several members interjected.

Mr DAVIES: The Speaker should give the lead. We have heard far worse in this House, especially across the Chamber—

Mr Sodeman: From yourself.

Mr DAVIES: Not that sort of language from me. We have heard that language from the Premier when he talks about some of the fifth columnists and so forth outside this House. The fact remains that if the member wishes to comply with Standing Orders, he should be allowed to do so.

There are many Standing Orders which are associated with petitions—in fact Standing Orders Nos 85 to 100 deal with petitions. The situation could have been handled in a much quicker way simply by allowing the petition to be read. There are other ways of talking to members, when it is felt that they have transgressed, if you think it necessary.

When it gets down to tors, we get back to Standing Order No. 97 and although it may have been tedious for us to listen to the one, two or a dozen members reading the same petition, the way Standing Orders are written that position must be upheld.

You, Sir, have so often upheld Standing Orders very well and bearing that in mind I believe the member should be allowed to read his petition.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and to say to members that at first glance it appears as though this whole motion is making a mountain out of a molehill. On second glance it is true to say that the matter is not essentially of great substance. The Speaker, by his own actions, has provoked a situation which we could quite easily have done without. It is very clear that the Speaker decided to be tender about the matter in which the member for Rockingham was engaged. It has become very clear to all members that while the member for Rockingham was wishing to persist in his reading of the petition, the Speaker was equally determined to prevent him from doing so.

The proposition I wish to put to the House is that the reputation of the Chair was not

endangered by the way in which the member for Rockingham was acting. However, it was certainly called into question by the Speaker's own persistence in attempting to make sure that his will dominated the will of the member for Rockingham.

This matter never would have come to pass, had the Speaker allowed the member for Rockingham to read the three paragraphs which comprised the belief of the petitioners. We know it was not a question of the three paragraphs having been previously read, though they certainly may have been read yesterday.

I cannot recall, in the eight years I have been here, that because a petition has been read before, the presentation of another petition was not allowed. It is the first time I can recall that a Speaker decided that would be the situation.

Further complicating and provoking the situation was the Speaker's determination to refer to the member for Rockingham as a smart aleck.

Mr Clarko: Spot on!

Mr B. T. BURKE: I would like your head—for my rock garden.

I have never heard someone in that Chair refer to a member in those sort of personal terms. If that is the level at which the Speaker is prepared to persist in the dispensing of his duties, then what right has the Speaker to say that someone else has called his position into disrepute?

Quite clearly the Speaker acted precipitously in deciding, come what may, that he intended to stop the member for Rockingham from reading the prayer to this petition. I say this to the House: It is unworthy of the Speaker that that should be the case; it is even less worthy to persist in the adoption of a Standing Order which does not exist, to my knowledge, and which says, "whether or not we have such a Standing Order Parliament will be run the way the Speaker wants it run." There is no Standing Order to stop the member for Rockingham from reading the prayer to the petition. It is quite clear that had the Speaker decided to let this matter go through to the keeper, if one likes, there would have been no problem whatever. However, in a fit of pique, the Speaker decided his will would persist, and we are being left open to this kind of motion. It has been further compounded and amplified by the Speaker's decision to refer to the member for Rockingham as a smart aleck. He might be too, but it is not the Speaker's place to start calling individual members smart alecks.

A Government member: Is it yours?

Mr B. T. BURKE: It may not be my place either, but that is why the Speaker is there, to force me to withdraw. Who is to tell the Speaker to withdraw? That is the whole point of the exercise. If the Speaker is allowed to refer to individual members as smart alecks, where does it stop? I support the motion.

Mr BRYCE: The Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated to the House that any member must take three or four essential steps in presenting a petition to the House, and every member here knows that we have a responsibility to check a petition with the Clerk of the House. We have a responsibility to the House to see that a petition is in order. We are required to state that the petition is in order when it is presented to the Chamber, and the essential elements of that procedure that a member must pursue, as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, are those outlined in Standing Order No. 97. A member has the responsibility to quote the number of petitioners, to outline the material allegation in the petition, and then he has a responsibility to read the prayer.

Mr Speaker, I submit to you, with the greatest respect, that the manner in which you sought to deal with this petition is depreciating the value and importance of petitions as ancient and revered parts of the British parliamentary system.

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr BRYCE: The practice of petitioning the Crown, and through the Crown, of course, the Government of the day in this Chamber, is older than our memories. I suggest that if people outside this Chamber realised the scant attention given to petitions in this State generally by the Crown in the form of the Government of the day, they would be disgusted.

Mr Tonkin: That is right.

Mr BRYCE: With your ruling yesterday, Sir, we saw the suggestion of a precedent that the importance of petitions themselves should be further depreciated. What you were in fact insisting upon yesterday was that no member of this Chamber would have the right any longer to read the material allegation, as referred to in the words of Standing Order No. 97. We would no longer have the right and opportunity to read the material allegation to members of this House if it happened that the material allegation coincides with a petition already presented by some other member.

I suggest that would be a backward step in respect of this very ancient tradition. I indicate my support for the sentiments expressed by the member for Balcatta. Who can remember any

member being asked to stand in his place and say, "I have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly and it is the same as the one tabled the other day"? If a member was not in the House the other day, if he could not remember the main allegation of a petition, or if there happened to have been two or three petitions presented the other day, then he would not know what the petition was about.

Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect, I urge you to realise the importance of the precedent you can create by insisting upon, rather than requesting—and I think that is the essence of our complaint—that a member should indicate the similarity of his petition to another petition that has been presented. If a member feels strongly about his representation of the people of his constituency in this place, I submit he has the right to read the wording of a petition in recognition of the very ancient tradition involved in petitioning the Crown.

Mr PEARCE: I must say I am not at all anxious to vote for this motion to dissent from the Speaker's ruling. However, obviously I will do so if the necessity arises.

Mr Speaker, now some discussion has taken place on this matter I think I agree with those members who feel that we would be doing a service by asking, where possible, for the procedures of the House to be expedited. However, if it comes to the point, the House should insist on its right to go through its proper format. I ask you, Mr Speaker, perhaps to avoid a vote on this matter, whether you would consider reversing your decision on the petition presented by the member for Rockingham. This would establish a good precedent, and it would give the House a considerable respect for your ability to reconsider a matter after it has reached such a heated stage. Also, it would allow us to finish with this matter, and you will appreciate it could go on for hours.

The SPEAKER: I will respond to the request of the member for Gosnells for me to make some comment. I would like to draw attention to the sequence of events which took place yesterday and which gave rise to the actions I have taken today. Similar petitions have been presented by members; in fact, some petitions have been identical in the terms of their text. I asked members of the House not to read the full text, but to save the time of the House by simply indicating that the text of a petition was in the same terms as the petition introduced by the member for Melville.

Such a request is not new in this House. I have made the same request before, and it has been complied with. I believe it is a fairly common-sense approach to this particular matter and it is an approach I have adopted while I have been in the Chair. After the member for Rockingham indicated that he wanted to pursue the path of reading the petition after I had made that request, he said he was not sure that the petition was in the same terms as the earlier one. He did not say whether or not it was in the same terms; he said he was not sure about it, and so he intended to read it. I then relieved him of the responsibility, and I had the petition brought here. I looked at it, the Clerk looked at it, and the text was in precisely the same terms as the earlier petition. So the petition was sent back to the member for Rockingham.

I motioned to the member to give him the opportunity to rise to present the petition and his interjection was, "No, I will do it tomorrow." I do not know that the interjection would have been at a sufficient level to have been heard by the *Hansard* reporter, but certainly I got the message that the member intended to present the petition tomorrow, obviously with the intention deliberately of not complying with my request.

Mr Hodge: That is his right.

The SPEAKER: It may indeed be his right, but one of the problems of this institution—and those members who serve with me on the House Committee know it—is that the privileges and facilities which members of Parliament enjoy are being abused by some people.

A minority of members are abusing those privileges, but all the members of Parliament are being made to suffer because of the actions of a few. The whole membership of this institution is being subjected to certain restraints. I regret that, but it is happening. I submit to this House that the member for Rockingham was trying simply to be smart in the way he dealt with this matter. I do not believe I would be upholding the dignity of this office if I were to allow something to happen which I know he knows, and which I submit everyone in the House knows, was simply an attempt to get around complying with my request. He did not want to follow the actions of other members who had complied with my request yesterday, and who have complied with similar requests since I first made it on 29 March 1979.

That is my position. I want to restate that I have the greatest respect for those people who wish to petition Parliament. I am happy for that petition to be put on the Table of the House, and

I believe it should be put there in the way in which I requested it.

Mr SKIDMORE: I rise to support the motion disagreeing with your ruling, Sir, and I do so with a great deal of reluctance. Perhaps it is my reward for acceding to your request yesterday; however, it has become patently clear to me that as one of the participants in yesterday's proceedings in respect of petitions, I presented a petition to this House and I did not do so in the correct manner. If you read *Hansard*, Sir, you will find I did not read the prayer of the petition. Quite a few members presented petitions in the same way yesterday, and they actually infringed the Standing Order. In those circumstances one wonders whether the petitions in question were presented in the proper manner, and that is something which worries me tremendously.

In addition, Sir, I might state it is not just a question of what this House ought to do about your ruling; it is also a question of how far a Speaker can go to impose his will upon the members of the House and upon the Government, contrary to the Standing Orders of the House. That is something I am not prepared to countenance. It seems to me that what you should do is explain to any member who desires to present a petition the way he is required to do so under Standing Orders.

Whether or not it was a smart aleck act for a member to say in this place that he would not present the petition until tomorrow is immaterial when compared with the matter of our Standing Orders; and it concerns a value-judgment which must be made by the Speaker concerning the contravention of Standing Orders.

I state categorically the member for Rockingham has not contravened Standing Orders. In fact, I believe I have contravened them by acceding to your request to present my petition in the manner in which I presented it. I now wonder whether that petition has been properly presented to the House, and that gives me grave concern, bearing in mind the importance of the petition. The number of signatures does not matter; on one occasion I presented a petition with two signatures because on the previous evening I was refused the right to present a similar petition with a number of signatures. I do not want to relate the circumstances of that instance, because you, Sir, may be aware of them. However, there is an inherent rule that petitions be presented in the proper manner and where we are using devious ways to overcome that rule that is not what I understand to be good Standing Orders or good behaviour on the part of the Speaker or members of this House.

I believe common sense should prevail, and if a member wishes to use the Standing Orders in order to present a petition, he should be given the right to do so. That is the reason I dissent from your ruling, Sir.

Mr BARNETT: I rise only briefly to contribute to the debate, and I start by saying that you, Mr Speaker, would be well aware that I have been a member of this place for some seven years. During that time, Mr Speaker, you have shown yourself in my eyes to be someone to be admired for adopting a fair and impartial attitude on most occasions in respect of the things that happen in this House. It would be wrong of me to say you do so on all occasions, as you would be well aware; but on most occasions you adopt a fair and impartial attitude and your action in that respect has been to your personal cost on some occasions. For that reason I have come to admire you and the decisions you make.

However, in this case I am extremely surprised and personally hurt by the comments you made about me when I endeavoured to do my job as I saw it and as the Standing Orders state I must do it.

Mr O'Connor: His comments were fact.

Mr BARNETT: The following is the course of events: Yesterday a number of members presented petitions to the House. Various petitions were involved; certainly they did not all purport to support nursing aides and nurses who require to stay in their accommodation. If the members who presented those petitions chose, as was their right, to concur with your request—and I say quite specifically "your request" because you have no right under Standing Orders to demand that members not read petitions—that was their business. However, Sir, your job under Standing Orders is to uphold the Standing Orders, not to make new ones to make your job any easier or the job of members of Parliament any easier.

Mr Speaker, I put this to you: If I see it as my job in this Parliament to stand up after 15 people have presented petitions on a particular subject in this House and to make a contribution to the matter, then I will stand up and make it. That is not only my duty but also my right, and it is a task given to me by my constituents who sent me here to do a job for them. I will not be thwarted in doing that job, especially when we have a Standing Order which says I must do it.

Yesterday I rose, intending to read my petition as Standing Order No. 97 suggests I must. You, Sir, stopped me and made a short speech; and at this stage I might say your speech took at least as



much time as it would have taken me to read the petition. You said I should not read it out. As a result of that—and I can assure you, not in a smart aleck way as you suggest—

Mr Sodeman: Even the member for Ascot is laughing.

Mr BARNETT: —I took it upon myself to read the petition today rather than thwart your intention yesterday. I do not think that is a smart aleck thing to do; I feel it is a logical and reasonable thing to do. Today I rose again to read the petition and you stood and ruled that I was not entitled to read it. I rose again at a later stage and attempted to paraphrase the petition and you ruled that I was not even allowed to paraphrase it.

What is this place supposed to be? If 367 people in my constituency want to petition this House they have every right to have that petition read in the first instance. If there is a need to speed up proceedings and I cannot have my rights under Standing Order No. 97, then surely I am entitled to paraphrase the petition. However, Mr Speaker, you are not even giving me the right to paraphrase the petition or even to read the prayer at the beginning or the end of it.

Quite frankly, the comments you have made, and the situation you have forced on members on this side as a result of your remarks have done this House and the Westminster system of government no good at all.

I was very reluctant, personally, to stand and defend my case; that was adequately done by other members on this side. Having entered the debate, I should like to make one final point: You know as well as I do that the Government has the numbers in this place, and that if this matter goes to a vote—irrespective of a Standing Order which states that I must take a certain course of action—your ruling will be upheld, and I will be prevented from taking that action. That is quite wrong; I do not believe the Clerk would be able to show you a precedent where a previous Speaker took it upon himself to say that the particular Standing Order would be ignored simply for the convenience of the House. In effect, you are saying, "You shall not do as the Standing Order provides; you shall do as I say." Of course a vote will uphold your decision; however, that will not make it correct.

It will not do you, Mr Speaker, the Government, the Opposition and, most importantly, the public of Western Australia any good at all to know that petitions will not even be read to the House, but will be taken no notice of after they are presented. You have shown from

your judgments in the past that you are a reasonable and honest man.

Mr O'Connor: If you acted in the same way we would have no problem.

Mr BARNETT: For the benefit of the Deputy Premier I point out that if I had been allowed to read out the petition three quarters of an hour ago, we would now be debating the Government's motion.

Mr O'Connor: That may be so, but if 50 members stood one after the other and read identical petitions, we would be here for hours.

Mr BARNETT: According to the Deputy Premier's logic only one speaker is necessary in this House to debate the various issues, because any subsequent speakers on the same issue would amount to tedious repetition, so why bother allowing additional members to rise? The Deputy Premier is basing his argument on a false premise. Every member of this Parliament has the right to represent his constituents to the best of his ability; in addition, the Standing Orders require him to take certain action in this place.

Mr O'Connor: If 20 members stood and read identical petitions, that certainly would amount to tedious repetition.

Mr BARNETT: I intend to ignore the Deputy Premier, who obviously does not intend to take any notice of our Standing Orders.

Mr Speaker, I ask you once again to reconsider this matter before it goes to a vote, because any decision of the House which upholds your ruling will be to the detriment of our Standing Orders.

Mr COWAN: The member for Rockingham has commented on the right of every member to read petitions in this place. The Leader of the Opposition, in moving a motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling, quoted Standing Orders Nos. 97 and 95. I would suggest the member for Rockingham read those Standing Orders because they contain nothing giving him the right to read a petition. They provide him with the right only to present a petition.

Mr Barnett: Would you read the Standing Order to the House?

Mr COWAN: No, the member for Rockingham is perfectly capable of reading it for himself.

Mr Watt: If his brains were ink they would not even make a full stop.

Mr COWAN: The member for Rockingham is quite entitled to present his petition but the Speaker is within his rights to demand that the honourable member confine himself to the material allegation contained in that petition.

Mr Skidmore: And the prayer of the petition.

Mr COWAN: I refer the member for Swan to the relevant Standing Order. It states that the member shall confine himself to certain areas, but it does not give the member the right to read his petition.

Mr Skidmore: Our Standing Orders provide that if the prayer is not read, the petition has not been properly presented.

Mr COWAN: That is incorrect.

Mr Skidmore: Rubbish! You should have another look.

Mr COWAN: A member is confined to particular matters when presenting a petition, one of which happens to be reading the prayer contained in the petition; however, the Speaker may elect whether he will or will not read the petition. The point I wish to make again is that the member for Rockingham has a right to present his petition but no right to read it. It is purely the Speaker's prerogative to determine whether a member, in presenting his petition, may also read it.

Mr Barnett: You are just trying to crawl your way to the front again.

Mr COWAN: There is no way I would try to do something like that. It remains the Speaker's decision to determine whether a member shall read his petition. The Speaker must make a value-judgment as to whether the material allegation in the petition can be delivered in a way other than by reading the petition.

As to the use of the words "smart aleck" my view is that perhaps those words were a little unfortunate. However, one must keep in mind that by his actions and his attitude to our Standing Orders the member for Rockingham tends to regard this place in a frivolous manner. I believe his colleagues would accept my remarks in this respect. So, perhaps in this case the words used by the Speaker have some justification. Had the member for Rockingham co-operated with the Speaker initially this confrontation would not have occurred.

The National Party cannot support this motion.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to jump on the bandwagon and move this motion of dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

Mr Bryce: We would not expect you to support anything from this side.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to remind members opposite the job of the Speaker is difficult enough at any time.

Mr Bryce: Especially if he is being bullied by you!

Sir CHARLES COURT: He must try to strike a balance between the conflicting situations of this place and to achieve some semblance of order and decorum. It is the duty of us all to do our best to assist the Speaker.

When it is boiled down, this is not a motion of any real merit. It is not really a matter of a particular Standing Order but rather, it is now a question of whether this House is going to uphold the dignity of the office of Speaker.

Mr Skidmore: That is absolute piffle! I have never heard such rubbish in all my life.

Mr B. T. Burke: You could apply that to any ruling the Speaker makes, and say we should uphold them all.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind members that some time ago, the Speaker introduced into this place a practice, which, from our point of view, made very good sense that whenever a succession of petitions are presented dealing with identical matters, the first petition is read and the succeeding petitions are presented in an abbreviated form, with the member referring to the first petition. That is a very sensible way of handling petitions, and it is in conformity with our Standing Orders.

Mr Skidmore: It does not conform at all.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The members presenting identical petitions relate the substance of their petitions to the identical petition which has just been read. I remind members again that the first petition is read.

Mr Barnett: It was the first petition today.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is not as though petitions are tabled without any reference to the detail or the prayer contained in the petition.

Mr Barnett: To which petition are you referring now?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Speaker has introduced a very sensible working arrangement.

Mr Barnett: You are very touchy on health matters, are you not?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I just want to remind members of the situation which used to exist in Federal Parliament.

Mr Davies: Do not go Federal on us.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is not so long ago when members used to stand one after the other and tediously read out identical petitions so as to conform with the practice of that House. Because it was possible for members to manipulate the time of the House, something had to be done in

defence of the whole House, and the Standing Order was changed. If my memory serves me correctly, their practice is not as adequate as ours; the Clerk of the House simply stands and states "I have the following petitions" or words to that effect; he then very briefly runs through the petitions, stating who has presented them. There is no doubt that some Federal members were playing to the galleries in that House; they had prime broadcast time, and were reading petitions one after the other.

One does not need much imagination to know that anyone who set out to be mischievous could hold up the business of the House for hours by having every one of the members on his side read out an identical, long petition, for no other purpose than trying to subvert the practices and the conduct of the House.

Mr Davies: So change the Standing Orders.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to commend you, Mr Speaker, on introducing the practice you did. I noticed there was no dissentient voice at all. I cannot recall a single voice in dissent.

Mr Skidmore: There was. The member for Swan deviated from the practice.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the member for Rockingham, if he recalls his conduct yesterday, that it was not conduct becoming a member. He knows, as well as any of us, that he set out deliberately—

Mr Barnett: Don't be disgustingly personal. You know very well that my conduct was exemplary.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Rockingham deliberately defied the Speaker's ruling. The conduct of the member for Rockingham was—

Mr O'Connor: Appalling.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It was appalling; it was deliberate; it was premeditated; and of course he came here—

#### *Point of Order*

Mr BARNETT: I cannot remember the number of the Standing Order, but I am sure you can, Mr Speaker. All imputations of misconduct against a member of Parliament are unparliamentary. That is precisely what the Premier is embarking on at the moment. I object in that it is unparliamentary; and I ask that the remarks be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: Order! I take the point raised by the member. It appears to me that this House is debating the actions of two people, the member for Rockingham and myself. There are no holds barred about what members say about one of the participants in the particular matter; and I submit that the member for Rockingham is likely to be the recipient of some comments about his actions. In view of the circumstances, I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr Davies: Not in unparliamentary terms, though.

#### *Debate (dissent from Speaker's ruling) Resumed*

Sir CHARLES COURT: I make the point that what we are debating in this motion is whether we uphold the position of the Speaker—the dignity of the position of the Speaker—for the benefit of the whole Chamber. The Speaker has given a sensible ruling, and one that has been accepted. One member refused to comply with it; and that member has taken his own course of action—

Mr Barnett: It was a request.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Mr Speaker has ruled that the position is as he says it is. I remind the House that if we had the situation as is now being contemplated by someone on the other side of the House, we could have an absolutely crazy situation. That is a situation that became absolutely impossible in the Federal Parliament; and that Parliament had to take more drastic action than our Speaker has taken.

Mr Hodge: Will you amend the Standing Orders if you think they are wrong?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am speaking from memory; but if one had time to research it, I am sure there are precedents for the Speaker's giving the ruling that he did in respect of the presentation of petitions.

Mr Davies: No-one has tried to read them before!

Sir CHARLES COURT: Therefore, if the member for Rockingham was fair to himself, fair to the Parliament—

Mr Davies: What about his electors?

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and to his electors—no-one is trying to stop the presentation of a petition or stop him being fair to his electors—

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: —the member would have conformed to the Speaker's ruling, even if he made his own private protestations to the

Speaker. The member has not been fair to himself; and he has tried to go around the ruling by adopting the attitude he has.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, the Government opposes the motion dissenting from your ruling; and it supports the practice that you have introduced into this House.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I do not quite know where we are going; but the last two members have cast some doubts upon matters on which we ought to have some quick reflection. The Leader of the National Party more than implied that there was no absolute right under the Standing Orders to present petitions. He went on to suggest—

Mr Cowan: I did not say that at all.

Mr H. D. EVANS: He went on to suggest that there should be a subjective interpretation of the phrase "material allegations" contained in the Standing Orders referring to petitions.

It is not possible for a Speaker, or anybody else, to do that. The actual intent is something in the mind of the individual member. It behoves the individual member to interpret that in accordance with his understanding and conscience. Therefore, the member for Merredin is grossly in error when he tries to accord to any individual member, be he the Speaker or anybody else, such a power.

Of even greater concern is the statement by the Premier—the Premier of all people, who should, first and foremost, be upholding the Standing Orders that it was not a question of the Standing Orders, but a question of upholding the authority of the Speaker. Now, that just cannot be. The Speaker must be obliged to follow the Standing Orders, otherwise this will degenerate into utter chaos and confusion.

I doubt if it would do that in your time, Mr Speaker, because you have shown qualities that have put you in a most favourable light in running this Chamber and in interpreting the Standing Orders. However, allowing such a premise to be put into effect would start undermining the traditions and the democracy of the Westminster system.

I agree most wholeheartedly that the role of the Speaker in maintaining the decorum and the operation of the Assembly Chamber is not an easy one. However, when we return to the point made by the Premier, if he looks again at Standing Order No. 97, the content of the various sections is made perfectly clear. As a member who presented a petition yesterday, I am led to wonder whether, when looked at in its true light, one can paraphrase or precis the contents of the petition by referring simply to the contents of the petition which had been presented by my colleague earlier.

I do not know whether that was correct, because of the 12 petitions shown in the *Votes and Proceedings* as having been presented yesterday, one would have to be absolutely specific to know which petition was referred to.

When the wording of a petition is brought forward to the next day, as the member for Rockingham tried to use a summation or a reference to the earlier wording, there is a strong probability of an error occurring.

While we have Standing Orders, there is an obligation on the part of everybody in the Chamber to adhere to them. I record my disappointment at the Premier's attitude when he suggests that it is not a question of upholding the Standing Orders.

Mr CLARKO: The whole of this episode was thrown into complete and absolute accuracy and truth when the member for Balcatta, in his very soft and unobtrusive style said that the member for Rockingham was wanting to persist in what he wanted to do. In other words, Mr Speaker, he wanted to defy you. He wanted to take away from you the authority that is set down in Standing Order No. 153—

Mr Bryce: What funny Chinese is this?

Mr CLARKO: Standing Order No. 153 says that you shall maintain order. Today, the member for Rockingham tried deliberately to defy that Standing Order and to defy you. The member for Balcatta has told us that that is so. Therefore, in the great wisdom of the member for Balcatta, who is about the youngest in the place, but sounds the oldest, and certainly looks the oldest, he has sunk irretrievably the boat of the member for Rockingham.

Mr Bryce: God help this Chamber if this man ever deposes you, Mr Speaker. If this man ever deposes you, this House is sunk.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CLARKO: In this Chamber yesterday, when the member for Rockingham chose not to present his petition, I said to my colleague the member for Whitford, "He will present it tomorrow, and he will try to say all of the words." I am sure everybody in this Chamber who was watching at that time knew that that would come about.

That situation has come about; and the member for Balcatta has underlined to everybody in this House that the member for Rockingham persisted in wanting to defy you. That is what it is all about. What the Premier said is absolutely true.

Opposition members: Crawler!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CLARKO: We could amend the Standing Orders of this House. However, the member for Merredin was totally correct when he spoke about Standing Order No. 97 when he stated that it provides that members shall confine themselves to four particular points. It does not say that the member has to mention and state explicitly each of those qualifications. It merely says "confine".

I do not have the same faith in the Opposition that the member for Merredin has because he said the member for Swan and the member for Rockingham could read. They may be able to read, but not with any comprehension. They do not understand Standing Orders.

In addition, when the member for Rockingham said "I shall stand up here and if I feel like doing so I shall say whatever I want to say" he indicated he did not consider himself tied to Standing Orders. Just because a member feels like saying something does not mean he can necessarily do so at the time. Members must comply with Standing Orders.

Members opposite show an abysmal lack of knowledge of the Standing Orders. Standing Order No. 1 lays down that we shall abide not only by the Standing Orders but also with the practices and usages of the House. In the brief time I have been here—seven years—your predecessor, Mr Speaker, Sir Ross Hutchinson, asked members to do exactly what you directed members to do yesterday. This was for the better order of the House.

There is no place in the world where so much repetitive nonsense goes on as in parliamentary Chambers. You were taking a step in the direction of common sense and intelligence, yet here we have a member who was blatantly and wilfully trying to defy you. That is what it is all about; people wanting deliberately to defy the Speaker and to break Standing Orders.

I noted that the Leader of the Opposition did not act with alacrity to move to dissent from your ruling. He first queried the expression "smart aleck". The fact is that anyone who knows our basic Australian language knows that what the member for Rockingham did was a smart aleck trick.

Mr McPHARLIN: It is incredible that there are occasions when members of the House do make it more difficult for you, Mr Speaker, to carry out your responsibilities. The Speaker's job is difficult enough without members endeavouring to circumvent the rulings given from the Chair. In my experience previous Speakers have endeavoured to be fair. They have endeavoured to give rulings based on common sense so as to save

the time of the House. Generally, these rulings have been accepted by all members.

Of the petitions presented yesterday, eight were practically identical in their wording, according to the *Votes and Proceedings*. Eight of them referred to the same subject. Surely it is the responsibility of a member presenting a petition which is identical with previous petitions to concur with a ruling or a request by the Chair to comply with the common-sense idea of saving time.

Some of us on this side of the House have had experience on the Opposition benches and at that time I cannot recall any member of the then Opposition refusing to comply with a ruling by the Speaker to such an extent that he was named and had to leave the Chamber. However, this has happened in the case of the present Opposition on a number of occasions.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about the former member for Narrogin? He should have.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McPHARLIN: The present Speaker is regarded by all to be very fair in his actions. Those members on the Opposition side of the House who occasionally attempt to circumvent his rulings should think again. The member for Ascot criticised what happened to the petitions after they are presented. It is not the responsibility of the Speaker but the responsibility of the Ministers who may receive the petitions. A member presenting a petition assumes it will be forwarded to a Minister for action.

What happens in other Houses of Parliament, such as the House of Representatives, does not apply here because we have our own Standing Orders. Members who have listened to the broadcasts of Federal Parliament will know that the Clerk will read a petition and list the number of members who have handed in the same petition.

The events of today have been blown out of all proportion and I believe members should reject the motion of dissent against the Speaker's ruling. I support what the Speaker has tried to do.

Mr STEPHENS: The principal reason for my rising is to reply to the member for Warren. The viewpoint of the National Party was well and ably placed before this House by the member for Merredin. I am concerned that the member for Warren could not correctly refer to those comments made by the Leader of the National Party even just a few minutes after they were made. I question the member for Warren's ability even to interpret the Standing Orders.

