

Legislative Council

Thursday, 24 November 1994

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

MOTION - URGENCY

Drought, East Gascoyne Region, Members' Visit

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): I have received the following letter addressed to me -

Dear Mr President

Under SO 72, it is my intention at today's sitting to move that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Saturday, December 24, 1994 at 8.00am for the purpose of discussing the outcome of a visit to the drought affected areas of the East Gascoyne by the Hons George Cash, Cheryl Davenport, Tom Butler, Murray Criddle and P H Lockyer during the week commencing Monday, November 14, 1994.

Yours faithfully

Hon P H Lockyer MLC

Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region

November 24, 1994

In order that this matter can be discussed, it will require the agreement of at least four members indicating by standing in their places.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON P.H. LOCKYER (Mining and Pastoral) [2.35 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until 8.00 am on Saturday, 24 December 1994.

Members will recall that a couple of weeks ago or maybe a little longer, I brought this matter to the attention of the House. I issued an invitation to all members to visit the area. I am happy to say that a large number of members from both sides of the House indicated that they would like to visit this area so that they could see, at first hand, the problems that exist there. However, for simple logistical reasons, it was impossible to take all members who wanted to go. The Leader of the House and Minister for Lands, Hon George Cash, indicated that he was anxious to visit the region in his capacity as the landlord of the pastoral leases. A cross party delegation made up of Hon George Cash, Hon Murray Criddle from the National Party, Hon Cheryl Davenport and Hon Tom Butler from the Labor Party was formed. We were accompanied on that trip by Mr Jim Thom who is a member of the executive of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association and a senior reporter from the *Sunday Times*, Mrs Janet Wainwright and a photographer.

I have brought this matter to the attention of the Parliament by way of an urgency motion because it is the only way that my parliamentary colleagues who joined me on that trip can express their views on what they saw. I ask other members to allow, as a matter of courtesy, those members the opportunity of speaking after me on the matter, not that I want to curtail anybody else who wishes to speak.

I thank those members for joining me. There is no doubt in my mind that the general public accepts very readily cross-party delegations on matters of a non-political nature. I enjoyed the company of the members who joined me and while the areas that we visited are in a serious plight, the trip was not without its light-hearted moments. We travelled a thousand kilometres by road through vast areas of Western Australia, which was a very interesting project. Five hundred kilometres from Meekatharra in a fairly desolate area, we got a flat tyre. When it was suggested to Hon Tom Butler that he help with the wheel

brace, he said he did not belong to that union. In fact, he wanted me to summon the RAC or a taxi or both. Suffice to say, after great difficulty, we got it fixed and the person who did the most to fix it was Hon Cheryl Davenport.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: And I was not even travelling in the same vehicle.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: The group flew to Meekatharra by courtesy of an aircraft provided by the Government. From there we travelled by four wheel drive vehicles to the following properties: Killara, Munara, Narracoota, Mt Padbury, Yarlaweelor, Milgun, Mulgul, Woodlands, Mt Clere, Waldburg, and Mt Augustus. People from Mt Vernon station, Mt Gould station and Mt James station joined us on the trip.

There is no doubt that the area is in a most serious situation. A drought has been going on there for in excess of five years. The drought has now reached a most critical stage. Stock numbers, on which Hon Murray Criddle will expand, are in some places a mere 25 per cent of what they used to be. Most people have either sold off whatever stock they could sell or have sent the basis of their breeding stock for agistment. However, the farmers of many of the places that have taken the stock on agistment will require those properties from about February onwards next year to put in their own crops. It will not be possible for these people to take their stock back and they face the possibility of having to sell the stock at a massive loss, if they can sell it.

We saw such things as people feeding their calves on Denkavit, a supplement for calves at \$48 a bag. Calves drink it at the rate of about one bag a week, so one can imagine the cost. The pastoralists do not want handouts. They can paddle along as they are. We saw great deprivation. We heard of cases such as a family's ponies having to be shot because they could not feed them. That is a pretty heart rending situation. The people there are stoic and proud and do not want handouts. They appreciated the fact that five members of Parliament took the time to go there by road simply to look and listen. It reflects strongly on the four colleagues who accompanied me and it reflects on Parliament itself. It gives it respect when members go out into the community and come back to tell the Parliament what went on. These people in the main have been there for generations. Properties taken up by the same families for generations are now facing near ruin and in some cases ruin if it does not rain. As I have said before, the problem is bad now, but it will exist when it rains, as it most likely will, and the drought is broken. The Government needs to examine how it can assist these people. They can paddle along for the moment, but the problem will arise when they are faced with restocking. I thank the members for joining me.

HON T.G. BUTLER (East Metropolitan) [2.42 pm]: During the trip the Leader of the House wanted also to get away in a cab. Had I been able to get one he certainly would have joined me in it. Although Hon Phil Lockyer is right in saying it is a very serious situation that we saw, the tour was not without its light-hearted moments. Next time I go away with Phil Lockyer I will take his camera and stuff it up his nose because it is a bit of a nuisance when one is just dropping off to sleep in bed and somebody takes some flash photographs.

Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan: Were you alone?

Hon T.G. BUTLER: There are things a gentlemen does not talk about. I congratulate and thank Phil Lockyer for raising the matter during a previous urgency motion. I thank him for organising the tour of the east Gascoyne pastoral leases and for making it possible for me to take part in that tour. It allowed us to evaluate at first hand the effect of the drought on the area and the people. It certainly proved to me how easy it is for us to become very insular in our thinking, taking things for granted, concentrating on our own electoral problems and giving only a passing interest to those things that happen outside our boundaries. It certainly allowed me the opportunity of appreciating the problems that pastoralists and their families endure in these circumstances. I have to admit I spent a bit of time during my days with the union travelling through the north, but I was always smart enough to pick a time when it was not too hot and a little rain had fallen. Basically I stuck to the coast. I have been in as far as Tom Price, Paraburdoo and places like that, but certainly not into this sort of arid outback that we visited. As a

consequence I have not really had the opportunity previously of being made aware of the problems of the region.

The tour organised by Hon Phil Lockyer was to me a real eye opener. I became very aware in a very short time of the effect the drought is having on people, not only the pastoralists but also small businessmen. It is causing lack of opportunities in and around towns like Meekatharra. The massive problem out there needs attention from not only the Government but also these two Houses of Parliament. With respect, the Press in Western Australia, especially *The West Australian*, has been a bit remiss in not informing us of the real situation. It has had two people travelling through the north but like me, I think they have stuck pretty much to the coast where the problem does not really exist. More information has been given on the droughts in New South Wales and Queensland than on the drought in the east Gascoyne region.

I was very happy to have Janet Wainwright and Jim Polden join us for the tour to record and report on the effects of the drought. I am hoping that the write up in the *Sunday Times* will be just the beginning and that follow up stories will officially put on record the devastation that the drought has brought to the east Gascoyne region, and its effect on the pastoralists and their families as well as the stock.

When we arrived in Meekatharra we had a quick productive meeting with the Meekatharra shire councillors. They informed us, to their credit, that they were considering rate relief to the pastoralists. Compared to the cost of the drought to pastoralists and how much they will suffer, the rate relief will not mean much money but it will be one bill they do not have to pay. We heard yesterday the Minister advise us that the Government was also putting a package together which would suspend the pastoral lease payments. I think the vermin tax was another one. The Minister admitted that it was not a lot of money, but again it means two fewer bills they have to pay. When members hear from Hon Cheryl Davenport they will understand how the families need to have the least possible number of bills at a time like this.

The country in and around the east Gascoyne area is as dry as one could expect to find. It is almost like a moonscape in places. It has not rained, as Hon Phil Lockyer said, for five years. The stock feed has all but vanished, even to the point where the spinifex has disappeared because of the arid state of the country. As Hon Phil Lockyer also said, pastoralists have had to send their breeding stock south to keep them going until such time as it rains. One pastoralist we spoke to had paid \$21 000 to get some cattle and sheep down to Eneabba and Dongara. It cost another one \$30 000 to get his stock down there. The breeding stock needs to be there because it will restock the pastoral leases when the drought breaks - if it breaks at all. We cannot be certain of that. Keeping the stock will be very costly and very difficult, for the simple reason that because of the drought pastoralists have had no income this year.

The problems do not cease when the drought breaks; they continue. Feed does not automatically spring up. Water lies around; the cattle are hungry, and they try to overcome that hunger by drinking water to excess. Consequently, they fall and cannot get up, so they either die there or need to be destroyed. It is devastating to see cattle and sheep in that condition. Many members in this place come from a farming background and they will appreciate the situation. The area is scattered with carcasses of sheep, goats and cattle that have died through starvation.

Winter rains do not break the drought. The area needs summer rain, and unless good soaking rain falls in February the stations will be in trouble. The most impressive thing about the people in that region is their pride and dignity. They do not want hand-outs. They just want a hand. I hope that the committee chaired by Hon M.J. Criddle will consider the whole problem and arrive at some solutions. The industry is vital to the economic balance of Australia and it is worth saving. Some families have run stations for more than 100 years. They have a lot of pride and dignity but they are suffering at the moment.

[The member's time expired.]

HON CHERYL DAVENPORT (South Metropolitan) [2.53 pm]: I join my colleagues in thanking Hon Phil Lockyer for organising our trip to the east Gascoyne for two days last week. As a person who grew up in a country area - albeit the south west of the State - I have some idea of what it is like to be on the land and to grapple with the elements. I have never seen anything like the conditions we saw in the east Gascoyne last week, and it was a tremendous learning opportunity for me. I have great sympathy with the struggle that is taking place on the stations in that region.

I thank the Minister for providing transport. It gave us an opportunity to see at first-hand the difficulties faced by people. On a lighter note, I was pleased to see that Hon George Cash and Hon Phil Lockyer were not bad at cooking the odd steak here and there. We enjoyed some lighter moments. It is always very useful to move away from the hothouse of parliamentary sittings and to look in depth at some of the huge problems that ordinary people face. I thank Jim Thom from the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. I had the opportunity to travel with him on the first day of the trip. He was born in the region. He told me that he was booted out of home at the age of 16, but he returned to the area and, until recently, ran a station. He has such a wealth of knowledge that I profited greatly in knowledge from his expertise and vast experience in the area. He pointed out constantly that he had never seen the place so dry in the many years he has spent in the east Gascoyne.

To some extent, I want to concentrate on the effect that the drought has on families. None of us would deny the enormous strength of the women in the area, especially the wives of the pastoralists. We saw the character etched upon their faces. Their days start at 4.00 am and they work extremely hard.

Hon T.G. Butler: Just before the phone starts ringing.

Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT: The phone did start ringing very early, and it was not for the Minister. It was the communication system for workers on the pastoral stations. The only time they have a chance to communicate with the outside world is either very early in the morning or very late at night.

We met women of all ages. One young woman had gone to a pastoral station as a teaching aide, so that the young children of the station were able to stay at home and receive an education through access to the School of the Air. Such young women assist the children to learn the basics that people in other country areas and in the city can access readily at school. We do not think twice about that. I spoke to another young woman who had two children, but had lost a child. She said that she was appreciative of the Federal Government's family allowance assistance which has been modified and introduced during the last 12 months. The allowance has enabled the family to maintain its private health cover and to make sure the children are clothed and fed. As a result of that allowance, this younger woman did not need to put her groceries and other necessities on the station agent's account. That was a great relief to the family. It was gratifying to me to know that such people are accessing the allowance. It is not a hand-out. People pay taxes for years and they then should have the opportunity via that allowance to provide for their children during the hard times.

I was told also that because the drought has continued for such a long time, the families with sons and daughters with the ability to work on the properties, could not employ them because they could not pay them. Therefore, they are forced to leave home to find work. The drought takes its toll by placing extra pressures on families, and none of us really appreciates that aspect.

At one station we met two beautiful little children, whom Hon Phil Lockyer referred to as feral kids. They are tough and they can scale a roof in the blink of an eye. Hon Phil Lockyer hastened to say that he grew up in a tough area such as that -

Hon Kim Chance: He is still feral.

Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT: He ran with the elements.

The family I was talking with had to cope with a seven year old suffering from dyslexia. Trying to obtain school books is a problem for that family. It is a very difficult situation.

They must pay for the books because such items are not available as part of the disability services package - which is what occurs in the metropolitan area through a special school. The parents must pay extra for those materials. I intend to place a question on notice in that regard. I saw diversification in some cases. There was a very fine melon patch. The price that the watermelons fetched at the market was higher than that being received for beef per kilo at present. The crops are harvested in the main by the women. One woman told me that she would have no spare time in the next six weeks. She said that between now and Christmas she would have very little time to do anything other than to go to the melon patch and harvest the watermelons. I hope the State Government, through the committee chaired by Hon Murray Criddle, will look at how the necessary kick-start will be given once the drought breaks. These people say that they do not need handouts; but they will need a bit of a hand to restock the stations and to get restarted.

