

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 20 August 1985

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

[Questions taken.]

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Election

The following members were elected to sessional committees, on motion by Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the House)—

- (a) Standing Orders Committee—Hon. Robert Hetherington, Hon. P. H. Lockyer, Hon. Lyla Elliott and Hon. John Williams.
- (b) Library Committee—Hon. Robert Hetherington and Hon. P. G. Pandal.
- (c) House Committee—Hon. Graham Edwards, Hon. Kay Hallahan, Hon. A. A. Lewis, and Hon. John Williams.
- (d) Printing Committee—Hon. H. W. Gayfer and Hon. Fred McKenzie.
- (e) Government Agencies Committee—Hon. J. M. Brown, Hon. Kay Hallahan, Hon. Robert Hetherington, Hon. N. F. Moore, Hon. C. J. Bell and Hon. John Williams.

MINING AMENDMENT BILL

Restoration to Notice Paper

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.57 p.m.]: I move—

That the Mining Amendment Bill 1985 be restored to the Notice Paper and thereafter be proceeded with at the same stage that it had reached in the previous session.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [4.58 p.m.]: I seek clarification from the mover of the motion. Restoring the Mining Amendment Bill 1985 to the Notice Paper, I assume means that the Select Committee chaired by Hon. Ian Medcalf will continue with its work and that the progress of the Mining Amendment Bill in this House will be stayed until that Select Committee has reported. I would like confirmation that my understanding of the situation is correct.

Hon. D. K. Dans: The Leader of the Opposition's assessment of the situation is correct.

The **PRESIDENT**: The Leader of the House should have waited until I had put the question in case somebody else wanted to speak on the matter.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I am sorry, Mr President.

Question put and passed.

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Adoption

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.59 p.m.]: I move—

That notwithstanding any rule or order to the contrary, the rules adopted for the duration of the previous session governing Questions, Petitions, Business after 11.00 pm and Motions for Disallowance be adopted for this current session or until the House otherwise orders.

I have previously spoken with the Leader of the Opposition who requested that I explain further the meaning of the motion. I suppose the brief answer is that if the motion is passed, we will return to the situation that we had during the previous session.

However, to put it on the record, the effect of this motion is to restore the sessional orders that were adopted earlier this year in relation to questions, petitions, the 11.00 p.m. rule, and motions for disallowance of regulations.

My understanding is that the sessional orders have worked well except that some members have reservations about questions. On the other hand, I believe that the business of the House has been assisted by the sessional orders that I am now proposing to have restored.

Without going into detail, the sessional order governing questions leaves a member with the option to give notice orally in the House or simply deliver it to the Clerk's office before the House meets. Answers are supplied in writing and published in a supplementary Notice Paper.

Questions without notice remain substantively unaffected.

If members consult the printed copies of the sessional orders, they will see that petitions can be dealt with in one of two ways depending on whether or not they want to read them in the House. Minor changes in wording have been made to the original Standing Orders governing the form and content of petitions.

The proposed order substituting for Standing Order No. 117 states what the House has always understood it to mean. The sessional order puts the interpretation beyond doubt.

The proposed order relating to disallowance motions means that the motion must come up for debate or face the risk of disallowance occurring on prorogation. Priority is also given to the motion on each day until it is disposed of.

Mr President, I commend the motion.

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

LAPSED BILLS

Restoration to Notice Paper

On motion by Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the House), resolved—

That a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly requesting that consideration of the following Bills be resumed:

- (1) Occupiers' Liability Bill 1985;
- (2) Parliamentary Papers Amendment Bill 1985;
- (3) Commercial Arbitration Bill 1985;
- (4) Liquor Amendment Bill 1985;
- (5) Fatal Accidents Amendment Bill 1984.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS: LAND RIGHTS

Commonwealth Legislation: As to Motion

The PRESIDENT: Notice of Motion No. 5 cannot be proceeded with in accordance with Standing Order No. 15 and will be taken after the Address-in-Reply debate has been concluded.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Assembly Personnel

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SECOND DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 15 August.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [5.04 p.m.]: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply debate may I echo the opening remarks of Hon. Jim Brown when he moved the following motion—

May it please your Excellency:

We, the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

I join with Hon. Jim Brown in congratulating His Excellency the Governor, Professor Gordon Reid, on the fine manner in which he carries out his duties as Governor of Western Australia. May I also congratulate Mrs Reid for the warmth and charm with which she carries out her duties. His Excellency the Governor and Mrs Reid have earned respect during their short term in office and they have brought honour to the position of Governor of Western Australia. The Opposition expresses its thanks and appreciation to both Professor and Mrs Reid.