Mr H. D. Evans interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: I ask that the member for Warren, instead of interjecting, read the member for Merredin's speech so that he will ascertain for himself the error he has made. He is only compounding his error by interjecting at this stage.

The member for Merredin quite clearly stated that a member had a right to present a petition to this House but that he did not have a right to read it all.

Mr Carr: He might have meant that but that is not what he said.

Mr STEPHENS: That is what I heard the member for Merredin say and that is the reason I am on my feet. A member has a right to present a petition but not to read every word of it. That is the point members of the Opposition have obviously missed.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about interpreting the phrase contained in that Standing Order? Are you suggesting the Speaker should have the responsibility for the interpretation?

Mr STEPHENS: I believe every member would agree that the Speaker should interpret the Standing Orders for the good order and smooth running of this place. I believe the Speaker has every right to say it is unnecessary for a member to read verbatim the content of a petition. Standing Order No. 97 states, *inter alia*, that a member shall confine himself to a statement of the parties from whom it comes, of the number of signatures attached to it, and of the material allegation contained in it. The operative words are "of the material allegation contained in it".

The Speaker gave the member for Rockingham the opportunity yesterday to indicate the material allegation contained in the petition but the member chose not to avail himself of that opportunity. He rose in the House today and proceeded to read verbatim the material allegation. He was questioned by the Speaker as to whether it was the same petition he attempted to present yesterday. Therein lies the fault of the member for Rockingham. He was trying to make a mockery of our Standing Orders. I uphold the action taken by the Speaker in attempting to protect the smooth running of the House and the interpretation of the Standing Orders.

I shall repeat the relevant words in the Standing Order which are "...and of the material allegation contained in it". The member was given every opportunity to read the material allegation contained in the petition, but he chose not to do so.

Like the member for Merredin, I regret that the Speaker used the words "smart aleck". I do not think it was necessary for him to say that, because I am sure most members in this House had that opinion. It was unfortunate that that phrase was used by the Speaker; but we are all human and, on occasions, some of us are pushed to a point where comments are made on the spur of the moment.

The final part of Standing Order No. 96 says "...and to the reading of the prayer of such Petition". The member for Rockingham was reading—

Mr Barnett: I was stopped in the middle of reading the prayer. Now get it right!

Mr STEPHENS: I am getting it right. However, the member for Rockingham did not continue with the allegation. Like the members for Merredin and Mt. Marshall, there is no way I can support this motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! Before I put the question, I will respond to the request by the member for Rockingham who asked me to reconsider my position. I was perfectly satisfied that the actions I had taken were sound in respect of asking members to precis the petitions they were presenting.

I have had the opportunity to have this matter researched and I found that in this House on 16 April 1969 the member for Maylands rose in his seat and said as follows—

I have a petition addressed to The Honourable The Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. It reads—

The member then read two paragraphs of the petition, at which point Speaker Guthrie interrupted him and said as follows—

It is only requisite upon you at the moment to tell us shortly what is in the petition. If the honourable member wants the petition read, he must have a motion carried by the House to that effect. Just tell us what it is about, how many signatories there are, and who is the organisation that presents it.

The member for Maylands complied with that request. I note with interest there was no dissentient voice, despite the fact that some members who have risen in their places today to debate this issue were present on that occasion and did not dispute the Speaker's ruling.

Therefore, I do not retract anything I have said and I shall now put the question.

Question put and negatived.

Motion defeated.

*Speaker's Ruling*

Mr BARNETT: May I have a ruling on that in all seriousness?

The SPEAKER: I have been serious all the way through.

Mr BARNETT: So have I. Does this mean that, in future, you, Sir, will rule that a precis or a synopsis only of a petition may be presented to the House? I do not know exactly where we stand.

Mr Watt: It is 14 pages long.

Mr BARNETT: Will we read the prayer only or give a short version of the contents of the petition if another in a similar vein to that which I presented yesterday is dealt with?

The SPEAKER: Order! I think every member of the House is perfectly clear as to the intention of the practice I have adopted.

Last year we dealt with a spate of similar petitions which were presented over a rather lengthy period of time. I note with interest that, on the occasions those petitions were presented, notwithstanding the fact that a similar petition had not been presented and read fully on the same day, the member presenting the petition simply used words to the effect that "This petition is similar in nature to many like petitions which have been presented during these last few days."

I simply say that common sense should prevail. If a petition is presented and it is entirely new to the House, obviously it should be read in full provided it is not exceptionally long.

In the case of the petition the member for Maylands sought to read to the House when Speaker Guthrie ruled on the occasion to which I have referred earlier, the Speaker determined it was too long to be read and so the member for Maylands simply gave the substance of the contents of it.

We could get to the ludicrous situation in which one person in the community could ask a member of Parliament to petition Parliament and he could come here with a thick volume and proceed to read it. That is out of the question.

Mr Bryce: Like the Premier's notice of motion yesterday?

The SPEAKER: I ask members to have regard for the common-sense attitude which I believe I have applied.

**INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION  
AMENDMENT BILL***Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry), and read a first time.

**CONSERVATION AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT:  
JARRAH CLASS ACTION***Standing Orders Suspension*

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [3.47 p.m.]: I move—

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the motion of the bauxite alumina class action to be proceeded with before the Address-in-Reply is completed.

By way of explanation, I should state to the House that there is a reason that the class action motion must be dealt with before we could reasonably expect the Address-in-Reply to be finalised in this House.

As members will know, a class action has been taken by the Conservation Council of Western Australia in another country and it is proceeding according to the requirements of the court in which it has been initiated.

I have been very worried about the fact that the only propaganda being heard in the United States of America at the moment in relation to this class action has come from the people who have taken it. It is very important that the voice of the Parliament, as distinct from the Government and the companies, should be heard.

I have expressed in very forthright terms what I think of the action which is being taken and to say the least I regard it as being distinctly un-Australian. Nevertheless, the action has been taken.

Mr Bryce: That sounds strange coming from you.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is very important that the people of America—and I am talking about all the people of America, not just the court concerned—understand the attitude of this Parliament. As promised, I have been able to obtain some information regarding the dates on which certain procedures at the legal level have to take place and I am quite happy to discuss these with the Leader of the Opposition. He will see that it is important for this motion to be dealt with fully by both Houses of Parliament no later

than next Wednesday and hopefully by next Tuesday.

Mr B. T. Burke: Can't you outline those dates to the House?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Apart from that, the Government has made no decision as to whether it will seek to be joined in the case and that matter is being studied by our legal advisers. I do not believe it is appropriate to state at this time the reasons that we might not want to be joined in the action. However, it might be necessary for that to occur.

I have asked the Commonwealth Government not to act unilaterally in the matter until we have conferred as to what is the best way to achieve the result we seek for this State and for the nation. The simple fact of the matter is that we require an expression of opinion from the Parliament of this State—both its Houses. That is why I used the words "the Parliament" in the motion. We need the expression of opinion quickly so that we can take advantage of it; and it must be an expression from the Parliament instead of only the Government, the companies involved or individual members of the Parliament. In this way we can be identified and have it made clear to all concerned within and without Australia that the companies involved acted in accordance with the contracts legally and properly entered into with an elected Government and ratified by an elected Parliament. For those reasons I moved the motion.

I confirm the advice given to the Leader of the Opposition that instead of moving that the motion be put today we will leave that until tomorrow in the hope we can resolve the matter during tomorrow's sitting. I commend the motion to the House.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [3.52 p.m.]: The Opposition always has been very reasonable when the Government has sought to suspend Standing Orders to enable it to get its legislation through the Parliament. We have co-operated on a number of occasions, especially during the last two sessions of Parliament and, particularly, during last year when the session really did not begin until August and the Government was caught with a number of pieces of legislation which could have been of some assistance to the public. When the situation was explained to us we were very happy indeed to support the suspension of Standing Orders to deal with those particular pieces of legislation. I do not suppose it is necessary for me to draw to the attention of the House the fact that we put through one piece of legislation last year as a

matter of urgency. The matter has not yet been resolved; we still have Honorary Ministers whereas the Government would have liked to have "proper" Ministers.

We must be sceptical of the Government's motions when the Premier is as vague as he was on this occasion. He said reasons exist for the Government's wanting this matter considered urgently by the Parliament. He said he is concerned about the propaganda prevalent in the United States of America, and that the motion relates only to the class action. He seemed to be concerned that the Government's point of view had not been put across. He probably has his propaganda "supremo" in his office or a string of publicity officers there, so it seems to me strange that the Premier has been unable to get his story across.

Mr B. T. Burke: The "supremo" or super scribe is on call in the south-west.

Mr DAVIES: I cannot see that anything the Parliament does will help to generate publicity in the United States. I cannot imagine *The Washington Post* running the story on the front page of its next issue. I cannot imagine *The Chicago Tribune* and a few other newspapers giving the story very much credence.

I am sure if someone were able to ask 99 per cent of the United States public, "What do you think about the jarrah class action?", they would wonder what he was talking about. Although I have nothing to gauge the extent of the propaganda of the jarrah class action supporters in the United States, I can hardly believe it has been such to subliminate completely the Press releases put out by the Government and the amount of information which has been fed through Alcoa and its principals which have had many opportunities for getting the story across. I cannot accept that anything this Parliament is likely to do will make the headlines.

Mr Sibson: In other words you support the class action.

Mr DAVIES: I ask the member for Bunbury to be quiet. He should join the rock garden which a previous member spoke about recently.

Mr B. T. Burke: I wouldn't take his head for that.

Mr DAVIES: The member for Bunbury has not read this evening's paper so he knows little of what he is talking about. He has been sitting on the edge of his seat ever since I rose to speak in the hope that he will be able to say that the Opposition supports the action. He has been disappointed. This matter was discussed at great length at the Liberal Party meeting the other day.



Liberal Party members thought that all kinds of terrible things would happen. They hoped to embarrass the Labor Party and the Labor Party Opposition and many other people with this motion.

If the Government is playing dinkum and not pulling a political stunt the Premier should give the dates and the reasons which make it necessary for the Parliament to pass this motion by Wednesday. Why are those things so secret that he might tell me only later? He never said he would tell me later; he said he would give some consideration to talking to me and letting me know the dates that make it crucial we pass this motion this week. If it is crucial we do so this week, that is a matter of importance to the whole of the Parliament and not just to me. I give notice now that if he tells me the dates I will broadcast them as widely as I can. I believe that every member of Parliament, including the member for Bunbury—

Mr Bryce: Not him.

Mr DAVIES: I will include him.

Mr Bryce: You are stretching it.

Mr DAVIES: Even the member for Bunbury is entitled to know the urgency involved in this motion.

Mr Sibson: You should be last.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister in another place could not give any indication as to when the action will be heard. The Premier admitted today that the Government is out on a limb; it does not know what it will do about the situation. Will it be joined as a party to the defence of the action? Will it be represented in the United States? Does it hope that its use of its numbers in this House to put through any motion it desires to put through will be complete and sufficient evidence on which the United States courts will be able to base a decision? If it thinks that, its thinking is woolly. I am quite certain the United States courts are not as naive as the Premier might be indicating.

Mr Sibson: They shouldn't be interfering with a decision made in this country.

Mr DAVIES: I will not answer the member for Bunbury. His interjection is the longest speech he has made this session. I am sure he will make a further contribution to this debate because he is still on the edge of his seat.

I seek the real reasons for this motion. As I said, the Opposition is reasonable. We have always co-operated, but we would like to be taken into the Government's confidence and told what the real reasons are. Frankly, I do not believe that propaganda is this motion's only use. As I said, I

am quite certain that whatever we carry in this House will not be headlined in any newspaper of any consequence in the United States apart from, perhaps, the "Alcoa News" if there is such a publication.

For a long time, we have known of the action that has been taken and we have sought certain information; however, the information has not been forthcoming. Are we now about to tie everything up in a tight little parcel, in accordance with what the Premier may like and say, "That is the thinking of the Parliament of Western Australia"?

Surely, no court would take any notice of that. The situation is getting worse than in the South American banana republics. If we are about to take such action, rather than deal with a situation as it is, then the Parliament has wasted its time previously in dealing with the various agreements and reports.

The voice of the Parliament has already been heard.

Mr Sibson: That is all the more reason that it should be enforced.

Mr DAVIES: There is no need to keep saying, again and again, as the member for Bunbury suggests, that if we pass this motion tomorrow it will be so much better if it is again discussed next Thursday and the Thursday after and so on. It is as though we are saying "if it is dealt with 10 times, it is 10 times more important than it is now". Is that the member for Bunbury's line of woolly thinking? It is completely unacceptable to me.

We are reasonable people and like to be treated with some dignity. We like to be taken into the confidence of Government members when such things need to be considered. Why will not the Premier tell us the dates, by way of interjection?

Sir Charles Court: I will respond when it is my turn to reply. I will give you some dates in April which are crucial but that is not the total picture, for reasons I will give you.

Mr DAVIES: As I understand, from memory, and from my last reading of the situation there had been an extension of time for which a defence could be put in and that had been granted and the date would be some time towards the end of April. I believe there is to be a hearing in May but I have nothing to back up such information. So, we look forward, with considerable interest, to what the Premier has to say in regard to the crucial handling of this case in the American courts.

I do not wish to discuss the proposed motion at this stage because I know I will be ruled out of order; but I do want to query the reasons for the Government's urgency in dealing with this matter. Have we received any request for endorsement of the action being taken? If we pass this motion, does it mean that we do not endorse the class action but we do endorse everything that Alcoa has done?

These are some of the questions which we want answered. We do not even know whether the Government intends to be a party to the case at all. This action is shrouded in mystery. The Premier says we should trust him but we hear nothing about it. What are the difficulties which have prevented the Government, for something like a period of six weeks, from deciding what action it will take? Will we see the same messing around that occurred over a period of some eight months in regard to a matter which was dealt with, as a matter of urgency, during last session?

I do not like to see any matter, which affects Australians, being decided in courts in another country. Even so, after all this time, the Government should know in which direction it is going. However, it is floundering around and members believe that if this all-embracing motion is carried it will satisfy everyone.

We are prepared to give the Government the right to bring this matter before the Parliament. Members may say that is very generous because we do not have the numbers to stop it, but we are not against the matter being debated; even bearing in mind that it appears to be a blatant political move.

We do not wish to go along with a stunt, but in the absence of any solid evidence from the Premier, we can only believe that this matter could quite easily develop into a stunt. That is not something with which we would wish to be associated.

What will happen if the motion is carried? Will the result be conveyed by API, Associated Press, or whatever it is called? Will it be conveyed through international news channels and distributed all over the world? Will the message state that we have finally decided to agree to what we agreed to a long time ago—apart from the matter relating to the class action?

This is just another "Alice in Wonderland" situation. If any member in this place believes that we will obtain any great credence by passing a motion such as this—which could be the worst kind of a gimmick—then I would like the Premier to try to convince me that it is not the case. I am a reasonable man and I have been reasonable on

many occasions and I would be interested to hear what the Premier has to say.

I would like the answer to my question: What will we gain in the United States by way of propaganda as a result of this motion? What will happen if the Government has its way and this motion is passed in the form the Government wishes it to be? Has there been any request for a motion of this nature? Why do we have to endorse what we have already done? Does that make it any more sound? Will the Government be represented at the hearing of the case? Why have Government members not been able to make up their minds? The conservation group knows exactly where it is going; it is leaving the Government for dead.

Why all the mystery about the dates for the hearing? Why has it become a matter of urgency? If I can be convinced of the necessity for all those actions, I would be happy to support the motion.

**MR STEPHENS** (Stirling) [4.09 p.m.]: National Party members have always been concerned when Standing Orders have been suspended during the Address-in-Reply debate because that action does limit the number of times available in the session for members to debate private members' business. The time allotted for private members' business is already too short.

However, we are prepared to accept that the action before the United States courts at the moment is a very topical one and that the Government may feel inclined to bring this debate forward when the subject is foremost in the minds of the people.

We in the National Party go along with the motion, bearing in mind the reduction in time for private members' business. We hope this motion will give the Government an opportunity to outline all the facts of the matter so that the members of the public, who are concerned about this situation and the effects of the escalation of bauxite mining on the escarpment, can be presented with the facts so that they may make their own judgments.

The Premier said that it was very important for the people of the United States, and presumably the courts in the United States, to be made aware of the voice of Parliament as opposed to the voice of Government.

I believe I am correct in stating that the Leader of the Opposition made the point that he would be able to point out or use a decision of this Parliament in the courts of the USA. I think that such an action would have more validity if the courts in the United States were also aware that

the principal proponent of this action had been heard by this Parliament before Parliament made such a decision.

When the Premier gave notice of this motion, I rang Mr Neil Bartholomaeus to ascertain his point of view. One of the questions I asked him was: Do you feel that the Press has reported your point of view adequately? I received an emphatic, "No" in reply.

Members of the National Party are always prepared to give their judgments on the facts and we believe that if we are to obtain the facts it is important that we hear all points of view. So, I believe that perhaps we should call Mr Bartholomaeus before the Bar of this House so that he has ample opportunity to put forward his point of view.

This point of view is not being reported by the Press at the moment, and unfortunately, the Press is the main avenue for news to the public of Western Australia and to the politicians.

Mr Herzfeld: Why don't you represent his views for him?

Mr STEPHENS: I am not here to represent his views or anyone else's views. I am here to ascertain the facts on which to make a judgment. Unlike the member for Mundaring, I do not follow the directions given me by the Premier. I make my own decisions, but before I make my decisions, I like to know the facts—not the facts according to the Liberal Party or the facts according to the Premier, but the facts according to the individuals involved. In the National Party we make our own assessment of the facts, and that is all I am asking.

All the member for Mundaring has to do is to do as he is told and he will get his endorsement. We see what happens to Liberal party members who do not do as they are told—the member for Subiaco knows all about this.

#### *Amendment to Motion*

Mr STEPHENS: Therefore, I move an amendment—

Add after the word "completed" the words "and to enable Mr N. Bartholomaeus to be called to the Bar of this House to give evidence concerning the motion".

I feel that the Premier will support my amendment. If the matter is to go before a court in the United States of America, it will be important that Parliament has made a decision on the matter and that Mr Bartholomaeus has been given the opportunity to present his point of view to the Parliament.

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Premier) [4.13 p.m.]: I want to say very briefly and firmly, and without any hesitation at all, that the Government rejects the amendment moved by the member for Stirling. The amendment is to bring a certain gentleman before the Bar of this House to enable that gentleman to have his say on a particular matter after he has elected, in a very un-Australian way, to go overseas to try to destroy an industry, to try to destroy the jobs of Western Australians, and even to try to destroy the jobs of a number of other Australians. This gentleman is trying to destroy a great export industry which brings funds to Australia and which will help the nation to expand. The member for Stirling wants to bring this man before the Bar of the House to explain something of great seriousness he has done in another country.

Mr Stephens: To explain why he has done it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: This man is using the courts of another land in a very un-Australian way. I feel rather sad that the Deputy Leader of the National Party should find himself supporting a man who wants to destroy an industry in this State and the jobs of 20 000 workers, plus all the benefits that go with the industry.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin) [4.15 p.m.]: I am very disappointed in the attitude adopted by the Premier, although it is a rather typical attitude I regret to say. The member for Stirling never once indicated his support for Mr Bartholomaeus. Not once did he indicate his support for what Mr Bartholomaeus has done. He did say that if we are to suspend Standing Orders in order to debate the motion moved by the Premier—incidentally a motion which reads like a Press statement—then as a Parliament we should have before us the best information available upon which to make a decision. Unlike the members of the Liberal Party, we do not take our orders from the Premier.

Mr Coyne: From whom do you take them?

Mr COWAN: We prefer to make a decision on information placed before the House and matters that come forward in debate.

I am very disappointed that the Premier has taken his usual stand and that he made the comment that the member for Stirling supports Mr Bartholomaeus. That is not the case at all. The member for Stirling was seeking to restore to this institution the right for members to seek information and to make a decision based on that information. Far too often the wishes of members of this Parliament are subordinated to the wishes of government, and that is one of the reasons Parliament is held in contempt by members of the

public. The sooner the Premier realises that, and allows some of his back-bench members a little rein to think for themselves, and perhaps the sooner they show they can think for themselves—

Mr Davies: That is the point.

Mr COWAN: —the sooner this Parliament may regain some of the esteem it has lost. Needless to say, I support the amendment moved by my colleague, the member for Stirling.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [4.17 p.m.]: The Opposition does not support the amendment because we do not believe it has been moved at the right time. We must decide whether we want to deal with the motion to suspend Standing Orders now, then get on with the business of dealing with the motion, and return to the Address-in-Reply, or do we not want to do that? It is as simple as that. We cannot wait to decide whether we want to adjourn the Address-in-Reply or take some other action until we hear a certain individual who could go on *ad infinitum*. If the members of the National Party believe that a need for further inquiry exists, and believe that the need for people to be heard by Parliament exists, then the proper time to move in that direction is during the discussion on the motion. It should not be moved while we are deciding whether or not we should suspend Standing Orders. I believe this amendment has been moved at the wrong time, although I do not know whether the members of the National Party realise that yet. We will give the matter consideration when the motion is being discussed but I am a little like the Premier—no, I do not want to say I am in any way like the Premier. Perhaps I should say I am a little concerned that we might be making decisions on matters where we do not know all the facts. I think those people who have read the Press and who have watched television over the past six weeks or so must surely be somewhat acquainted with the situation. Quite simply, this is not the right place to move such an amendment.

Mr Stephens: Yes it is.

Mr DAVIES: Therefore, we oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Mr Cowan	Ayes 3
Mr Stephens	Mr McPharlin
	(Teller)

Noes 47

Mr Barnett	Mr P. V. Jones
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bridge	Mr Laurance
Mr Bryce	Mr MacKinnon
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Nanovich
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr O'Connor
Mr Carr	Mr Old
Mr Clarko	Mr Pearce
Sir Charles Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Coyne	Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig	Mr Skidmore
Mr Crane	Mr Sodeman
Dr Dadour	Mr Spriggs
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Trethowan
Mr Grayden	Mr Tubby
Mr Grewar	Mr Watt
Mr Grill	Mr Williams
Mr Harman	Mr Wilson
Mr Hassell	Mr Young
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Shalders (Teller)
Mr Hodge	Mr Bateman (Teller)
Mr Jamieson	

Amendment thus negatived.

#### Debate (on motion) Resumed

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [4.21 p.m.]: I undertook to respond to the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I must say I am very disappointed at the fact that he said if I conveyed information to him as the Leader of the Opposition he would undertake there and then to broadcast it to the world.

Mr Davies: I was being fair by telling you what the position would be.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Throughout my history in this place Leaders of the Opposition of both sides have been able to confer with Premiers and Ministers of the day, and it has not been unusual for Premiers of the day to convey certain information to them.

Mr Skidmore: What is so sinister about our wanting to know what is going on?

Sir CHARLES COURT: In my experience I cannot recall a case where that confidence has been abused.

For instance, in many cases in the Federal Parliament it is publicly known that only the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy from the Opposition have access to certain information.

Mr Davies: This is a one-up situation; I am not speaking generally.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If those persons were not prepared to honour a commitment, that line of communication would cease. I hope that never happens.

Mr Davies: This is a one-up situation which is important enough for you to know where we stand on it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition would be more concerned about the interests of the State, the Government of which he aspires one day to lead. I want to tell him, as I endeavoured to do by way of interjection, that some dates in April are crucial. They are not crucial because the case is to be heard in April, but it is crucial that the information be available. Whether it is crucial to the way the information will be used by the persons concerned in the presentation of certain matters to the courts is not for me to decide. Heaven forbid that I do that. However, it is important the information be made available before those dates so that it may be used by the persons concerned who are literally fighting for the preservation of an industry in this State. It is important that the information be available to them if they decide it is desirable to let the court know the opinion of this Parliament.

Mr Davies: You have already got that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will come to that.

These people have to present certain information to the court and it is desirable that they have our opinion; otherwise they run a very severe risk of the court later saying, "It is too late to present that now; you had your chance when you made your submission." From memory the first crucial date is 15 April, and the other date also is before the end of this month.

Therefore, I would remind the House a degree of urgency is involved. It is not a question of when the case will be heard, because in my experience of American courts they just keep rolling on and on, but there is a certain point at which the persons concerned must establish some facts.

Whether the respondents to this case will elect to use the opinion of the Parliament is not for me to say, but at least the Parliament of this State has a responsibility to show the courts that we are conscious of the fact that the companies are operating lawfully and properly, and that we declare that to be so right now.

It has been said that if these companies are acting properly under agreements ratified by Parliament, then Parliament has already put its seal on their work. Of course it has, and that is what we are trying to codify in one motion. We are trying to codify, firstly, the fact that the companies are operating under agreements and, secondly, that they are currently operating properly. It is as simple as that—a declaration from the Parliament.

The other point is in respect of how we are going to use this motion outside the courts. I would assume the Opposition would want us in a sensible way to get the message across that the Parliament of the State has declared the companies are operating lawfully and properly under properly signed agreements which have been ratified by the Parliament of this State, and that they are conforming to those agreements as at today, and not as at the date the agreements were ratified. Therefore, it makes good sense that we pass this resolution and pass it quickly. That is the answer to the second point raised by the Leader of the Opposition in respect of what will happen to this information. I repeat that it will be available for the companies to include amongst the exhibits they tender if they wish to do so; and on the other hand it will be available to the Government if it wants to do something.

The third point raised by the Leader of the Opposition concerned whether a request had been made for this motion. No request has been made, but as a Government we have a responsibility to do all in our power to protect a vital industry. We do not have to be asked to do this sort of thing. We believe in the interests of the State, the industry, the nation, and the companies involved we should do all in our power to strengthen the case of the respondents if they need it; and particularly if we have to become involved.

The next question asked by the Leader of the Opposition was: Why do we have to endorse this? It is important that we have an up-to-date endorsement of the Parliament—not only the Government, but the Parliament—in respect of the agreements and the fact that they were entered into lawfully and ratified by the Parliament and are being operated properly at the moment.

The fifth question asked by the Leader of the Opposition was whether we will be represented. I thought I had made it clear it would be very wrong of us to declare whether or not we want to be linked with the case. I know good reasons which I will not give at the moment that we should not be involved, but it may happen that our legal advisers after considering the matter will provide reasons that we should be involved. It is up to us to examine the alternatives.

The last question was in respect of the urgency of the motion. I think I have explained the importance of the dates in the proceedings. I believe we owe it to ourselves, to the State, to the workers in the industry, and to the nation to do all we can in our power to make the case as strong as possible and above all to make sure we get the message to the people of America that the

companies are acting properly and responsibly. Whether or not we like it, public opinion in America is very strong and the legal system there is different from ours. I believe in leaving no stone unturned to make sure we get the message across to the Government within the United States of America, to the States of the United States, and as far as we can to the people of the United States.

For that reason it is important we deal with the motion quickly and have it passed by both Houses.

Question put and passed.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

#### *Motion*

Debate resumed from 31 March.

**MR PEARCE** (Gosnells) [4.30 p.m.]: I will begin my contribution to the Address-in-Reply by recording my thanks to the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which, each year, runs a seminar lasting a little over three weeks on parliamentary practices and procedures in the Parliament of Westminster. The last Western Australian attendee at this seminar was your good self, Mr Deputy Speaker in 1978; and in 1975 the attendee from Western Australia was the present Speaker, the member for Kalamunda. I think you will agree, although there may not be widespread agreement in the House, that Western Australia has sent a formidable trio to the seminar in the last few years.

I was tremendously impressed by the experience and the amount I learnt at the seminar. I was able to meet many of the members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and to discuss with them in a frank way the current political problems besetting the Parliament of Westminster and the British nation as a whole.

I wish to thank the people who organised the conference. Those people included the Secretary of the United Kingdom Branch of the CPA (Mr Peter Cobb); the assistant secretary (Mr James Batten), who was an aide to the former Governor of Western Australia, Sir Charles Gairdner; and Mr H. G. Davies. I would like to thank Mrs Valerie Kaye and Miss Phillippa Peel, who did most of the hard slog organisation in the office, as well as the members of the office staff.

One of the things I learnt at the seminar is that although we cling to what we consider to be Westminster traditions in this House, we do so in a much more frantic and frenetic way than do the people in that Parliament. What we consider to be

Westminster traditions have in many cases long been abandoned by the Parliament of Westminster; yet we take them very seriously in our thinking. I am in the process of formulating proposals for streamlining considerably the operations of this Parliament; and I shall be asking the Parliament to consider these proposals in a relatively short time. Under those proposals, we would remove some of the older trappings, and we would work more effectively as a Parliament in the late 20th century.

However, it would be wrong for me not to address myself to the Government's programme, as the Opposition's shadow Minister for Education. I should spend some time in canvassing those sections of the Governor's Speech relating to education.

The first thing I could say is that perhaps it was my own absence from the Parliament on the occasion of the opening that led the Governor not to canvass the area of education to any great extent. He had very little to say about the pressing problems being encountered in the education system at present. If I were to summarise these problems, it would seem that the most pressing issue as far as the parents of the children are concerned is the high cost of so-called free education. It is becoming more and more unbearable financially for parents to send their children to State Government schools these days. The rate of inflation in the cost of education seem to be higher than most other inflationary aspects in the community.