I thank Hon Phil Lockyer for the opportunity to visit this area. Although I did not enjoy seeing the devastation and the hard times that these families are facing, I was interested to see what it was like for people who live on stations of that nature and to meet very fine, hard working people. I hope that through Janet Wainwright's article, perhaps those in the Eastern States will acknowledge that the drought in this State is just as bad, if not worse, than it is in New South Wales and Queensland.

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural) [3.01 pm]: I thank Hon Phil Lockyer for the invitation to accompany him and the Minister for Lands to this area. Since my visit to the area with the Minister for Primary Industry on 8 September, the conditions on the properties have fallen away dramatically. Very few stock are left and no grass is on the land. Apart from a few trees upon which the stock feed, nothing is left. If there is no rain towards the end of the summer, the situation will become desperate.

Since I chair the risk management committee, I want to point out the measures that have been taken and the direction that we would hope to follow as we develop the case for the pastoralists. Although these people do not want handouts, we must do something to help them restart once the rain comes, hopefully in the very near future. They need a good summer rain. The rain at that time of year puts the guts into the feed, and it will carry the stations through for a couple of years. The winter rain is for herbage and grasses which have no substance.

Following the meeting with the Minister for Primary Industry on 8 September, after Robert Power, Jim Thoms and Ben Patrick met with us here, the Minister sent out letters outlining the measures that we hope to take. Hon Phil Lockyer, in a previous speech on another urgency motion, said that a consultant should have been sent to look at some of the pastoral areas. That consultant met with 10 property owners in the Meekatharra area and five or six in the Carnarvon area. Some of the information the consultant brought back will be beneficial in the development of a case.

We sent out an information kit so that all of the available assistance measures would be known to everybody. It appeared from my inquiries of the people in Esperance that they did not know what measures were available. We therefore put the kit together and we hope it will be useful if it is needed in the future. It provides Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation farm management advice on productivity interest rate assistance which may be useful when it comes to looking at situations such as the melon growing venture mentioned by Hon Cheryl Davenport, and other industries that might develop which will provide another income to the pastoralists. Perhaps these pastoralists could diversify into tourism and the like.

The committee brought to the attention of the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Primary Industry the vermin rates on the pastoral leases. We have written to the Minister for Local Government regarding council rates.

I want to touch on the exceptional circumstances that apply in the Eastern States, in Queensland and northern New South Wales. Members will be aware that the Prime Minister announced \$160m of funding for which those people, who were declared to be in exceptional circumstances, would be eligible. That \$160m will fund interest payments of up to 100 per cent on commercial loans to restructure debt and also the rural

adjustment scheme. There are also relief payments by way of social security benefits. Farmers in the Eastern States have reached the stage where they literally do not even have enough money to put food on the table. In my area, shires are taking donations for such elementary things as toiletries and the like. This drought relief payment in the Eastern States and the Austudy benefits for education would be more than welcome here. Those are essential funding measures for people in the pastoral areas. The exceptional circumstances are based on meteorological conditions, with the outlook highlighting a rare and severe occurrence. We know it is a tough environment and that the present circumstances are indeed exceptional.

Another condition is progressive destocking as a result of the dry conditions, which I will come to in a moment. Declining stock conditions is also a criterion that must be satisfied before pastoralists can receive assistance. Conditions have fallen away and stock is dying. The water supplies in the area are not a problem. As the stock goes off the land, more water is available. The environmental impact relates to the degradation of land that is likely to occur because of these dry conditions. I was quite impressed with the condition of the country in that erosion did not appear significant. There was no indication that the land had been misused. If it rains and the grass starts to grow, the trees will hold the land in a reasonable condition.

Farm income levels and the financial situation are being addressed. We hope pastoralists will send back the requested information to enable us to build a case. Although it is difficult for some people to forward that information, we will treat it in a confidential manner. We hope that information will be forwarded so that our case can be strengthened. Mention has been made of the scale of the events of a prolonged dry spell affecting a substantial number of pastoral operations. As time goes by and the rain does not come, the stations are facing worsening conditions. I felt I should inform members of the conditions with which we must deal as we build our case to the federal Minister to take to Cabinet, and of course it will go through our Minister for Primary Industry. We need to look at the long term situation. I have stressed that the long term tax relief and the income equalisation deposits need to be revamped. Landcare also needs to be taken into account. Perhaps we could get some climate research to have an idea of what the future holds for these stations.

I said earlier that I would touch on the stock numbers and the cost of running the stations. One station we visited had a carrying capacity of 4 000 cattle; it now has about 800, and they are not in good condition. That is a fall-off to about 20 per cent. Of other stations on which I took notes, one had 6 000 cattle in 1989 and, until the winter rain in 1991, the number had dropped to 1 800. In 1994 that station is carrying 3 000 cattle, but the property owner told me that he destroyed between five and 10 cattle in a week, and that number would grow as time went by. Another station had 10 500 sheep in November 1993 and now has only 2 200 and has reduced its cattle numbers from 200 to 100. We take for granted lighting from the State Energy Commission, but it costs pastoralists \$200 a week just for the fuel to run a lighting plant. A drum of Avgas costs \$245, which equates to \$1.22 per litre. A lighting plant is not a luxury but a necessity on a station. It costs about \$320 a week to care for windmills. A bale of hay costs \$4.10. The cost of bringing a beast to Perth is about \$46 a head. One pastoralist told us that he had averaged \$68 per beast since February when he would normally receive \$200 or \$300 per beast. Therefore, the pastoral industry has a high cost structure. We are seeking to develop a strategy and to put in place a mechanism to deal with this drought situation. It is fortunate that the price of wool is starting to increase, but it is doing so at a time when these pastoralists have the least possible chance of benefiting from that increase.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [3.11 pm]: I extend to Hon Phil Lockyer my appreciation for moving an urgency motion in this House four weeks ago and for inviting members of this House to see for themselves the difficulties currently being faced by pastoralists in the east Gascoyne. Coincidentally, I had planned to visit the east Gascoyne following a visit a month or so ago to pastoralists in Meekatharra, so I was pleased to join my colleagues on the visit.

There is no doubt that things are tough in the east Gascoyne at present. A point that was

made repeatedly as we moved around the 12 stations which we visited was that they were upset that the Western Australian and Eastern States newspapers were concentrating on the drought which we all know is occurring in many parts of the Eastern States, and that the Western Australian media failed to either recognise or publicise the fact that the east Gascoyne has been experiencing for five years one of the worst droughts it has experienced in the past 100 years. That drought has made it difficult for the pastoralists who remain on the stations and has also caused severe dislocation. There were very few young people aged between 18 and 25 years at the stations which we visited because the drought had forced the sons and daughters of those pastoralists to seek alternative employment. In a number of instances, employment had been found in the mining industry, and in other instances those young people had moved to farming properties in the hope that one day they would be able to return to their parents' station and continue a tradition which had, in some cases, been carried on for three generations.

Rain is needed desperately in that area. One pastoralist said to Hon Tom Butler and me, "I have got to be optimistic. I have been here a long time and there is no doubt that the drought will break when it rains." He was optimistic that it would rain; the only thing he could not tell us was when that would happen. I think he thought it would have rained long ago. There is no question that these pastoralists are optimistic.

I have said already that not one of the pastoralists whom we met was putting out his hand and asking for assistance. The pastoralists were putting up their hands and asking the Government and the people of Western Australia to recognise their plight, and they wanted to work with the Government to ensure that a scheme was put in place so that they would be able to restock their stations when the drought breaks. Much of the stock that formally comprised the stations has died, and the stock which has not died is regrettably near death. Some stock has been salvaged and sent to other areas of the State, in particular Geraldton, Dongara and Eneabba, for agistment, but a significant cost is involved in the transport of stock. In one case, we were told it had cost \$21 000 up-front to transfer stock from the east Gascoyne to the Geraldton region. That is \$21 000 which that pastoralist did not have, and he told us that he has until February, firstly, for it to rain so that some pastures will regenerate, and, secondly, to find some more money with which to bring his future breeding stock back to his station. We asked him where would he finish up if it did not rain between now and February, and he said that stock would have to be sold to pay for the agistment and to recoup the \$21 000 which he had paid to transport that stock. The pastoralists are doing everything possible to maintain the pastoral tradition in that area. Many of them have experienced drought previously. Many of them agree that they will experience drought again during their lifetime. However, not many of them have experienced a drought as severe as this drought.

The pastoralists whom we visited asked whether they should consider greater diversification of the industry and of the general pursuits they can undertake on the land. I made the point that the new land administration Bill which is currently being drafted will widen the definition of pastoral pursuits and enable pastoralists to undertake pursuits such as tourism and horticulture, whereas in the past there has been some restriction in that area. At Mulgul station, which is run by Robert and Jacqui Power, we saw a successful horticultural project, to which Hon Cheryl Davenport has referred, and while it looked very green and productive from our point of view - that is, from our side of the fence looking in - Hon Cheryl Davenport is absolutely correct in saying that it is labour intensive. Mr and Mrs Power and the people whom they employ from the area carry out the backbreaking task of harvesting the watermelon, rockmelon and other fruit which they are growing.

It was a clear example of a pastoralist who had decided to diversify. There was a significant risk in making that decision, but they were prepared to take those risks, put up the money, and if it did not work, they would look somewhere else for other opportunities. I used Robert and Jacqui Power, and Mulgul station as an example of a successful horticultural pursuit. Pastoralists generally across Western Australia must consider the question of diversification.

The pastoral industry has been a traditional industry for many years, but it needs to

expand its vision in some areas, and consider other opportunities. I say that in a constructive and positive way. With the drought conditions the agricultural industry in Western Australia faces from time to time, it needs to explore other opportunities. Hon Murray Criddle was clearly in demand as chairman of the task force that has been appointed by the Minister for Primary Industry to work on a scheme to assist these pastoralists. I hope that the Government will be able to put together a package that will at least provide finances for the restocking of the stations when the drought breaks. It was pointed out to us on a number of occasions that the problem of restocking is the first big hurdle the pastoralists must overcome. It is not just a matter of finances, but where they will get the stock when the drought breaks. All in all it was a successful visit, and I was pleased to be part of it.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [3.21 pm]: I am pleased that Hon Phil Lockyer has provided us with a second opportunity to debate this matter following the delegation's visit. I regret that I was unable to attend with that group; particularly, after initially indicating that I was available to do so; however, circumstances ultimately prevented that. The five members of this House who did attend presented a mixture of experience and talent, which probably would not have been improved by my attendance. I am delighted with the reports which have come back, in that they have been so constructive. I wish Hon Murray Criddle's committee well, and if I can assist in any way in my function as the shadow Minister for Primary Industry, I will be most happy to do so. In particular, I may be able to assist in the member's communications with the Federal Government. I make no promises that I can do that, but I will be happy to attempt it.

Yesterday I met with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, and today with the Western Australian Farmers Federation executive. On both occasions we discussed the drought situation; in particular, with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association. Although I am appreciative of the Prime Minister's package for the Eastern States drought measures, and I share the view that it should be made available to those affected in the east Gascoyne, something rather larger than that is needed. The fact that we need the Prime Minister to visit a particular location to drive home the need for these measures is proof that the national drought strategy we have adopted as a nation is a misnomer. It is a strategy not to have a strategy. I was critical of it at the time, and I remain critical. If any good is to come of this drought, it is that we remember the pain. Every now and again we need some pain to remind us of what needs to be done, because after a run of good years we need to provide for the bad times. This drought is an acute reminder that we need to do something about a national drought strategy which is worthy of the name.

I endorse the comments made by the Minister for Lands. I have read some of the proposals made by the Minister for Lands in respect of the forthcoming land administration Bill; in particular, those proposals which free the pastoralists to diversify to some extent. Although the Labor Party has not specifically dealt with that, because it is yet to see the Bill, I can assure the Minister for Lands that although I no longer have a role in lands on behalf of the Opposition, there will be a loud voice in Caucus in support of those views.

I told the PGA yesterday that I would like to see the rights of some of those pastoral leases which have 2 000 hectare excision rights, as in the old freeholder's right, extended to all pastoral leases. There should be an 'as of right' excision, and not one that pastoralists are required to pay up-front or as a once a year lease. If we can diversify and give pastoralists some degree of security in their incomes, that is the way to do it. The pay-off to the nation is the critical point. That pay-off will be the research effort which is put into tropical agriculture by those people who make a living from it. We are not spending anywhere near enough on that. Done correctly, the changes involved in the land administration legislation may well provide an impetus for that to continue and, I hope, to take some of the pain out of the droughts which we are certain to have in the future.

HON P.H. LOCKYER (Mining and Pastoral) [3.27 pm]: I thank the members for their input. Hon Sam Piantadosi spoke to me privately and said that we should be supporting a

pipeline for the north to assist with irrigation projects there. It is early days, and I appreciate the thought, but underground water is not a problem. That area has all the water it needs at shallow depths.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Irrigation will save the area.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: Mulgul station, and the desert gold project at Wiluna are prime examples of successful irrigation projects. Anything will grow if we provide the water, but there is no easy fix. Horticulture is an expensive and time consuming business. Horticulturists take their chances with the market; it goes up and down. Although horticulturists can make a lot of money, the risk of loss is enormous.