The Address-in-Reply debate gives members the opportunity to speak on any subject they think fit and to bring matters of concern to the attention of this House and to the public.

I take this opportunity to address a matter which is of enormous importance to Australia and Western Australia. It is an issue that will have repercussions throughout Australia. It is indeed a true test about whether the Federal Government, this State Government, the Minister for Industrial Relations in Western Australia and, indeed, all State Labor Ministers, really have the future of this country and this State at heart. The question arises as to whether the ALP—this Government—really wishes to raise the standard of living in the community. Does it wish to give the workers in this State a better deal and to improve competitiveness and markets? Does it have any regard for the country people and the future of farmers in Western Australia?

The dispute to which I refer concerns the Mudginberri abattoir in the Northern Territory—a dispute which will decide the future and indeed the survival of many farmers throughout Australia, not the least the farmers in Western Australia. Many farmers are under tremendous pressure at this time because farming costs are becoming a burden to them and to the community.

The dispute will decide the future standard of living not only for Australia, but also for Western Australia. It will decide the prosperity of this nation. Australia will either become a

prosperous nation and work to achieve true distinction or it will become a nation of mediocrity.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: We are doing that very quickly.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I agree that we are; certainly we are going down that path of mediocrity because it appears that we are being controlled by an unelected Government—

Hon. Kay Hallahan: Do you mean the upper House?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Hon. Kay Hallahan should listen to what I am saying. I am talking about who runs this country and this State. We are controlled by an unelected Government; that is, by the Trades Halls of every State of Australia and the central Government is the ACTU. There is no doubt about it. We have seen the ACTU control Government by everything that it does.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: When I talk about Australia becoming a nation of mediocrity—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us get this session away to a reasonably orderly start. I suggest that the honourable member who is interjecting cut it out. I also suggest to the honourable member who is on his feet that someone has done something to the amplifiers during the recess and I can hear him without his having to yell.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The standard of living in Australia is decreasing. Thirty or 40 years ago the standard of living in Australia was the second best in the world. I understood that it had fallen to eighteenth position, but recently I heard that it had dropped even further to the twenty-third position in the world.

Members on the other side of the House seem to think that that is very good. However, I tell them that the people in the community do not think it is.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: This dispute is all about Australia's standard of living and Australia's future. I suggest to those members who are interjecting that they read the reports about the Mudginberri abattoir in order that they understand what the dispute is about, because it is a condemnation of the Labor Governments throughout Australia.

This dispute is the most significant in years. It represents a test for this Government and this Minister for Industrial Relations. The Minister and the Government must face this test. They must stand up and declare their position so that we can all understand what they stand for. Members opposite obviously have no understanding of the dispute or the importance of its impact. If they had such an understanding, they would not make the sorts of remarks that have been made so far. Therefore, I shall go into the background for the dispute.

Meatworkers in Australia work on what is called a tally system. That tally system is rigidly enforced by the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union. In this State that union is controlled by a person who is notorious as a ruthless union operator, a man called Alex Payne. He is the State secretary of that union and also a personal friend of the Minister for Industrial Relations. That same man is directly responsible for the loss of 400 jobs in Albany and the closure of the Borthwick abattoir. More than that, he is still operating and is making threats across the board. He has been involved very much with this dispute.

I am glad that the Minister for Industrial Relations has resumed his seat. During the Borthwicks dispute when jobs could have been saved, this same Minister remained mute and did not go into the town to see what he could do. He did not even get off his backside to go to Albany. That is typical of the lack of action of the Minister for Industrial Relations. His attitude will presumably be much the same for the Mudginberri dispute, despite the fact that it will affect every farmer in Australia.

The Minister for Industrial Relations seems to have just one priority in this House; namely, to keep his head down as far as he can in order to save his own thick skin and further his political ambitions. He is not likely to stand up and condemn those people who threaten the future of the farming community. He will sit on his backside, keep his head down and make sure that his nose stays clean. He does not care about the people in the farming communities and rural areas.