I am very sad to see the build-up of costs imposed upon parents in the last few years because many of the schools which are increasing charges are doing so generally because they need the money to operate effectively. Nevertheless, I believe the schools have a responsibility to consider the financial import of their pressures on parents who have to find so much money all at the same time—that is to say, at the beginning of the school year. That applies particularly to parents on low incomes and those who are supporting families of two, three, four, or more children at school. The situation is worse if the children are at the high school level. Sometimes the parents find themselves having to pay up to \$1000 in one hit, for four or more children, at the beginning of the school year. That is a tremendous bill to charge to anybody; and it is one that families can no longer sustain.

Therefore, in the schools now we have the situation in which people who cannot afford to buy textbooks do not have them. Their children are disrupting the classes by turning up at school without texts. In some cases, because of the

embarrassment, the children do not go to school at all; and the State has to pay truant officers to find out why these children do not go to school, and to force them to attend school without the necessities which would make their attendance worth while.

That is irrefutably the fact of the matter; and I am sorry that in his Speech, the Governor did not see fit to address himself to these problems. It is not that I would blame the gentleman himself for not thinking of them, because one would have expected his advisers in these areas to have told him of the problem. Here the finger points quite directly to the Minister for Education and to the Premier. They have failed to realise that there is a pressing problem in this area.

The Minister for Education and the Premier are culpable for a lack of foresight, because I took the opportunity before the beginning of the school year to indicate to them that these problems existed. I tried to tell them exactly the nature of the problem, and the sorts of measures they could adopt to solve them. I went into considerable detail as to the sorts of measures that were necessary for those problems to be overcome; and I will outline those measures briefly to the House.

All members would accept that a problem exists. The costs of education are becoming very high indeed. They are imposing a strain on parents; and a considerable number of the parents cannot meet the costs. That fact is borne out by the geometric progression in the applications for the very meagre assistance that is available for students to overcome these sorts of costs. However, that will be dealt with a little later in the debate.

Let me justify the figure of up to \$1 000 for a large family attending school. The charges to which I refer are divided into two categories. Schools levy a fee for students to attend the school although, of course, we know that education is supposed to be free. Over the years, the schools have built up a non-compulsory fee for the students to attend. They also have lists of books which the students must have; and these books cost a considerable amount to the parents.

I will deal briefly with the fees first; and then I will deal with the cost of textbooks. Then I will outline to the Governor the sorts of steps he needs to have his Government undertake, if that is the way the system operates in fact. We appreciate that is how the convention would have it.

In the days when you and I were at school, Mr Deputy Speaker, you will remember that the schools raised money from the parents, either through fund-raising activities by the P & C, or

through what used to be called "voluntary giving" or "direct giving" in which the schools asked the parents to send probably sixpence a week with the children to make a direct financial input to the school. That money was used to provide what, in those days, were the necessities, because the schools were funded very sparsely by today's standards.

Over the 20 or 30 years of this direct giving on a voluntary basis, the system of the imposition of school fees developed. These school fees are voluntary, as the Minister said in answer to a question by me late last year. However, in practical terms, they have become very close to compulsory fees.

As a teacher, I would never pressure the children to have their parents pay the voluntary school fees by threatening to withhold reports and other things; but the schools do that now, as a matter of routine. Nevertheless, there is a very high level of default on these fees.

The principal of one school in my electorate, the Kelmscott Senior High School, stated publicly late last year that there was a bad debt situation with the fees at that school of \$6 000. That is a very considerable amount for a school which expected to receive that sum in voluntary fees. The fees at that school are of the order of \$50 per student; and although it is incredibly high, it is not unusual for high schools within the metropolitan area.

I am uncertain of the range of fees charged by country high schools. They seem to vary more than they do in the metropolitan area, depending in part on the fund-raising ability of the local P & C Organisation.

A sum of \$50 per student is a hefty whack for the school to take, particularly as the Education Department recommendation is that no school should charge more than \$9 by means of its voluntary fee—that is as I understood the situation. What the schools do is to charge fees for specific subjects and that seems to be inimical to the whole concept of free education. We will have a situation in which one will have to pay a fee to undertake an English course and quite often a substantial fee has to be paid when one wishes to take an optional course for which materials have to be purchased. The student wishing to study art may need to pay \$25 a year to the school for the purchase of art materials.

The same situation frequently applies to other subjects, such as photography, and the tendency is starting to appear in some schools which offer courses in manual arts which used to be

compulsory and highly regarded subjects in schools.

It appears that now one cannot go and undertake a course in some schools without paying a subject fee. That seems to me to be a very poor way in which to operate an education system. I find it difficult to believe that, in these days of moderately generous education funding, schools have to charge more for additional materials than they have had to in the past.

Again, as far as the system in Western Australia is concerned, one of the culprits is the Minister for Education. Schools are charging more for materials for courses because in real terms the Education Department—let me make it clear to the Deputy Premier in case he starts on another one of the “contained within limits of expenditure” larks on which we had a discussion last week with regard to health care cuts—is supplying less to schools, notwithstanding that the materials are for consumption by students in pursuance of courses, than used to be the case four or five years ago.

Therefore, the Education Department is not providing the materials to the schools and schools are providing the materials to students by charging them at the beginning of the year for all the materials they are likely to consume during the course of that year.

Of course, by requiring that all the charges be paid in advance, the school contributes, in part, to the unbearable load placed on parents, because they have to meet all of these fees in a lump sum. I want to make it clear to the House that I understand perfectly well the charges levied in this way by schools vary considerably from school to school. Some schools have a very enlightened approach and are able to put minimal charges on students without the courses appearing to suffer unduly. Other schools do not have a sufficient regard for the ability of parents to pay when charges are levied. I am sorry to say that, but I believe that is the case.

In that situation, two mandatory obligations fall on the Minister. The first of these is to monitor very carefully the charges which schools are imposing on parents so that they may be limited if they are excessive. That is to say, the Minister should say to the high schools “You cannot charge beyond certain levels for voluntary fees or for fees for courses.”

Secondly, it is mandatory upon the Minister to ensure schools are provided with educationally necessary materials so that they can run the courses they require without having to make a charge for them.

Mr Grayden: That is exactly what is happening at the present time, as you will find out very shortly.

Mr PEARCE: When I was in London a fortnight ago I visited a school in the inner London area. This school is funded not by a large and rich State like Western Australia, but by the Greater London Council and it offers a range of courses not only—

Mr Sibson: Which school?

Mr PEARCE: The Pimlico Comprehensive School. It offers a range of courses which, in Australian terms, go from year eight to year 12 and they would shame the Australian education system. Not only does this school have a tremendous variety of courses, but also a person who was embarking on the form six year of study would be offered a range of up to 30 courses compared with the 10 to 12 courses available in most schools in Western Australia. The students study at this school completely free of charge and all textbooks are supplied on loan throughout the year absolutely free.

Mr Sibson: Did you happen to see the Holland Comprehensive School, because if you had your attitude would be different? It is quite a lot different from the one you are describing.

Mr PEARCE: No, I did not. Had the member for Bunbury given me the itinerary he wished me to follow for the purpose of his speeches in this House, and had he given me an expense allowance, no doubt I would have been prepared to do that.

Mr Sibson: It is important in the respect that, while some comprehensive schools are very good, some are very bad.

Mr PEARCE: There is a considerable variation in schooling in England, because it is carried out on a county-by-county basis. However, as far as I am aware, in all counties textbooks are normally provided free to students and fees are not charged. I am not able to say that the subjects do not vary somewhat from school to school. They certainly vary from State to State in Australia—the analogy is quite correct there, and as counties vary, so do the States in Australia vary.

Nevertheless, the system of charging students who attend schools which prevails in Western Australia would not be tolerated in England, nor would the extent to which people are charged for textbooks. This gives rise to many of the complaints made in Western Australia, because a number of the people who live here now came originally from England. At one point or another a significant proportion of the population of



Western Australia immigrated directly from England.

Approximately one-third of the population of my electorate is made up of English immigrants and I believe a large proportion of the populations of the electorates of other members would fall into the same category.

These people are accustomed to the education system which prevails in England and they cannot understand why a State as resource rich and wealthy as our own cannot provide education—that most essential commodity—in the way that even such a struggling economy as that in England is able to afford.

Mr Grayden: There is not a word of truth in virtually everything you are saying.

Mr Shalders: Could you tell the House—

Mr PEARCE: I wonder whether the Minister and the member have worked out which one should be interjecting at this time. The Minister has the floor.

Mr Grayden: I want to make it absolutely clear that in almost everything you have said this afternoon there is not a grain of truth, as you will find out shortly.

Mr PEARCE: I knew I should have taken the interjection made by the Government Whip first.

Mr Grayden: I am completely surprised at your ignorance of the matter.

Mr Shalders: Could you tell the House where the money for all those textbooks and everything else that is provided free of charge comes from? Who provides the money for those schools?

Mr PEARCE: It is paid for by the Government. The Government pays for it indirectly. I do not intend to elaborate at great length this afternoon on comparative education systems. However, the Government pays the money to the county councils directly and they fund the education system. They also raise money themselves by charging rates in the same manner as local governments do here.

Mr Shalders: Hence they pay for their school books. Did you look at the budgets of the local councils?

Mr PEARCE: Overall all one can say is that it is not the case that levels of taxation in England are significantly higher than they are here. That is the point I am making. The same sorts of taxation levels prevail in England and in fact because of the policies of the Conservative Government the overall level of direct taxation is lower in England at the present time than it is here. However, more is spent on the education system in England than is spent here.

It is not a question of taxpayers having to foot the bill; it is a question of the priorities Governments give to their expenditure. The English Government gives a higher priority to education than does the Western Australian Government and I am arguing to the effect that the English Government is right in this matter and the Government of Western Australia is wrong.

Mr Sibson: Almost the highest segment of expenditure by the Government of Western Australia goes to education. In England you have millions of people and short distances.

Mr PEARCE: The member is making a big error when he brings up those sorts of figures. He will be well aware, as a member of the WA Council of State Schools Organisations, that Western Australia spends less than 23 per cent of the State Budget on education, whereas all other States with the exception of one spends in excess of 30 per cent. That is the sort of situation that the member, as a parent representative on the State Council of the WA Council of State Schools Organisation, ought to be trying to correct, instead of propping up the poor performance of his Government.

Mr Sibson: You know how much better the Western Australian education system is in every respect compared with the Eastern States. You have only to go—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member's interjections are too lengthy.

Mr PEARCE: The point to which I am addressing myself this afternoon is that it is not a good situation when parents are forced to pay for education in this manner.

Mr Sibson: Many parents will disagree entirely with the attitude you are adopting.

Mr PEARCE: I am astounded that somebody who combines his membership of this House with the membership of the State Council of the WA Council of State Schools Organisation is prepared to argue against me when I say a greater effort should be made to ensure that parents do not have to pay out such phenomenal amounts of money at the start of the school year.

Is it not an incredible situation that when I ask for a better deal for parents, a so-called parents' representative yells at me that parents want to pay more. In essence, that is what he is saying.

Mr Grayden: He is objecting because half your statements are completely untrue.

Mr PEARCE: I have obviously improved by 50 per cent since the Minister last interjected.

The second matter I wish to deal with concerns the cost of textbooks. We need, in this area, a more imaginative and creative use of the Government money which is provided already for the purchase of textbooks. This should be done to enable all students, in all schools in this State, to have their textbooks free, on loan. I am not saying there should be more Government expenditure but we should look at the money which is already provided, in lump sums, to parents for school textbooks. That money should be used more effectively and efficiently so that the schools may buy the texts which should be loaned to students; thereby alleviating a cost which could run to as high as \$200 per student.

Mr Grayden: Are not you aware that many schools in Western Australia tried and rejected the hire scheme?

Mr PEARCE: I am quite aware of the way in which school hire schemes operate and I will tell the Minister the reasons for the non-success of this scheme. I will explain to him, as simply as I can, the difference between my proposition and the hire schemes schools have run in the past. That difference is the reason that the scheme I put forward will be successful, whereas the hire scheme flopped.

If the Minister were to write to the schools which had hire schemes in the past or schools which have abandoned the scheme, he would find the main reason for the lack of success was that parents did not opt into this system, with a lost penalty to the school. Secondly, there was always the default or bad debt situation.

Mr Grayden: The school principals reject the idea completely.

Mr PEARCE: They do not reject it completely at all. School principals have a wide range of attitudes with regard to what should be done.

I am suggesting that the Government's subsidy—which varies from \$10 to \$35, depending on the year in which the student is studying—should be paid directly to the schools instead of directly to the parents of students. I think the subsidy is \$10 for years eight, nine and 10; \$35 per student for year 11 and \$20 for year 12 students. If that money were paid to a school in a lump sum the problem could be overcome. The schools would be able to build up a stock of books for free loan to students and it would cost the Government nothing.

The irony of the situation is that at the present time the subsidy is paid to the parents and with the rising cost of textbooks it has been necessary for schools to go into some hire scheme. When I was senior English master at the Lynwood High

School the students paid \$3 a year for English textbooks. No-one had to buy textbooks because that amount was enough to cover all that were required. If the students were to buy the textbooks at that time, the cost would be 10 times as much per student, yet, at the same time, the parents were receiving the Government's subsidy for school books, to subsidise their cost. Some parents were receiving the subsidy and not buying books. A parent was automatically paid the subsidy if a child was enrolled at the school. The school used to organise that subsidy but it was inefficient and costly to the Government, the school, and the parents.

I am not knocking the scheme; it was introduced by a previous Labor Government. Liberal Governments have not found it necessary to introduce such a scheme. The scheme has been operating for some time now with a considerable rise in the cost of school books.

We should look at the system again and attempt to find a more effective way to use the \$1 million of State money which the Government pays in textbook subsidies each year. The real wastage is that at the end of the year that \$1 million is worth nothing to the State because the books are either thrown away or locked in a cupboard. Therefore, there is a wastage of \$1 million per annum. If the system I described were put into force that \$1 million would be retained and carried through as assets to the following year. In subsequent years that asset would build up. Of course, there would be depreciation with books wearing out but at least some of them could be built up and carried over for the next year.

I announced this scheme prior to the start of the school year and it is a scheme which will be implemented by the next Labor Government. I gave the present Government a clear opportunity to adopt the scheme, without any charge or patent on it.

Mr Shalders: In the unlikely event that your party became the Government and this scheme is introduced, how do you propose to cover the loss of books? Will there be a bond on books to cover that loss?

Mr PEARCE: There would not be a bond but there would be a charge for books which were wilfully damaged or lost. The member will appreciate that if one has a hold on students in regard to reports and references, and if books are lost during the course of the year, it is possible to recover money from the parents.

Mr Shalders: Without incurring a bad debt situation?

Mr PEARCE: There is no bad debt situation.

Mr Shalders: If a parent will not pay the \$5 for a lost book how will you get it?

Mr PEARCE: I will not spend a tremendous amount of time on the petty details of the scheme. The way to extract money from reluctant parents would be to withhold reports and references.

However, it is more legitimate to use those measures to ensure payment for lost or destroyed books than for non-payment of fees which should have been voluntary in the first place.

#### *Amendment to Motion*

Mr PEARCE: I feel so strongly about the failure of the Governor, in his Speech, to present significant educational policies that I move an amendment to add the following words to the Address-in-Reply—

But we regret to note that Your Excellency has not seen fit to include in his speech measures to alleviate the high cost of so called free education for students attending Government schools and we accordingly recommend that immediate steps be taken to:

- (a) limit the charges levied by schools on parents.
- (b) introduce a free text book scheme for secondary and technical schools.
- (c) provide a more adequate system of allowances for needy students.

MR WILSON (Dianella) [5.01 p.m.]: I second the amendment.

In the course of my remarks, I intend to concentrate in particular on paragraph (c) of the amendment which concerns the provision of a more adequate system of allowances for needy students. Before I address myself to the specifics of that, I want to make a general comment about the situation which has moved the Opposition to propose this amendment.

The situation in education as it affects a significant sector of the children in our schools at the present time is symptomatic of an overall situation which is characterised by a serious and growing gap between the haves and the have-nots in our community. It is characterised by the growth of significant pockets of poverty in Western Australia. This is the sort of issue, of course, that we tend to try to ignore or to pretend does not exist, especially at the Government level; because these days Governments at State and Commonwealth levels in all countries are more concerned with slick public relations exercises than with the real welfare of all the people.

I would like to quote briefly from an article published by the Catholic Commission for Justice

and Peace. It deals with the issue of poverty in Australia, including Western Australia, and states—

The affluence of many Australians contrasts not only with the poverty of neighbouring countries but also with the poverty of large numbers of their fellow Australians. Poor Australians face the particular hardship of being poor in a very rich society which denies the presence of extreme poverty in its midst . . .

Poverty in Australia is often ignored because the poor tend to be hidden away or concentrated in specific areas.

The article goes on to delineate those hidden and concentrated areas. Some of this might not be relevant to education, but the article talks about aged persons, single parent families, families whose sole breadwinners are on low wages, sick and handicapped persons, the unemployed, Aborigines, recently arrived migrants, refugees, and other matters which certainly are not relevant to the issue before us. However, the article underlines the point that the general situation is one which the majority of people in our community, including the Government, unfortunately are not prepared to recognise but are prepared only to pretend to ignore. Yet it is a situation in which there is a growing gap between those who are rich and those who are poor. As the member for Balcatta mentioned recently when talking about housing problems, a growing number of people who hang in the middle are increasingly finding themselves at the lower end of the scale in terms of the resources they require to cope with increasing costs.

To take up and press further one of the points raised by the member for Gosnells with regard to book hire charges and school amenity fees: A member of the Government interjected and talked about variations in conditions in schools in the United Kingdom. It may be news to the Government to realise that, very unfortunately, there is an increasing tendency in Western Australian schools for variations of this kind to occur. In lower income areas large discrepancies occur in the resources available to schools to carry on the education of children.

I raised this matter in the Parliament in 1979 and I put questions to the then Minister for Education in which I drew his attention to the fact that up to 30 per cent of students of high schools in low-income areas were unable to afford the book hire charges suggested by the department as a means to alleviate the burden of the high cost of textbooks.

Also, as the member for Gosnells has indicated, the parents of a large number of students are not able to afford the amenities fees imposed by the schools. As a result of that the schools have to forgo the income. Talk about bad debts! In some schools the fees have to be written off; and proposing solutions in terms of bonds for books is trying to shut the gate after the horse has bolted.

Some of the schools are already incurring large bad debts because of the inability of many parents to pay the fees; and so the schools concerned are suffering as a result. Those schools are disadvantaged because they have to forgo thousands of dollars of revenue on which they must depend to maintain the quality of education on a par with schools in more affluent areas where the proportion of parents who are able to afford the fees is much higher.

So we have a system in Western Australian schools in which we are developing poor schools in poor areas. We are developing schools with resources which are not on a par with the resources of schools in more affluent areas. We are developing a system in which we are unable to provide equal educational opportunities for children in all areas. We are developing a system which has inbuilt in it a disadvantage for some of our children.

I would like to go on from there to deal specifically with the two schemes currently provided by the Education Department.

Mr Shalders: Are you prepared to answer a question?

Mr WILSON: I have not the time to answer questions.

The two schemes administered by the department are the school book assistance scheme and the education endowment scheme. What is happening in respect of the increasing demand for assistance, the increasing need for assistance, and the very strict limits imposed on the assistance provided to needy families may be demonstrated by statistics provided to me by the Minister himself in answer to questions. For instance, if we look at the education endowment scheme we find the number of applications for assistance has increased from 147 in 1978 to 1100 in 1981. When we look at the number of grants awarded we find 131 awards were made in respect of the 147 applications in 1978, and the majority of those awards were for \$160. In 1981, when approximately 1100 applications were made for assistance, 431 awards were granted at the rate of \$160 per student. Those figures alone show the increased need. They illustrate a great increase in the number of parents requesting assistance.

The other matter we must consider in respect of these grants and applications is the level of income at which one is eligible for assistance. For instance, to be eligible for a grant a family with one dependent child must have a gross weekly income of \$100 or less. Can members imagine any family trying to survive with an income level of \$100 or less at today's costs? When we check that against the latest figures provided by the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research of the University of Melbourne we find that the poverty line for a family with one child with the head of the family in the work force was \$134.40 a week in 1980. The poverty line for a single parent with one child is quoted at \$91.40 a week.

The limit for this form of assistance is set above the poverty line. What are we saying to these people? We are saying that the State refuses to recognise that they are living below the poverty line; and because they are below the poverty line they are not entitled to any special assistance to enable their children to obtain an education on a par with that of children of wealthier families in the area.

We are saying to those people that their children, who comprise a significant part of our most valuable natural resource, are not regarded as being on a par with the rest of the children of the State. We are wiping them off and saying they do not deserve assistance and they will not get it. We are saying we are already spending so many hundreds of millions of dollars on education and that is all we can afford to spend, irrespective of priorities. We are saying these people just have to miss out. We are saying it is too bad for the people concerned; we cannot reach out to them; we cannot afford to pay for their claim for equal educational opportunities.

The eligibility level for a family with two dependent children is \$110 a week. The poverty line for a family with two children is \$156.90 a week. The eligibility level for a family with three children is a gross weekly income of \$120. I would like to see a Minister of this Government surviving with three children with an income of \$120 a week and being able to afford high school fees.

Mr Young: Or one of the members.

Mr WILSON: Yes, or any of the members of the Parliament; I do not deny that. I am referring to the reality of the situation and by quoting a Minister of the Government I am pointing out that the Government has responsibility for this system and it is the Government which is refusing to update the system and refusing to recognise the

really critical position which exists for many of the poverty-stricken people of our community.

If we look at the other system which is available to people, and to which the Minister for Education directs people when complaints are made about their not being able to afford the fees which are being charged—the school book assistance scheme—we find that for the year 1977-78, the grants totalled \$122 576, while in 1979-80, they amounted to \$208 344. I do not have figures relating to the number of grants made, but I suppose they could be calculated. We are told the grants range in value between \$45 and \$85.

These grants are not as high as those provided under the other scheme. However, we find that the income eligibility level is not much advanced on the other scheme, either. The level is \$120 a week, plus \$7 for a spouse, \$5 for the first child and \$4 for each succeeding child. So, in fact, a family with three children is subjected to a cutoff level of \$140 a week. As I have already indicated to the House, the poverty line for a family of three children is \$156.90 a week. Again, we are expecting a family with three children on that level of income to educate their children in a State school in this State.

We constantly hear about the resources boom, which will be greater than anything else ever experienced in the world; yet this wealthy State, which is on the threshold of a fantastic boom, cannot even provide assistance to a low-income family with three children to educate their children at a level which is on a par with that enjoyed by people with more financial means.

It is a scandal in a rich State like Western Australia and a scandal for a Government which sits complacently behind its ranks of public relations officers—who spend all their time thinking up ways of congratulating the Government for what a good and generous Government it is—that we should treat low-income families in such a shabby manner. There are no grounds at all for this kind of complacency, for this kind of slick public relations operation when we have in our midst families in such poor circumstances, for which this State is not prepared to make provision.

These people are being ignored, left out and forgotten; they are the people the Minister for Health prefers to call "the disadvantaged". They really are disadvantaged in a State ruled over by his Government.

I wish to conclude by making one further comment about the question of priorities. Today I had on notice a question regarding the amount of

money which is being allocated by the Education Department for the printing and publishing of its new newspaper *WA Education News*—a newspaper which many teachers have told me they never bother to read because they believe it is so useless. I am informed that in the current financial year the Education Department has allocated \$35 000 for the publication of the newspaper, and that on 16 February 1981 the department engaged an editor, to edit this newspaper, at an annual salary of \$22 557. This Government, which cries poor when it comes to the disadvantaged and the poor—those who are truly disadvantaged under our education system—is prepared to throw away \$50 000 to put out a useless newsletter to schools and other people in the community. It is prepared to engage another employee—I do not know how the Government got his appointment past the staffing levels set by the Public Service Board—at an annual salary of \$22 557. This is another scandal perpetrated by this Government and the Minister for Education. The Government stands condemned for its shocking allocation of priorities.

I support the amendment in the strongest terms.

**MR GRAYDEN** (South Perth—Minister for Education) [5.21 p.m.]: We have just listened to a rather extraordinary debate. Most of the statements made by the two members were untrue.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** Which ones?

**Mr GRAYDEN:** We will soon establish that. At the outset, I wish to say that, quite contrary to what was said by the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella—who made the point in some detail—the Government is concerned about disadvantaged people. The member for Dianella maintained and reiterated that the Government was not the slightest bit concerned about the high cost of books.

**Mr Wilson:** I did not make that point.

**Mr GRAYDEN:** I wrote down what the honourable member said. He said "The Government refused to recognise the serious position which confronts parents."

**Mr Wilson:** I did not talk about books; I was referring to the total situation.

**Mr GRAYDEN:** Yes, the total situation in respect of books.

**Mr Wilson:** Address yourself to the real question.

**Mr GRAYDEN:** The Government is most concerned, and has been concerned over a very

long period; we constantly make additional provisions in order to help those parents who are in need of assistance. This point has been either completely overlooked or deliberately ignored by both the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella.

I emphasise again that the Government is extremely concerned about the present situation. It is investigating the situation with a view to doing whatever it can to alleviate the position. Therefore, it is false in the extreme for members to criticise the Government in this respect. It is also extremely hypocritical on the part of both members because they know costs are constantly increasing. Increased costs are not confined only to the education system. Members opposite know a similar situation applies in virtually every other walk of life. It applies to our hospital and health services and, naturally, it also applies to education.

What has the Opposition done to try to contain costs? Whenever the Government makes a move to rationalise our education system, it is opposed by members of the Opposition.

Mr Wilson: Like employing an editor at \$22 500 a year?

Mr GRAYDEN: We all know the song and dance which has arisen over the efforts of the Minister for Health to contain costs in the health system of Western Australia and we know of the sort of support to the furore created by members opposite.

We know the attitude of members of the Opposition in respect of the 35-hour week which, again, must have the effect of greatly increasing costs in every walk of life.

We know the attitude of the Opposition in respect of excessive wage demands, which are being made virtually daily by unions throughout Australia. New South Wales, of course, under a Labor Government, is a forerunner throughout the Commonwealth in excessive wage demands.

All these matters have the support of members of the Opposition. Yet at the same time they are supporting these things, they point their fingers at what is happening in our education and public health systems and in other Government departments and suggest that additional money should be spent. It is the epitome of hypocrisy that on the one hand, members opposite do everything possible to force up prices and, on the other hand, criticise the Government for failing to contain those costs.

Most of the statements made by members opposite have been either untrue, or overlooked the assistance which has been and continues to be

provided by the Government. The member for Dianella and the member for Gosnells denigrated the State Government education system in Western Australia. Those statements were untrue.

Mr Wilson: I did no such thing. Stick to the question before the Chair.

Mr Pearce: I did not denigrate the education system at all.

Mr GRAYDEN: I regularly come into contact with a great number of people from North America, Canada, Britain and other parts of the world. In fact, only yesterday I received a deputation of British people who, without exception, eulogised our education system. These are people who are conversant with the education system in their own countries. When such people move to Australia—if they have school-age children—they join the various parents and citizens' organisations around Australia and become conversant with our system. Without exception they say our education system compares more than favourably with that offering in their home countries.

Mr Tonkin: What nonsense! Do you say it is without exception?

Mr GRAYDEN: Yes.

Mr Tonkin: I know an exception to that.

Mr GRAYDEN: From which country?

Mr Tonkin: From Britain.

Mr GRAYDEN: Good gracious, as I mentioned, only yesterday I had a group of people from Britain in my office expressing absolute amazement at the standard of our education system in Western Australia.

By any world standards, our teachers are dedicated and hard working. The great mass of our State Government school teachers are highly dedicated and all are highly trained. On occasion, I visit schools throughout Western Australia. No matter where I go—whether it be to a classroom in Esperance, Kimberley, Pilbara, or anywhere else—without exception I find the children engrossed in their work. The walls of the classrooms are festooned with the children's work. If the fans are not operating, their work is hanging from the fans. All sorts of projects are under way. I visited the school at Perenjori the other day and found the children doing a project on snails. Strangely, the children, living as they do in a wheatbelt town, have never seen snails. Without exception, the children were obviously enjoying the learning process.

Therefore, for people like the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella to

denigrate our education system is absolute rubbish.

Mr Pearce: We are not denigrating the system.

Mr GRAYDEN: I hope the *Western Teacher*, which is the journal of the Teachers' Union, will publish their comments, because I imagine the 13 000 full-time teachers in this State would be dismayed to read the remarks of those two members. Their remarks were completely untrue. The statement that children in other countries enjoy a better system of education than ours is false, as the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella both know.

Mr Wilson: I did not make that statement. Stick to the facts.

Mr GRAYDEN: All they are attempting to do is obtain cheap publicity for political gain, at the expense of our education system.

In the Eastern States a situation different from that which exists in Western Australia obtains. There, because of the policies pursued by the various Governments, the population in State schools is declining; school enrolments are declining; schools are being amalgamated; others are being abolished. The biggest problem confronting teachers is that of redundancy. There is, too, the situation of children leaving the State school system in droves and going across to the private school system because of criticism such as we have heard today from the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella in their support of those militant elements in the Teachers' Union. The situation in Victoria is that there is a strike somewhere in the school system each day and that has been going on for nine years. It is as a consequence of those divisive militant attitudes such as were expressed in this House tonight. To listen to the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella one would think there was no assistance available for needy parents in this State. Again, nothing could be more untrue.