I thank members for their input. If circumstances do not improve in that area, it may be necessary to once again bring the matter to the Parliament. I have full confidence in Hon Murray Criddle, who has done a very good job. It was his second trip to the area. He is close to the subject and he knows there is no easy answer. He has his fingers on the pulse. I thank Hon George Cash, Hon Tom Butler, Hon Cheryl Davenport and Hon Murray Criddle for joining the delegation and visiting the area, and for their sincerity.

[Motion lapsed, pursuant to Standing Order No 72.]

BILLS (3) - THIRD READING

1. Electricity Corporation Bill
2. Gas Corporation Bill
3. Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Bill

Bills read a third time, on motions by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

ADOPTION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 November.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [3.31 pm]: It is quite clear from the substance of the Bill that Hon Cheryl Davenport has a very keen interest in the adoption area. Her interest in matters of social justice was obvious in our recent trip to the east Gascoyne when, on many occasions, she spoke to the station owners about their plight as a result of the drought currently affecting that area. I know from the way in which Hon Cheryl Davenport pursued that matter, that she has a very deep and genuine interest in these matters, and that is reflected in this Bill. However, the Bill in its present form cannot be accepted by the Government. Rather than my explaining the reasons, I think it appropriate that the Minister representing the Minister for Community Development in this place, Hon Eric Charlton, be afforded that opportunity.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [3.33 pm]: The content of this Bill is based on the position Hon Cheryl Davenport has held for a long time with regard to her perception of the shortcomings in the current Act which was recently passed by both Houses. That legislation will come into effect on 1 January next year, and the member believes that a number of limitations should be included in it. The Government does not support the Bill proposed by Hon Cheryl Davenport, for the following reasons.

It is well documented that she and other members had the mistaken belief that when this Bill was referred to the Legislation Committee, the committee's recommendations would automatically be implemented and the existing legislation would be amended. A couple of important points should be made on that aspect. Firstly, the Minister for Community Development did not give an undertaking to change the legislation if the committee made recommendations about the content of the Bill and suggested changes. He said that he would consider the response of the committee as part of the ongoing review he intends to

implement. Secondly, having initiated the legislation the Minister did not wish to take away the confidence that had been placed in it by those people affected by the decisions reached, after it had been passed by both Houses of Parliament. The member will be aware from her time in government that it would not be realistic to expect the Government to begin the whole process again with a view to further amending the legislation, when the current Act has not yet been enacted. It would probably take us until this time next year to put the process in place. Preparing legislation and putting it through the system is a mind-boggling process and I am sure the public does not understand why everything takes so long, even when agreement has been reached within government. Even if the Minister agreed to implement the changes, a lengthy period would be involved.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: Why did the Minister agree to send it to the committee?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: He agreed because of the strong desire of Hon Cheryl Davenport and other members that the committee examine certain aspects of the Bill. The Minister did not deny them that opportunity. The chairman of the committee has said on more than one occasion that it is not a satisfactory situation for legislation to be referred to the committee after it has been passed by both Houses. Probably, in future this will happen less frequently, and for the reasons I have stated.

Hon Cheryl Davenport believed, quite properly in her own way, that should the committee agree that certain changes were in the best interests of the people affected by this legislation, the amendments would be made forthwith. However, the practicalities are that going down that path would not achieve the result sought. Secondly, it must be acknowledged - Hon Cheryl Davenport will be aware of this from her time in government - that when changes were made to the original adoption legislation, some of the provisions she asked for were not included in the amendments. A series of events has taken place which will give people greater access to the information they want, but that last line about obstruction and denial remains in place. On the other hand, the member knows that a percentage of relinquishing parents want to maintain a veto position. Considering that the Parliament has gone through that process it is equally proper to acknowledge the fact, even if we do not agree with it, that those people believe it is not right to implement at this time the changes desired by Hon Cheryl Davenport in this amending Bill.

The Government and the Minister for Community Development, who is responsible for the adoption legislation, want to put in place the legislation to which both Houses have agreed. Responses will immediately flow about whether any problems exist with it and, if so, which changes need to be made. The decision of the committee will be foremost in ascertaining any future changes to the legislation. I spoke with the Minister last night on this issue. I understand also from comments which have been made to me that examples exist where amendments to similar legislation in other States went all the way, but those States have then backed away from that situation because it caused problems to some who believed the information provision was too open.

I have met with the same people Hon Cheryl Davenport has, although not to the same extent. In 1988 when the previous legislation was before this place the same people, to whom I have spoken since, had the same point of view. They were most disappointed at the lack of progress that was made to satisfy their point of view. Twelve months to two years is a long time for them to wait to get what they believe is a right and just position. However, as with everything else in life, we will not please everybody. It must be acknowledged also that a mechanism exists - although not the one Hon Cheryl Davenport wants to implement through her legislation - to advance the situation. It will be in place to enable those affected to exchange the information they require to make contact with their families.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: There is no compulsion for them to place that.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: No, there no compulsion. There is an improved mechanism through the message box and other provisions in the Government's Bill. The Minister is pretty disappointed -

Hon Cheryl Davenport: So am I.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: - in the actions of Hon Cheryl Davenport.

Hon John Halden: He must be easily disappointed.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: He is disappointed that the member has brought forward another piece of legislation. It is obvious why he is disappointed: He had been through a consultative process to bring forward the amending legislation - something which was not achieved by the previous Government.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: It was very close to being achieved. It was largely as a result of the then Opposition's amendment in the other place that it did not go through that last phase.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I know as well as Hon Cheryl Davenport what was the situation.

Hon John Halden: This is a cheap stunt.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I am making a valid and accurate point that a range of people had different points of view about the situation, which points were probably more extreme then than they are now. That was a logical reason the previous Government did not go as far as it could have at that time. Like everything else in life, people grow and over time come to terms with changes that are made. The situation has come a long way from where it was 20 years ago. New legislation is in place. The Government wants that legislation enacted and then the Government and those involved to be given time to assess the new legislation. The Government does not support the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

[Questions without notice taken.]

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [4.35 pm]: I support the Bill and commend it to the House on the basis that it embodies and gives effect to the recommendations in the twenty-seventh report of the Standing Committee on Legislation. I do so because the Bill embodies the hopes and aspirations of many adoptees and relinquishing parents, some of whom appeared before our committee. I do so because the Bill embodies previously established best practice in the Australian States and also because the Bill proposes to give to old adoptees those same benefits the Government's 1993 Act gives to new adoptees.

The recommendations of the Legislation Committee were as follows -

Hon Peter Foss interjected.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: The Minister should be steady. There is not much hope of this sinking in there. Unanimous decisions of a committee are rather a debased currency now.

Hon Peter Foss: Hon Derrick Tomlinson has explained precisely the position. You do not listen.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: It is the Minister who does not listen to the recommendations; not the other way around.

Hon Peter Foss: You have not heard Hon Derrick Tomlinson.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: We heard Hon Derrick Tomlinson at length, particularly on the committee.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! The member will speak to me so that I can listen.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Of course, Mr Deputy President. We do not want to leave you out to the sole benefit of the Minister. The recommendations of the committee were -

1. That the information veto in relation to old Act adoptions be removed so that the only restrictions on access to information should relate to age.
2. That provision for contact vetoes should exist for a maximum of ten years from the day of the Act's commencement, after which time -

- (i) there shall be no right to lodge a contact veto; and
- (ii) vetoes already lodged shall cease to have effect.

The recommendations were unanimously passed by the committee, and for that reason this Bill must be given serious consideration, because it embodies those recommendations, even to the degree of drafting instructions within the report that would give effect to those recommendations. The Bill should also be supported because it embodies the hopes and aspirations of many adoptees and relinquishing parents, some of whom appeared in person before the Legislation Committee.

Hon Peter Foss: Was not Hon Derrick Tomlinson's point that there was not a lot of evidence but a lot of emotion?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Sometimes emotion contains a great deal of wisdom.

Hon Peter Foss: True, but not evidence.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: We will come to that. The Minister should not worry because his questions will be answered during the course of my -

Hon Peter Foss: Slow speech!

Hon J.A. COWDELL: - elucidating speech. The injustice of the 1993 Act is felt most keenly by 300 Western Australians who currently have a veto applied to them. It may be felt by another 10 000 Western Australian adoptees who may, without the amendments contained in the Bill, be subject to veto. I will not quote at length from the various witnesses who appeared before the committee, but I will quote from one witness who made a number of points as to why the veto should not continue to apply. Of course, this Bill proposes to remove the veto other than on the basis of certain age criteria.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: On information.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: On information wholly, of course. I just read the recommendations. It also refers to access after a 10 year period. The witness brought to the attention of the committee a number of very pressing reasons why this veto should not continue to apply to certainly 300 and potentially 10 000 Western Australians. In open session the witness stated that obviously with health considerations the veto should not be there for the physical and psychological health of the person to whom the veto was applied.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It is only pertinent to the latter when health records are accessible.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Yes, but I will read the comments about how inadequate the records may be without personal contact. The witness stated -

There is a veto on contact and a veto on information, and you want to allow for that. If you let the law go through as it is, then you are saying to me I cannot know the information that, for example, my biological father had a heart attack in his late forties, and then take steps, which I have because I know I am in a high risk group, to prevent that happening in my case. For my sister, have you read my submission about how difficult it was? . . . I cannot have any kind things to say about the department, but that is not the point of my being here. My sister has had three miscarriages in a row. Do you not think it would have been nice for her doctor to know about her birth mother and whether she had problems? . . . I will not dwell on medical issues, because we will get into legalistic areas, and I am not really interested in that. The fact that we have to defend our right to be of equal status and to have an equal opportunity for preventive medicine, to use the jargon, is ridiculous . . . How else am I going to get that information but by making contact directly with my birth mother? I cannot rely on statements they made 30 years ago, because (a) they might not have provided comprehensive information -

Indeed, that is most often the case. It continues -

- and (b) it is wrong anyway . . . I can go through the non-identifying information

I got, and it is outright wrong. The information the department gave me was wrong. I know it because I have found out the truth. Whether that is because they got it wrong, my birth mother told them incorrectly, or the solicitor got it wrong is irrelevant because you have access to the source.

That is an important medical consideration which still applies to those who are or may be subject to the veto. Information of 30 or 40 years ago which goes on the departmental record is, in the main, very sketchy and of little help. Of course, there is the relevant consideration of the impact of the veto on adoptees. This witness gave evidence of the impact on him. Referring to his appearing that day, he states -

I did not know how I was going to handle today. I did not want to get angry and upset, but I just cannot understand why, when it boils down to it, we are being treated like Z class citizens, all for the sake of one or two possibilities that may happen - hypothetically - which have not in Western Australia as far as I know ...

When I found out about my veto I broke down and cried in front of someone I had met about five minutes previously. I had not cried for years. Everything depended on that information. I quit my job and was just waiting for that information - that name - because I thought it would help me know who I was. At that stage I did not even know that I had lacked an identity. I was not even aware that adoption meant anything. That was at the age of 29. I have since done a lot of work and reading. I refused to admit it at first and considered it rubbish - psychologists gone mad. However, I believe it now. I have seen too much, I have spoken to too many people, and I have read too much. It is one of the few issues in academia in which there is almost 100 per cent agreement. There is no division here; we agree that it is a very difficult form of positive identity.

The veto is a terrible shock. No matter how well the social worker handles it in telling you that it is not rejection - that the birth parents just cannot handle it at the moment - you know emotionally when you feel something like that happen that rationally, sure, your partner, daughter or father is going through a difficult time and perhaps cannot give you what you need. However, it still hurts; the emotion is still there. There are two separate issues. A veto of five years would be better than 10 years, or better than a life long veto.

That was relevant relating to the Act that this Bill is amending - the 1993 one - because it allows for the continuation of lifetime vetoes. It is limited by requiring five year renewals or whatever. The committee considered that option.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It should be pointed out that it relates only to the new Act adoptions.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: That is the problem.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Precisely.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I will make that point clear. The Act of 1993 is very enlightening in respect of new Act adoptions. The problem in Western Australia is that there are only 20 adoptions a year now, so in fact the new Act, which is enlightening, will in about 18 years come into effect for 20 people coming on stream each year. I have no objection to that. The problem is that there is a group of people comprising about 10 000 who have been let down by the 1993 Act. I have no difficulty with the 20 a year who will come on-stream in 18 years having benefited by the Act, but certainly the 10 000 will have nothing. They should expect more.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It creates two laws.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: In respect of the hopes and aspirations of the old Act adoptees, this witness expressed a valid point of view that it may be of benefit to relinquishing parents to remove all the veto, even though they may not appreciate it. He states -

My mother has since told her husband and four of her five children about two children she gave up.

He did not know until the information veto was broken down that he had a sister, let alone the situation of his parents. He states -

One of the reasons I made contact with her - I was surprised that the committee was surprised that I went ahead and did it - was partly for me, but more for her. I did not want her going around with a burden for the rest of her life. She was only 50 at the time and probably had another 25 years to live. Why should she have to carry that burden because she is locked into a time warp - the social stigma of the late fifties and early sixties - and bears the shame and guilt of having borne two children out of wedlock to the same man? I did it out of a sense of fairness, but there is no doubt that I did it for myself as well. I needed that information. I was in a terrible state.