The tally system which is being imposed on the abattoirs throughout Australia with respect to cattle works something like this: If 12½ beasts are killed per man per day, a wage of approximately \$250 a week is earned. When that number is exceeded, the workers go on penalty rates. The rates, of course, increase rapidly. That is a simple description of the tally

system. Those 12½ beasts can be dealt with by the workers in something like four hours, after which time they go onto penalty rates. The new system at Mudginberri is one whereby the workers are given a guarantee of a minimum wage of between \$288 and \$344 a week. They are paid by the carton or, in other words, by results.

Under the Mudginberri system the workers can save the meatworks \$100 a beast and they operate very happily under that system. The dispute goes back to 1977. The abattoirs involved are Mudginberri, Mareling, Victoria Valley and Alice Springs. Traditionally these abattoirs have worked under a contract system whereby the employers and the employees have made a deal that pleases them. Both the employers and the employees are pleased with such deals. We feel there is nothing wrong with such arrangements. Of course, the Government is horrified, as are the unions. Those abattoirs have traditionally operated under a system of payment by result. The more the workers produce and the harder they work, the more money they get.

Over recent times there has been a great deal of agitation from the union and people like Alex Payne, Mr Dowding's friend, about that system. It does not matter whether the workers like the system and are earning more money. The unions do not like the system and think it is wrong.

Hon. P. H. Lockyer: He might have been on the selection committee.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am sure he was. The situation at such abattoirs has been that the workers have been happy and the employers have seen better production and therefore have made greater profits. In recent times pressure has been applied and the unions have said they will not have that sort of system. They have said they will not stand for a system in which people can make their own arrangements. According to the unions, people must be told what is best for them and must not decide that for themselves.

In 1984 the AMIEU created disputes. By picketing Point Stuart, it closed that abattoir. That abattoir was working well, but the picket put it out of business. That is the sort of cold-blooded attitude taken by militant union leaders. At Mudginberri the workers decided to carry on working. They ignored the directions from the AMIEU. They said that they would do their own thing and that they were happy working under the existing system. The union ex-

pelled those workers at Mudginberri. It did not matter that the workers had a responsibility to their families and liked their jobs.

In May the Full Bench of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, under the direction of Sir John Moore, brought down an award. That award was called the Northern Territory meat industry award. It protected holidays and set a minimum rate of pay and sick leave conditions. Thus, there was no problem with the protection of those rights. The significant difference between that award and most other awards was that the award allowed employers and employees to carry on what they had done for a long time—that is, make their own arrangements to suit themselves. Under such an arrangement, the harder they worked the more money they got. As I understand it, the AMIEU promised that if the Full Bench brought down a decision it would abide by it. However, in a manner typical of that type of union leadership, the friends of Mr Dowding and this Government said that despite the AMIEU's promises and the ruling of the Full Bench they would impose pickets and put out of business the Mudginberri abattoir and put out of work the 35-odd workers there.

The Mudginberri workers continued to work despite the pickets. Trouble arose when export inspectors employed by the Commonwealth Government—50 per cent of whom are paid by the industry itself—refused to cross the picket line. The Commonwealth Government said it would stand down those inspectors if they did not cross the picket line. That was a half-hearted way to deal with the problem because it knew that the Mudginberri abattoir would have to hand in its export licence as it could not operate without properly qualified meat inspectors. The Mudginberri company requested the Government to approve the appointment of veterinarians who were well qualified and could easily have carried out that job. The Commonwealth Government refused to authorise inspections by veterinarians and thus effectively put the mockers on the Mudginberri abattoir as far as exports were concerned. Thus, the Federal Government did not perform, although it could have resolved the problem and allowed exports to continue without any trouble.

The result is that at present the meat is not being exported and future markets are lost. Even if there is a resolution to the dispute, it may be too late for some of those export markets. They may well be lost. It is interesting that as a result of the contempt shown by the union

leadership during the dispute for the decisions of the Full Bench and of Sir John Moore, the company sought to use section 45 of the Trade Practices Act. As everyone knows, that Act is designed to protect companies and people against secondary boycotts. The Federal Government, supported by this State and its Minister for Industrial Relations, is desperately trying to repeal section 45 of the Trade Practices Act. Luckily, the Senate will not let that happen. I have no doubt that if that sort of legislation were in Western Australia Mr Dowding and his colleagues would say that it was unfair and seek to repeal it. However, it cannot be repealed and section 45 will stay on the Statute books.