The amendment moved by the member for Gosnells reads as follows—

But we regret to note that Your Excellency has not seen fit to include in his speech measures to alleviate the high cost of so called free education for students attending Government schools and we accordingly recommend that immediate steps be taken to—

- (a) limit the charges levied by schools on parents.
- (b) introduce a free text book scheme for secondary and technical schools.

(c) provide a more adequate system of allowances for needy students.

Let us consider paragraph (a) relating to the limiting of charges levied by schools on parents. That is already being done.

Mr Pearce: Being, or been, done?

Mr GRAYDEN: It has already been done, and the member should know it.

Mr Pearce: What are the limits?

Mr GRAYDEN: The limit is \$9.

Mr Pearce: Why do schools charge \$50?

Mr Wilson: You do not know what is going on in the schools.

Mr GRAYDEN: The Government provides buildings, teachers, and basic facilities such as library books, home economics utensils, manual art tools, and scientific equipment. There is no cost in respect of that.

Mr Tonkin: That is not true.

Mr GRAYDEN: I am sorry, but it is absolutely true.

Mr Tonkin: The school has to charge extra for home economics.

Mr GRAYDEN: I have here the actual regulation with which we are dealing. It is regulation 56 substituted and published in the *Government Gazette* of 16 June 1964. It reads in part as follows—

#### Division 9.—Amenities in Schools.

56. (1) The principal or headmaster of a school may, with the approval of the Director-General—

- (a) establish and conduct within the premises of the school a library, book-shop, book hire scheme, school fund, or other amenity not being conducted by a Parents and Citizens' Association that is likely to facilitate, assist or be of advantage to the teachers and instructors in their professional duties and to students at the school in the course of their studies, as the case may be;
- (b) issue directions, seek voluntary contributions from parents not exceeding an amount approved by the Director-General.

So a school principal may issue directions seeking voluntary contributions from parents not exceeding the amount approved by the director general. The director general has approved the maximum amount of \$9. So here we have it in black and white.

Mr Pearce: What is the regulation under which they charge fees?

Mr GRAYDEN: So paragraph (a) of the amendment is already in operation.

Mr Wilson: It has not been enforced.

Mr GRAYDEN: I will not even comment on that interjection. If the member knows of a situation where it is not being enforced he should advise the director general.

Mr Bryce: You are sending out debt collectors.

Mr GRAYDEN: We want flexibility and we give school principals autonomy in that regard. Incidentally, before a school principal fixes a fee he invariably consults with his local P & C association.

Mr Pearce: After they fix the charge the parents go down to the P & C in droves.

Mr GRAYDEN: The P & C considers whether the amount is a reasonable charge and the amount does vary in different areas. The amount in City Beach could be quite different from the amount in Carlisle. So we give principals a certain amount of autonomy. Surely the member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella do not object to that. If they do object I can assure them their objections would be opposed most vigorously by school principals, by the department, and by the Teachers' Union. I assure them that their objections would be opposed by P & C associations also.

Mr Wilson: Your ignorance is abysmal.

Mr GRAYDEN: The second part of the motion refers to the introduction of a free textbook scheme for secondary and technical schools. Very shortly we will get on to the amount of money the State Government is spending on education, but let us firstly consider what the Government is doing in respect of financial assistance for those who need it. First of all we have free primary school textbooks.

Mr Pearce: I said "within considerable limits".

Mr GRAYDEN: The situation is that standard textbooks are available for free issue to all primary school students in all subjects. Some schools elect to use additional or alternative textbooks which results in some costs to parents, but the amounts involved average less than \$10 per student per year. Members should remember that this is as a consequence of the autonomy we give to principals. If the P & C says to a principal that it believes he should go outside or beyond the range of textbooks which are made available by the department, that is acceptable. I repeat that it is on a voluntary basis.

Mr Pearce: If in some way you gave them the cash in primary schools I say you should give them cash in secondary schools so they could get books which they wanted and reject some of the dud ones the department sends them and so they would not have to charge parents anything.

Mr GRAYDEN: Textbooks are already free. It seems the member is unaware of this.

Mr Pearce: If they pick from a restricted list.

Mr Wilson: We are talking about secondary schools.

Mr GRAYDEN: There is not a primary school in this State where textbooks are not supplied. If the principal of a school wants to go beyond the books provided with the blessing of the P & C or at the instigation of the P & C we allow that. Again, I emphasise that the amenities fee is a voluntary fee.

Now we come to another form of assistance given by the State Government and this relates to a secondary textbook subsidy. This is a subsidy of \$10 for each child in years eight, nine and 10, a subsidy of \$35 for year 11, and a subsidy of \$20 for year 12. This is payable to all parents with respect to all secondary school children. Payment is made on application from parents. Strangely, about 25 per cent of parents do not apply and, regrettably, non-claimants appear to be highest among parents most in need. In the 1980-81 Budget a huge amount of \$1 113 000 was made available under this scheme. To listen to members of the Opposition one would think nothing was being done.

In addition we have what is called the school book assistance scheme. I mention now that there are other allowances available from the Commonwealth Government in respect of children in years 11 and 12. Under the school book assistance scheme an amount of up to \$90 per child is available to meet the cost of books and certain optional subjects and this is available on application, subject to a means test of \$110 per week adjusted on the family income. In 1979-80 grants totalling \$208 000 were made to 3 000 students.

Mr Pearce: Your time is up. It is zero. You have had your chips.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired.

Mr GRAYDEN: I did not realise my time had expired and I just want to say in connection with this amendment that there is virtually no truth in the allegations made.



Debate adjourned until a later stage of this sitting, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier).

## QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### *Closing Time*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Thompson): On Thursday last I indicated my intention to make a clarifying statement concerning the closing times for questions on notice.

I now indicate that, following representations from a committee composed of representatives of the Government and Opposition, the revised closing times for questions for the next sitting day's notice paper are—

5.00 p.m. on Tuesdays,  
2.30 p.m. on Wednesdays, and  
12 noon on Fridays.

The times for the receipt of written replies have not altered. They are 4.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and 2.15 p.m. on Thursdays.

I understand it is the desire of the majority of members of the House that questions without notice will be taken at or about 5.45 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and at about 4.00 p.m. on Thursdays.

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

### *Council Personnel*

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees elected by that House.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

### *Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR BRYCE** (Ascot) [6.05 p.m.]: I am impressed at the number of Government members who have remained in their seats to listen to my pearls of wisdom.

In supporting the amendment to the Address-in-Reply moved by the Opposition spokesman on education, I want to indicate that I have raised the matter of rapidly escalating costs of secondary education with the senior staff of four senior high schools in close proximity to my own constituency. I do not intend to name the particular high schools, because whether members of this House are aware of it or not, the Minister

for Education and the senior officers of the Education Department have adopted a practice of coming down very heavily on school principals who speak with members of Parliament.

Mr Grayden: There is not a vestige of truth in that statement. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr BRYCE: Therefore, I have no intention of naming the individual principals.

Mr Grayden: A completely untrue statement.

Mr BRYCE: I have been forced into this position by the Minister and his tactics.

Mr Grayden: You can't point to a single instance.

Mr BRYCE: I will happily inform the Minister outside this Chamber during the tea suspension of the particular school principal who was not so very long ago called into the Education Department and hauled over the coals.

Mr Grayden: Name the individual in the House. I don't want to hear something on a confidential basis. If action has been taken against a person, tell us who it is.

Mr BRYCE: I have indicated my position, and I do not intend to alter from it. I have had some very good teachers—

Mr Grayden: You can't substantiate it, and you know it.

Mr BRYCE: —who sit opposite me in this place.

Mr Grayden: That is an extraordinary thing.

Mr BRYCE: It is not extraordinary at all. This Government hauls over the coals civil servants and employees of the Government who dare to criticise it. That has been the hallmark of this Government's performance since the day it took office.

Mr Grayden: You cannot substantiate your statement.

Mr BRYCE: I have no intention of setting up these people to allow the Minister publicly to ridicule them or to allow the departmental heads to haul them over the coals.

Mr Watt: You spoke in the plural. Give examples.

Mr BRYCE: It is essential for any member of Parliament who represents constituencies which have low-income earners to be aware of the difficulties which confront those families in respect of the State education system at the moment. I have no hesitation whatsoever in raising this matter on behalf of parents who have been in touch with me, and I have had no hesitation in raising it with some of the schools in

my electorate. I have come to the conclusion that the quaint impression of many Western Australians that we have free education in this State is a fundamental misapprehension.

The concept of free secondary education is dead and buried. Many people in Western Australia find beyond their means the so-called free education in our secondary school system. I point out to the Minister for Education that if he has been unable to discover this in areas such as South Perth and Como, then it is very much the case in areas such as Bayswater and Belmont and in numerous other suburbs in the metropolitan area and many places in country areas where people are finding it extremely difficult to make the decision to send one, two, and particularly three or more children through the secondary education system.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to a few of the basic figures that I advance in support of my argument. The Minister should be aware that any student in the lower years of a secondary school can be required to pay anywhere in the vicinity of \$70 to \$80 for text materials; and in the upper school it can be as high as almost \$200 and is usually \$150 to \$170. In addition to the cost of text materials, things defined as resource fees have crept into secondary schools in this State. The Minister stood this evening and said the Education Department places a \$9 limit on amenities fees. This is in a State in which one would expect no fee for secondary education in Government schools.

Yet what do the facts reveal? I indicate these are facts and figures given to me by the senior staff members of four senior high schools near my constituency. Amenities fees and resource fees combined can amount to anything from \$50 to \$130 per student per year; and the Minister has the hide to stand in his place in this Chamber and say there is a limit of \$9 on fees other than the cost of texts. The reality is that if we add the amenities fee of \$150 per student to the cost of text materials, which is up to \$200 per student, and multiply that by the number of students who could attend secondary school from one family at any given time, we have a prescription for the financially crippling circumstances which are facing many of the families I represent. That is the reason I stand here tonight and ask the Minister to do something about the situation in this State where we are supposed to have free education.

Somebody has given this Minister the impression that students in secondary schools pay only \$9, but that is simply not the case.

Mr Grayden: That is in respect of amenities fees. Stick to the truth.

Mr BRYCE: Many schools throughout the State are adopting a book hire scheme to relieve as many parents as possible of the high cost of books.

Mr Grayden: Schools have been doing that for years.

Mr BRYCE: My God! I administered such a scheme for the Minister's benefit in the 1960s, and I hired my books from a country high school in the 1950s; so the Minister need not try to inform me that such a practice has been in vogue for years. Of course it has; but the actual cost to persons availing themselves of the hire schemes is anywhere between \$55 and \$80 per student per year.

Mr H. D. Evans: Didn't the Tonkin Government have free books?

Mr BRYCE: As a matter of fact, the Tonkin Government broke through the creditability barrier that the Brand Government had been unable to handle for more than a decade, and we implemented a free textbook scheme in primary schools. In fact, secondary schools would have free text materials at this very moment had the Tonkin Government remained in office. The election result of 1974 proved to be a very expensive decision for all families in Western Australia which have students at secondary schools.

What appalls me most particularly is that under this Government, for the first time in the history of the State, debt collectors are being called in to secondary schools to recover money. I ask you, Sir, in all sincerity: Who would have believed a few years ago that debt collection agencies would be used to haunt people on low incomes and to force them under threat of the bailiff to pay school book hire fees?

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr BRYCE: Before the tea suspension, I was deploring the fact that in the State of Western Australia debt collectors are being used to force people who cannot pay book hire charges to make those payments, under the threat of the bailiff. I ask the Minister whether he approves of the use of debt collectors for this purpose in the schools over which he presides.

Mr Grayden: I have never heard any instance of it. I would be very pleased, if you have heard of an instance, if you gave me the information and when it occurred.

Mr BRYCE: Does the Minister approve of the principle?

Mr Grayden: Of course not.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister does not approve of it; and I sincerely hope that from this moment on the matter may be redressed. To redress it, one does not do so with pious thoughts, and hopes, and aspirations. It requires money.

Mr Grayden: I do not know what you are actually talking about. I have never heard of an instance of that.

Mr BRYCE: I make the point to the Minister for Education that if we are to obviate this situation, the time has arrived when it is necessary to give secondary schools in this State a budget on which to work. How absurd it is in 1981 that schools with over 1 000 pupils, and, in some cases, more than 100 teachers, are given no budget from the Education Department for the principal to administer the school. This is the root of the problem. The principals are required to strike this amenities fee in order to lay their hands on sufficient money to run their schools.

Mr Grayden: Do you not think the principals ought to have a certain amount of autonomy?

Mr BRYCE: Certainly the principals should have autonomy, but not autonomy to become taxation men—not autonomy to levy taxes on people across the board, assuming that everybody has an equal capacity to pay those levies. There are families with students in secondary schools who simply cannot afford to pay the amenities fees in the amounts for which they are being asked.

Mr Grayden: They are voluntary payments. It is not compulsory at all.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister said earlier in this debate that he has authorised the fees to be set at \$9.

Mr Grayden: A maximum of \$9; and then the P & C has to approve—

Mr BRYCE: Let every parent in Western Australia discover that that is the Minister's position. Every secondary school would become insolvent overnight if every secondary school parent in this State knew that he or she was not compelled to pay more than \$9.

Mr Grayden: It is in the regulations.

Mr BRYCE: Then those regulations are not known and understood by the people. The people are being bluffed and threatened into paying much higher amenities fees and book hire charges.

Mr Grayden: If they want to pay for additional amenities, that is their business.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister is turning his back on this financial situation, because he knows that if he looks at it fairly and squarely, it will cost him. It will cost him dearly to face reality. The reality is that the \$9 about which he speaks would not finance the secondary schools. Every principal in the State would be facing insolvency.

I have a great deal of pity and sympathy for the principals of secondary schools who are placed in this invidious position. Many of them—probably the majority of them—deplore what is necessary to obtain this money from the parents in some areas, a high proportion of whom simply cannot afford to pay the money.

The Government seems to be ignoring the economic recession in which the secondary education system finds itself. The current economic downturn is having a devastating effect on the youth of this country. There are now thousands of young children of secondary school age—teenagers—who have been out of work for many months on end. I regret to say that in 1981 their period out of work is starting to dribble into a period of years. Now, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, parents, and people from the pulpit urge these youngsters to go back to school. In many cases, they do return to school; and what do they find? The courses of instruction simply do not exist to meet their needs. The education system does not have the resources to catch up with the challenge with which it is confronted.

Mr Grayden: That is not so.

Mr BRYCE: The young people find that the courses do not exist. Where the courses are being developed, the cost involved in many cases is discouraging, to say the least, and prohibitive in some cases. There are some outdoor exercise activities involving horseriding, canoeing, and various other leisure-based activities provided for some of the students, and the fee involved is simply prohibitive for many of them.

Mr Grayden: If they want to participate, they can pay the fee and participate.

Mr BRYCE: From the mouth of the Minister for Education we learn that if they cannot afford to participate, they will not be allowed to participate. That is this Government's philosophy on this question.

I stand in this Chamber with a great sense of pride and say I would like to see the Western Australian education system providing equal opportunity for everybody in education.

Mr Grayden: What absolute nonsense. We give them the opportunity to pay for these additional courses if they wish to take them.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister gives the principals the right to discriminate between those who have and those who have not. He said if the youngsters wish to participate they can—at their own cost.

Mr Grayden: These are additional courses.

Mr BRYCE: What if a youngster comes from a family of five or six children, with four or five of them at school, and two or three of them at high school; and one of them comes home and says that an alternative leisure-based activity will cost \$100 for the term? Where are they left?

Mr Grayden: If they want to go skiing, the parents have to pay for it. It is as simple as that.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister has never been able to grasp the changes that are taking place in education. He does not understand the inadequacy of this department to cope with the changes.

I will draw my comments to a conclusion by asking the Minister if he, as a part of the Cabinet, now faces the reality that in this resources-rich State not only do we have a hospital system that is closing its doors to the sick, and forcing people—

Mr Young: Where has a door been closed?

Mr BRYCE: Have a look at all the hospital beds that have been closed.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Young: Why don't some of you people over that side stick to the truth?

Mr BRYCE: Now we see—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: This Minister presides over an education system that is applying the squeeze—

Mr Young interjected.

Mr BRYCE: This Government is applying the squeeze to the State's education system in a fashion which ought to make it ashamed. The reality is that this State does not have an equity in respect of the development of our resources. We are not receiving anywhere near enough for the resources that are being developed. The king size share of the value of these resources is going overseas.

How does this Government answer the question when it is asked—

Sir Charles Court: Do not talk rot.

Mr BRYCE: —why are the hospitals closing down beds—

Sir Charles Court: We are not closing beds.

Mr BRYCE: —why is it sacking hospital staff; why is the education system—

### *Point of Order*

Mr CLARKO: I am of the opinion that the member is not speaking to the amendment before the Chair. Would you rule on that?

The SPEAKER: It seems inappropriate for me to make any sort of ruling now, as the member's time has expired.

### *Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed*

MR PARKER (Fremantle) [7.40 p.m.]: I wish to contribute briefly to this debate by speaking about particular problems relating to the amendment. In my own area, we have had expressed a considerable degree of concern, particularly by the parents of children attending the South Fremantle Senior High School. The school costs for those children have doubled and, in some cases, more than doubled since last year.

These students or their parents have had to pay amounts which are so great that it is difficult for some people to keep their children at school, and certainly to keep them there in a dignified way. They have had to pay amounts which mean that they cannot participate in some of the areas which ought to be available to them. The parents of these students came to see me and members for the same area in another place, to discuss with us what they could do about the situation.

There were various other problems, but I will not go into them because they have been resolved satisfactorily by the principal of the school and by the regional superintendent; but it is the principle about which I am concerned.

With the two upper House members, I went to see the principal of the school and the regional superintendent. We discussed the sorts of things the principal was being called upon to pay from the amounts of money being asked for from the parents. Such payments included gestetner paper; but that was not gestetner paper for extraneous matters but for core subjects. One of the specific matters for which the money was being levied was to purchase gestetner paper for material provided as a core item for each and every subject.

For example, there was a roncod pamphlet which was the core material relating to maths; and the same applied to English and to science. One would expect that such fundamental things would be provided by the State. However, the information given to us by the regional superintendent and the principal was that the State did not supply them with enough paper for that purpose. They were not talking about P & C notices or other extraneous notices about social outings, and things like that. They were talking about core subject material.

That is material the staff were required to present to the students as part of their curriculum. That is one of the items that the parents and students were being required to pay for in the student charges.

At our tertiary institutions—at the University of Western Australia, for example—that sort of material is made available free of charge. The students do not have to pay anything whatsoever for it.

Another matter for which the principal had to charge fees related to core books—in other words, in the room in which English was taught, the curriculum would require a number of books of differing types relating to the basics being taught in that subject. One would have thought that these books for classroom use would be provided by the Education Department; but they were not. They were provided out of the funds levied on the students.

Another specific item levied was the library levy. When I questioned that, I said I thought that the libraries and librarians were paid for by the Education Department. The response was, "We don't get any funds for replacement of lost books, stolen books, or even books which have, during the course of time, deteriorated."

The students were required to pay a library levy as part of their overall costs. That levy was in addition to the general amenities levy and the situation is that, to a large extent, that library was funded—certainly in so far as keeping up the stocks—by the parents of the students and not by the Education Department. That situation may be compared with that which exists at the University of Western Australia and I think the same situation applies in all the tertiary institutions where a person who is an enrolled student has use of the library free of charge. That is not the situation currently in our secondary schools.

Another levy was charged for a swimming pool which had been built some time previously and which the Government had assisted to some degree. However, it was necessary to pay for that swimming pool and this was done by implementing a levy on the students. Some of the students did not use the swimming pool. A number of them are taken to the sea, which is quite close to the school, for their swimming instruction and other aquatic activities. Many students did not have anything to do with the swimming pool, but it was still compulsory for their parents to pay the swimming pool levy. I regard that as being unconscionable.

I shall refer now to the situation in regard to textbooks. The charge for the textbook hire

scheme has increased dramatically, as has the deposit. On top of the increased charges we found a situation in which many students were no longer in receipt of Government advances. This applied particularly to Portuguese students who had in past years received a considerable number of advances by way of grants made available by the State Government. However, they were no longer in receipt of the advances, because of the restricted nature of the guidelines for payment to which the member for Dianella and other members have referred, and the fact that so many applied for the advances this year that they were not available to a number of students.

Many parents of ethnic origin find it very difficult to speak English and, in the case of Portuguese students, very few can read and write their own language, let alone English, because Portugal is one of the few countries in the world where primary education is not compulsory. Therefore, some of the parents of the students are not only unable to read or write English, but also they cannot read or write Portuguese.

In many cases notices are sent home in English and no attempt is made to send out the notices in the language with which the student's parents are familiar or, in the case of parents who could not read at all, there is no additional assistance so that they can understand the notices. Therefore, frequently the forms are not returned to the school and some of the students concerned do not submit applications for those reasons.

Mr Grayden: I can't accept those remarks. Frequently if the parents of the students are Italian, the notices are sent home in Italian, but the parents are illiterate. The same applies to the Portuguese and many other ethnic groups in the community.

Mr PARKER: That is what I have just said.

Mr Grayden: But we are taking all sorts of action to help those children, including sending home notices in their own language.

Mr PARKER: In the case of the South Fremantle High School, I believe the Minister should look into the discrepancy between the number of grants provided to students at the school last year compared with the number made available this year. Last year there happened to be a registrar at the school who was a close member of the Portuguese community. However, this year the registrar retired and left the school.

Mr Grayden: There are special schools which receive huge additional amounts.

Mr PARKER: However, in terms of these charges, the amounts of money provided under the special schools programmes do not go to

meeting these charges; they go to the provision of other facilities, including the recognition of the ethnic origin of the children.

However, the assistance to which I am referring is assistance of an administrative nature which will help parents when it is necessary for them to complete appropriate forms and will even extend, on occasions, to filling out the forms for them in the correct manner. That was done frequently at the South Fremantle High School last year, because the registrar was a part of the closely-knit Portuguese community. However, he retired and the new registrar does not have the same role as far as the Portuguese community is concerned. Therefore, I ask the Minister to give the figures for the discrepancies between the number of Portuguese children, in particular, who obtained bursaries last year compared with the number who have obtained them this year.

Mr Grayden: This is the first time it has been brought to my attention. If you say the forms have been discontinued this year, we certainly would not tolerate it.

Mr PARKER: I am not saying the forms have been discontinued, but the assistance to the parents as far as helping them understand the forms has been discontinued. The forms are sent out to all the parents of students who attend most schools, as I understand it.

It has been a particularly hard year for the parents of Portuguese children and other parents of students at the South Fremantle High School as a result of the very severe downturn in the fishing and meat industries, both of which are substantial employers of these people. Therefore, a much greater number of people have applied for the advances and, as has been stated already, it is very likely that, due to the huge call on the funds, the grants would not have been provided had applications been made anyway.

I wish to point out that a system which demands parents of students must pay amounts in addition to taxation for the provision of libraries, swimming pools—they are at the school, whether or not the students use them—core materials, and textbooks such as those which I have outlined, is not one which can be described as providing a free and equitable system of State education.

It is becoming very difficult for some of these parents to send their children to school. Indeed, this is another aspect of the matter and the registrar to whom I referred previously, discussed with the parents the need to send their children to school, because in Portugal it is not compulsory. Probably the parents looked at the economic situation and wondered about the point of sending

their children to school at all when they could take them out on the fishing boats and they could start to earn a living, which is what would have happened in Portugal. How much more difficult is it to persuade parents of that nature to send their children to school when they cannot see any job prospects at the end of the educational process as a result of the economic conditions of the State and as well they have to pay large sums of money to send their children to school? It does not appear to them that they are getting much out of it. It is a very unfair system and, if sums of money are available, they ought to be directed to ensuring that, firstly, the parents to whom I have referred are told of their rights and entitlements and, secondly, that the amount of money made available for those rights and entitlements should be increased.

I support the amendment moved by the member for Gosnells and commend it to the House.

**MR SIBSON (Bunbury) [7.53 p.m.]**: I should like to speak briefly to the amendment moved by the member for Gosnells which refers to limiting the charges levied by schools on parents. I believe the member, when speaking to this amendment, did not expand adequately on that aspect of it and, therefore, did not develop a case based on reality or on the economic and educational situation at the present time, which would prove to the House that the amendment was not soundly based.

The Minister has pointed out that levies charged by schools are limited to \$9 and any parents who are unable to pay the levy are not compelled to do so. Wherever possible the school principals, teachers, and in some cases the P & C associations endeavour to collect this money, because it will benefit the students at the school. That is the important fact to remember. The education budget is a rather substantial part of the total Budget of this State, but it is not possible to meet the requirements of all students in all schools. I have put seven children through the education system and I now have grandchildren going to school. There are times when, as a parent, one elects to contribute to certain amenities which will be of direct benefit to the students attending the school.

Mr Pearce: Which school did your seven children go to?

Mr SIBSON: It is ridiculous to stand up in this place and say there should be no school fees. I believe the current situation is the best one. The amenities fee is limited and assistance is provided to lower income families.

Mr Wilson: It is not provided to all of them.

Mr SIBSON: The Education Department makes available the machinery to enable principals and P & C associations to organise book hire schemes or any other facilities which will develop a school and provide extra facilities.

Today many P & C associations are involved in the running of the school and the development of its curriculum. They assist in the general betterment of education. These organisations are prepared also to raise money in various ways, through canteens or school fetes. In fact, the Adam Road Primary School in my electorate raised in excess of \$2 000 last Sunday afternoon when it held a fete which I had the pleasure to open. It is not correct for the member for Gosnells and those who support the amendment to say the Government is being unfair and irresponsible in levying fees.

The fee levied is very moderate and it is not compulsory. However, at the same time the department, with the co-operation of the principal and the staff—certainly with the co-operation of the P & C—endeavours to allow additional money to be raised.

When one hears the cries made by Opposition members in this regard, one would think someone was standing over the parents saying "Thou shalt pay". However, that is simply not the case.

On occasions parents in difficult financial situations become a little apprehensive. I have been approached by some of these people, but after talking to them and telephoning the principal and getting him to speak to them, they invariably say "We are not worried now." On occasions, despite real hardships, some parents wish to pay these fees and they are very happy when they come away from a visit to the school realising they have arrived at a satisfactory arrangement.

Mr Pearce: Are you seriously contending that no State school charges a fee of more than \$9?

Mr SIBSON: I did not say that at all.

Mr Wilson: You said there was a limit.

Mr Pearce: The Minister said there was a limit of \$9.

Mr Grayden: It is an amenities fee.

Mr SIBSON: I was involved in a situation in Bunbury where a parent telephoned me and complained bitterly about school fees. However, he admitted he had paid some of the high school fees, because he particularly wanted his daughter to take a special subject. I explained the way in which the system works and the reasons for the fees. I pointed out that the charges levied enabled

the students to become involved in extra activities, such as art or some other area of interest. The person realised it was not such a bad idea after all and I suggested he become involved in the P & C so that he would have a say and have some influence on the activities surrounding the school.

It is possible for people to work within the education system. I believe it is a very good system and, in the case of the assistance in regard to textbooks, members opposite did not point out what is in fact available.

Under the school fee assistance scheme, up to \$90 per student is made available to meet the cost of books and certain optional subjects.

Mr Pearce: How many people received grants?

Mr SIBSON: I will tell you in one moment.

Mr Pearce: And how many applications?

Mr SIBSON: In 1979-80 grants totalling \$208 000 were paid out to 3 000 students.

Mr Wilson: What about the income eligibility levels?

Mr SIBSON: An amount of up to \$160 per annum per child can be paid, from endowment trust funds, to needy parents. In 1980 grants totalling \$60 000 will be made to 380 students from this source.

Mr Wilson: Your figures are wrong.

Mr SIBSON: Anyone can challenge the figures, but they are the ones shown on the documents.

Mr Wilson: They even disagree with the figures provided by the Minister.

Mr SIBSON: Nevertheless, these schemes are available and there are many other ways in which low income families and people in dire economic straits can be assisted.

Mr Wilson: Not many other ways.

Mr SIBSON: They are not forced to pay the fees.

Mr Pearce: This is a disgraceful speech from a so-called parents' representative.

The SPEAKER: Order! The members of the House ought not to interject at the frequent intervals they have over the last few minutes. I submit to the House that the interjections are highly disorderly and do nothing for the standard of debate in this House.

Mr SIBSON: Thank you very much, Sir, for reminding me that I should address only the Chair and ignore the flak.

Over the years, the Education Department has developed ways and means whereby every student in the school is dealt with in a fair way.

Mr Wilson: Untrue.

Mr SIBSON: I believe we should be considering the different facets of the contributions to schools. If the amendment had been on the basis that there should be more parent involvement in schools—and by that I mean not just the payment of fees, but the involvement of parents in the school scene—I would have been prepared to support it. However, today with so many parents working there is not as much involvement in the school by parents as there should be.