The concept there is that it may be beneficial at any rate for the relinquishing parent who applies the veto. The witness gives an interesting description of the first meeting, but the summary of the witness is very pertinent and should be read to the Chamber. It reads -

I hope that the law you make is fair and balanced, that it genuinely takes account of and listens to the unheard voice. Despite the fact that there has been intense lobbying over the years - I have been involved in adoption issues only in the last three or four years - the voice of adoptees, not just the 300 vetoed adoptees, has been listened to but not heard because their suffering has not been given status. It has not been understood because on the one hand, the birth mother's legal right to privacy and anonymity has been maintained. Many of the reasons for their fears have been proved to be groundless. However, the other side has not been listened to. On the scales of justice, one tiny side has got everything; even though it weighs less, its rights have been weighted heavily. The other side has been weighted so much and has so little.

It was an eloquent summary of the situation in which many adoptees find themselves, and of their views. I commend the Bill to the House for the second reason: It embodies the hopes and aspirations of many adoptees.

The Bill embodies the previously established best practice in the Australian States. As my colleague, Hon Cheryl Davenport, has previously stated, in 1991 the final report prepared by the Western Australian Adoption Review Committee, entitled "A New Approach to Adoption", concluded that lifetime information and contact vetoes were totally inappropriate, and it recommended accordingly. In 1990, the New South Wales Adoption Information Act which was passed, contained no right of information vetoes as well as a 10 year finite time limit on contact vetoes. A review of the New South Wales Act conducted by the New South Wales Law Reform Commission and tabled in 1992 indicates that these sections of the Act are working well and recommends no change.

I further commend this Bill, as previously stated, on the basis that the same benefit should be accorded to old adoptees as the Government's 1993 Act provides for new adoptees the right of information and the right to contact, subject to certain age restrictions. This amending Bill proposes that these very justifiable rights not be made available only to that small number of new adoptees but to 10 000 Western Australians who are denied justice under the old Act.

This Bill proposes to give effect to the assurances given to certain members of this Chamber by the Minister for Community Development, Hon Roger Nicholls. I quote from the speech of my colleague Hon Cheryl Davenport -

I place on public record that had Minister Nicholls not agreed to make these amendments to the new Act prior to the review clause coming into operation, I would not have moved the referral motion.

Further on she said -

Minister Nicholl's contention that he can ignore the Legislation Committee's recommendations because they provide no legal reason for change flies in the face of the agreement he and I reached on the evening of 6 April 1994.

I note the Minister's contrary view in his letter of 21 November to Hon Cheryl Davenport. The Minister stated in that letter -

The claim in your letter that I agreed to amend the Act "if the Legislation Committee came up with evidence" is false. If you examine your own words, you will see it would be absurd to agree to such a proposal which has no reference to what the "evidence" is to be about or what quality of evidence is required.

My recollection of our private discussions is that I agreed to amend the Bill if there were legal impediments, and all other matters would be considered in the two year review. Having read a copy of your comments in Hansard Thursday, 24 October 1994, I am now more convinced that your recollection is influenced by your own political agenda.

I do not believe that the member would have gone to all the trouble of referring this matter to the committee had she not received an assurance of genuine consideration by the Minister.

I took note of the comments earlier in this debate by the Minister for Transport, Hon Eric Charlton, who spoke about the same old arguments of the same people who came to see him this year as came to see him in 1988. He questioned why people were concerned over another two years elapsing before a further review can be held. For some adoptees the difference between 1988, 1994 and 1996 is the difference between contact with a biological parent and no contact at all as a generation passes on. The Minister voiced the concern that, given the amount of debate on the Bill and its passage through another place, we should all be satisfied with that for the moment. However, it is the purpose of this Chamber to review legislation, to make recommendations to improve it and to have those views taken into account in the process and not be pigeonholed.

I commend the Bill to the House on the basis of the unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee on Legislation, and its embodiment of hopes and aspirations of so many adoptees and, of course, because it embodies legislation that has been seen to work well in other States.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Muriel Patterson.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No 3)

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 November.

HON CHERYL DAVENPORT (South Metropolitan) [4.56 pm]: Firstly, as I was unable to be present during the debate on the Voluntary Membership of Students Guilds and Associations Bill owing to family responsibilities, I will now place on record my opposition to that legislation. Secondly, I will speak about a memorial tour for the late Chris Harni, which took place in Australia in the early part of October and which I had the honour to help organise for the Western Australian leg of that tour.

Owing to the fact that I have two university campuses in my electorate - Curtin University of Technology and Murdoch University - it is important to place on the record my opposition to the Voluntary Membership of Student Guilds and Associations Bill. It is very interesting that this Government chose to use international covenants and human rights issues to argue its case for the voluntary membership of student guilds. I have found on numerous occasions when international conventions have been discussed in this Chamber - particularly the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights - that the Government has thrown in the Opposition's face the view that the United Nations was imposing its views on Australia and that we should have the ability to decide our own fate.

Over the years the student guilds have provided very useful services for many people. Those services do not necessarily need to be discontinued as a result of that legislation. Nonetheless, as a result of the fact that membership will no longer be compulsory, a range of services provided by those guilds will probably disappear. I am concerned

about the possible loss of some of the services that disadvantaged youth have accessed in the past. As a mature aged student in the mid-1980s I had access to the services offered by the student guild at Murdoch University. I found the child care facilities to be very useful. To have my son on campus and to have very quick access to him while I studied was of great assistance to me. There is great danger that those sorts of services will not be available to people for much longer.

I wanted to offer employment to students through the Curtin guild when I was first elected to this place. Because Curtin University is very close to where I live, I rang the student guild to find out whether any young people had put down their names for employment who wanted to do child care services. I was very fortunate in being able to find two people who each took up that service for two year periods. That was very beneficial to them. As students they found the money they could earn supplemented their Austudy payments. The first person who worked for me was a country girl from the Geraldton area. It provided her with a very useful way of supplementing her income. As she indicated to me, she was obliged to be there which meant that she could use that time for study. As members will know, we sit very unusual hours. These students were quite prepared to stay overnight when the need arose. It has been a very beneficial service to me and to those young persons.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! I draw the member's attention to Standing Order Nos 91 and 93 which prohibit her from alluding to any debate and proceedings from the same session.

Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT: I was about to wind up my comments on that matter. I was not aware of those standing orders, and I apologise to the House.

At the beginning of October a major delegation from South Africa visited Australia. It was entitled the Chris Hani Memorial Tour. The delegation consisted of three major leaders from South Africa, including Charles Nquakula, who succeeded Chris Hani as Secretary of the South African Communist Party after his tragic assassination. The second in the delegation was a woman named Thenjiwe Mthintso, a newly elected member of the South African Parliament. The third member of the delegation was John Gomomo, the President of COSATU, the South African trade union organisation. They came to Australia to talk about what had occurred in South Africa since the election of the new unified Government and about the need for continued participation by other nations in the processes which are starting to rebuild a new South Africa.

One of the major parts of the process is a program of reconstruction and development. It is a unified approach to try to rebuild South Africa into a new country. We will all be aware of the expectations of the unified Government to provide many services that have never existed before to black South Africans, in particular, owing to the tragic policy of apartheid, and that is an incredible task for those people. It is no secret that the rand is quite depressed. The reconstruction and development program is very much aimed at trying to deliver services in the areas of health, community development, education and housing.

I was very pleased in our Caucus meeting earlier this week to hear the report of Hon Ian Taylor, who was a member of the delegation led by the Deputy Premier to South Africa during the past couple of weeks. His view was that the South Africans face an absolutely incredible task because their expectations are extremely high. I have a press statement which was issued on 27 July by the trade union organisation about the strike wave by the vehicle builders, I think. It is perhaps appropriate that I read out to the House parts of it. It indicates that as in any other developing nation, people in South Africa are seeking to raise their living standards, and like us South Africa will face workers' strikes from time to time because of that. The press release states -

In recent times there have been tendencies to portray the wave of workers' strikes in south Africa as wholly counter-productive to the effort to reconstruct and develop our country. In many of the strike actions, management has told workers they should not strike because this would cut into the surplus that is available for reconstruction.

These arguments are self-serving and hypocritical. Big business in our country has been squandering profits for decades. The level of investment in productive activity is extraordinarily low.

Profits are squandered in speculative activity on the stock exchange or in building more and more unwanted shopping malls and empty high-rise office blocks.

What is more disturbing has been the tendency from the side of some of our comrades . . . to echo some of these views.

In particular, there are tendencies to demobilise mass participation and to dampen popular expectations on the grounds that these will "frighten foreign investors away".

Obviously an unending spiral of unrealistic wage demands would not be sustainable, economically or socially. The SACP is convinced that this is not the case with the current wave of strikes.

We believe that workers have the right to industrial action and that this right is being exercised in an entirely legitimate fashion at present.

It is extremely unfair to present COSATU workers as an employed elite taking resources away from the millions of unemployed. In a country where there is virtually no social security net, it is precisely employed black workers who are supporting millions of unemployed.

The Reconstruction and Development Program, the mandate on which the ANC has been elected into power, is very clear about the path to growth that it envisages.

It is not a market-driven but a people-driven program. The major source of resources for the RDP lies in the mobilisation of internal resources, in the redistribution of opportunities and infrastructure, and in the reconstruction of production in our country.

It is precisely this kind of redistribution and reconstruction that lies at the heart of the present worker struggles.

The SACP expresses its full support for workers.

We also call on workers to broaden their demands, where appropriate, from basic wage demands to wider questions of workplace democracy and more effective co-determination on key questions of investment, restructuring and training.

While we should certainly seek the co-operation of the private sector locally and internationally, it is high time that we abandon any naivete about this private sector.

The private sector has an extremely limited capacity, and little willingness to lead a growth process in a country like our's, in which the economy is in deep structural crisis.

One of the major reasons that the tour was organised was to talk about the problems that are being faced in South Africa and to tell us that rather than have the international community desert South Africa because it now has a free reunified Government, there is still a role for us to play in exchanging information and we should not be too harshly judgmental about its methods in the long term struggle to develop. They asked us that if we do come to South Africa to lend a hand, particularly in regard to people resources, we acknowledge the need to be culturally appropriate during our visit. I understand from some limited discussions with Ian Taylor about the tour which was led by the Deputy Premier that people are attempting to do that, and I hope that will continue to be the case.

I pay tribute to Thenjiwe Mthintso, who was recently elected to the South African Parliament, and place on record my admiration of her contribution to the cause of women in South Africa. She was a freedom fighter and was exiled from South Africa for 14 years but returned to South Africa on the release of Mandela in 1990 and was a

participant in the move to try to resolve the problems in South Africa so that there could be free and democratic elections. She has been involved both within and outside South Africa in establishing the gender desk for the African National Congress. The ANC had developed an affirmative action program whereby women would comprise 30 per cent of its representation in the new South African Parliament, and I am delighted that the ANC has 83 woman members in the new Parliament. While we in the developed countries struggle to ensure that the gender mix in both our public and private sector management processes and Parliaments reflects somewhat the gender mix in the population, it is a great credit to women like Thenjiwe Mthintso that in their first opportunity to vote as black women they have achieved such tremendous success.

My major contribution to Thenjiwe Mthintso's visit to Western Australia was to introduce her to a range of people. I arranged for her to spend half an hour with Dr Carmen Lawrence to talk specifically about women's issues and, to a lesser extent, health issues. I was horrified to hear from Ian Taylor that 250 babies which are HIV positive have been left in a ward in a hospital for black people in Johannesburg, presumably to die. That is just one example of the mammoth health problems which are being experienced in South Africa and of the many things with which these new members of Parliament will have to come to grips. We in the developed countries can assist in these matters, being mindful of the cultural differences.

Thenjiwe Mthintso asked Carmen and me at that meeting whether we could give her some ideas about how the 83 woman members of the South African Parliament might work together. Perhaps we could learn from her rather than the other way around, because we do not have that many woman members! Having said that, she was conscious of the fact that they had to overcome many problems. Despite that affirmative action policy, the issue of merit arose soon after the election when the members of Cabinet were to be elected, because the comment was made that only two of those 83 women would be suitable to participate in Cabinet. Those women did not take kindly to that and turned up on the President's lawn, met with him for a time, and worked out a way of increasing their representation in Cabinet in a way which would reflect their representation in Caucus.

What impressed me about this delegation was the lack of bitterness that exists against a regime which over many years had maintained in South Africa the policy of apartheid. They were keen to right the wrongs in a socially just way. They are looking for people with expertise in a range of areas to assist them to develop policies and to advance the position of their people, who have had such difficult lives. That will not happen overnight. I have been invited to go to South Africa to assist the women's league, and I hope to do that in January and February. They have asked me to bring a range of legislation dealing with issues like sexual assault, women's refugees, equal opportunities, domestic violence and the family, which will advance the cause of women and children in South Africa. Despite the large number of black women in South Africa, there is only one refuge for black women to access to escape violence. We are planning not only to provide that information but also to assist in training the trainers for the next group of women who will seek election in both provincial Parliaments and local government authorities.