Mr Pearce: They are working to pay the school fees.

Mr SIBSON: I believe the member for Gosnells would serve his electorate far better if he were to stand in this place and encourage what is being done by the department. He should encourage the efforts of the P & C organisations; that is, those which have members. The member knows that it is difficult to get parents involved because of their other commitments, plus the fact that many parents are quite prepared to leave it up to a few to work for the school.

Parents can become involved in the schools in many ways; for instance, in the running of school canteens which primarily provide a meal for students and secondly, provide some finance for the school to buy extra things as they are required.

If we were to encourage people to become more involved in schools then perhaps we would be moving in the right direction and all this nonsense about fees would become less significant.

We should be spending our time assessing our priorities in education. It is all very well to come to this place and say that everything should be free, but, ultimately, the taxpayer has to pay. My idea is that if parents invest a dollar in the education of their children then they will ensure that they get value for their dollar.

Mr Parker: What about a person on \$20 000 a year and a person on a pension? How can a person on a pension pay the fees?

Mr SIBSON: The Opposition would be better advised to consider the priorities in education. We all know that the education budget in this State takes up a very high percentage of the total.

Mr Pearce: It is the lowest of all Australian States.

Mr SIBSON: Some people may believe that we are spending too much on education.

Mr Grayden: It is 24 per cent of the Budget.

Mr Pearce: That is untrue. It is 22.7 per cent of the Budget.

Mr SIBSON: I accept 22.7 per cent as being the percentage of the Budget.

Mr Pearce: The Minister did not accept it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SIBSON: As I said, that is a very high percentage of the Budget.

Mr Pearce: Are you saying it is too much?

Mr SIBSON: I said it is a very high percentage but some people may say it is too much. When we consider the situation, we should perhaps ask ourselves whether there is not enough money for textbooks, educational facilities, and learning programmes in schools. We should perhaps ask ourselves whether we are pushing for lower class sizes to the extent where that action will draw a lot of flak.

We should ask ourselves whether we are being sensible in taking such a hard approach to the matter. Such an approach could be very good in the long term; that is, if we did not push to reduce class sizes and maintained them at the size they are at present.

Mr Pearce: What sort of a parents' representative are you?

Several members interjected.

Mr SIBSON: I will ignore the comments of the member for Gosnells because as usual, he has twisted them around to suit his own purpose. However, when he reads *Hansard* tomorrow, he will be able to understand my comments.

Another aspect we should consider with regard to education is teachers' salaries. I am not opposed to anyone seeking an increase in salary, that is par for the course, but I believe the Opposition members would do well to ask more questions on this matter as I have done on many occasions. I have asked: How much of the budget for education is being paid in teachers' salaries?

Mr Pearce: Do you think they are paid too much?

Mr SIBSON: I think the members of the teaching profession are reputable people. They must be, otherwise the system would not be in such a good state as it is now.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SIBSON: At the moment, we have a great deal of pressure from various elements in our society to have time set aside for teachers to carry out duties other than teaching—referred to as DOTT. I know it is important for teachers to speak to parents, but it is also important that we consider ways to save money.



Not enough time and thought is put into determining the priorities of education. Over the years the taxpayer has accepted that he must pay, but I believe the time has come when that system is coming to an end because we cannot push the percentage of the total budget up beyond a reasonable limit. We must reassess the ways in which we can spend our education dollar and on that basis we would be more constructive tonight if we put our minds to looking at the total Budget and directed funds to the areas of greatest need. I do not believe anyone could accuse me of not being aware of the needs of people who have to live in an affluent society whilst on a very low income. I feel for the people in such areas as welfare and social security—

Mr Pearce: Well, what about my free textbook system which uses money which has been allocated already?

Mr SIBSON: I could shoot holes in that argument in five minutes. I would prefer to give the money to the parents so that they could spend it on books for students. I believe every student at school should have his own books because if a person were to go through his school life not owning any books he would have no respect for books. It is important that every citizen in our society has a great respect for books, whatever level he or she be on.

If the parents buy the books then the students will learn to respect them so that they may pass them on to their brothers and sisters. I do not agree with the situation where the responsibility is taken away from the parents. Parents should be involved in providing those things which are required for the education of their children. Parents should be able to contribute towards the investment in school books and the students will thus learn to value them.

Mr Pearce: What a disgraceful effort from a so-called parents' representative.

Mr SIBSON: I suggest to the member for Gosnells that he should change the needle on the record because it is starting to scratch. However, he is not using the usual used-car tag and that is a welcome change.

Mr E. T. Evans: It will be back!

Mr SIBSON: I urge members not to support the amendment moved by the member for Gosnells.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [8.12 p.m.]: First of all, I wish to make it quite clear that when the member for Bunbury states that the way to spend more money on education is to increase taxes, it is complete nonsense.

It is always said that if one wants more money then it has to come from increased taxes; of course, there are other areas from which money can come—such an area is where this Government wastes money.

We note that every Minister has a journalist who writes his Press releases. In many cases, the Minister has not the ability to write the Press release for himself so we see the situation, time and time again, where questions are asked of a Minister about a Press statement made in his name that morning and the Minister asks that that question be put on notice because he does not know what he is alleged to have said.

Mr Grayden: Who are you talking about? That is absolute rubbish! I have not had one for months.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Grayden: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr TONKIN: If the Minister for Education does not have a Press secretary then that indicates he is at the bottom of the pile.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TONKIN: There are approximately 15 Press secretaries and if the Minister for Education does not have a Press secretary then he should speak to the Premier because he is being short changed and someone else has his Press secretary.

Mr Grayden: It makes a mockery of your statement, doesn't it?

Mr TONKIN: The fact of the matter is that 15 of those people are employed by the Government and Ministers often are not able to answer questions about what has been said because the Press officer has made a statement and the Minister has to go back to ask him what to say when the question is asked on notice the following day. That is where the money could come from, for a start. So cut out this rubbish of saying that we on this side are in favour of increasing taxes.

Another area in which money has been wasted is in respect of a corrupt Minister who was given \$100 000 out of the public purse. If the Premier, instead of rescuing a person who was found guilty in the Supreme Court of this State, had left him to look after himself as any other citizen must do, that amount of money could have been spent on education. We would rather see it spent on education than spent in that manner.

Another way in which money could be saved is to stop repairing the gutters of wealthy people in

England. That is another waste of money. Apparently this Government believes the gutters of wealthy Englishmen are more important than the education of Western Australians. Our party will not go along with that. The Premier had the hide to say we had a moral responsibility in that case; but apparently he thinks we have not a moral responsibility to save the lives of desperately ill people who want admittance to Royal Perth Hospital, or to see that our children are educated.

Already tonight we have had mentioned to us the provision made for those who are unable to afford to pay for textbooks. But just listen to the incomes involved. I wonder whether members with any conscience here tonight would like to look at their own incomes and work out how much bigger they are than the incomes of the people whom I will describe.

If members do that it will help them come back to earth and realise how desperately poor these people are, and yet not one of them is eligible for textbook assistance. I refer to the minimum wage of \$143.90 per week. A man on that wage will take home a little in excess of \$130 a week. If he is married with a dependent child, he is not eligible for assistance under this scheme. If that child is in fourth year the person will have to fork out something like \$150 to \$160 for textbooks. That is more than his weekly wage. I know that some of us would simply take the money out of the bank; but when a person is taking home \$130-odd a week, how much do members think is left over each week to put aside for textbooks?

Let us consider the situation of a person with three children at school, perhaps one in fourth year, one in second year, and another in grade seven. In his case the bill will be about \$220 to \$230, and yet that person could be taking home as little as \$160 or \$170 a week and still not be eligible for assistance. Where does such a person find over \$200 in February or January? Christmas has just passed and he has probably managed to buy his children something—not much. Where will he find that money?

We have a hard-hearted Government of Philistines who say people can afford to pay for their children's textbooks, and if they cannot afford to pay there are schemes to assist them.

Mr Grayden: We are constantly searching for new ways to assist them. If you can make suggestions we will examine them in detail.

Mr TONKIN: We are making suggestions now.

Mr Grayden: That has been tried many times and discarded.

Mr TONKIN: I am talking about people who are not eligible for assistance. Do not let the Minister ask us to make suggestions.

Mr Grayden: We have asked every principal in Western Australia to cast around and see if he can assist in this situation and come up with ideas.

Mr TONKIN: What is needed is monetary assistance. What is needed is for the Government to spend on assistance for textbooks some of the money it gives to Ministers in trouble or spends on gutters in England or on Press officers.

Mr Grayden interjected.

Mr TONKIN: Of course the principals are not in a position to do that.

Mr Grayden: Some are. They do it most satisfactorily. They have all sorts of schemes in the schools of which you are not aware.

Mr TONKIN: The fact of the matter is that people receiving \$139.90 a week are not eligible for assistance; and if persons in that situation have three children at school the likely cost of textbooks is more than \$200 in the circumstances I outlined earlier. Persons on an invalid pension would not be eligible for assistance; a married couple with three children would receive \$141.80 a week and would not be eligible for assistance. It is rubbish for the Minister to say if we come up with some suggestions he will look at them. The suggestion we make is that people on minimal incomes should receive assistance. It is as simple as that.

Mr Grayden: A huge number of them do receive it.

Mr TONKIN: A person who receives \$143.90 a week does not receive any assistance.

Mr Grayden: Several schemes are available.

Mr TONKIN: I know; four main schemes are available, but these people are not receiving assistance because the cutoff point is \$120 a week. What we want to know is why principals are forbidden to reveal that fact. Why is that figure classified? Why is it not clearly and openly known to parents that that is the cutoff point? Why are not the schemes well known? If the Government spent some time telling parents of the existence of the schemes and encouraging them to apply for assistance if they are within the eligibility criteria instead of spending money on a vast propaganda machine telling lies, half truths, and distortions about how great the Government is, it would do something useful for the children of Western Australia. That is the kind of publicity we would like to see.

We are not talking about the taxpayer paying more, as the member for Bunbury suggested. We are not talking about taking money from teachers' salaries in order to subsidise textbooks. We are talking about increasing the size of the Education vote. The amount of \$22.7 million is not nearly high enough; in fact it is the lowest of any Australian State.

Mr Grayden: It is \$443 million.

Mr TONKIN: The only State that approaches Western Australia in respect of the scarcity of funds is the great State of Queensland, the kind of State one would expect to give very low priority to education.

I hope it is quite clear to members opposite that we are not talking about increasing taxation or about taking money from one section of the Education vote and giving it to another. We are talking about increasing the total component for education, not by raising taxation, but by stopping the wastage of money which this Government continues to do. The Government should stop trying to perpetuate itself by means of an enormous propaganda machine; instead it should spend some of that money on education.

I have received complaints from parents in my electorate in respect of four different high schools and in every case the problem is something outside the control of the principal. Therefore, it is no good the Minister saying principals are trying to come up with solutions. Of course they are. They are dedicated, professional people doing their best in a difficult situation. However, the principals cannot act as a taxing machine; they cannot print money or give money to students. They are faced with this ridiculously low level of \$120 before any assistance is given.

No attempt is made to see that the students and the parents are educated in respect of the assistance available. Therefore, the remedy is beyond the power of any principal. Principals are educators; they have not the ability to raise money, although I know many parents and citizens' associations do a good job in raising money. Nevertheless, this is something the Government must face up to squarely because in this State we have a continual downgrading of education.

We are not talking about the school system itself being starved. We are talking about people who cannot afford their children's education, and when we hit parents through their children we hit them in a very weak spot. I know of many parents who would do anything to give their children a good education, and who would do anything to buy the necessary books for their children. They

scrimp and save, but this kind of burden should not be upon them.

Mr Grayden: It is not, unless it is decided by the school principal and the P & C. They are the two authorities which set the additional fees. We give the principals autonomy, and if a school wants to do it that way surely it should have the autonomy to do it. It is the P & C which endorses the policy of the school.

Mr TONKIN: It is not a question of the school or the P & C wanting to do it. They are forced to do it.

Mr Grayden: No they are not. There are other schools which do not do it.

Mr TONKIN: They are forced to do it, otherwise the quality of education will drop. Of course they must see the children have textbooks, and of course they are forced to authorise desperate measures to raise the necessary money.

Mr Grayden: Why does it vary from school to school?

Mr TONKIN: The point is that principals are being forced into the situation by a Government which will not do anything to lift the burden. The Minister has said we should make suggestions. I suggest that if he lifted the limit to \$150, he would be doing something useful because \$120 is a ridiculously low level in respect of this assistance.

The Opposition is therefore completely dissatisfied with the efforts of the Government in this regard. We believe the amendment is not a vindictive amendment but merely draws to the attention of the House some matters which have certainly exercised the minds of everybody on this side of the House.

I have no doubt Government members also have had parents approach them who are facing tremendous difficulty each January and February in trying to find money for textbooks. We urge the Government to try to find some way of lifting the limit from \$120 or to come up with a scheme such as that outlined by the member for Gosnells. If the Government is not happy with that proposal—and I worked under such a system when I was a school teacher—it should look for something else. Undoubtedly it is not the best system; it is not the best of all possible worlds. However, given the situation that the Government will not subsidise textbooks, something has to be done. If the Government does not consider the suggestion of the member for Gosnells, it should come up with a better one. At the moment it is abdicating its responsibility and placing a burden on those parents who can least afford it.

**MR CLARKO** (Karrinyup) [8.27 p.m.]: I would agree with the member for Morley that this is not a vindictive amendment. It is an amendment which talks about an area of concern to people involved in education. I think everyone would agree this is one of the smaller rather than one of the major issues involved in education. I take it as a compliment to the Government of which I am a part that the attack on the Government in respect of education relates merely to a small facet of education rather than to a major and fundamental area, as was the case back in 1974 and 1977. Certainly in those days the members who have spoken tonight used to try to give us the stick about major elements of the Education vote; yet here we are talking about only a small part of the whole scene.

**Mr Wilson:** It is not small to the people concerned.

**Mr CLARKO:** The amendment deals with three specific areas, and I intend to devote a few comments to each. The first paragraph talks about limiting the charges levied by schools on parents. First of all at no stage has the Opposition been prepared to say what the maximum should be. I feel if members opposite were sincere and had thoroughly studied this amendment they would have come up with a maximum figure.

**Mr Pearce:** Would you accept a total of \$10?

**Mr CLARKO:** The member for Gosnells suggests the maximum amount should be \$10. I believe that is a miniscule amount for the majority of parents whose children attend Government schools. That is the weakness of the argument of the Opposition. Many people who can afford significant contributions towards the education of their children send their children to Government schools. Many such people do not want free education. They believe Government schools are providing a good education.

I know of many parents who could afford the expense of sending their children to private schools but who choose to send them to Government schools. They are happy to pay quite significant sums of money for their children's education, but they deliberately choose to send their children to a Government school. Such people should not be inhibited as they would be if there were a maximum figure. Persons on a modest or medium income would find \$10 an extremely small amount. Probably they would give their children much more than that each month to spend on Coca Cola and potato chips.

**Mr Wilson:** Be specific: What is a medium income?

**Mr CLARKO:** Under the present scheme the staff and principal of the school in association with the P & C work out a figure on a voluntary basis. I am interested to hear the talk about debt collectors being put onto people.

**Mr Pearce:** Tell us about book hire schemes.

**Mr CLARKO:** I will come to that later. I am referring now to debt collectors being authorised to recover amenities fees. The Minister for Education said it would amaze him; it certainly would amaze me.

Why put an upper limit on charges levied by schools when there are many people who can pay much more and there is an opportunity for those people who are not in a position to pay to avoid payment?

The second point of the amendment relates to the introduction of a free textbook scheme for secondary and technical schools. I welcome the fact that at last, the Labor Party has spoken out about what its "free textbook scheme" really amounts to.

**Mr Speaker,** you will remember how a former Premier of this State (Mr John Tonkin) prior to the 1971 election made a statement which was interpreted throughout the length and breadth of this vast State as amounting to a promise to implement a free textbook scheme for primary and secondary education.

Following the election, Mr Tonkin got off the hook by saying he was referring only to primary schools, and mentioned that he made his position clear in a speech at Albany. Apparently the speech was widely reported in the *Catholic Record*. The number of people who knew that Mr Tonkin was referring only to primary schools would have fitted into a small telephone booth. In fact, what the Labor Party did in 1971 was to allow a statement to be misinterpreted and to allow the public to believe a Labor Government would implement a free textbook scheme in both primary and secondary schools.

**Mr Young:** He referred to "pupils".

**Mr CLARKO:** The Minister for Health has reminded me that Mr Tonkin claimed his scheme would apply to "pupils". Even the *Catholic Record* did not specify the scheme would apply only to primary schools; it mentioned only "pupils". Everybody should know that children in secondary schools are "pupils" just as much as are children in primary schools. It was a most excellent piece of semantics as practised by the ace semanticist, the Leader of the House during the Labor Administration.

I note the member for Ascot smiling; I am glad he agrees with me.

Mr Bryce: You have misinterpreted my expression.

Mr CLARKO: One of the great criticisms of a free textbook scheme for secondary schools is that books invariably are printed and provided by the Government, because, supposedly, it is cheaper to do it that way. They are the sorts of books which now exist for the Achievement Certificate in social studies. Many teachers of the social sciences believe those books are far too restrictive.

All of us who have been classroom teachers know that the books which are most commonly left behind after a classroom has been vacated are the so-called "free books". They are left behind in droves because they have not been paid for. They are also in the worst condition; generally, they have been scribbled on or defaced in some other way.

Those textbooks which have been paid for by students' parents are the ones which children hang on to and do not lose; they are the ones which are cared for best.

I remember entering university in my first year, about to study History 10, as I think it was called in those days. I recall the daughter of one of the wealthiest surgeons in Western Australia, who resided in that struggling suburb of Dalkeith, offering for sale her History 10 textbooks of the previous year. She is now married to a fellow by the name of Robin Day, who is not short of a penny, but she is probably still doing the same sort of thing.

It always amazed me that the children of low-income-earning parents invariably showed the least aptitude in acquiring books at a reasonable cost. We hear people talk about year 11 students being faced with a bill of \$200 for textbooks. The only people who ever pay those sums of money generally are those who cannot afford to pay. Those who have any "nous" or sense, can find a person wishing to sell those books at a fraction of their retail cost. In fact, I as a teacher advised them before classes commenced to do so.

Mr Carr: Isn't that something which can be put down to experience?

Mr CLARKO: I am sure the member for Geraldton did as I did; namely, at the beginning of fourth year, he advised his students to obtain books second-hand. Did the honourable member do that sort of thing? He will not answer my question.

Mr Carr: Those who did already knew the system because they had older brothers or sisters (15)

at the school to advise them. Those people who were in high school for the first time were in the situation of thinking that the only option available to them was to buy books at retail price.

Mr CLARKO: Did the member for Geraldton advise his students to obtain second-hand books?

Mr Carr: Of course I did.

Mr CLARKO: I thank the honourable member. I am sure the members for Ascot, Gosnells and Morley also advised their students to obtain their books in that manner. The figures relating to the cost of books in fourth year were always grossly exaggerated.

In addition, those teachers of the social sciences—as the members opposite to whom I have referred were—do not want to be restricted. They do not want "a" history book, "an" economics book or "a" geography book. They do not want a single book or two books produced by the curriculum branch of the Education Department, printed by the Government Printer and distributed free to students on day one. I would be surprised if members opposite want that sort of system, but that is what is happening with the free books provided for the Achievement Certificate.

The amendment also refers to the introduction of a free textbook scheme for technical schools. I remind members opposite that there are many part-time, as well as full-time technical students and the amendment does not explicitly exclude part-timers. I would hate to think what it would cost the Government to provide a whole range of books to every technical student. It would be a huge figure; it would be a gross waste of Government funds.

I am sure members opposite have all worked teaching evening technical classes at our various high schools. They would know that after one month, often only half the original number of students remain, and that by the end of the year, only one-quarter the initial enrolment remain. Members can just imagine the tremendous waste of money which would be involved in such a scheme.

Mr Grayden: It would involve many millions of dollars.

Mr CLARKO: I agree; I am sure it would be of that order. It is far better to give students a textbook grant, as this Government has done. As you would know, Mr Speaker, the amount of money spent in this direction is higher than it has ever been.

I agreed with many of the points made by the member for Morley. I was interested to hear him

talk about the percentage of the State Budget which is allocated to education. One member puts it at 24 per cent, while another says it is 23 per cent; I would be happy to accept either figure.

I ask members of the Opposition what percentage they would allocate to education if they were in Government. More particularly, I remind the House that there has never been a Labor Government in Western Australia's history which has ever allocated 23 per cent of its Budget to education.

Mr Pearce: That is totally untrue. Twenty five per cent is the average for Labor Governments.

Mr CLARKO: When the Brand Government came into office in 1959, from memory I believe it found the vote of the previous Hawke Government was about 11 per cent of the total Budget.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

Mr Bryce: It was 19 per cent.

Mr CLARKO: I assure members opposite that when the Brand Government came in there was a dramatic increase in the percentage allocation to education.

Mr Bryce: "Supertonk" left the Brand mob for dead.

Mr CLARKO: When the Court Government came in in 1974, again there was a significant increase in the percentage allocation to education.

Mr Pearce: Actually, there was a drop.

Mr CLARKO: I invite members who speak later to correct me if they believe I am wrong.

Mr Pearce: The Federal Labor Government propped up the early days of your Government.

Mr CLARKO: I question whether the people of Western Australia who send their children to Government schools want their education to be totally free; I do not think the majority does. I believe members will find that some of the best involvement in schools by parents is by way of the parents and citizens' organisations.

The member for Bunbury has previously been criticised. I should like to give him a public plaudit, because that honourable member has spent many hours of his time, for many years, working with a parents and citizens' organisation, and has subsequently reached the highest council level of that body. They are a fine group of people, and he is one of the keenest members of the organisation. I commend him for it, and I am ashamed of the people who might want to do otherwise. If we had more members prepared to involve themselves in parents and citizens' groups

throughout this State, our education system would be far better off.

I am saying it is a good thing for parents to involve themselves in their local schools, whether it be by a lamington drive, a fun run, or a "swimathon". All these activities not only benefit the education system but also enhance community spirit. I am sure those involved with parents and citizens' organisations know that is the case.

It is a pity so few parents actually appear at these meetings: the work is shouldered by a very small number of people.

Mr Pearce: You are 20 years out of date.

Mr CLARKO: If the Opposition by its mutterings is saying it is opposed to the concept of parents and citizens' organisations, or that they do not like such organisations having to raise money for schools, I would like members to come out and say so.

Mr Pearce: The "bake a lamington for education" approach is 20 years behind the times.

Mr CLARKO: That is the view of the member for Gosnells; I totally reject it. I believe it is a good thing that parents should be involved in their local schools.

I recall a few years ago the Principal of the Scarborough Senior High School sending out two letters to parents urging them to attend a very important meeting of the parents and citizens' group. Only 18 attended the meeting. At that time, the school had an enrolment of something like 1 300 or 1 400 pupils. One can imagine the number of parents associated with those children; equally, one can work out for oneself that 18 people represented only a tiny percentage of the total.

What we do not want is a system which gobbles up vast sums of money in a free textbook scheme.

I believe I have completely exposed the weakness of including technical schools in the amendment; that should have been qualified. I have also pointed to the tremendous waste which occurs whenever free textbooks are provided. I have pointed to the problems which occur when free textbooks are provided by the Government; I have pointed out that there is a tendency for the Government to provide these books because, supposedly, it is cheaper to do it that way.

I mention now that it was the Court Government which introduced a scheme to allocate money to primary school headmasters so that they could purchase books with the money, rather than automatically getting the books from the Government Stores. Unfortunately, there is a weakness in our scheme in that the Government

books which are deducted from that grant are priced at an abysmally low figure which is not a genuine measure of their cost. In addition, we are getting an excessive proportion of these books written by only one or two people and expressing a narrow point of view, or at the very least not providing the flexibility which most genuine teachers seek. Most genuine teachers want a range of books from which to choose. If the member for Gosnells does not agree with my statement, I do not mind; he is entitled to his view.

I am just saying that most teachers I know, particularly in the social science field, like to have a choice of an optimum number of books. They do not want only one textbook, as a school in a Communist State would have. That is the wrong approach.

Mr Pearce: I am not saying that at all.

Mr CLARKO: I am not suggesting the member for Gosnells said that. Time and time again, I have come into contact with social science teachers who have wanted the maximum opportunity to choose a variety of books.

As long ago as when I taught at Perth Modern School—some 20 years ago—I worked with a man called Tom Staples. He was a superb history teacher who taught at Perth Modern School for over 30 years. The Minister for Health is one of the few members in this place who was a student at that very exalted school. I might also say the teachers of those days were as exalted as the students; however, I will not mention Bob Hawke!

Over 20 years ago, Perth Modern School had a system whereby the various teachers teaching Leaving History knew they had 40 books by, say, Ayerst on some aspect of the French Revolution and 40 books by somebody else. That system avoided the necessity for parents to spend great sums of money. Many teachers believe more encouragement should be given to such a multiple books system within schools. I believe it would produce a better education system. Certainly, it would be cheaper.

I invite members to look at the amount of money this Government spends on libraries in both primary and secondary schools; it is a huge figure and represents a dramatic departure from what happened in my day. These libraries are available more than ever before to our primary and secondary school students.

That is a great achievement by this Government. Its record on education is outstanding; it is fantastic; it is tremendous. It is a record of which we can be truly proud.

The third part of the amendment refers to needy students and it is true that there are such students; but there are schemes to care for them. Unfortunately, time will not allow me to dwell on that point. The member for Morley said that \$120 a week was the maximum figure a supporting mother with three children could have in order to get some sort of help. The information provided to me by the Education Department is that an amount of up to \$160 per annum per child can be paid to needy parents from endowment trust funds, subject to a means test, up to \$160 a week on adjusted family income.

In 1980, grants totalling \$60 000 were made to 380 students from this source.

Mr Wilson: That is incorrect.

Mr CLARKO: This is information provided by the Education Department.

#### *Point of Order*

Mr BRYCE: It is more than passing strange that at this stage of the member's contribution I should take this point of order, but I ask that he table the piece of paper from which he is quoting.

The SPEAKER: I will ask the member to table the piece of paper at the conclusion of his speech.

#### *Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed*

Mr CLARKO: The member for Dianella referred to students in his area who are needy. I accept that he may have students in this category, but should we base our whole education system in this State on a high school he has in his area which is perhaps one of the most needy?

Mr Wilson: Two high schools.

Mr CLARKO: Perhaps they are the two most needy high schools in the State and that is my broad assessment of the situation; but are we to base our education system on that sort of situation or are we to have a system which considers all areas and which is a system seeking justice for all?

The SPEAKER: I ask the member to table the piece of paper from which he was quoting. It shall be placed on the Table of the House for the remainder of this day's sitting for the information of members.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

	Ayes 19
Mr Barnett	Mr Hodge
Mr Bertram	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce	Mr Pearce
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Parker
Mr Harman	

(Teller)

	Noes 26
Mr Clarko	Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan	Mr Old
Mr Coyne	Mr Rushton
Mrs Craig	Mr Sibson
Mr Crane	Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewer	Mr Trethowan
Mr Hassell	Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Young
Mr McPharlin	Mr Shalders

(Teller)

	Pairs	Noes
Ayes		
Mr McIver	Mr Mensaros	
Mr B. T. Burke	Dr Dadour	
Mr Bateman	Mr Blaikie	
Mr Davies	Mr P. V. Jones	

Amendment thus negatived.

#### *Debate (on motion) Resumed*

**MR SIBSON** (Bunbury) [8.51 p.m.]: I rise to say a few words in respect of the Address-in-Reply debate.

Mr Pearce: The jack-in-a-box with the broken spring.

Mr SIBSON: There are a few matters I would like to touch on and firstly I would like to have recorded in *Hansard* the fact that the Mayor of Bunbury (Mr Pat Usher) was awarded the OBE in this year's Honours List. It is well known that His Worship the Mayor has put as many as 24 or 25 years of service into local government in a voluntary capacity and has been involved in every aspect of local government until now he is the Mayor of Bunbury. He led Bunbury's celebrations during the State's 150th activities and at the same time he led the celebrations of the coming of age of the City of Bunbury. I should also mention that his wife (Nell) has very strongly supported him over the years.

On a more sober note, I would like to record the passing of Mr Hay, more affectionately known as Barney Hay.

Mr T. H. Jones: A good Labor man.

Mr SIBSON: Over the years he was a good Labor man and he was also a very great admirer of our Premier.

Mr T. H. Jones: I didn't hear him mention that.

Mr SIBSON: On many occasions he indicated to me that he thought Sir Charles Court was one of the greatest Premiers this State had ever seen. Of course, members of the Opposition have endorsed those remarks. Mr Hay was a one-time mayor of Bunbury. Although he was criticised on many occasions he was renowned and respected for the amount of work he did for the then Town of Bunbury and the many achievements connected with his work.

Mr T. H. Jones: Was he not a Labor Party candidate?

Mr SIBSON: I would like to mention two of his achievements, one of which relates to the development of Blair Street, which is now a dual carriageway providing access and egress to and from the City of Bunbury. This is as a result of long-term planning on his part. He was also responsible for the setting aside of land for the Bunbury Regional Hospital, and all members would know the development which has taken place there. The important aspect of this development was the original act of putting aside the land.

Mr Jamieson: Do you remember Blair Street?

Mr SIBSON: Perhaps if the member for Welshpool reads my speech he will learn what I have had to say on that subject. I now refer to the Hay Park complex established by Mr Hay. He arranged that 300 acres of land would be set aside, and this land is now almost fully developed.

In October 1979 the Premier opened a \$2.4 million complex at this site, a complex funded by local money together with Government funds provided on a regional basis. The complex is for the use of people in Bunbury and the surrounding districts. A plaque was erected in recognition of Mr Barney Hay's foresight and action.

I would like to comment now on the planning and infrastructure provided for and the encouragement given to the development taking place throughout the south-west, particularly in my own electorate of Bunbury. We have all heard about the development and expansion of the Alcoa installation at Wagerup. Unfortunately, due to certain circumstances, that project has been slowed down for the time being. I understand a debate will take place in this House in the coming days and that this will throw much more light on that matter and explain the reasons for the slow-down in activity.

We have also had the spudding in and advancement of the Worsley project. The member for Collicie would be pleased to support me on this point.



Mr T. H. Jones: A Labor Government took the project to Worsley.

Mr SIBSON: The Worsley company has made itself very welcome in the south-west. It has adopted very good policies to ensure that local contractors are used in the development of the site. In short, it is working its way into the community in a very sensible fashion. It has a very good approach.

We have also heard of the proposed development of a further power station which will add to the already large development at Collie. The member for Collie is aware of this and is aware of what has transpired in regard to power generation. There is also current expansion of the coal generating units at Collie. There are moves to have a new power generating unit established in the south-west adjacent to the current Bunbury power station. This would be an excellent site although I understand other sites have been and are being considered. For my part, I believe the site adjacent to the current Bunbury power station is ideal for a project of this nature.

The industry is clean, and the area has road and rail access. It also has many of the other features such as an abundance of sea water and bore water for use in the power generation plant. Of course, the plant would boost employment in the Bunbury City area by providing some 350 jobs. That would have a multiplier effect throughout the area, which is something which would be very well accepted by the people.

Some debate has occurred as to the particular site. We can only leave that decision to the experts who must determine the viability of each site and the problems associated with it in regard to water salinity and the fact that certain areas may have aspects detrimental to the placement of a power station such as at Muja or some other site. For my part I urge the Government and the State Energy Commission to place the plant at Bunbury. I know the people of Bunbury would support that. Since the Government saw fit to spend \$4 million to place electrostatic precipitators on the Bunbury power station which have eliminated the fly ash which for many years annoyed the people in Bunbury and surrounding areas, those people have come to realise the significance of a power station of that nature particularly in terms of the employment provided and the input it has to the community as a whole and its economy.

There will be more development eventually. The gas line from the north-west will go through Pinjarra, Worsley, and, eventually, to Bunbury, where it will have a great impact on the economy

of the various industries in the area. We look forward to that development. Naturally with such developments, problems occur. I believe the approaches made in respect of overcoming the various problems that will occur in areas of education, health, and what-have-you, will be fruitful. Of course, there will be problems in regard to housing developments.

The south-west lends itself very well to the absorption of large developments. I refer to the area from Pinjarra, through Waroona, Harvey, Donnybrook, and Capel to Bunbury, and all the small towns in that area. I refer to the infrastructure in that area which has the scope to provide for accommodation in schools, hospitals, and other service industries and facilities required for a growing population.

I believe many of the problems normally encountered in the establishment of new towns will not be encountered in the south-west and in the Bunbury area in particular.

Mr T. H. Jones: What about the matter of finance? Where will the money come from?

Mr SIBSON: I would agree with the member for Collie that finance always has been a problem, yet he always is the one to criticise this Government for trying to do something about it. If we talk about bringing in money from overseas he slips into the Government—he criticises it.

Mr T. H. Jones: I criticise the mistakes made. They have cost this State many millions of dollars.

Mr SIBSON: I could talk for a long time about the supposed mistakes to which the member for Collie referred. Everyone knows the reasons for the decisions taken at certain times, such as the decision to change from coal-fired to oil-fired power stations. I do not intend to bore the House with those details.

Mr T. H. Jones: You want to forget about that.

Mr SIBSON: The real reasons for these occurrences have been recorded in *Hansard* by me and other members. Problems will confront everyone in the south-west and, certainly, will be the concern of the local authorities and the general community. There will be great concern in regard to housing. Already the high demand for rental accommodation is causing some concern.

Mr T. H. Jones: My word!

Mr SIBSON: Naturally development companies have moved into the area in an endeavour to secure housing for their staff and other employees. This has had the effect of rapidly escalating the rent levels in the area and,

particularly, in the inner Bunbury City area. Rentals which were running between \$35 and \$50 a week are now running between \$65 and \$80 a week. I know in certain segments of the community that level of rent can be withstood, but it is having an adverse effect on low-income earners.

The member for Gosnells unfortunately is not here at the moment. It would have been good for him to hear my remarks because earlier he criticised me for not being concerned for people on low incomes. Those people will be adversely affected by the high rentals. Generally they rely on rental accommodation and, naturally, will suffer most. In regard to this problem I have spoken to the Minister for Housing, and can only reiterate that a need will exist for a very close monitor of the situation in regard to State Housing Commission rental accommodation to ensure that those low-income people not able to pay the high rents in the private sector will be able to obtain public housing.

Mr T. H. Jones: You mentioned Donnybrook. Do you know there hasn't been a State house built in Donnybrook since 1973?

Mr SIBSON: I would say that is a direct reflection on the member for Collie. It means he has not represented the electors of Donnybrook well enough—

Mr T. H. Jones: I control the Court Government, do I?

Mr SIBSON: The member for Collie has not said whether a need exists for that sort of development.

Mr T. H. Jones: I certainly look after my electorate.

Mr SIBSON: If the member requires any assistance I will be glad to give it to him.

I will return to the matter of housing by saying this: The housing development industry in Bunbury of which I always have been proud, and about which I have made mention previously in this House, is doing an excellent job. We have several building companies within the area of Bunbury which have put almost all their efforts into housing development. The type of house they build is particularly suited to the low-income earner. The block on which it is built costs between \$8 000 and \$12 000, and the all-up price is between \$35 000 and \$42 000 or \$43 000. I believe the housing development industry in Bunbury and surrounding districts should be commended for its efforts. Some of these companies build houses in Collie, and the member for Collie would be very much aware of that. In addition, I believe they have built low-cost

housing in Donnybrook. The important point is that these houses are very well presented; they are very neat. Whilst they are a little small they are craftsman built and finished to perfection.

An Opposition member: Nothing is perfect.

Mr SIBSON: I would like it known that the people of Bunbury are aware of the worth-while job the housing industry is doing in that and surrounding areas. If members were to drive around the area on one particular day they would see five, six, or seven homes being started. Some people would say that must be an exaggeration, but I can assure members it is not. Most of the houses are built at ground level so that the cost is kept to a minimum.

The Government and the local authorities in the area will need to ensure that plenty of housing is available and on the market to meet the need for rental accommodation for low-income earners.

In the area of education not much pressure will be brought to bear for some time, particularly on primary schools. For instance, a new primary school was constructed at Australind, and many other primary schools have a capacity to take in more students.

Possibly pressures will be brought to bear on high schools in the area, and a third high school will be required. I do not say that it necessarily should be built in Bunbury. It could be placed in the Australind area which is in the electorate of the member for Wellington, the Minister for Local Government. In the interim there will be a need to upgrade the Bunbury Senior High School and make additions to it. It is badly in need of a hall-gymnasium. It does not have one now because unfortunately the local authority saw fit not to join in the three-way programme to build hall-gymnasiums whereby local authorities, the Education Department, and the Department for Sport, Youth and Recreation came together to fund hall-gymnasiums. At the time the previous Minister for Education, a member in another place, was in a position to offer a hall-gymnasium to the Bunbury Senior High School the offer was not taken up by the local authority, so the need still exists.

Currently the P & C association, the principal, the staff of the school, and I are discussing this matter with the local authority to see whether it will change its policy in regard to that type of funding for a hall-gymnasium.

In addition, the Bunbury Senior High School needs four permanent classrooms to replace the transportables presently in existence there—they have been there for some three or four years. An area at the school is taken up by the caretaker's

cottage which is no longer in use by a resident caretaker and is used for other purposes. It is no longer satisfactory and a need exists to replace it with four permanent classrooms to accommodate the arts and music classes of the school.

The Newton Moore Senior High School is presently very well developed but it also does not have a hall-gymnasium because the local authority did not see fit to enter into the joint programme. Through the P & C association, the school principal, the staff, and I, the local authority's mayor and councillors are being encouraged to see the value of joining that tripartite scheme.

In the long term funds will be available, despite the local authority, but at present they are not because of demands in other areas. I hope appropriate facilities will be provided for the schools in the area which will relieve any future problems in regard to education.

I would like now to talk on a subject about which I feel very strongly. Throughout our society today we hear discussions about a 35-hour week. This would have a devastating effect on our economy, the people of this nation, and also on our export markets.

Mr T. H. Jones: What has it done to Collie?

Mr SIBSON: I would like to put forward some fairly strong criticisms about the way in which certain employers have approached this business.

Mr T. H. Jones: We have had it on the Collie coalfield for 20 years, and you know it.

Mr SIBSON: Unfortunately, some employers and some people in the middle and upper management have accepted—

Mr T. H. Jones: You tell us all about Collie and the 35-hour week.

Mr SIBSON: Does the member for Collie wish me to seek time off to allow him to speak?

Mr T. H. Jones: No, you tell us all about it.

Mr Davies: Do you want to take it away from Collie?

Mr SIBSON: The effect of a 35-hour week would be devastating. I am not going to say we should not talk about improvements in working conditions or reductions in working hours, but I am appalled at the approach to this subject by some of the people in managerial positions in some companies. These people are prepared to accept it as a *fait accompli*. I do not think the unions genuinely believe that they should have a 35-hour week without question. In the main the unions and unionists are more responsible than that.

I believe the way we should approach this problem is to talk about the economics of the idea, the viability of companies, and more importantly, productivity. It does not really matter whether we refer to a 20-hour week or a 70-hour week if there is insufficient productivity.

Mr T. H. Jones: What is wrong with a 35-hour week?

Mr SIBSON: I am having some difficulty, but I will press on.

Mr T. H. Jones: You do not want to answer, do you?

Mr SIBSON: The cost of producing the various articles within the different industries is important. I do not intend to criticise the Collie miners or the coalmining industry.

Mr T. H. Jones: The companies agreed to it.

Mr SIBSON: I thought I mentioned the companies.

Mr T. H. Jones: The coal tribunal ratified it.

Mr SIBSON: I referred to the coalmining industry, and I meant that to cover everyone. I do not intend to disagree with the scheme that was worked out for Collie. However, we must bear in mind that the price of coal is increasing, and perhaps the coalmining industry should look at that.

Mr Davies: What about the price of oil?

Mr SIBSON: Because the member for Collie and the Collie coalmining industry were successful in arranging that system, that does not give a licence to everyone else to say that they are entitled to a 35-hour week. Many problems would follow in the wake of a 35-hour week.

Currently the iron ore contracts are looked at in terms of cost and the viability of delivering the product. We must consider also the rural industry which is already at stress point in regard to production per man hour. The farmers themselves work very long hours to be able to compete on the overseas market and to keep local prices down.

Mr T. H. Jones: Are you going to mention the position of the Bunbury wharf? Give us something positive.

Mr SIBSON: Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), if that twit would only keep quiet for a moment, we could get on with the business of the House.

We must consider the productivity of different industries and what they can afford. It may well be that certain industries can afford reduced working hours but people in those industries must understand that there must be sustained production on an economic basis for the industry to survive.

Many people whom I thought would have had a much greater sense of responsibility have said that more jobs will be created automatically simply because of reduced working hours. In fact quite the opposite could happen. Reduced working hours will result in rises in the cost of production whatever the article produced. Whether it is machinery, grains, or iron ore, orders for these products could be lost because of the increased cost of producing them. So rather than make more jobs available, the ultimate outcome of a 35-hour week could well be fewer jobs. This has been proven time and time again.

Mr E. T. Evans: When was it proven? Give an example.

Mr SIBSON: One has only to read what happened during the Whitlam era to find that out. Prices escalated to such an extent that many overseas markets were lost.

Mr Davies: I think you have lost your marbles.

Mr SIBSON: For a moment I would like to look at this situation from a slightly different angle. I believe there is a responsibility on society to make some decisions in regard to the inequities of hours worked throughout the community. The Public Service works for approximately 37½ hours a week while the average employee works 40 hours a week. I put forward a challenge to the workers, the unions, and the Public Service. In this day and age we cannot tolerate such a difference between two classes of people. In other words, we are causing a division in our society.

Twenty years ago for some strange reason it was accepted that members of the Public Service were entitled to shorter working hours and that a public servant was a somewhat better person than workers in other jobs. Such a concept is not acceptable today. We have equality of rights, equal pay for women, and such things as human and civil rights thrown at us every day. There should be some close scrutiny of the situation I have referred to.

The unions should be prepared to discuss reduced working hours on the basis of economic production. If production is lost, the cost of living is forced up and the possibilities for export markets are forced down. However, at the same time, we must look at removing the inequities in our society today.

Mr T. H. Jones: What about the trouble on the Bunbury wharf? Tell us about that.

Mr SIBSON: I believe the interjections—

Mr T. H. Jones: They are in trouble. What are you doing to help them?

Mr SIBSON: The member for Collie should ask Mr Bob Goodlad, the secretary of the Bunbury branch of the WSWF—he will tell him.

Mr T. H. Jones: You tell me something positive—you are the member for Bunbury.

Mr MacKinnon: The only time the member for Collie does not give his No. 1 or No. 2 speech is now.

Mr SIBSON: I believe the Opposition is interjecting because its members do not like what I am saying.

Mr T. H. Jones: We are wondering about the Bunbury wharfies, are you?

Mr H. D. Evans: And how is Pledge going?

Mr SIBSON: For the benefit of the member for Warren, the Pledge scheme is going very well. Certainly we would like some more money so that we could broaden its aspects but the parent involvement and the work being carried out under the scheme are commendable. However, that is not what we are discussing at the moment.

Mr H. D. Evans: Tell us what you have done about it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! There have been far too many interjections. I ask Opposition members to remain quiet and let the member for Bunbury conclude his speech.

Mr T. H. Jones: Albany and Bunbury are ganging up.

Mr Barnett: Get on with it.

Mr H. D. Evans: Tell us about the wharf you cannot use.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SIBSON: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for endeavouring to call the House to order. I appreciate the difficult job you have.

Mr Barnett: He is excessively protective.

Mr SIBSON: In concluding my remarks about the 35-hour week, I want to record in *Hansard* that I am very concerned about the way the total society—and that includes employers and employees—is approaching this matter. Many responsible people would like to hear the matter debated properly. I would not like to think that we will just stumble on and finish up eventually with a 35-hour week, and with the same result as in the late 1940s and early 1950s when the working week was reduced from 44 to 40 hours.

Mr T. H. Jones: Did that happen in Collie?

Mr SIBSON: There was an absolute understanding that production would not be affected. It was said in the Press, and by everyone concerned, that production would go up. We

know that that never happened. Despite the fact that there was reasonably full employment at the time, an inflationary situation resulted, and that situation set this State back right throughout the decade of the 1950s. We did not get over it until well into the 1960s, and we would not have got over it then, had it not been for the mineral boom.

Mr T. J. Burke: What about blaming Whitlam?

Mr SIBSON: It must hurt members opposite to be reminded of what happened, but the same thing will happen again if we go along accepting blindly the inevitability of a 35-hour week. Our employment situation is improving every day—the statistics are now going in the right direction. We do not want to turn around and create unemployment unprecedented in this country. That will wreck completely the economic structure of this country.

Mr T. H. Jones interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order!

Mr SIBSON: I have a lot of respect for *Hansard* trying to take down words I am saying. If members of the Opposition have no respect for my speech, at least they should give the *Hansard* reporter a go.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Pearce: Why don't you conclude, and we will all be happy?

Mr SIBSON: In case my comments about the economy did not reach *Hansard*—

Mr Pearce: Disrespectful remarks about *Hansard*!

Mr SIBSON: We will all be back to the situation in the early 1950s, and it will take us 10 or 15 years to rectify the adverse economic and inflationary trends.

Opposition members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have already attempted to call the House to order once. The interjections are far too numerous; and there are far too many interjections at once. I remind members of Standing Order No. 137 which permits no interjections. However, the practice of the House is to tolerate interjections provided they add something to the debate and where they are of such a nature that the member speaking has the opportunity to use the interjection in terms of making his speech. However, I ask members, for their own edification, to read Standing Order No. 137.

Mr SIBSON: There is one more subject on which I would like to touch—

Mr Jamieson: You didn't touch on the last one.

Mr T. H. Jones: The Bunbury wharfies—that is the one we want to hear about.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr T. J. Burke: What about unemployment under Menzies in the 1950s?

Mr SIBSON: In my electorate a number of people, for some strange reason, have adopted the unfortunate attitude that some jobs are not very important to Bunbury.

Mr Pearce: Like yours!

Mr SIBSON: There are only a very few people who believe this; but unfortunately they have achieved a lot of publicity in recent times. In fact, a headline in the *South Western Times* last week was to the effect that the 20 jobs that the Borden plant would bring to Bunbury were insignificant, and were of no consequence whatsoever. My reaction is that Bunbury, like anywhere else, cannot afford to miss out on one job, let alone 20. I want to record that I dissociate myself from remarks of that nature. They have been made by a small number of people in my electorate; and certainly they are not supported by the vast majority of people. It is unfortunate that those remarks have been given a lot of prominence in the newspapers. I want to make it clear that the feeling of the people who live in my electorate is that those remarks do not apply. It is very important that these remarks be recorded in *Hansard*, because unfortunately—

Mr Pearce: Is *Hansard* widely read in Bunbury?

Mr SIBSON: —the media is giving much more coverage and much more credence to the people who are prepared to denigrate and ridicule. I make particular reference to the fact that somebody in my electorate has said that the 20 jobs that Borden will bring are insignificant.

Mr Jamieson: That will not bring additional work to the waterside workers.

Mr SIBSON: The member for Welshpool should be very careful. He could be talking through his hat. The next point I am going to make is that the advent of the Borden chemical plant in Bunbury will be of great significance to the economy and the expansion of the particle board factory at Dardanup. On this question, the member for Welshpool will be shot through the floor of this House.

Opposition members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order!

Mr SIBSON: The overall effect of the Borden chemical plant coming to Bunbury will be a greatly reduced cost for the resin products which are vital to the production of particle board.

Mr H. D. Evans: To export from Fremantle!

Mr SIBSON: Some of that board has been sent out from Bunbury—

Mr T. H. Jones: Very limited.

Mr Jamieson: Two sheets!

Mr SIBSON: I can put the member for Collie in his place. If the particle board factory can find markets overseas in South-East Asia, the shipping through Bunbury will increase. The company will have a greater chance of finding new markets once the price of the resin is reduced. Trial shipments from the Port of Bunbury have already been carried out. The particle board people have discussed this matter with the waterside workers in Bunbury; and the waterside workers understand the situation. In fact, the Bunbury branch of the Waterside Workers Federation supports the placement of the Borden factory at the inner harbour at Bunbury.

Mr T. H. Jones: Who is opposing it? Are we opposing it?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SIBSON: I will finish by saying that the people who shoot from the hip, whether they be members of the Opposition, or people like one or two in my electorate, are acting irresponsibly. They do not think through to the outcome of their utterances, particularly in terms of what they mean to the people living in the area, and jobs, and markets, and overseas exports. Such people act in an unacceptable way. I want to say categorically that they are only a very minor—

Mr Barnett: Order!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Preace: Respect for the Chair!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Barnett: No extra time allowed!

Mr SIBSON: Only a few people are saying these things.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr E. T. Evans.

*House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.*

# QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

### *Mirrabooka*

213. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Are internal repairs and renovations to be undertaken at the Mirrabooka Primary School in 1981 and, if not, when are they to be undertaken?
- (2) Will these renovations include the replacement of outmoded Wonderheat room heaters with modern gas heaters, and the replacement of staff furniture and furniture for year 1 children?
- (3) Will these renovations include the installation of ceiling fans in classrooms?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No.  
Repairs and renovations are to be undertaken in the latter part of the 1981-82 financial year.
- (2) The renovations will include the replacement of the Wonderheat room heaters.  
The necessity to replace the staff furniture and furniture for year 1 children will be assessed at the same time.
- (3) Yes, provided sufficient funds are made available.

## EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

### *Mirrabooka*

214. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

In view of the apparently marked remedial problems in evidence at the Mirrabooka Primary School with significant numbers of children showing 20 to 40 months' retardation and many others up to 20 months' retardation in literacy and numeracy skills, what consideration is being given to the establishment of a remedial class at the school and the inclusion of the school in the priority schools programme?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Since reading ages are based on "average" performance it is to be expected that some children must

achieve less than "average" performance. At Mirrabooka Primary School a special class has been provided which caters for some children who have learning difficulties. In addition a number of children who are experiencing difficulties receive assistance through access to special education staff based in the school and through the regular support teacher programmes. In addition, children from Mirrabooka Primary School have access to two remedial reading clinics and four district remedial centres.

The priority schools committee is considering all schools' claims for inclusion in the programme in 1982 and Mirrabooka's entitlement will be assessed by that committee.

## NOISE

### *Interdepartmental Committee Report*

215. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the interdepartmental committee report on motor vehicle noise been finalised?
- (2) If "No", when is it expected that the report will be available?
- (3) Will the report be made available to the public, and if so, when?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) This has not been decided. The report is now to be given to Ministers concerned for comment.

## EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### *Telephones*

216. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

What changes have been made in the telephone policy in primary schools in line with his promise in answer to question 86 of 1980 that such changes would be available for the 1981 academic year?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The review of telephone policy is progressing, but at this stage has not reached finality. Should changes occur.

they will be introduced in the 1981-82 financial year, depending on the extent of funding approved.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *Building: Uniform By-laws*

217. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is she aware that several local authorities are possibly flouting uniform building by-laws which specifically prohibit buildings including pergolas and carports forward of the set back line?
- (2) Has the Local Government Department refused to take the necessary steps to have the by-laws amended in response to such a request from the Shire of Wanneroo?
- (3) Is she prepared to instruct her department to take appropriate action to regularise the present situation?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) To the best of my knowledge there has been no flouting of the Uniform Building By-laws. I am advised that these by-laws do give councils a discretion to permit the construction of carports, including pergola carports, forward of the set back line. The by-laws do not otherwise make specific provision for pergolas.
- (2) The department can find no record of any request from the Shire of Wanneroo in relation to carports or pergolas.
- (3) There is no evidence of any situation that requires regularising.

## HOUSING

### *Low Income Earners*

218. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is the State Housing Commission considering the reintroduction of a home purchase scheme for low income earners?
- (2) If "Yes", what stage has been reached in these considerations and when is an announcement likely to be made regarding details of such intentions?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The State Housing Commission has already a home purchase assistance scheme operating whereby \$1 568 million in funds from the home purchase assistance account have been allocated this year to assist tenants in occupation of rental houses to buy their homes. The eligibility requirements, terms and conditions are almost identical to those available by terminating building societies and so directed to low-income earners.

The commission is currently formulating a home purchase scheme under the Housing Act 1980 which will enable low income applicants to purchase a new house constructed by the commission.

It would be intended to first satisfy those applications that are already held by the State Housing Commission before opening the scheme to new applications.

As well as these programmes the Federation of Terminating Building Societies of WA maintains a loan priority list from which eligible applicants receive home purchase assistance account advances. This arrangement caters specifically for lower-income earners.

## CONSUMER AFFAIRS

### *Tenants: Protection*

219. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is he aware of proposals to introduce new laws in Victoria and South Australia to safeguard the right of tenants in rented flats and units?
- (2) Has any consideration been given to the need for similar legislation in this State?
- (3) What safeguards are currently available to tenants in rented flats and units in Western Australia in the event of short notice to vacate and delays in recovering bond deposits?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) The Victorian and South Australian laws on tenancy are being examined. The former has only recently been passed and it is too early for its effects to be observed.



- (3) Notice to vacate must comply with the terms of the lease and tenancy agreement, otherwise it is ineffective at law. Orders for the return of bond deposits, where entitlement exists, appear to be adequately handled by the Small Claims Tribunal.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY AND GAS

### *Charges: Rebates*

220. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has he received a submission from the State Energy Commission action group titled "Proposal for a Rebate System"?
- (2) When was the submission received?
- (3) What action has been taken on it?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 1 August 1980.
- (3) I have announced on several occasions that a high level working committee of senior Energy Commission and Department for Community Welfare officers was established to investigate and report upon the SEC Action Group's proposal. The proposals require careful study, and would entail considerable expenditure if implemented. For this reason, the Government will not be rushed into a decision on this matter until it has fully considered all aspects of the SECAG proposal, and the working committee's report which I received in final form in March 1981. I hope to be in a position to answer the SECAG shortly.

## HEALTH

### *Medical Practitioners and Dentists: Registration*

221. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

How many medical practitioners and dentists are registered in Western Australia but do not practice in this State?

Mr YOUNG replied:

Medical practitioners—1 January 1978 ..... 172  
Dental practitioners—not known.

## HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES

### *Ownership*

222. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Government take steps to establish a public register of the ownership of all hospitals, nursing homes, and similar institutions in Western Australia?
- (2) Does the Government have access to details of ownership of all hospitals, nursing homes and other similar institutions in this State?
- (3) Is he aware that the details of ownership of private hospitals, nursing homes, and similar institutions in this State are not available to public under existing laws?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) No.

## NOISE

### *Dogs: Barking*

223. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Will he bring about suitable amendments to the Police Act to cover the control of noise by domestic pets more particularly the barking of dogs at night?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If he does not intend to bring about such an amendment and the police have no control over such matters, what can people so affected do to enable them to have a normal night's rest?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) The nuisance of dog noise is controlled by the Dog Act, and any person affected by such noise can take appropriate action under the provisions of section 38.

## BOATS

### *Certificates of Registration*

224. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Transport:

How many pleasure craft and/or power boats hold current certificates of registration with the Harbour and Light Department?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Approximately 40 000.

## TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLES

*Stock Carriers*

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

- (1) Is the Road Traffic Authority currently conducting a special campaign directed to ensuring compliance with the road traffic code on vehicle standards?
- (2) Is stock transport receiving special attention?
- (3) How many work orders—yellow stickers—have been issued this calendar year specifically related to the heights of the tops of stock crates above ground level?
- (4) If statistics are unavailable, will he indicate whether non-compliance on stock crate heights are a particular and significant problem?
- (5) What are the criteria which establish the 4.3 metres as the height limit for road vehicles?
- (6) Is he aware that for practical reasons operators need to vary combinations of prime movers, trailers, and stock crates, and that this may vary the gross height of the vehicle?
- (7) Is he aware work orders have been issued for rigs exceeding the code height limit by as little as five centimetres?
- (8) Will he have the operators problems investigated by initiating discussions with them to see whether suitable modifications to the code can be established that take into account the operators problems?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) No. The Road Traffic Code does not relate to vehicle standards. These are set out in the Vehicle Standards Regulations 1977. The authority has not initiated a campaign in relation to any specific regulation but maintains surveillance on all regulations as a routine procedure.
- (2) Stock transporters have not been receiving special attention from the authority although the heavy haulage section have taken height measurements to assess the proportion of overheight stock transporters.

(3) This information is not readily available. It is understood that the Main Roads Department have issued approximately 18 overheight permits for stock crates this calendar year.

(4) Non-compliance of stock crates with regulation heights appears to be a problem in relation to transporters operating from the Northwest and extending into the South-west Land Division.

(5) The 4.3 metre height limit was established by the National Advisory Committee on Vehicle Performance on recommendations by the Association of Australian State Road Authorities and took into account bridge and other structure clearance heights, vehicle stability, electric cable heights, and associated considerations.

(6) I am aware that stock transporters have run into problems with various combinations of their equipment but transporters have a responsibility to select equipment which is compatible with regulations in all configurations and combinations. There is no engineering reason why legal heights limits have to be exceeded.

(7) No.

(8) Yes. Provided the stock transport industry clearly defines its problems in conforming with the regulations, I will have the necessary investigations carried out.

## ROAD

*Bullsbrook-Toodyay*

226. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is work contemplated to improve the Julimar Hill section of the Bullsbrook to Toodyay road?

(2) If so, at what estimated cost?

(3) When is it anticipated the work will be funded?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (3) I understand the question refers to a hill on Julimar Road approximately 12 km south east of Bindoon. This section of road is under the control of the Chittering Shire. It is believed that the shire is currently preparing a request for funds to enable improvement to this section but at this stage no recent submission has been received by the Main Roads Department.