South Africa has 30 per cent affirmative action for not only its national Parliament, but also the other tiers of government within that country. As so many of them were exiled for so long, they do not have the depth of women coming through the process that we have, so I look forward to the opportunity to pass on my knowledge in those areas to assist in their struggle to gain equal opportunity.

Another delegate on that tour was the President of the Council of South African Trade Unions. The organisation has a membership of 1.72 million. It is the largest labour organisation in South Africa, and is focused on advancing the cause of the worker, and it was instrumental in designing the reconstruction and development program. Western Australians who participated in the visit were incredibly impressed with the capacity of these three people. They were tremendous ambassadors for their country, and were able to tell it like it is. They have had very little education, and their analysis of their struggle

and their vision of what needs to be done was very clear and impressive. I wish them well, and I look forward to seeing the outcome of the issues they are dealing with. I hope to take with me some ideas that will assist them. I commend the Bill to the House.

HON SAM PIANTADOSI (North Metropolitan) [5.22 pm]: I support the Bill. I will touch on a number of issues. The first concerns the formal opening last month of the Stirling Ethnic Aged Homes Association, which was long overdue. The association is progressing towards stage 2, which is a nursing home to complement the frail aged hostel, and further down the track aged accommodation, so the centre will have three tiers of accommodation.

People from non-English speaking backgrounds have a great need in this area. I have urged Dr Lawrence, the Federal Minister for Health, and other people at a federal level, to look at the possibility of making it a condition of granting a new licence for a nursing home that a wing for people of non-English speaking backgrounds be constructed. If that were a condition for all new nursing homes or frail aged homes, there would be no need for separate hostels to cater for people of non-English speaking backgrounds as that need would be met in the community. That is feasible, but it will take money. Both the State and Federal Governments are looking at the question of care for the aged, and it is up to everybody to come up with the right guidelines for how to best serve the aged community generally. Because of my background, it is only right that I try to champion their cause. There has not been much action from successive governments in providing care for aged people from non-English speaking backgrounds, apart from the Villa Terenzio, Villa Dalmacia Day Centre, and Villa Hellas Aged Care Hostel. The funding for the Stirling ethnic aged hostel and Villa Hellas in Dianella was provided at much the same time.

Hon Max Evans interjected.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The original application on behalf of the Stirling hostel included the Greek community, but it submitted an application in its own right, which went ahead. The Stirling area is identified as having a high concentration of people from non-English speaking backgrounds, and the need for a frail aged hostel was acute. We are now looking at providing similar facilities in other areas to cater for that group. The Swan Valley has a Yugoslav-Italian mix.

Hon Max Evans: Are there Serbs and Croats?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: That issue evokes strong feelings. It caused three clubs to withdraw from participating in the Stirling project. The word Yugoslav means southern slav, but the Croatian association would not accept that. It did not withdraw because its communities did not have a need, but because it objected to the word "Yugoslav". We attempted to appease them, by referring to them as southern Europeans to try to keep a lid on the situation, but such is the feeling among those people that it spilled over into Stirling. We had hoped to avoid those problems as our main objective was to deliver a service to the aged. We did not want to get into the politics of that region but, unfortunately, that is not always possible. Many aged care facilities are run in conjunction with local government authorities, and the Government may consider a similar concept for services that it provides to people of non-English speaking backgrounds. A service is being provided for some activities, and people of non-English speaking background should also be part and parcel of that so that recreational and other facilities are available to them. Family centres, community centres and autumn centres have been established over a long period, and I can assure the Minister that the services and information provided at those centres for people of non-English speaking backgrounds are few and far between. The Government could possibly help provide those services for the community because, irrespective of people's birthplace, this is a community resource. In these days of equal opportunity, fair trading, and everything else being fair, it is fair to request the Government to provide some services in that facility.

I refer another matter to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, who I know has had a long interest in sporting matters. Western Australia has been invited to participate next year in the national soccer league. However, a suitable ground is not available in

Western Australia to meet the standards required. It is not always possible to use resources such as the Western Australian Cricket Association ground. The rugby league is in a similar situation and, although it has opted to play games on the WACA ground, the cost will be significant. In the initial stages the Western Reds have attracted a big following, but it remains to be seen whether that interest will be sustained in the long term. The Packer proposal for rugby in New South Wales - and Aussie rules football will follow suit - means that people will be fighting for the sponsorship dollar. I do not know whether the interest level will be maintained.

A stadium should be provided in this State for soccer, rugby and hockey games. All three sports use the same pitch size, and the three individual codes could utilise such a facility. They use an area about half the size of an Aussie rules pitch.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: It is probably half the game.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: It depends. I guess that could be true with some players. I do not know which category the member fits into but, no matter what the code, good players will make a game interesting even if the spectators are not familiar with the code. The players make the game exciting. I am sure that Hon Ross Lightfoot and I would be in that category! I played league soccer in this State for three years and I also played rugby league for five years. I have associations with both codes and respect them. I enjoy watching and am a keen fan of Aussie rules. I support the old Royals club, but it has not enjoyed much success over the years. Nevertheless, I remain loyal through the good and the bad times.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Why not join the Falcons?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I could have some problems with the garlic munchers. I have already been associated in name only with the Falcons because of my ethnicity. I lived in East Perth and attended Christian Brothers, Highgate. Jack Sheedy, Polly Farmer and Ted Kilmurray through the late 1950s coached us at Forrest Park two days a week. It was a stone's throw from Perth Oval. There is no chance of my changing now. I have been a supporter for 40-odd years, and I guess the team will still see some good times and some bad times as is the trend now because, unfortunately, the club has been through some changes and is losing players.

Hon T.G. Butler: It has Marksy though.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: That is part of the problem. A multipurpose stadium is needed to cater for these three codes and consideration should be given to that in future.

Hon Max Evans: Were they not looking at Perry Lakes at one stage?

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Yes, and part of the proposal was to erect floodlights at Perry Lakes, which is not being utilised at present. If there were floodlights, the ground could be used for summer athletics. The proposal did not eventuate because local residents raised a storm and the local member, Liz Constable, took up the issue. The proposal eventually died. A facility such as Perry Lakes could be used, and large amounts of money have been spent on this facility in the past. I doubt whether its attendance figures have exceeded 5 000 for one event in recent years. The last event at which the attendance was between 15 000 and 20 000 was the world professional wrestling bouts. Since then, apart from the people who attend track meets and some soccer matches, none of the crowds has exceeded 5 000. I know that the North Perth Croatian Soccer Club has utilised the ground on occasions. Obviously, Perry Lakes has great potential and if lights were erected, it could be used for rugby, hockey and soccer games.

Hon Max Evans: What about the ground at Gloucester Park inside the track?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The area would be big enough for a soccer pitch.

Hon N.F. Moore: It would be a fair distance from the spectators.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I was just about to say that. Bearing in mind the size of the trotting track and the large section of grass in front of the grandstand, the distance

between the grandstand and the playing surface is 60 to 70 metres, if not more. That would create a problem.

The other possibility is for funds to be expended on the old velodrome at Lake Monger. It is no longer used as a velodrome since the construction of the new facility at Midvale. At Lake Monger the spectators are positioned high, looking down at the pitch. The pitch is too small as it is; however, if it were elongated by an extra 10 metres at either end it would be a first class facility, with the additional bonus of the track being one or two metres below the surface. Unlike Gloucester Park, where spectators are about 70 metres away from the track, at Lake Monger they are only about 5 metres away from the pitch. It also has good parking facilities nearby. The only criticism about the Lake Monger velodrome is that an arrangement would need to be made with the Town of Vincent to combat the mosquitos from Lake Monger. In summer the midges and mosquitos attracted by the lights turn people away.

Hon Max Evans: What about the Cannington dog track? The rugby league used to be out there. It is not too far away.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The venue must be suitable as a location for a spectator sport, so the track may be a problem. However, some of the major stadiums overseas have a betting track all around with the pitch in the middle. Three or four facilities in Perth could be used. It would not be a bad idea to consider the possibility of spending funds on a venue which three or four sports could utilise. That could be done because the playing pitch of soccer, hockey and rugby covers about the same area. They could all be played well on a pitch of that size.

Hon Max Evans: Hockey is looked after at Curtin University.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: That is right. Three years ago when the national under-17s championships were held in Perth the association considered the Western Australian Cricket Association ground as a venue; however, the cost was prohibitive. As an alternative the facilities at the Italian Club (WA) were utilised. The cost of lighting alone for the WACA would have been about \$400 an hour, compared with \$50 an hour at the Italian Club. The championships would not get the attendance to meet the cost, because the lights had to be switched on up to an hour before and after the match. A number of other organisations would otherwise use the WACA as a function venue. I remember that exercise because I was involved with the club when the approach was made. It would have been a financial disaster because the championships were to be held over 10 days. The cost at the WACA could have been between \$12 000 and \$20 000 on lighting alone. Another venue is Leederville Oval, which is in my electorate.

Hon Max Evans: I suggested that a few years ago.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The Town of Vincent is making temporary use of it at the moment, but what will happen in the future?

Hon Max Evans: A number of codes looked at Leederville Oval a couple of years ago after I spoke to them.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Eight years ago, or possibly longer, even soccer considered moving there rather than to Perry Lakes; however, ultimately the decision was made for it to utilise part of Perry Lakes which was not being used.

Hon Max Evans: Does soccer use an artificial surface or grass?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: An artificial surface was considered by the Kangaroos early last year when they considered utilising the Burswood Superdome. It then considered another system which was being used in the United States. It was lawn on a system of trays which fitted together, creating a perfect surface which could be removed. It had to be taken out of that air-conditioned environment and placed in the sunlight for a day, retaining its condition throughout. However, that process was costly. That surface was considered, but there was not adequate demand for it. Many surfaces and much technology can now be utilised. We must consider spending the money to ensure that available venues are utilised. The old velodrome will never be used as a cycle track again; it is in bad condition. It could become a good venue for other sports.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Is it big enough for those other sports?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: As I explained to the Minister earlier, part of the track would have to be cut into, because although the playing surface is one of the best turf pitches in existence, it is very small. Its lawn is similar to that of the WACA. Its drainage system is excellent, and its playing surface has been maintained. However, the pitch is a minimum standard pitch at the moment. The embankments of the cycling track, which is no longer used, could be cut into. It could be turned into one of the better stadiums in Australia. The total cost of making those changes is in the range of \$150 000. That velodrome could accommodate between 5 000 and 10 000 people. Plenty of parking is available. Should there be a bigger event, the sizeable reserve alongside could accommodate much of that traffic. The freeway access would alleviate any traffic congestion much easier than in the past.

The Town of Vincent does not have the capacity to undertake some of the major works required to bring the facilities up to the required level; I think the Town of Leederville would be in the same boat. The Minister for Finance and the Minister for Sport and Recreation should look at this in the very near future.

Hon Max Evans: Especially if we are going into a national soccer competition.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The PCC and the State could both provide money. If we compare the number of people who use the Beatty Park pool with the number of people involved in soccer, I think the soccer taxpayers of the State are not getting a fair deal. Even the Minister for Commerce and Trade has said that soccer is a medium through which we can improve trade with South East Asia. Soccer is the major football code in South East Asia. The Kangaroos and the veterans were perhaps too successful in Singapore. We have considerable young talent here, and the South East Asian countries are entertaining playing a team from here. A number of young Australians are playing in the European league. Just this year we have lost six players to Eastern States' clubs. We have had three or four young players in the Joeys team, the national under-17 team, which finished fourth in the world championships. However, we need better facilities to promote the game and to assist our players. Our young people can still continue to improve. These young people make excellent ambassadors for the State; they have proved that. The Kangaroos did not lose a match in Singapore; it perhaps got to be a bit embarrassing after a while. In the future there will be an expanded league and we should be preparing for it. Unfortunately with a few of the people involved in the negotiations the true story did not emerge until after the agreement was signed. Nevertheless, in three or four years we will have teams playing in a South East Asia league, which will include teams from Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Western Australia and possibly the Philippines and Hong Kong. This would truly be an international competition on our doorstep.

One of our local manufacturers, D'Orsogna Bros Pty Ltd, is looking to break into the South East Asian market and is considering establishing a knockout competition similar to the FA Cup competition. D'Orsogna is hoping to put up the prize money because the people involved know that soccer is a good medium through which to get into South East Asia, because soccer is the code that most Asians follow. Rather than spending money on advertising to promote itself in the area, D'Orsogna wants to promote itself by sponsoring a soccer knockout competition.

Last year the Malaysian Government spent something like \$35m on the sport. Dunhill provided a further \$15m. Money was provided to build a new 85 000 capacity stadium in Shah Alam in the state of Selangor at a cost of \$240m. It should also be borne in mind that Malaysia has the Merdeka stadium, which also has a large capacity.

We have facilities here that are going to waste, the velodrome and Leederville Oval, and I suppose a third would be Perry Lakes Stadium. The new Towns of Cambridge and Vincent do not have the resources to upgrade these facilities.