## ROAD

### *Great Northern Highway*

227. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In regard to his recent announcement of the development of a road train assembly area for north-west transport at Upper Swan, will he detail what improvements are proposed to Great Northern Highway between Upper Swan and Muchea?
- (2) What is the estimated cost?
- (3) When will the work be implemented?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Widening between Middle Swan Road and Muchea to provide a 7.4 metre sealed pavement with improved shoulders sealed 0.6 metres wide. Widening and strengthening a small bridge at Bullsbrook and rescaling the existing road surface.
- (2) \$1.6 million.
- (3) Work is in progress and should be completed by the end of 1981.

## TRAFFIC

### *Boat Trailer Licences*

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

How many boat trailer licences are currently on issue by the Road Traffic Authority?

Mr HASSELL replied:

The latest available figure is 10 241 boat trailers as at 4 December 1980.

229 and 230. *These questions were postponed.*

## GAMBLING

### *Government Policy*

231. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

What is the Government's policy with regard to—

- (a) the introduction of poker machines in Western Australia;
- (b) the establishment of a casino in Western Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) and (b) The Government does not have any plans to legislate for either the introduction of poker machines or the establishment of a casino in Western Australia.

## FIRE BRIGADES

### *Funding*

232. Mr BRYCE, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) What was the total cost of funding the W.A. Fire Brigade Board during each of the last five years?
- (2) In respect of each year, what amount of the funding was contributed by—
- (a) local government;
- (b) State Government;
- (c) insurance companies?
- (3) For purposes of funding, why is the W.A. Fire Brigade services not regarded as the same as the Police Force, Road Traffic Authority and State Emergency Services?
- (4) Is the Government aware of the heavy burden which the levy for the W.A. Fire Brigade Board places upon local governing authorities?
- (5) Is it the Government's intention to relieve all or part of the burden upon local government?

Mr HASSELL replied:

(1) and (2)

Proportion of costs	Local authorities 12%	State Government 12½%	Insurance companies 75%	TOTAL 100%
	\$	\$	\$	\$
1975-1976	1 546 652	1 546 652	9 279 912	12 373 216
1976-1977	1 680 450	1 680 450	10 082 700	13 443 600
1977-1978	2 028 857	2 028 857	12 173 141	16 230 855
1978-1979	2 300 171	2 300 171	13 804 827	18 405 169
1979-1980	2 608 651	2 608 651	15 651 904	20 869 206

- (3) Throughout Australia, as in many other countries, fire brigades began at local authority level. Subsequently operational control was centralised for better efficiency but legislators at the time presumably considered financing of brigades should reasonably be attached—at least in part—to property owners through the local authority. Successive Governments reduced local authority contribution ratio from 33-1/3 per cent to the present level of 12½ per cent.
- (4) Yes, in common with its awareness of the burden across government of providing essential community services.
- (5) In August 1979 the Government legislated to fund from Consolidated Revenue the full cost of fire services in areas not covered by permanent brigades, effective from 1/7/1980, and at an estimated cost of \$1.7 million. At that time the then Minister said—

The Government has for some time been examining alternative ways of financing the board's operations. I must emphasise that there are no obvious practical alternatives which do not involve more inequities than the present system. Let me say unequivocally that the Government is not able to meet the whole cost of the service from Consolidated Revenue as has been proposed in some quarters

A practical alternative to the existing funding method is not available but the matter remains under consideration.

### BRIDGE

#### *Beechboro-Gosnells Freeway*

233. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In respect of plans for the bridge across the Swan River as part of the Beechboro-Gosnells Highway project, has his department considered the feasibility of including provision for a railway line?
- (2) Will his department consider the value of such a proposal as an alternative to the cost of constructing an additional railway bridge at some time in the future?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) There are no plans or future proposals to construct a railway line in this area.

### CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

#### *Swan River*

234. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) What form of assistance is available for—

- (a) private individuals;
- (b) local authorities;
- (c) business premises;

as land owners to combat the erosion of the Swan River foreshore north of the Causeway?

- (2) What plans does the State Government have to prevent further erosion of Swan River foreshore north of the Causeway?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) On receipt of a complaint the area is examined and remedial work is placed on a programme, then the Swan River Management Authority, in conjunction with the Public Works Department, carries out a programme of reconstruction of banks which have been affected by erosion as finance becomes available.

- (2) The banks north of the Causeway are largely composed of unprotected soil and are subject to erosion from a number of sources including flood water, wash from passing craft and trampling by people and stock. Some of these can and are controlled, such as the speed limit imposed on boats in the upper reaches. However, complete protection would require the armouring of the banks, the cost of which would be prohibitive.

To assist in the education of the public an eight minute film entitled "The Swansong" has been prepared by Channel 9 free of charge and has been shown on that station and to numerous primary schools in the metropolitan area. The film is available on request from the offices of the Waterways Commission.

## EDUCATION

*Television Programmes*

235. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that serious warnings concerning the possibility of prosecution have been issued to teachers in Government schools in respect of the video taping of television programmes for use in schools?
- (2) Is it also a fact that in some schools, teachers have been warned or instructed to "wipe" whole series of video copies of programmes used as teaching aids in schools?
- (3) (a) Has the Education Department received representations from any of the Perth television networks complaining about the copying of programmes for use in schools;  
(b) if so, will he provide details?
- (4) Has any Western Australian television network or film documentary producing company—  
(a) threatened to take action;  
(b) instituted action;  
against any school or teacher as a result of video copies of television programmes being used in schools?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) A notice was placed in the February 1981 issue of *AVE NEWS* (a publication issued to teachers by the Audio Visual Education Branch of the Education Department) as follows—

Teacher librarians and library technicians are reminded that, under the laws relating to copyright, they are authorised to copy only ABC Schools Broadcasts between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Monday to Friday during the school term. Unauthorised copy during all other transmission times will constitute infringement of copyright.

- (2) No.
- (3) No.
- (4) No.

## BOATS

*Swan River: Number and Speed Limits*

236. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does his department conduct regular "boat counts" on the Swan River system?

- (2) If so, will he indicate—

- (a) how frequently the boat counts are conducted;
  - (b) the points at which the counts are conducted;
  - (c) when the last count was conducted between Courtney Island and Sandy Beach;
  - (d) the results of the counts conducted in 1980?
- (3) What are the current speed limits on the Swan River between the Causeway and the Guildford Bridge?
  - (4) What are the penalties for exceeding the speed limits on the river?
  - (5) How frequently are the Belmont-Redcliffe and Bassendean sections of the Swan River patrolled?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Causeway to Bunbury rail bridge unrestricted speed. Bunbury bridge to Goodwood ski area unrestricted speed except for Sunday afternoons when sailing is in progress, then 8 knots. Punt Road, Rivervale to Maylands reserve 12 knots. Maylands reserve to lower limit Ascot ski area 8 knots. Upper limit Ascot ski area to Point reserve 8 knots. Point reserve to Bassendean Road Bridge 5 knots. Bassendean Road Bridge to Governor Stirling jetty 8 knots. Governor Stirling jetty area 5 knots. Governor Stirling jetty to Caversham 8 knots. Upstream of Caversham 5 knots.
- (4) Maximum penalty \$200.
- (5) At least one patrol vessel each weekend, sometimes two vessels.

## STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

*Details*

237. Mr BRYCE, to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) When was the State Emergency Service established in Western Australia?
- (2) How many full-time personnel are employed by the State Emergency Service?

- (3) How many part-time and volunteer personnel are attached to the State Emergency Service?
- (4) In how many civil emergencies was the State Emergency Service engaged in each of the last five years?
- (5) In respect of (4) above, what were the categories of such emergencies and approximately how many people were involved in each case?
- (6) In respect of questions (2) and (3) above, what are the classifications of the personnel?
- (7) What is the estimate of the number of Western Australians who have received basic civil defence training in some form?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia came into being in October 1961 as a result of combining the separate Civil Defence and State Emergency Service organisations. The organisation was retitled the Western Australian State Emergency Service in July 1974.
- (2) 21.
- (3) 3 500 approximately.
- (4) 1976 — 28  
1977 — 30  
1978 — 21  
1979 — 31  
1980 — 23.
- (5) The categories range from cyclones, floods and earth tremor situations and special operations such as the Sky-lab re-entry, down to assistance in the search for missing persons. The organisation is also on standby whenever nuclear powered ships visit this State. The number of persons involved would range from 1 000-plus, down to a score or so dependent upon the situation.
- (6) Full-time personnel—

No.	Classification
1	A-I-I
6	G-II-5/6
3	G-II-3/4
1	G-II-2
3	G-II-1
1	C-II-1
2	C-VI
3	C-V
1	G-X

All others are volunteers and therefore unclassified.

- (7) Training programmes conducted at the Western Australian State Emergency Service headquarters, Belmont, cater for some 1 200 students per year. In addition, training is conducted at the regional and local level. The State also receives in the order of 100 allocations each year for selected persons to attend various courses of training and seminars at the Australian Counter-Disaster College, Mount Macedon, Victoria.

## WATER RESOURCES: UNDERGROUND

### *Bores: Private and Domestic*

238. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) What is the estimated number of private/domestic water bore systems in the metropolitan area?
- (2) What statistical information is used as the basis of the estimate?
- (3) What is the approximate cost of metering devices suitable for measuring private/domestic water bore systems?
- (4) Does his department have any estimate of the volume of ground water drawn by private/domestic bore systems in the metropolitan area?
- (5) Is it a fact that his department has already purchased a large quantity of meters suitable for metering private/domestic water bore systems?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Approximately 55 000 as at November 1979.
- (2) A survey carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in November 1979.
- (3) Various measuring devices are available but none have been considered in detail, hence no cost investigations have been undertaken.
- (4) Approximately 60 million cubic metres during the summer period for private bores in low density residential areas.
- (5) No, but the Water Board did purchase 25 meters for the voluntary groundwater usage study which it is conducting on the private bores of board officers.

## EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY

### *Centres: Four-year-olds*

239. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Adverting to his answer to question 9 of 1981 relevant to pre-primary centres, in which particular pre-primary centres

established by the Education Department has permission been granted to accept children younger than one year below school age?

- (2) If such children are not generally admitted, upon what basis are the exceptions made?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) At Balingup and Greenbushes pilot centres were established several years ago and these centres have had permission to admit younger children. Beaconsfield, South Terrace and Highgate, which are classified as disadvantaged schools, admit younger children to pre-primary language centres set up under the priorities programme. Two children with a special medical recommendation have been allowed to attend pre-primary, one each at Cassia and Yarloop.

- (2) When the receiver and manager has completed liquidation of the company.  
 (3) Because I am not prepared to make public the advice which was tendered to the Government by its officers on this matter.  
 (4) The following people were members of the 150th Anniversary Industries Committee at various times.

Mr K. Dickson  
 Mr J. Bunce  
 Mr A. Moredoundt  
 Mr G. Johnson  
 Sir Bruce MacKinlay  
 Mr S. Bardon  
 Mr F. Malone  
 Mr J. Leyland  
 Mr B. Atkinson  
 Mr N. Oliver  
 Mr J. Hendry  
 Mr R. Trigg  
 Mr P. Murphy  
 Mr R. Finch  
 Mr D. Cooley.

241. *This question was postponed.*

## WEST TRADE CENTRE LTD.

### *Details*

240. Mr BRYCE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Adverting to his answers to question 3 of 1981 relevant to the West Trade Centre Ltd., will he table the feasibility study conducted by the 150th Anniversary Industries Committee which apparently justified Government assistance to the West Trade Centre?  
 (2) When does he expect to receive information from the receiver/manager concerning the nature and extent of the State Government's total liability?  
 (3) Why is he not prepared to table the Government's advice which indicated that financial assistance for the West Trade Centre was within the scope of the provisions of the Assistance to Industries Act?  
 (4) Who comprised the membership of the 150th Anniversary Industries Committee?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) No, because it related to the formation of a private company and such information is considered confidential.

## EDUCATION

### *Country High School Hostel*

242. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) With reference to his answer to question 100 of 1981 relevant to country high school hostels, how are the people who comprise the board of management of the Narrogin Senior High School hostel selected and appointed?  
 (2) When was the CIB called in to investigate the financial mismanagement of the hostel's financial affairs?  
 (3) In view of the fact that the hostel's financial accounts were supposed to be audited by the internal audit section of the Education Department, how does he explain the fact that the accounts of the hostel had not been audited since August 1978?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The people are selected by the board of management itself and submitted to the Country High School Hostels' Authority for approval. Appointees are usually public spirited individuals of various interests, or parents from the catchment area from which the hostel draws its students.

- (2) 31 October 1980, by the chairman of the board of management.
- (3) Annual audits of hostel accounts are desirable and a succession of visits to the hostel was made during the second half of 1979 and during 1980 for this purpose. However, the absence of the account books prevented the audit being carried out. It was reported to the hostels authority that the account books had been lost in transit to the Education Department and were in the process of being rewritten.

### ROAD.

#### *Great Eastern Highway, Greenmount*

243. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In relation to the escape route on Great Eastern Highway, Greenmount, why is there a barricade across the entrance to the escape route?
- (2) Does not this barricade indicate that there is to be no access to this escape route?
- (3) Why are there no signs indicating the presence of this escape route and distance indicators showing drivers how far there is to go to reach the escape route?
- (4) Interstate drivers would probably not automatically know that there was an escape route, so why are there no signs along Great Eastern Highway to make these drivers aware of the existence of the escape route?
- (5) (a) Has this escape route ever been used officially by a vehicle out of control; and  
(b) if so, when?
- (6) In view of the accident that occurred on Greenmount last week, and reported in *The West Australian* when a truck lost its brakes, careered out of control and finally mounted the bank on the opposite side of the road, would he ensure that action is taken to have this escape route well signposted, the barricade removed from the entrance, and if necessary have the escape route resurfaced to ensure the maximum restraint of an out-of-control vehicle as it travels along the escape route?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) A barricade is across the entrance to the escape route because the escape route has some deficiencies.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) and (4) Answered by (2).
- (5) (a) No.  
(b) Answered by (a).
- (6) The escape route will not be sign posted nor the barricades removed from the entrance until the Main Roads Department is satisfied that it is safe to use. When the escape route was designed and constructed as an experiment, it incorporated the best knowledge available at the time but the material proved to be unsuitable. Further information, including some from the United States of America, received later indicated that the length may not be adequate. The escape route has now been redesigned which will necessitate an extension and the use of a different type of material.

### CONSUMER AFFAIRS

#### *Credit Ratings: Accuracy*

244. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Will the Government accept a suggestion by the Consumer Affairs Council that legislation be introduced to allow people to check the accuracy of their credit rating?
- (2) If "No", why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Consumer Affairs Council has not in fact recommended legislation in this field.

### CONSUMER AFFAIRS

#### *Food: Date Stamping*

245. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Government considered legislation to cover the date stamping of food?
- (2) When will it be introduced?



Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Introduced 16 May 1980, operative 16 November, 1981, after 18 months' phasing-on period.

## HEALTH: DENTAL

### *Technicians*

246. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many dental technicians qualified at the end of 1980?
- (2) Of that total, how many are employed as technicians?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) At February 1981, 15 apprentices completed training at Mt. Lawley Technical College.
- (2) I am advised that 11 are employed. Circumstances of the remaining four are not known.

## CONSUMER AFFAIRS

### *Bureau*

247. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

How many additional officers have been appointed to the Consumer Affairs Bureau in the present financial year?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Two.

248. *This question was postponed.*

## CULTURAL AFFAIRS

### *State Library: New Building*

249. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

What is the estimated completion date for the new Library building?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Subject to finance, contract period for the main frame will specify a completion date of 9 May 1983. Associated subcontracts will not be completed until some time in 1984.

## COMMUNITY WELFARE

### *Family Advisory Committee*

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

- (1) Further to the answer to part (3) of question 62 of 1981 concerning the ministerial advisory committee on families, will he advise the names of the members of the committee?
- (2) Will he give details of the category "C" rate of fees applicable to the non-Government members of the committee?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Sir Lawrence Jackson, chairman

Dr Judith Henzell  
Dr Warren Loudon  
Mr Geoffrey Aves  
His Hon. Judge Ferrier  
Mrs Pat Smeeton  
Mrs Sally Pownall  
Mrs Ann Griffiths  
Mr Robert Isaacs  
Mr Jeff Hopp.

- (2) Category "C" rate of fees—

Full-day meeting:	\$96.00 (chairman)
	\$72.00 (members)
Half-day meeting:	\$64.00 (chairman)
	\$48.00 (members).

However, the chairman accepted appointment only on the basis that his service would be honorary.

## WATER RESOURCES

### *Agaton*

251. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Further to my questions 367, 682, 846, and 945 of 1980 concerning the priority being given to the Agaton project, is he

aware that his colleague, the member for Moore, at a meeting of the executive committee of the Rural Water Council at Bencubbin on Monday, 9 March 1981, described the answers to those questions as spurious and indicated that if he had asked the questions, he would have received entirely different answers?

- (2) If "No" to (2), will he check with his colleague to ascertain the reasons for his statement?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) No.  
(2) No.

### HOSPITALS

#### *Charges and Means Test*

252. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) By how much will hospital charges rise after 30 June this year?
- (2) Will hospitals impose a means test on free public ward treatment?
- (3) Is it correct that the State Governments have agreed that daily bed charges should be increased automatically each year?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No decision has been made as to whether there is to be an increase in public hospital charges.
- (2) No decision has been made on the basis upon which uninsured inpatients will be provided with medical and hospital treatment after 1 July 1981. Commonwealth decisions on the funding of hospital and health services are still awaited. The State Health Ministers at their recent conference in Perth advised the Commonwealth Minister that they did not favour a means test at the point of service.
- (3) At the recent Australian Health Ministers' Conference, State Ministers agreed that there should be an annual adjustment of daily bed charges on an agreed formula.

### MINING

#### *Quarrying: Darling Range*

253. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is there a Western Australian Government committee examining quarrying along the Darling escarpment?
- (2) If "Yes", what is its title?
- (3) Who are its members?
- (4) How many times has it met?
- (5) When, and to whom does it report?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Darling escarpment aggregate resources committee.
- (3) Officers of the Departments of Resources Development, Urban Development and Town Planning, Local Government, Mines, and Conservation and Environment.
- (4) 14.
- (5) This committee reports to an MRPA subcommittee, the basic raw materials committee, as required.

### INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT

#### *Section 101*

254. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Did he receive a letter from the Industrial Commission with reference to the provisions of section 101 of the Industrial Arbitration Act?
- (2) If so, when?
- (3) Will he table it?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) November 1980.
- (3) No.

### ELECTORAL

#### *Elections: Conduct*

255. Mr DAVIES, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has the State Government received a report suggesting alterations to the conduct of State elections?
- (2) If so, will he table it?

- (3) When is it proposed to introduce amending legislation to the Electoral Act to the State Parliament?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) and (2) At my request, the Chief Electoral Officer has investigated and advised me in relation to a number of aspects affecting the conduct of State elections, including the hours of polling and the collection of results. The Chief Electoral Officer and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the Queensland State election for the purpose of observing their practices and procedures, in a State where a number of problems relating to distances, remoteness, and communications are similar to our own.

In accordance with usual practice, departmental advice to a Minister, which is both oral and written, will not be publicised, but the Government will in the usual way consider the advice it has received.

- (3) Not all the matters under consideration would require amending legislation. When the Government has completed its consideration of the issues, final decisions will be made.

## RAILWAYS

### *Burning off*

256. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can he tell me what motivated Westrail to alter its policy on permits when burning off railway reserves?  
 (2) Will Westrail be providing firebreaks between farming properties and railway land this year?  
 (3) If "Yes" to (2), when will work commence?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Under current arrangements Westrail does not burn off railway reserves, but participates in burning organised on a communal basis by local authorities, fire control officers, or brigades, who also arrange the permit.

- (2) and (3) The Commissioner for Railways is to review Westrail's proposed firebreak policy before July 1981 and this review will take into consideration all representations received from interested parties over recent months. I have asked the commissioner to advise me of the findings of this review.

## HEALTH

### *Diabetics: Syringes*

257. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he received complaints re the use of Australian syringes for the 100 unit strength insulin used by diabetics?  
 (2) If "Yes", from what source have complaints been received?  
 (3) Is it known when the import ban on American syringes will be lifted?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No.  
 (2) I am aware of representations being made by the Diabetes Federation of Australia to the Federal Minister for Health about minimal dead space insulin syringes. The federation has expressed great concern that, as from 30 June 1981, one make of these syringes will become a prohibited import.  
 (3) There is no ban at present.

## EXPORTS

### *Sheep and Meat*

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

- (1) How many sheep were exported from Western Australia in each of the years 1979 and 1980?  
 (2) Of these, how many were lambs or hoggets?  
 (3) How many sheep were exported live from New Zealand in each of the years 1979 and 1980?  
 (4) What quantity of chilled or frozen lamb and mutton did New Zealand export to Middle East countries in each of the years 1979 and 1980?  
 (5) What was the number of abattoir employees in Western Australia at the peak periods of each of the past five years?

- (6) What has been the total quantity of chilled or frozen mutton and lamb exported from Western Australia to Middle East countries in each of the past five years?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 1979: 2 753 000 (sheep for slaughter)  
1980: 3 127 000 (sheep for slaughter).  
(2) This information is not available.  
(3) New Zealand does not export live sheep for slaughter.

- (4) 

	Lamb	Mutton
1979:	20 495 tonnes	2 038 tonnes
1980:	97 039 tonnes	2 127 tonnes

- (5) This information is not immediately available.

- (6) 

	Lamb	Mutton
1975-76	11 553 tonnes	15 227 tonnes
1976-77	14 948 tonnes	16 446 tonnes
1977-78	12 772 tonnes	10 290 tonnes
1978-79	4 198 tonnes	4 723 tonnes
1979-80	15 236 tonnes	8 884 tonnes

## AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

### *Legislation*

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

Is it intended to introduce legislation regarding agricultural chemicals in the present session?

Mr OLD replied:

No.

## LAND

### *Agricultural: Rainfall*

260. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Over what period have rainfall records been kept in the areas of land identified by the Rural and Allied Industries Council committee as potentially suitable for agriculture?  
(2) Where was rainfall gauging equipment located for the purpose of compiling records applicable to this land?  
(3) With whom did the responsibility of compiling these rainfall records lodge?  
(4) How frequently were readings made throughout the period?  
(5) Will he table a copy of these rainfall records?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) to (5) As the rural and allied industries council committee identified some dozens of blocks as being potentially suitable for agriculture and many of these were in existing agricultural areas it is impossible to provide the information on each as requested.

However, as indicated to the member in question 126, the Rural and Allied Industries Council's committee identified broad areas which could be suitable for agriculture. It has been announced that the Government will restrict release to no more than 50 new blocks in any one year and that release will occur only after extensive investigations as to suitability by a working committee and ultimate referral to the relevant Cabinet subcommittee. The member has also been advised that no decision has been made at this time as to the actual areas to be released within this policy.

## STATE FORESTS

### *Clearing: SEC Installations*

261. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

What is the area of State forest which has been cleared in each of the past five years for the purpose of State Energy Commission power lines and installations?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The information is not available in the form requested. However it was estimated in March 1979 that 392 hectares of State forest had been rendered unproductive by SEC power lines, at that time.

## FRUIT

### *Apples: Juicing*

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

- (1) What quantity of apples is it expected that the apple juicing factory at Cap will utilise in the current season?  
(2) What quantity of apples did this factory use in the 1980 season?

- (3) (a) Have growers been given contracts to supply apples to the Capel plant for the current season: and  
(b) if so, at what price?
- (4) Will growers receive the right to supply additional quantities of apples above their quota of last year to the Capel plant?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 3 500 tonnes.  
(2) 9 168 tonnes.  
(3) (a) Yes.  
(b) \$82.50 at the factory.  
(4) No.

## WATER RESOURCES: CATCHMENT

### AREAS

#### *Clearing Bans*

263. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is it intended to introduce any amendments to the Country Areas Water Supply Act in the current session of Parliament?
- (2) Have changes to the guidelines regarding compensation for land in the catchment areas where clearing bans apply been altered this year and, if so, will he table a copy of the altered guidelines?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) At this stage it is doubtful whether any amendments to the Country Areas Water Supply Act will be introduced in the current session.
- (2) New guidelines are still being finalised.

## EDUCATION

### *Bunbury Parent Learning Development Group*

264. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) How much does the parent learning education development group at Bunbury receive each year from—  
(a) State Government;  
(b) Federal Government;  
(c) other sources:  
to enable it to operate?

- (2) Until what date is State and/or Federal funding for the Bunbury parent learning education development group assured?
- (3) What arrangements for funding after this date have or will be made?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) The parent learning and education development group receives each year from—

(a) State Government	Nil.
(b) Federal Government	Under the family support services programme, administered by the Department for Community Welfare, the yearly funding level in November 1978 was \$20 700. In July 1980 the yearly funding level was raised to \$31 600.
(c) Other Sources	Donations, fees to users, and fund raising undertaken by PLEDG raised \$3 486.00 in the 12-month period from January 1980–December 1980.

- (2) Federal funding for the Bunbury PLEDG project is assured until 26 November, 1981.
- (3) It is anticipated that funding will continue beyond this date until late 1982 when a decision will be made on the entire family support services scheme by the Federal Government. It is therefore unclear what funding arrangements, if any, will apply beyond late 1982.

## FRUIT

### *Apples: Juicing*

265. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Was a study of apple juicing in the south-west carried out for the Government in the past two years?
- (2) What personnel or firm carried out such a study?
- (3) Will he table a copy of the report and, if not, what are his reasons for not doing so?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes, completed 14 June, 1979.  
(2) Mr G. R. Muir, consultant.  
(3) The report will not be tabled as it was for departmental use only.

## WOOD CHIPPING

*Wheatley*

266. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

Adverting to the Minister's reply to question 49 of 25 March 1981 relevant to wood chipping at Wheatley, in which he indicates that "future cutting is expected to be a considerable distance from the Donnelly River settlement", could the Minister indicate the distance with greater precision in kilometres or metres?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

No, but care will be taken in drawing up any future plans and these will have regard to development of the site in question.

## WATER RESOURCES: CATCHMENT AREAS

*Clearing Bans*

267. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Have new guidelines for compensation payment on land in five catchment areas which cannot be cleared, been drawn up?
- (2) If "Yes"—

- (a) have they been released, and if so, will he table a copy;
- (b) when will they be released?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) New guidelines are still being finalised.
- (2) (a) No;
- (b) as soon as practicable.

## AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

*Dieldrin*

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

- (1) What quantity of agricultural chemicals containing dieldrin was sold in each of the past five years?
- (2) Have tests been carried out on a regular basis to determine residual effects in agricultural produce, and if so—

- (a) on what products have such tests been carried out;
- (b) how frequently have they been carried out;
- (c) on how many occasions in the past five years have residual quantities of dieldrin been detected and at what levels?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Total sales of dieldrin in Western Australia—as estimated by the secretary, pesticides advisory committee—were:

	Number of litres of 25 per cent concentrate
1976	40 000
1977	40 000
1978	36 000
1979	32 000
1980	28 000

The proportion used in agriculture could not be determined.

- (2) Yes.

- (a) Beef, mutton, pork, bottled milk, eggs, cheese, and vegetables.
- (b) Market vegetables samples every 14 days. Other products on an irregular basis.
- (c)

	Number of samples analysed in five years	Number of samples with residues above MRL*
Beef	1 167	13
Mutton	561	1
Pork	87	1
Bottled milk	195	1
Eggs	229	1
Cheese	316	1
Vegetables	1 300	1

\*MRL. Maximum Residue Level as set by the National Health and Medical Research Council

## POLICE

*Greenbushes*

269. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

In view of the expansion of mining activities at Greenbushes, which is increasing the population of the district

is it intended to station a police officer in the town?

Mr HASSELL replied:

Present population and work do not justify stationing a police officer in the town. All police placements are continuously monitored under a work-unit system of assessment.

#### TRAFFIC: RTA

##### *Fremantle Region*

270. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) What is the extent of the area covered by the Fremantle section of the Road Traffic Authority?
- (2) How many officers are usually employed by the Road Traffic Authority in the Fremantle region?
- (3) How many staff normally man the Fremantle Road Traffic Authority office after hours—
  - (a) week days;
  - (b) weekends?
- (4) How many patrolmen were on duty in the Fremantle region on the evening of Wednesday, 25 March—
  - (a) on motor cycles;
  - (b) in patrol cars?

Mr HASSELL replied:

It should be noted that Fremantle section is part of the Fremantle region.

- (1) Fremantle section—256 square kilometres  
Fremantle region—3840 square kilometres
- (2) Fremantle section—32  
Fremantle region—50
- (3) and (4) It is not policy to divulge information relating to disposition and numbers of police and Road Traffic Authority personnel.

#### HOUSING

##### *Donnybrook*

271. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Will he please advise when the last State Housing Commission home was built at Donnybrook?

- (2) In view of the demand for housing in this town, when is it intended to construct additional State Housing Commission homes at Donnybrook?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) October 1973.
- (2) A firm capital works programme for 1981-82 cannot be established until precise funding arrangements are known.

#### POLICE

##### *Personnel: Increase*

272. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

As a result of representations made by the Police Union in connection with the police strength in Western Australia, is it intended to increase the strength of the Police Force in this State, and if so, when will the alterations be made?