Hon Max Evans: We have the Cannington dog track.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: We should consider something more central, such as Leederville Oval or the velodrome.

Hon Max Evans: You have mosquitoes and midges at the velodrome.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: We could have the Town of Vincent spray the swamp to get rid of them. We should not allow these facilities to fall into disrepair but should bring them up to standard so that they can be used. I support the Bill.

HON TOM HELM (Mining and Pastoral) [5.58 pm]: I want to explain to the House my involvement with the Deaths in Custody Watch Committee. The committee came about following the royal commission inquiry into the deaths in custody throughout Australia some years ago. Some 300 recommendations came from that inquiry, which dealt mainly with the disproportionate number of deaths of Aboriginal people in Australia's prison system. These deaths were reaching epidemic proportions and the Government wanted to establish what the community could do to prevent these deaths from continuing. One of the major recommendations to come from the inquiry was the need to consider the cultural appropriateness of incarcerating Aboriginal people, in disproportionate numbers, in our prisons.

The Deaths in Custody Watch Committee was an initiative of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, which took as its model the watch committees that used to be prevalent in the United Kingdom where the trade union movement there would set up committees in the various major towns to look after working people who were temporarily ill or in poor financial straits. The committees showed solidarity with the people and attempted to ease their suffering, especially those people who were without employment and had fallen on hard times. Like most Western Australian organisations, the Western Australian watch committee has done its work well. Its work is an example to others.

[Debate adjourned, pursuant to Standing Order No 61(b).]

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [6.00 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - J-Corp Pty Ltd Builders and Developers, Complaints Against

HON A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (East Metropolitan) [6.01 pm]: I am reluctant to use the cloak of parliamentary privilege to name individuals or companies against whom complaints have been alleged. However, I have been approached by many individuals who feel totally powerless to obtain justice and have been intimidated in their attempts to obtain a remedy to their problem. Morally, I have no choice other than to raise this matter. The complaints I have received go well beyond the usual definition of "complaint". It is inadequate to describe as complaints the trauma that these individuals who have contacted me have suffered through their dealings with a building company. The persons to whom I refer are the dissatisfied home buyers of J-Corp properties. J-Corp is one of the leading building companies, at least in size, in this State and it has a great many dissatisfied customers.

Unfortunately the frequent refrain is that attempts by individuals to deal with this company to have their often substantial problems rectified fall, at best, on deaf ears and are much more likely to result in an abusive response and, in some instances, in what could only be described as intimidation. It is a most unfortunate state of affairs and perhaps it is one of the reasons that the number of complaints to the Builders Registration Board do not reflect the degree of the problem within the housing industry. I note that the complaints received to date this year by the Builders Registration Board have increased by 65 per cent over the previous year, while home constructions have increased by only 10 per cent. Therefore, even within the Builders Registration Board there has been an increase in the incidence of complaint. However, the problem is much more extensive than that. Unfortunately there are many people, including those who are the clients of this particular company, who are too scared to put their claims before the Builders Registration Board. They have been told that if they lodge a complaint to the board or publicise them in the Press they will be penalised.

Hon N.F. Moore: Do you have any evidence of that?

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The evidence I have is the word of these people who have been to see me. I certainly would not have acted on the basis of one or two complaints.

Hon N.F. Moore: All I am asking is: Are you making these allegations on the basis of some evidence?

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Yes, I am. I am making these allegations on the basis of information which has been given to me by individuals, and largely it is verbal evidence. I am seeing a pattern of complaint. Over the past six months that I have been raising these issues in this House many people have called my office. Certainly, if it was a question of one or two complaints I would never think of naming this company in this House.

Hon E.J. Charlton: I am interested in your comment about some people being too frightened to say anything.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Again, that is a frequent occurrence. For example, the fretting mortar action group - which is not the group to which I am referring - told the Opposition that it has often sent out application forms to clients of a Buckeridge company to join their group and to date it has not received one completed form. This group has been told by a number of people that -

Hon Peter Foss: This is getting a little bit beyond direct evidence.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I am not pretending I have investigative powers. I have seen a pattern of complaint building up. The fretting mortar action group has been approached by Buckeridge home buyers, who said that they complied with the instructions on the cover sheet of the application form and rang the builder to notify him that they intended to join the group. They were told that if they did the builder would not fix their homes. I am not saying it happens in all instances with J-Corp. Some people have advised me, particularly those with houses which have been constructed with thermalite bricks, that ultimately their houses have been repaired and, in some instances, quite extensively. Nevertheless, a substantial number of people - about 50 - have contacted me and they have spoken about their difficulties with J-Corp.

Hon Peter Foss: Have you taken this matter up with J-Corp?

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Not yet. I certainly intend to do so. I wanted to raise this issue tonight because a group of people are currently planning to picket some of J-Corp's display homes and they are concerned about what might happen to them legally.

Hon Peter Foss: Natural justice would normally require you to raise the matter with J-Corp before raising it here.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I do not think that is correct. As a result of matters I have raised in this House I have already had one letter threatening a defamation action from a Buckeridge company, even though I did not name that company in my address to the House. In other instances when I have commented generally on the housing industry my comments have gone to the Buckeridge companies and there have been aggressive responses. At a later date I am happy to take this matter up with the Buckeridge companies, but at this stage I am seeking to draw attention to the problems. I am doing it now to avail myself of the cloak of parliamentary privilege. Over the six years that Mr Foss has been in this Parliament he has made accusations against many people.

Hon T.G. Butler: And that has been based on a lot less information than you have.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Yes, that is right. He has used a lot more scurrilous accusation.

Hon Peter Foss: About what?

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The attacks that Mr Foss made on Hon Joe Berinson.

Hon Peter Foss: We had the evidence here.

Hon T.G. Butler: You did not.

Point of Order

Hon PETER FOSS: The member is reflecting on a decision of this House because the House found that Mr Berinson had misled the House.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If honourable members did not interject on each other so often these points of order would not need to be raised. I am not sure that Hon Alannah MacTiernan was reflecting on a decision of this House; in fact, I do not think she was. The point I make is that the honourable member should not be concerned with what other people do, have done, or might do, but she should be concerned about what she is doing and ignore all the other interjections. She should inform the House of the matter that is concerning her and then the House will get through its business much more quickly.

Debate Resumed

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The point of order was quite irrelevant. The standard of construction of the homes has been questioned. What perhaps is more important is the fact that when these individuals have made complaints about the quality of the houses which they have bought, they have received a poor quality of customer service, including their telephone calls not being returned, rude and argumentative company representatives -

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: These claims are again unsubstantiated. You are trying to get at Len Buckeridge, as the other place tried to get at Ric New in the 1980s. That is all you are trying to do.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I am trying to get justice for many ordinary working Western Australians who have put their life savings and their dreams into purchasing a house and have found that it is now a nightmare. I note the extent of Hon Ross Lightfoot's interest -

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Alannah MacTiernan does not need to scream and carry on. *Hansard* does not reflect that the member raised her voice. *Hansard* reads the same whether a member whispers or screams. I suggest that Hon Alannah MacTiernan direct her comments to me, where she is supposed to direct them, because I will not interject and argue the point with her. She will certainly not have to raise her voice to me.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Mr President, I was raising my voice simply in order to be heard over the squawks emanating from Hon Ross Lightfoot. I understand the Government's desire to protect Mr Buckeridge because his company is a major donor to the Liberal Party, or has been to date; when it sees what an incompetent Government this is, it may change its mind. Although the Government has performed well in protecting Mr Buckeridge and people like him, these problems are being faced by many Western Australians on a daily basis and have enormous impacts on their personal life and financial status.

[The member's time expired.]

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.12 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

MOTOR VEHICLE THIRD PARTY INSURANCE - \$50 LEVY

Exemptions; Pensioners, Rebates

1114. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What percentage rebate are pensioners with disabilities eligible for on third party insurance for motor vehicles?
- (2) What percentage rebate are age pensioners eligible for on third party insurance for motor vehicles?
- (3) Can the Minister list the groups who are not required to pay the \$50 levy on third party insurance for motor vehicles?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1)-(2) Any pensioner who holds a pensioner concession card is completely exempted from paying the \$50 premium increase on only one vehicle registered in the pensioner's name. This represents a 20.66 per cent rebate on the total third party insurance premium for a class 1A family sedan.
- (3) Pensioners who hold a pensioner concession card - applies to one vehicle only.

Owners of vehicles insured under -

Class 6 - trailers, caravans, invalid wheelchairs.

Class 7(a) - veteran vehicles, farm firefighting vehicles, motor cycles not exceeding 75cc.

Class 7(b) - forklifts, tow motors, self-propelled headers, tractors - not prime mover type, tractor plant.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

Actuary's Report on Premium Increases, Tabling

1119. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) Given the State Government Insurance Commission's monopoly of motor vehicle third party insurance, will the Government table the recent actuary's report on recommended premium increases prior to the end of the last financial year?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The actuarial report is obtained for the purposes of section 3T(2) of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act prior to consideration and assessment of the 1994-95 premium requirements. As the report is not a public document, I am not prepared to table the report.

JOHNSON, TERRY - STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION, DISMISSAL

1120. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) Is Mr Terry Johnson still employed by the State Government Insurance Commission?
- (2) If yes, in what capacity?
- (3) If no, when did his employment cease and under what circumstances?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) No.

- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Mr T.H. Johnson was dismissed on 18 August 1994 from his employment as Manager Government Insurance Division with the State Government Insurance Commission on the ground of misconduct. The circumstances that brought about his dismissal were a combination of the following -

Mr Johnson being charged by the Western Australia Police on 8 August 1994, with the offence of attempting to make a false declaration - section 170 Criminal Code Act - in relation to a motor vehicle accident he was involved in on 5 June 1992.

Findings of an independent inquiry into serious allegations made by current and former employees of the State Government Insurance Commission in relation to Mr Johnson's behaviour and performance of employment.

SEWERAGE - WOODMAN POINT

Plankton Increase, Shoalwater Bay Marine Park

1122. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is the Minister for Water Resources aware of the local residents' concern at the build-up of plankton in the waters off Shoalwater Bay marine park?
- (2) Is this build-up a result of an excess of nutrients from the Woodman Point sewage outfall?
- (3) Is industrial effluent being, or going to be, disposed of through the Woodman Point sewerage facility?
- (4) To what stage of treatment will this sewage be treated prior to its release into the ocean?
- (5) What monitoring will be done to ensure the health of the marine environment, especially in regard to seal and fairy penguin colonies in the ocean region, is maintained?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes. I have been advised that the build-up of plankton off the Western Australian coast is a natural phenomenon which occurs regularly in the spring with the onset of longer days and warmer weather.
- (2) No. I have been advised that this type of occurrence has been taking place for decades and is in no way linked to the Woodman Point ocean outlet at Cape Peron.
- (3) Approved industrial wastes, after appropriate pre-treatment, are discharged into the sewerage system upstream of the Woodman Point treatment facility and constitute approximately 15 per cent of the inflow. No industrial waste is currently discharged into the Cape Peron outfall downstream of Woodman Point. At the present time, the Department of Environmental Protection is examining the possibility of treated industrial waste effluents discharging to the ocean via the Cape Peron outlet.
- (4) Any treated industrial waste effluents entering the system downstream of the Woodman Point treatment plant would have to be equivalent to the effluent produced at Woodman Point, which is presently primary effluent.
- (5) As part of the original environmental review and management plan, extensive monitoring of the ocean around the Cape Peron outlet was undertaken both prior to, and since the launching of, the outlet pipe. Annual ocean monitoring and reporting to the Department of Environmental Protection has occurred since the commissioning of the system. Over recent years the Perth coastal waters study has carried out a

major innovative oceanographic investigation, concentrating on the Beenyup outlet area at Ocean Reef and the Woodman Point outlet area at Cape Peron. This study, which is arousing great interest around the world, will be completed in the next few months. Recommendations will include an enhanced monitoring program at all ocean outlets.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES - PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MONITORING MEDIA EXPENDITURE

1127. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for the Environment:

What level of funding was spent in the financial year 1993-94 on -

- (a) public relations; and
- (b) monitoring media,

with respect to all departments and agencies under his portfolio?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following reply -
Department of Conservation and Land Management -

- (a) CALM does not have a budget item for public relations per se. CALM does, however, provide public information and community education programs designed to increase community awareness and understanding of, and support for, nature conservation and ecologically sustainable land management; it promotes wider cooperation in the prevention and solution of conservation and land management problems; and consults with public groups, the private sector, government organisations, and CALM employees in the planning, implementation and review of policies, programs and projects. This work is a portion of the works program of many CALM staff and funding for it is dispersed throughout the department.

- (b) \$8 572.99.

Department of Environmental Protection -

- (a) DEP does not undertake traditional public relations. It has a community awareness/environmental education program with a budget of approximately \$24 000 annually.
- (b) Subscriptions to newspapers during 1993-94 were \$1 676.11.

Kings Park and Botanic Garden -

- (a) During 1993-94 Kings Park and Botanic Garden incurred expenditure of \$45 125 on engagement of a marketing company who appointed on a subcontract basis, a public relations company.
- (b) Nil.

Perth Zoological Gardens -

- (a) \$31 000.
- (b) \$2 092.

Waterways Commission and Swan River Trust -

- (a) The Waterways Commission and the Swan River Trust do not have a budget for public relations. Funding for public awareness activities in 1993-94 was \$25 288.
- (b) Nil.

HOSPITALS - BUNBURY
Collocation Negotiations

1133. Hon DOUG WENN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Have negotiations with St John of God Hospital to collocate with the new government hospital concluded?
- (2) If yes, when will details of the new arrangement be released to the public?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

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

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, ACTING

1180. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

For each department and agency or statutory authority under the Minister for Local Government's portfolio -

- (1) Which chief executive officers are currently employed in an acting capacity in that position?
- (2) When did they commence acting in the position?
- (3) Which of them has applied for appointment to the substantive position?
- (4) When did they apply for this appointment?
- (5) What is the reason for any delay in confirming any of these appointments?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

- (1) None.
- (2)-(5) Not applicable.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, ACTING

1181. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Health:

For each department and agency or statutory authority under the Minister's portfolio -

- (1) Which chief executive officers are currently employed in an acting capacity in that position?
- (2) When did they commence acting in the position?
- (3) Which of them has applied for appointment to the substantive position?
- (4) When did they apply for this appointment?
- (5) What is the reason for any delay in confirming any of these appointments?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

Health Department -

- (1)-(5) Not applicable.

WA Alcohol and Drug Authority -

- (1) General Manager for the WA Alcohol and Drug Authority.

(2) 8 August 1994.

(3)-(5) Not applicable.

WA Health Promotion Foundation -

(1)-(5) Not applicable.

NURSES (AUSTRALIAN NURSES FEDERATION - WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SECTOR) AWARD - LEVEL 1 BEGINNING PRACTITIONER

1262. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Health:

In the context of the Nurses (Australian Nurses Federation - Western Australian Public Sector) Award 1994 -

- (1) What are the parameters of the position of the level 1 beginning practitioner?
- (2) How does this position relate to that of a level 2 nurse and the preceptorship role as described in the operational instruction linked to the new award?
- (3) What is the proposed starting increment between a level 1 and a level 2 nurse?
- (4) What is the definition of a multinurse centre?
- (5) What definition does the Health Department of Western Australia give of an "experienced nurse" in a multinurse centre?
- (6) Is it intended that some salaries for community nurses will be reduced, or will salaries be maintained following introductions of changes consequent to the Nurses (Australian Nurses Federation - Western Australian Public Sector) Award 1994?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) Level 1 registered nurse beginning practitioners who have graduated from a general undergraduate nursing program can nurse in any general hospital or setting, other than specified psychiatric settings, in which access to a more experienced registered nurse is available. The beginning level competencies are clearly documented by the Australian Nursing Council Inc and form the basis for registering authorities granting registration on graduation. As from December 1994 nurses will graduate from comprehensive undergraduate programs which include mental health nursing competencies. Graduates of these programs will be registered to work as beginning level practitioners in any setting. A framework for the introduction of level 1 nurses into community nursing settings is currently under discussion with the Australian Nursing Federation. There are eight annual increments within the level 1 band. Nurses can progress to level 2 with a minimum of three years' post-graduation experience at level 1.
- (2) Level 1 nurses at beginning practitioner level - that is, first year post-graduation - have traditionally not been employed in community nursing settings because many of these positions are for sole practitioners. Nurses at the beginning level need access to more senior and experienced nurses who provide preceptorship. It is expected that such preceptorship will be provided by level 2 nurses.
- (3) A new nurse graduate is employed at level 1 increment 2 at \$495.10 per week. A nurse can choose to remain at level 1 and advance through eight increments. At level 1 increment 8 the salary is \$636.60 per week. Level 2 increment 1 nurses commence at \$660.20 per week. There are four annual increments at level 2, taking the salary to \$707.30 per week. A nurse can progress from level 1 to level 2 with a minimum of three years' experience.

- (4) A multinurse centre is one where more than one nurse is employed to provide services. These centres are distinct from sole practitioner settings such as child health centres or nursing posts where only one nurse is employed to provide services.
- (5) An experienced nurse in a multinurse centre is one who is employed at level 2 and who has experience in community based nursing care; can provide supervision or guidance to nurses new to community nursing; and is knowledgeable and skilled in primary health care.
- (6) No community nurse will have salary reduction. Salary maintenance will apply as per the award.

MEDIA DECISIONS WA - GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS

1267. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Disability Services:

With respect to the Minister for Disability Services' department and each of the bodies administered within that department, what is the total of payments of media accounts made to Media Decisions Western Australia in each of the following months -

- (a) December 1993;
- (b) January 1994;
- (c) February 1994;
- (d) March 1994;
- (e) April 1994;
- (f) May 1994;
- (g) June 1994;
- (h) July 1994;
- (i) August 1994;
- (j) September 1994; and
- (k) October 1994?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

The Disability Services Commission has not made any payments of media accounts to Media Decisions Western Australia during the period December 1993 to October 1994.

MEDIA DECISIONS WA - GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS

1269. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Health:

With respect to the Minister's department and each of the bodies administered within that department, what is the total of payments of media accounts made to Media Decisions Western Australia in each of the following months -

- (a) December 1993;
- (b) January 1994;
- (c) February 1994;
- (d) March 1994;
- (e) April 1994;
- (f) May 1994;
- (g) June 1994;
- (h) July 1994;
- (i) August 1994;
- (j) September 1994; and
- (k) October 1994?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (a) \$133 416.17
- (b) \$15 700.95

- (c) \$45 339.40
- (d) \$38 635.59
- (e) \$90 346.85
- (f) \$754 248.04
- (g) \$350 710.01
- (h) Nil
- (i) \$9 405.00
- (j) \$27 277.08
- (k) \$41 768.10

MEDIA DECISIONS WA - GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS

1289. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

With respect to the Minister for Local Government's department and each of the bodies administered within that department, what is the total of payments of media accounts made to Media Decisions Western Australia in each of the following months -

- (a) December 1993;
- (b) January 1994;
- (c) February 1994;
- (d) March 1994;
- (e) April 1994;
- (f) May 1994;
- (g) June 1994;
- (h) July 1994;
- (i) August 1994;
- (j) September 1994; and
- (k) October 1994?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

(a)-(k) Nil.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES - PRIVATISATION OF FUNCTIONS

1324. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

With respect to the Minister for Local Government's department and to each of the bodies administered within that department -

- (1) What functions have been wholly or partly privatised since 6 February 1993?
- (2) As a result of that, how many full time equivalents have left the public sector?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

- (1) None.
- (2) Not applicable.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES - PRIVATISATION OF FUNCTIONS

1366. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

With respect to the Minister for Local Government's department and to each of the bodies administered within that department -

- (1) What functions have been wholly or partly privatised since the coming into operation of the Public Sector Management Act 1994?
- (2) As a result of that, how many full time equivalents have left the public sector?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

- (1) None.
- (2) Not applicable.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF - REGIONAL
OFFICES
*Albany; Costs***

1436. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the article in the *Albany Advertiser* of 15 November 1994, headed "Minson says no to DEP officer" in which the Minister for the Environment dismissed a call for a Department of Environmental Protection officer to be located in Albany -

- (1) In what other regional centres are Department of Environmental Protection officers located?
- (2) What is the total cost of running each of those regional offices?
- (3) What are the "financial constraints" which preclude the Minister from locating an officer in Albany at this time?
- (4) What is the timetable the Minister has set for the Department of Environmental Protection to locate an officer in Albany?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following reply -

- (1) Karratha, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie.
- (2) The extraction of detailed costs for each regional office would be very time consuming; however, \$104 800 is an estimate of the total cost of establishing a regional office with one officer.
- (3)-(4) The major environmental issues needing day-to-day management in Albany are associated with Albany Harbour. These issues are adequately managed by the Albany Waterways Management Authority and staff of the Waterways Commission. The priority for allocation of scarce government resources is therefore to areas where such support is not available.

**MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - INVITATIONS TO COMMUNITY
FUNCTIONS, INVOLVEMENT IN OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

1458. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

When the Minister for Water Resources receives an invitation from a community group to attend a function, does the Minister or his office in any way insist that the Minister, or his representative, officiate or be involved in official proceedings at that function?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Water Resources has provided the following reply -
No.

**MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - INVITATIONS TO COMMUNITY
FUNCTIONS, INVOLVEMENT IN OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

1460. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for the Environment:

When the Minister for the Environment receives an invitation from a community group to attend a function, does the Minister or his office in any way insist that the Minister, or his representative, officiate or be involved in official proceedings at that function?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following reply -
No.

PERTH CITY COUNCIL - ELECTIONS

1483. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

Can the Minister for Local Government confirm that the election for the new Perth City Council, as described in the City of Perth Restructuring Act 1993, will be held in May 1995?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

The City of Perth Restructuring Act 1993 provides that election day will be 6 May 1995 unless another day is appointed under the principal Act. Section 73 of the Local Government Act provides that another day can only be appointed if the first Saturday in May is -

- (a) a day appointed for a federal or state election or referendum; or
- (b) a public holiday

in which case another Saturday in May must be appointed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE TRAINING BOARD - MEMBERSHIP

680. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Who are the members of the State Training Board?
- (2) When were they appointed?
- (3) Pursuant to the resolution of 21 January 1994 delegating all State Employment and Skills Development Authority's powers and functions to members of the interim State Training Board - namely, Mr Ian Williams, Mr Harvey McLeod, Mr Lyndon Rowe, Dr Lynn Allen, Mr Robert Meecham, Mr Tim McDonald, Mr Graham Laitt, Mrs Shirley Thorn and Ms Michelle Dolin - are there any new members of the board?
- (4) Has SESDA also delegated to these new members all its powers and functions?
- (5) Who appointed the original board and who appointed any subsequent members?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1)-(5) The member has asked a number of questions about SESDA in the last two days, and yesterday I asked that he place his questions on notice as I had been unable to provide answers. The situation has not changed. Mr Harvey McLeod, the Chairman of SESDA, is currently overseas and will not be back until Monday. It is only fair that I should discuss a number of

these questions with the chairman, who is also the Deputy Chairman of the State Training Board. The member should either put his questions on notice or take his chances on Tuesday and ask his questions again.

**HEALTH SERVICES (CONCILIATION AND REVIEW) BILL -
INTRODUCTION DATE**

681. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Health:

In view of the serious claims that have been made by the Injured Persons Action Support Association about the role of some medical practitioners and psychiatrists in the workers' compensation system, when will the Minister introduce the Health Services (Conciliation and Review) Bill in order to create an independent, accessible and structured complaints resolution system?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

That Bill is certainly overdue for introduction and I have made arrangements to resolve some of the outstanding matters as soon as I can. I apologise because it has taken longer than it should have taken to be introduced, but I hope to put that right as soon as possible.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION - APPOINTMENTS

682. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Labour Relations:

The Minister for Labour Relations has called for nominations to fill at least two vacancies on the Industrial Relations Commission.

- (1) Has the Minister made a decision on those appointments?
- (2) If so, when will the Minister announce his decision?
- (3) If not, when will the Minister make a decision?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes, but such appointments are made by the Governor in Executive Council.
- (2) When the appointment is approved.
- (3) Not applicable.

RETAIL TRADING HOURS - DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

683. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Fair Trading:

I refer the Minister to his answer yesterday to question without notice 669 in which he made reference to a departmental report suggesting what he should report to the Parliament with regard to the review of retail trading hours.

- (1) When did the Minister receive the report?
- (2) What publication of the report has taken place?
- (3) In particular, have the contents of the report been published, either partly or wholly, to some non-ministerial members of Parliament and/or some members of the media?
- (4) Will he table the report today?
- (5) If not, why not?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

The member misunderstands the situation. He is talking about a report. I am the one who makes a report. What has been presented to me by my

department are suggestions which I might report. Until such time as I make up my mind what to report, no report exists. The information is purely a draft by departmental officers suggesting what I should do. It is up to me to make a decision. Let us deal with the draft.

- (1) I cannot recall precisely when I received it.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: What month?

Hon PETER FOSS: A couple of suggestions which I have received I have sent back to my officers and we have had reprints; nevertheless, I can probably check on it for the member. I do not think all the toing and froing of suggestions from my department to my office as to what I might report is terribly relevant. That is a procedural matter to do with the mechanics of the department. It is appropriate that I make up my own mind on the information. When I decide and then report, that report will be the only document of any relevance.