Mr HASSELL replied:

The requests of the union, when formalised and submitted to Messrs R. Ewing and R. Court, in accordance with arrangements made last year between the union and the Government, will be fully and carefully considered in the context of the State Budget preparation.

#### FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

##### *Power Stations: Coal Consumption*

273. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the annual consumption of coal at the following power stations—
  - (a) Bunbury;
  - (b) East Perth;
  - (c) South Fremantle; and
  - (d) Kwinana?
- (2) When all units at Kwinana are converted to coal, what will be the anticipated annual coal burn?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The annual consumptions of coal at the nominated power stations for 1980 were as follows—

	Tonnes
(a) Bunbury	432 000
(b) East Perth	107 000
(c) South Fremantle	285 000
(d) Kwinana	723 000

- (2) The anticipated coal burnt at Kwinana will rise to a peak of approximately 1 100 000 tonnes in 1983-84.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

### *Power Station: Bunbury*

274. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

In view of the statement made by the Commissioner for Railways in Collie recently, where he refuted my statement that it would cost \$27 000 000 per year to transport coal from Collie to Bunbury if the new power station is constructed, and also in view of the fact that he said the freight charges would be in the vicinity of half of that figure, will he detail what agreements have been made with Westrail in connection with the transport of the 5 000 000 tonnes of coal that will be required annually for the proposed new Bunbury power station?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

No agreements have yet been made with Westrail in relation to the transport of coal to Bunbury.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

### *Power Stations: Coal Price*

275. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

In a recent article in *The West Australian* newspaper, he referred to the fact that the price of coal to the State Energy Commission was much dearer in this State than in other States. In view of this statement, would he now tell me what price other commissions in other States are paying for coal?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The prices paid for coal in other States are generally not available for commercial reasons, but I would refer the member to the annual reports of the Joint Coal Board and of the various State Mines Departments, where some broad indications may be obtained.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

### *Power Station: Kwinana*

276. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What would be the anticipated total cost of the conversion of all units of the Kwinana power station from oil to coal?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The conversion of stage 'C' cost \$3 million, and conversion of the stage plant is currently estimated at \$40 million. No estimates have been made of the cost of conversion of the remaining stage 2 units, as they are less suitable for conversion.

## TRAFFIC

### *Drivers' Licences: Endorsement*

277. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Can the Road Traffic Authority endorse a driver's licence with the following words: "To abstain from alcohol and to take medication as prescribed"?
- (2) If "Yes", is this not a breach of civil liberties?
- (3) If "No" to (2), would he state why not?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Yes, under authority of section 44(1)(c) of the Road Traffic Act which states—

Where an applicant for a driver's licence should not, in the opinion of the Authority, drive a motor vehicle, except subject to condition or limitations, the Authority may issue a driver's licence subject to such conditions as it thinks fit to impose; and those conditions shall be endorsed on the driver's licence.

- (2) No.
- (3) In accordance with the intention of the legislation it is used to safeguard the public in general.

## LIQUOR ACT

### *Amendment and Review*

278. Mr JAMIESON, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) In view of the fact that the Government has not yet made a final decision on amendments to the Liquor Act, is there



any likelihood of some small non-controversial amendments being considered this session of Parliament?

- (2) Can the House expect a major review of the Liquor Act in the spring session of Parliament, incorporating a number of changes that were not dealt with by or referred to the liquor inquiry committee?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) The Government's intention is to deal with all necessary amendments to the Liquor Act at the one time.  
 (2) Amending legislation will be introduced as soon as possible. There are no submissions before the Government that were not considered by the Government Liquor Act committee.

## HEALTH

### *Asbestos: Wittenoom Workers*

279. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is the likely disease occurrence among former Wittenoom asbestos workers in relation to—  
 (a) lung cancer;  
 (b) mesothelioma;  
 (c) pneumoconiosis—asbestosis or silicosis?  
 (2) What plans have been made to meet current and projected needs of asbestos disease sufferers by the State Government?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) This is not known. The known data is being studied to see if the occurrence of disease in the past can be used to predict the likely disease occurrence in the future. However, a quotation from page 619 of a recent paper by Professor M. S. T. Hobbs and others is relevant. It reads—

The follow-up period for the majority of employees is still too short to justify any attempt to predict the likely future experience of mesothelioma in the cohort. The present indications are, however, that those who worked for less than three months, accounting for

approximately 44 per cent of the workforce, are at relatively low risk, and that the future occurrence of mesothelioma will be particularly concentrated in those with employment periods in excess of one year or engaged in the Heavy-exposure occupations (37 per cent).

- (2) Former employees of Australian Blue Asbestos and its associated companies are eligible for workers' compensation and the Government has agreed to an amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act to enable workers suffering from lung cancer, in the absence of demonstrable asbestosis, to submit claims if the lung cancer is considered to be the result of their employment. Cases of personal hardship for which there is no legal or social security cover will be considered on the basis of the circumstances prevailing at the time.

## LIQUOR ACT

### *Payments to Minister for Education and Minister for Health*

280. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

What amounts of money were paid to—

- (a) the Minister for Education;  
 (b) the Minister for Health;

under section 168 of the Liquor Act in—

- (i) 1970-71  
 (ii) 1971-72  
 (iii) 1972-73  
 (iv) 1973-74  
 (v) 1974-75  
 (vi) 1975-76  
 (vii) 1976-77  
 (viii) 1977-78  
 (ix) 1978-79  
 (x) 1979-80  
 (xi) 1980-81?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) and (b) In accordance with section 64 of the Constitution Act fees levied under the Liquor Act are paid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund over which the Parliament has the power of appropriation under section 72 of the Constitution Act.

Funds required for the purposes of section 168 of the Liquor Act form part of the estimates of the respective Ministers which are considered by and for which appropriations are made by the Parliament.

Expenditure is charged direct to the appropriate items in the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates.

## HERBICIDE

### 2, 4-D: Geraldton

281. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What were the results from the 2,4-D ester monitors in 1980, which were set up in the Geraldton spray restriction area?
- (2) If there was a positive recording, was it considered detrimental to the tomato crop; i.e., was the recording at the tomato crop growing period or after crop had been harvested?
- (3) What was the percentage of damage to the tomato crops in the Geraldton region attributed to "tobacco mosaic"?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) Data is still being analysed and interpreted—a report will be available by 30 April.
- (3) 26 gardens were sampled and 88 per cent had tobacco mosaic virus present. It is not possible to assess production loss due to the virus.

## STATE FINANCE

### Borrowing Programme

282. Mr HARMAN, to the Treasurer:

Adverting to question 71 of 1981 concerning the infrastructure borrowing programme, from what source were funds used in respect of the Worsley alumina project \$0.3 million, North-West Shelf gas infrastructure \$1.2 million and North-West Gas infrastructure—Jervoise Bay—\$4.00 million in anticipation of arrangements being finalised?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In respect of the Worsley alumina project the expenditure was met out of the railways departmental works and sales advance on the basis that the funds would be recouped from the company. With regard to Jervoise Bay, outlays have almost entirely been met by way of a Treasurer's advance. At present negotiations are proceeding with potential lenders to borrow the funds to repay the Treasurer's advance.

As to the North-West Shelf gas infrastructure, expenditure has been charged to the relevant items which are listed in the Loan Fund Estimates. On this project it should be noted that the Loan Council approval does not cover all of the cost of social and welfare facilities in the area. It is provided to assist the State meet the demands generated specifically by the North-West Shelf project. Part of the cost of these facilities will be met by contributions from the company and demands arising from normal growth in the area are the responsibility of the State.

## URANIUM

### Industry: Occupational Health

283. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

Will he table a copy of a set of guidelines prepared by State and Federal officials concerning occupational health in the uranium industry?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The publication Code of Practice on Radiation Protection in the Mining and Milling of Radioactive Ores, 1978 was tabled on 25 March 1981.

NOTE: published for the Department of Science and the Environment by Australian Government Printing Department.

284. *This question was postponed.*

## MINING ACT 1978

### Landowners: Right of Appeal

285. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) In the *Farmers Weekly* of 26 March 1981, referring to a statement in *The West Australian* of 21 March 1981, it

was said by Mr Pat Gethin, the Primary Industry Association legal officer, that the following is untrue—

Mr Jones had also disputed that landowners were denied and miners granted the right of appeal to the Minister on decisions of the mining warden granting prospecting or miscellaneous licenses over private land.

Is the assertion by Mr Gethin fact?

- (2) If so, will the Act be amended to give landowners the right of appeal to the Minister?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) I have been made aware of Mr Gethin's allegation. I would appreciate having made available factual support for the assertions.

However, the position relative to the statement is—

- (i) an applicant for a prospecting or miscellaneous licence over private land has a right of appeal to the Minister under sections 56(2) and 94(3) respectively where the warden refuses the application or imposes conditions which the applicant considers unreasonable;
- (ii) where, however, the warden refuses an application for a prospecting licence or a miscellaneous licence because he has found that a private landowner has not been unreasonable in refusing the applicant lawful access to the land, the warden's decision in these circumstances is paramount and the Minister cannot overrule such decision to the detriment of the landowner;
- (iii) where the warden grants a prospecting licence or miscellaneous licence because he has found that the landowner was unreasonable likewise there is no right of appeal to the Minister.

- (2) The position will be reviewed after the 1978 Mining Act has been in operation for a reasonable time.

## MEAT

### Commission

286. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many head of cattle have been sold through the marketing division of the W.A. Meat Commission since it began operating?
- (2) What percentage of sales does the above represent?
- (3) How do prices compare with auction sales?
- (4) Does the nett return to producers compare favourably with auction sales?
- (5) If Press reports are correct, there have been undue delays in posting out cheques; if so, what is the reason for these delays?
- (6) Is there any prospect of the Meat Commission becoming a major trader under the present W.A. Meat Commission Act?
- (7) If not, will the Government give serious consideration to altering the Act to provide a better system of selling stock?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 17 174.
- (2) These sales represent 47.2 per cent of the marketing division's total meat sales, and approximately 2 per cent of total cattle sales from the agricultural areas.
- (3) and (4) The information to make this comparison is not immediately available to my department. The Western Australian Meat Commission considers that on average the net return to producers from its marketing division is in line with auction prices.
- (5) The marketing division's normal procedure is to mail payments within seven days of slaughter. I am advised that the instance referred to in Press reports of delayed payment was due to an oversight.
- (6) and (7) The structure and operation of the marketing division is currently being reviewed.

## RAILWAYS: GRAIN

### Freight Rates

287. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has a progress report on the possibility of a contract between the grain industry and Westrail for hauling grain, made by

the grain freights research group to the steering committee on grain freight rates, been received by him?

- (2) Has the Commissioner for Railways received an official copy?
- (3) If so, is Westrail in a position to make comments on the proposal contained in the report?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) Answered by (2).

#### HOSPITAL: SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER

##### *Traffic Accident Victim*

288. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware of claims made by a motor accident victim on a television news programme on 28 March that he was prematurely discharged from Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital on 26 March, while being barely able to walk, despite the concern of doctors, nurses, and physiotherapists, because of Government cutbacks in hospital funding?
- (2) Can he confirm that the person concerned was admitted to the hospital late on 24 March following a traffic accident in which he sustained injuries to both knees requiring plastic surgery, a fractured left hand requiring surgery, a dislocated shoulder, and severe abrasions to a large part of his body?
- (3) Can he also confirm that due to a shortage of beds, this patient was placed in the ear, nose, and throat ward?
- (4) Did this patient undergo surgery on 25 March and was he discharged from the hospital at 4.00 p.m. on 26 March because of lack of bed space?
- (5) Was he officially advised to return to the hospital for further outpatient attention on 31 March?

- (6) Can he confirm that it was only when the patient returned to the hospital on the morning of 28 March that it was discovered that he had also incurred a broken wrist which required to be placed in plaster, and that he was advised by a doctor that there might be problems in the break healing because of the delay in applying the plaster cast?
- (7) Can he also confirm that it was not until his return to the hospital on 28 March that the patient was given pain-killing drugs, antibiotics, and sleeping pills to relieve his pain and sleeplessness?
- (8) Is he prepared to guarantee that in future decisions by the Government on the funding of hospitals, the consequences for this patient of current policies will be fully taken into account?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Minor surgery performed 25 March. Patient was discharged 26 March.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Yes. There is no record of the alleged comment.
- (7) Yes.
- (8) The series of events which happened to this patient had no relationship to the Government's financial policies. Diagnosis of injury is the responsibility of the medical practitioner.

#### HOUSING

##### *Sewer Blockages*

289. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he confirm that a complaint was received by the State Housing Commission from the pensioner tenant at 13H Calvert Way, Girrawheen about a sewer blockage affecting his home between 9.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. of 27 March and that this problem subsequently also affected the adjoining unit at 13G Calvert Way?
- (2) In view of the considerable difficulties and possible health risks involved in any delay in dealing with this problem why did it take until 2.00 p.m. on 30 March for the problem to be rectified?

- (3) What is the normal procedure adopted in meeting requests for emergency maintenance by plumbers, especially in the case of sewerage blockages?
- (4) Is there any distinction made in treating emergency requests for maintenance at weekends, between flats and other types of units?
- (5) If "Yes", what is the reason for this distinction?
- (6) Will he take action to have these procedures reviewed as a result of the situation referred to in (1) and (2)?
- (4) Yes—however where one or more tenants complain or are affected by the blockage and advice is received of this condition arrangements would be made for urgent maintenance attention.
- (5) Blockages in flat complexes may create greater health hazard potential and inconvenience to adjoining units. Other type accommodation generally has no more than one other unit serviced by the same sub-main.

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) No complaint was received by the commission regarding a sewer blockage at 13H Calvert Way, Girrawheen on 27 March (Friday).

The first record of the complaint was received by the commission's urgent after hours maintenance service (UTAS) at 2.46 p.m. Sunday 29 March.

UTAS passed the call to the commission 9.17 a.m. Monday, 30 March.

The tenant also phoned the commission approximately 9.30 a.m. Monday 30.

The work order was passed to the contractor for urgent attention Monday a.m. and the problem was rectified 2 p.m. the same day.

- (2) From the time the call was received by the commission i.e. 9.17 a.m. Monday 30 to the time the blockage was rectified 2 p.m. Monday 30 is not considered to be unreasonable delay.
- (3) The urgent after hours maintenance service instructs the commission's contract plumbers to give immediate maintenance services to sewer blockages in the following situation—

- (a) Apartment complexes—at all times.
- (b) Other type units—

Normal weekends

Calls received on Friday or Saturday are attended to immediately.

## 2. Long weekends

Calls received on Friday, Saturday or Sunday attended to immediately.

Calls received on the last day of the weekend are attended to first thing next working day.

- (6) Not considered necessary as normally, and with consideration to the substantial frequency of after hours calls, remedy of problems are quickly attended to.

## EDUCATION

### *Special*

290. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When did he receive the report on special education from his advisory council on such matters?
- (2) When does he expect to be able to complete his consideration of the report and make an announcement about the Government's attitude towards the recommendations of the report?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) A number of reports on special education have been received from the Council for Special Education. The most recent of these was the report on "The Education of Intellectually Handicapped Children" which was made available to me as a proof copy on 25 February 1980 and a final copy was provided late in March.

- (2) The report has been carefully considered and action has already been taken to implement some recommendations and prepare teachers in order that other recommendations may be implemented. Some of the recommendations are conditional on changes in Commonwealth-State funding arrangements and thus lie outside the power of the department to implement, as do recommendations regarding pre-service preparation. Some recommendations concerning teachers' allowances and qualifications have implications for long serving teachers and further consideration is being given to these recommendations.

### EDUCATION

#### "WA Education News"

291. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What has been the cost of publishing and printing the first two editions of *WA Education News*?
- (2) How many copies were printed of each edition?
- (3) What is the budgeted allocation for this publication in the current financial year?
- (4) To what organisations and individuals other than schools is the publication distributed and what are the distribution costs involved overall?
- (5) Has this publication been introduced as a counter to the *Western Teacher* which is published by the WA Teachers' Union?
- (6) When was the present editor of this publication appointed and what are the conditions of his appointment?
- (7) What is the salary paid to the editor?
- (8) What other tasks does the editor perform for the department?
- (9) Does the department employ public relations officers?
- (10) (a) If "Yes" to (9), how many such officers does it employ;  
(b) what tasks do they perform; and  
(c) what salaries do they receive?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) \$3 040.
- (2) 20 000.

- (3) The budget allocation for the current financial year is \$35 000. A clearer picture of the budgetary situation is obtained when it is recognised that publication and distribution of *W.A. Parent* have been discontinued as a consequence of publishing *W.A. Education News*. Reduction in the size and, therefore, cost of other departmental publications, such as the *Education Circular* have also been effected.

- (4) (a) Members of the WA Parliament, WA members of Federal Parliament, tertiary institutions in Australia, media in WA, national education committees and agencies. Each school also receives a number of copies for distribution to parents.

(b) Postage—\$550.

- (5) *W.A. Education News* is an additional important means whereby the Education Department keeps its teachers informed of general educational as well as departmental developments. It is the intention to make the paper a vehicle for relevant up-to-date information of an educational nature, including authoritative statements on departmental policy.

- (6) (a) 16 February 1981.

(b) Under contract to the Minister for Education.

- (7) \$22 557 per annum.

- (8) None.

- (9) Last year the Education Department employed one of its teachers on public relations duties. With the institution of *W.A. Education News* this officer has returned to regular duties; the department does not employ any public relation officers.

- (10) Not applicable.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### *Replacement of Mr Justice Kennedy*

69. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

When does the Executive Council propose to recommend to the Governor the appointment of a person to the Legislative Review and Advisory

Committee to replace Mr Justice Kennedy who resigned on being appointed a Supreme Court judge?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of his question, the answer to which is as follows—

The matter is under consideration by the Government at present. A recommendation will be made to Executive Council as soon as possible.

relating to copyright, they are authorised to copy only ABC Schools Broadcasts between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Monday to Friday during the school term. Unauthorised copy during all other transmission times will constitute infringement of copyright.

Unfortunately that is the legal position as has been relayed to the Education Department and I am not in a position to go beyond that.

## EDUCATION

### *Television Programmes*

70. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

My question arises from the Minister's answer today to my question on notice 235 concerning the videotaping of television programmes for use in schools as educational aids. I preface my question by pointing out that a significant number of school teachers in secondary schools have been scared into wiping a long list of valuable tapes used for educational purposes.

In the light of his statement in answer to my question which states that no television network in Western Australia has threatened to take action or instituted action or that the Education Department has not received representations from Western Australian television networks regarding this matter, will he now make a statement that will allay the fears of educationists in all Government institutions regarding the use of videotape documentaries—good quality programmes—for use in schools?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

All I can do is reiterate one section of the reply I gave today in answer to the member's question. It is as follows—

A notice was placed in the February 1981 issue of *AVE News*—a publication issued to teachers by the Audio Visual Education Branch of the Education Department—as follows—

Teacher librarians and library technicians are reminded that, under the laws

## MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

### *United States Trip*

71. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it true that during the Premier's last visit to the United States of America he demanded a daily run-down by telex of news stories published in daily newspapers in Western Australia?
- (2) Is he prepared to reveal to the House the total cost of the exercise if it was engaged in?
- (3) How does he justify such expenditure at a time when massive restrictions are being placed on the State's hospital and other health services?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) This session seems to be the session when the member for Balcatta is producing reruns. I do not know what one might call them in regard to television shows that are repeated.

Mr Williams: Replies.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The question is not new. It was raised by the Opposition after previous visits.

Mr B. T. Burke: Has it been answered?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Yes.

Mr B. T. Burke: What is the answer?

Sir CHARLES COURT: First of all, I did not "demand" a telex summarising the daily news. I did not have to. Any well-trained staff as a matter of good sense, bearing in mind the Premier is still the Premier, wherever he is—

Mr B. T. Burke: God help us!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I know the member for Balcatta would love to attend a certain funeral.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is not fair; I didn't say that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I inform the member for Balcatta that any well-trained staff would keep the Premier of this State informed, as I would hope any Minister would be informed if he were away because he would basically remain a Minister.

The costs in regard to this matter are part of the costs of the ordinary operations of the department, as they would be in any other department. I make no bones about that. Of course my staff kept me informed; not in an extravagant way, but in a professional and concise way so that I was aware of the general events back home as I should have been. If I had not been kept informed I would have neglected my duty.

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### *Broke Inlet*

72. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Adverting to question 143 of 31 March 1981, when is it intended that the working group which is considering the future management of Reserve No. 19787 will next meet to further consider this matter?
- (2) When did this group last meet?
- (3) When is this working group expected to bring down its recommendations?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) During May 1981.
- (2) 22 July 1980.
- (3) It is anticipated that the recommendations will be referred to the EPA some time during June-July 1981.

## K-MART STORES

### *Sale of Firearms*

73. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

In view of the Premier's welcome comments earlier this afternoon about his stand in respect of guns, I draw his

attention to the large advertisement in tonight's issue of the *Daily News* featuring guns and ammunition on sale and on special at K-Mart stores. What is the Premier's attitude to the sale of such things in such stores and the advertising of those things? Will he take steps to stop the advertising and sale of guns and ammunition in such retail stores?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I have not seen the advertisement to which the member referred, but I will look at it. My understanding is that these super-marts or any other stores are under the strict control of police authorities. Someone cannot just decide to sell a few guns in Coles, Woolworths or anywhere else. Proper permission must be obtained. I will investigate the circumstances to which the member referred, but I can hardly understand that a firm of repute would go outside the law.

## EDUCATION

### *Teachers: Technical Colleges*

74. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that teachers working part-time conducting night-school classes at technical education colleges have not been paid since the beginning of the school year?
- (2) Since some of those teachers cannot obtain full-time employment and rely on that source of income as their sole source of income will he take some action rightaway—indeed, tomorrow—to ensure that these people are paid forthwith?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) If the situation is as has been suggested by the member I cannot for the life of me understand why one of the teachers has not rung my department or made some representations to it. In view of the fact the member has raised this matter I certainly will investigate it.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS

*Director: Special Allowance*

75. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

I ask the Premier whether he is yet in a position to answer the question I asked him on Thursday last and repeated yesterday. In addition, I would like to know in view of the fact the Government has appointed the \$34 000-a-year director of public relations does it intend to continue to employ on a casual basis the services of Mr W. W. Mitchell?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In answer to the first part of the question, I will have the details I have sought available for the member tomorrow. There is nothing extraordinary about the delay. I would not like him to think that any difficulty has been encountered. I have not been down to the department to pick up the details he requires. When I made some inquiries about them I was told they will be available for me when I arrive.

In relation to the second part of the question, I cannot see any relationship between any contract we have with Mr Mitchell and the appointment of a director of public relations.

## AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD

*Blackberries: Eradication*

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

I gave some notice of this question to the Minister. It is as follows—

- (1) What has been the total amount spent by the Agriculture Protection Board in the eradication of blackberries in each of the past three years?
- (2) What amount does the APB intend to spend on blackberry eradication this year?
- (3) Is he aware of the concern of lower south-west members of the Primary Industry Association regarding the spread of blackberries to more land?

- (4) In view of the concern expressed by the PIA does the Government intend to increase its efforts to eradicate blackberries and, if so, what action does it intend to take?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (4) I apologise to the member for not having the details he requires. I told him yesterday that there is a fair bit of research involved in obtaining the historic figures. I am aware of the concern he has expressed on behalf of the Primary Industry Association in the south-west. I received a letter yesterday on that particular point, and I am currently having the matter investigated. I will do my best to have a complete answer for him tomorrow.

## CRIME

*Violent*

77. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

I refer to the rising level of violent crime in our community, and do so bearing in mind the expression of sympathy this House passed and forwarded today to the family of President Reagan. It concerns me that the paralysis affecting family life in the United States of America is beginning to have the same effect in this country. Has it occurred to the Premier that the time is opportune for those of us in positions of responsibility in Western Australia to take a long hard look at an examination of the causes of violent crime in communities such as ours so that we may prevent occurring in our community the extent of violent crime which occurs in the United States?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

My understanding is that a number of studies have been made and are being made by people working in the social field—

Mr Bryce: But not by the Government.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Of course, many of the people doing these studies are in the direct employ of the Government; they work for the Government and with the Government. Studies are being carried on outside the Government, at some of the institutions of learning and have a

very high priority for study in this field quite apart from the normal research programmes. In some cases such study is part of the work of the faculties.

I would not like people left with the impression that no work is being carried out in this field. It is being done not only in this State, but also in the Eastern States. There will not be a ready solution. Some people say if we had a few more policemen the problem would be fixed. Even if we had many more policemen, it is not of itself the answer. Of course we would like to have more policemen, but one of the more important concerns to me and to the Government—the reason we set up the committee under Sir Lawrence Jackson—is that there seems to be a great deterioration in the sanctity of family life. Some reasons have been given for that such as the effect of watching television over long periods and the types of films shown on television. Another is that so many women have opted of their own volition to go into the work force and, therefore, have added to the deterioration of families through less influence within families. A simple solution to the problem does not exist.

I assure the member that studies are being carried out all the time, and the Ministers involved, particularly the Minister for Community Welfare, have some highly specialised people in their departments who as part of their daily work try to evaluate the trends and determine what can be done to offset the trends we all deplore.

#### TRAFFIC: RTA

##### *Fremantle Region*

78. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

This question follows a question on notice I asked the Minister today. It relates to the number of Road Traffic Authority patrolmen in the Fremantle region. He declined to answer part (4) of my question relating to the number of patrolmen on duty on a particular night in the Fremantle region. I understand his reluctance to do that, but one of my

constituents made a serious allegation to me that on the night of 25 March this year there was only one patrolman on duty in a car in the Fremantle region and only one officer on duty in the RTA office.

I regard that as a serious allegation and wonder whether the Minister can give me two assurances. Firstly, I ask him to assure me that the allegation is incorrect. Secondly, I ask him to assure me, and other members of the House and my constituency, that adequate numbers of patrolmen are on duty each night in the Fremantle region and an adequate number of officers are stationed at RTA offices.

Mr HASSELL replied:

I suggest to the member that if he has what he regards as serious allegations concerning the manning by the police authorities of the Fremantle region on a particular occasion, he should convey those allegations to me by letter. He did not do so by asking a question. As far as the question is concerned, I cannot tell him how many policemen were on duty on a particular night in a particular police district. It is not a matter which normally concerns me, but I would be surprised if what he said is correct.

What he has illustrated is, perhaps, an example of why we should not disclose in this House precisely the numbers of patrolmen involved in a particular area. Statistics of this kind can be used in all sorts of ways to create alarm amongst groups of people. People may question whether things have been done correctly, but they may be seen to have been done correctly when the whole context of the situation is understood. In certain areas, at times, very few policemen will be on duty, but at the same time other officers are available immediately by a radio call, and they would be only a short distance away.

We have the Police Force organised in certain ways and so that we have squads of officers who can move to certain areas very quickly. The squads are mobile but must be made up of officers, and when they are in the squads they are not able to be placed at individual stations in the metropolitan area. These matters are manning and management

problems for the police authorities. If there is some particular area of concern I always have it investigated when it is brought to my attention.

If the member is concerned about a particular night because an allegation has been made to him that he feels he should bring forward, I would be pleased to investigate it if he will do so.

## HOUSING

### *Aborigines: Transitional*

79. Mr PEARCE:

I would like to ask a question without notice of the de facto, if unpaid, Minister for Housing, in regard to transitional housing. Where an Aboriginal family is in the process of moving from transitional to full and adequate housing, is it the policy of the State Housing Commission to assess any alleged damage to transitional housing and then bill the family for any damage which may be apparent at the time it moves out? Does the SHC then refuse to give housing to people who do not pay for any damage which, in the opinion of the SHC, has been incurred in a transitional house?

If so, does he not consider that a somewhat different policy ought to be adopted because, after all, transitional housing is rather basic and damage to this sort of housing is different from damage to ordinary accommodation?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

Could I ask you, Mr Speaker, to whom the question was directed?

The SPEAKER: I take it that the question was directed to the Honorary Minister for Housing.

Sir Charles Court: That is not what the member said.

Mr LAURANCE: If the question was directed to me, I ask the member to place it on notice.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: NUCLEAR

### *Power Station*

80. Mr WILSON, to the Premier:

In view of the failure of the Minister for Resources Development to answer questions I put to him yesterday, I ask the Premier the following question—

- (1) Does he deny that he is on record as having quoted 1995 as the necessary date for the commencement of the building of a nuclear power station in Western Australia?
- (2) Does the Government intend to hold a referendum or a public opinion poll on the issue of the establishment of a nuclear power station in Western Australia in conjunction with the next State election?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) I cannot recall ever saying that 1995 was the "necessary date". I think it was said that it could not be before that year. I cannot be precise, but there are reasons that it cannot be before 1995. I do not understand the reference to a "necessary date". The year 1995 was given as an indication only as part of the total approach. We wanted people to understand that such a possibility was a long way ahead and that we wanted to know what it was all about.
- (2) No. This Government has made its position clear on referendums. I think we have had only one referendum in our whole history, and I sometimes doubt whether we were justified in spending public money on an issue like that. I believe Governments make decisions on these matters, and the best referendum I know is the general election poll itself.