- (2) The member asked what publication of the report had been made. Again, no report exists. Therefore, no report has been published. There is, however, a part at the end of the draft which does refer to options. I have changed that and I have put options to our party room. I have in large measure adopted some parts and some of the format of what might have come out of that, but what was put to the party room is what I asked to be put to the party room. It has been through various processes, including going to Cabinet. It is really not what was presented to me, although it may have some similar words because it is dealing with retail trading, and some of the ideas were ideas derived from them. What I put to the party room is what I put to the party room.
- (3) I certainly have not published it partly or wholly to the media, but I cannot guarantee the security of everything either in my department or in the party room. I think Hon John Halden is a classic example of how difficult it is sometimes to guarantee that someone will not publish something outside. I certainly have not published it to anyone, but I have seen published to me a copy of it by the Pharmaceutical Council. It looked remarkably like the document I handed out, although it had been carefully retyped and so I am unable to identify the source document.
- (4)-(5) I will not table what I received from the department. When I am able to reach my conclusions and make my recommendations I will bring a report to the Parliament in accordance with the Act and table it. I think all members will understand that the preparatory documents that go towards the making of a formal report have no legal effect or relevance. What does matter is my report to the Parliament. When I publish that it will be tabled in the Parliament.

POLICE - CONSTABLE, ALLEGED CLAIMS FOR HOLIDAY EXPENSES

684. Hon TOM HELM to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police:

With reference to question on notice 999 of 20 October -

- (1) Who made the decision not to charge the constable who allegedly claimed holiday expenses for himself and his wife?
- (2) Was consideration given to whether there was a prima facie case of criminal conduct?
- (3) If not, why not?

- (4) If so, what was the conclusion.
- (5) Is it a policy of the Police Department that resignation is a defence for breaking the law?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am advised by the Commissioner of Police as follows -

- (1) The then Commissioner of Police. The charges were to be preferred under the Police Force regulations. These charges were not proceeded with after the constable's resignation was received as the regulations then have no effect.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) There was insufficient evidence.
- (5) No.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT TRUST - DRIVERS' AWARD, BALLOT

685. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can the Minister advise the House of the outcome of the vote taken by the Metropolitan Transport Trust drivers in yesterday's ballot?
- (2) What will be the outcome of the result of the ballot?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2) That is probably the best question I have heard for a long time.

Hon John Halden: If you did not write it, it must have been written by someone in your office.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Yesterday's vote was a very serious one and it was the third time that drivers have come together. I am sure members are aware that the first vote taken by the drivers resulted in a difference of almost 100 in the vote. The vote was 572 for and 673 against. The second vote was taken on a show of hands. At both meetings I reiterated the Government's position and some drivers took exception to what I said. I told the drivers that they would be doing themselves a disservice if they did not approve the reform package which their union had entered into. I told them that the consequences would be extreme and the procedure to go to tender would result in the MTT not being successful. They were told that if they did not approve the package they would not have a current workplace arrangement and, in fact, they would not have any workplace arrangement because the MTT would not be successful. I made that abundantly clear to all the people involved. I am pleased that at yesterday's ballot the drivers voted in favour of the package; the result was 744 for and 381 against.

Hon Kim Chance: Is it the same award?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Yes, it is the Greenfields award which the union and the MTT management spent nine months negotiating. Under the new system there will be part time and full time drivers and they will have greater flexibility of hours. As a consequence the drivers who are on the permanent staff will take home more pay, although there will be fewer of them. It is estimated that between \$7m and \$8m a year will be saved depending on the number of operations in which the MTT will be

involved. The most important aspect of this package is that it puts the MTT on the road to major reform which will make it competitive in the marketplace when it takes part in the tender process. Expressions of interest have already been called for some of the routes.

SWAN VALLEY - LETTER TO RESIDENTS

686. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the Minister's 3 November letter to residents of the Swan Valley.

- (1) How many letters were sent out?
- (2) What was the cost for the production and distribution of the letter?
- (3) Who met these costs?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) 2 302.
- (2) \$3 993.04. This includes the cost of production and distribution of the letter and the accompanying map.
- (3) The State Planning Commission.

MILK INDUSTRY - MILK VENDORS SURVEY

687. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Will the Minister advise the name of the market research company which undertook a recent survey of the views of milk vendors in Western Australia?
- (2) Will the Minister table a copy of the survey questionnaire together with the results of the survey?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) This survey was not commissioned by the Government. I understand that the Small Business Development Corporation commissioned a survey of vendors through Patterson Market Research.
- (2) As I do not have all the documents requested, I suggest that the member contact the Small Business Development Corporation seeking provision of a copy.

MILK INDUSTRY - MILK VENDERS FORCED OUT WITHOUT CHOICE *Distribution Adjustment Assistance Scheme*

688. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) Does the Minister stand by his claim that all milk vendors and distributors have been offered a choice whether they remain in the industry or leave, bearing in mind that at least 20 milk vendors have not been offered a contract by a dairy company and have therefore been forced out of the industry without any choice?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the distribution adjustment assistance scheme loan may represent only 50 per cent of the value of an individual milk vendor's business and is, therefore, neither fair nor equitable compensation for milk vendors being forced out of their industry by government policy?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(2) The Dairy Industry Amendment Bill is presently before the Legislative Assembly and a number of clauses are being discussed. The DAA scheme is one of the issues being considered and it would be inappropriate for me to preempt any decision that might be made.

ROADS - KWINANA FREEWAY

689. Hon BOB THOMAS on behalf of Hon Doug Wenn to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the serious problem that has occurred with the southern section of the Kwinana Freeway.

- (1) Who is carrying out the assessment to determine responsibility for the serious problem?
(2) Under the contractual arrangements entered into for the construction of the freeway, what is the period of time allowed before the contractor's obligation is terminated?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The Main Roads Department, but by officers not associated with the project.
(2) The defect liability period for the contract is six months from 1 September 1994.

ROADS - KWINANA FREEWAY

690. Hon BOB THOMAS on behalf of Hon Doug Wenn to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Who carried out the repair work on the new section of the Kwinana Freeway?
(2) What is the cost, or estimated cost, for this repair work?
(3) Has the Government paid for, or is it intending to pay for, these costs.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The contractor is Charles Hull Contracting.
(2) The repair costs have not yet been finalised.
(3) The cost of the work has been borne by the Main Roads Department at this stage. When the assessment is finalised, responsibility for all costs will be determined. This answer is in line with my answers to the other questions which have been asked by Hon Doug Wenn. The time limit has to be proceeded with to ensure that all contractual arrangements are adhered to. At that time the department will determine how the various costs of the maintenance work will be attributed to each contractor involved.

FRETTING MORTAR - STEERING COMMITTEE

691. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What was the Minister's purpose in establishing a technical subcommittee to the fretting mortar steering committee?

(2) Why has he appointed a lawyer to that technical subcommittee?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

(1)-(2) The first stage of the inquiry was very much in the nature of commissioning the chemistry laboratories to find out the possible technical cause of the fretting mortar. The answer was that almost anything could have been a technical cause of that. The next stage was not only the issue of a scientific inquiry, but getting together various people who could help out in a technical way, and that included a lawyer. The difficulty with which we are faced is that fretting mortar could have been caused by misuse of or defective mortar.

Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan: A lawyer can help on that, can he?

Hon PETER FOSS: No, he can assist people in the sifting of evidence to find out what proves what. The difficulty I have is that the scientific inquiries found that it could have been caused either by misuse of the substance or by the substance being defective. The type of inquiry that now needs to be carried out to try to find out what was the cause is one where a lawyer will be able to say what will prove what. A list of all the houses affected will have to be put together and that is being done.

Hon Reg Davies: Are they looking at Homeswest now?

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes, to see whether there are any common factors and to see whether there is any way evidence can be established to show what is the cause. I think the member is probably more than well aware that lawyers are particularly well qualified to advise people on the sorts of matters that may go to establishing that sort of proof. That is the difficulty that the inquiry will have.

FRETTING MORTAR - STEERING COMMITTEE

692. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Health:

If that is the work of the technical subcommittee, what is now the work of the original steering committee?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

At this stage, not a great deal because we have moved into a new stage of investigation.

SEWERAGE - INFILL CONTRACT

693. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

With regard to the original sewerage infill contract given to private contractors -

- (1) Is the work behind schedule?
- (2) Is the work over budget?
- (3) Have the private contractors received constant assistance from Water Authority personnel?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

(1)-(2) No.

(3) General conditions of contract apply.

SCHOOLS - SUBIACO PRIMARY Property Sale

694. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will the Minister confirm that the former district office located in the

grounds of Subiaco Primary School and used by the school for out of school care has been offered for sale by the Education Department?

- (2) If so, to whom has the property been offered and for how much?
- (3) Why is the property being sold when student numbers at the school are increasing?
- (4) Why were parents and the principal left in the dark and not consulted about the proposal?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1)-(4) The property is not being offered for sale.

**WATER AUTHORITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - KALGOORLIE
PIPELINE**

695. Hon SAM PLANTADOSI to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Did the Kalgoorlie pipeline nearly run dry last year?
- (2) If yes -
 - (a) was this due to the incapacity of the pipeline to supply; and
 - (b) the lack of maintenance of the pipeline?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

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

STATESHIPS - CONSULTANT'S REPORT

696. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the article in Wednesday's *The West Australian* in which Stateships' General Manager Mike Ansell referred to "an expensive report by a private consultant", and ask -

- (1) What was the report?
- (2) Who was the consultant?
- (3) Did the consultant tender for the work?
- (4) Was the consultant's tender the lowest tender submitted?
- (5) What was the cost of the report?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1)-(5) Two consultancies were carried out involving Stateships during 1993-94, one by Price Waterhouse Urwick and the other by Mr Mark Newton of Asia World Shipping, and reports were prepared. These pieces of work were not tendered for because initial estimates for each were below \$50 000. Total costs for Stateships for the work during the year was \$96 581.

I had the first consultancy by Price Waterhouse done, because on coming into government we were confronted with many financial issues which were far beyond the realms of proper accounting and the expectations of a properly run business. I asked Price Waterhouse to assess, from an accounting viewpoint, the outgoings and incomings of Stateships and to assess also why the deficit was so extreme. As part of that consultancy, it identified that the contractual arrangements entered into by the previous Government in securing those three ships on lease was funded by Westpac. The situation as I understand it is that, as a consequence of those contractual arrangements, Stateships recommended that a decision

be made by the Stateships commission to accept a tender from a Danish firm to build the ships that were ultimately tendered for, but that was rejected by the Government. That Government was the 1988 Government headed by former Premier Peter Dowding, Deputy Premier David Parker and Minister for Transport Bob Pearce. The Government subsequently entered into negotiations to have the ships built here. As a consequence, it cost an extra \$7m to have the ships built in Western Australia. It was as a result of that situation with which this Government was confronted that I commissioned Price Waterhouse to do that assessment. That situation was also funded by Westpac. The consequence was that there was no competition for the funding and I was advised that the funding process had placed a significant tax burden on the taxpayers of this State for ever more.

I then brought in Mark Newton of Asia World Shipping to see whether Stateships could improve its position by having someone involved in the shipping industry look at scheduling and at changing a range of operations. As a consequence of that report, the decision was made to go out for expressions of interest for someone to manage the situation. Members opposite will see also in that report a number of recommendations about changes to all aspects of Stateships' operations.

Today, the Government is left with having to pay \$40m to get out of the current leasing arrangements with Westpac. Members should remember that we are paying something like \$6m a ship a year for the current leases and it will cost \$40m to sign off on the lease. We do not even own the ships. That \$40m is in US dollars, which fluctuate from time to time as the Australian dollar goes up and down against the American dollar. Other contractual arrangements, including superannuation, leave pay and sick pay associated with the employees, add approximately \$19m. Entering into this project was one of the worst economic and business decisions the previous Government made. We are all now confronted with the best way of resolving it.

The Government wants to do two things. It wants to retain the service to provide an opportunity for trade facilitation and it wants to provide a service to the north west. However, members opposite should understand that it is costing the taxpayers something like \$17m to \$20m a year to provide that service because of the bad decision made by the inept Dowding Government.

Hon John Halden interjected.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Hon John Halden should be ashamed for trying to defend his colleagues.

MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT - CASCADES ROAD, UPGRADING CONTRACT

697. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Transport:

With regard to the work carried out by the Mains Road Department on the upgrading of Cascades Road between Lake King and Esperance -

- (1) Was this construction included in the MRD's road building program for 1992-93, 1993-94 or 1994-95?
- (2) If not, can the Minister explain how this project was given approval to proceed?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1)-(2) It is part of the Main Roads Department's planning for funding over that period. I have met with local government authorities in the area. It is being directly funded by the MRD and not local government. Contractual

arrangements will be carried out by the MRD, and it is upgrading that section of the road. Over a long period nothing has been done. This is another one of the problems we inherited.

Hon John Halden: It is as bad as ever.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Of course it is as bad as ever.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: It will stay as bad as it ever was because the Opposition entered into contractual arrangements.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Hon John Halden knows -

The PRESIDENT: Order! When I call order the Minister must stop yelling across the Chamber. Has the Minister finished answering the question?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Not quite, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: Then he should get on with it.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: An agreement was entered into to provide funding for this road, which people are using and want to use, because it was in a deplorable state. It had not been finished or properly formed. Those funds are guaranteed over a three year period. I look confidently to that being compressed into one contractual arrangement with whoever carries out the work.