The court then said that the Mudginberri abattoir should operate without interference. The court directed that the abattoir be left alone and the workers be allowed to get on with their business and that the pickets be lifted. The pickets, as we have read in the newspapers, were not lifted. Unfortunately they have been sanctioned by the ACTU. The pickets are there against the law and against the decision of the Full Bench under the chairmanship of Sir John Moore. Despite the fact that a lawful award was brought down, the pickets remain and are sanctioned by the ACTU and those who supposedly advocate an industrial arbitration system.

The Minister for Industrial Relations has recently talked about the wonders of the industrial arbitration system. I wonder how he stands on these pickets. I wonder whether he is prepared to stand up and say, even by interjection, that the pickets are not legal and should be lifted.

Is Mr Dowding prepared to say that? He is refusing to answer that question. He is in fact saying the pickets should continue and he supports them. If he is denying that, perhaps he should say so; but he will not because he supports illegal pickets where it suits him and where a militant union has control. We know only too well the Government will not go against the union.

The pickets are up there and the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union has been fined \$44 000. There will be a claim, probably running into millions of dollars, for losses which have been forced on the abattoirs because of the contempt these people have shown for law and order in Australia. It is to the credit of the National Farmers Federation that it has stuck to its guns. It will fight this tooth and nail

and win because it has to. If it does not win, the farmers in Australia will suffer greatly and many will go to the wall.

Why is the question so important? There have been many disputes perhaps of a similar nature but of nowhere near such great importance. The reason for this dispute symbolises the fundamental crisis facing Australia today. It puts in one single package all that this Opposition has been saying for a long time.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Five years.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: For a long time.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Longer than that?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Would the Minister like to tell us about the pickets? Does he support picket action? He is usually very vocal. Would he like now to say, "Yes"?

Hon. Peter Dowding: What did you do when you were in Government?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: This dispute puts in one single example the absolute and utter absurdity of our industrial arbitration system and the very reason why it must and will change. People have had enough; they are not going to be pushed around and held to ransom by the sorts of things going on in this State at this time. Our declining prosperity because of poor productivity and trade union intransigence is put clearly in focus.

Our problem today is productivity. That is one of the arguments in favour of the workers at Mudginberri; they are prepared to produce and earn more as a result. This situation shows clearly how militant union leaders dictate every Government move. We have a Minister who grovels at their feet to get endorsement, yet refuses to answer a simple question in this House which would clear his name. He stands condemned for his position. He protects the vested interests and preserves a new corrupt and wicked system.

The dispute is of great importance and raises many issues. It raises issues in the rural sector—the issues of exports and the protection of exports, of private contractual arrangements, and of the commission's powers and authority. I am sure Mr Dowding would accept that is important.

If we can talk about the rural sector for a moment, Mudginberri represents the future of the meat industry—its success or failure. The tally system is estimated to cost the meat industry and the livestock industry \$100 million per year. Some 50 export abattoirs, as I understand it, have closed or surrendered their export li-

cences over the last six years. There are 70 left. If the tally system is not changed, experts in the field say it is quite likely that we will be importing, not exporting, beef in the years to come. The success of the Mudginberri dispute, as far as the farmers and the whole community are concerned, offers hope for the future.

Where does the Government stand? Where does this Minister stand? We heard an interesting speech in which Hon. Jim Brown made reference to the plight of farmers and the farming community. The following is found on page 8 of *Hansard*—

I would like to remind honourable members that this Government has taken important steps in looking after a key sector of the Western Australian economy which is facing a difficult period.

This is a man representing the farming community and many meat producers. He says we have to protect them and look after them, yet when there is a dispute which will decide the failure or success of many of our farmers I suggest the honourable member is not prepared, even by interjection in this House, to say that those pickets should be lifted and the men should go about their work as they wish. Will Mr Jim Brown say that? Of course he will not. He is not prepared to stand up for the farmers and for the beef producers and say that the pickets are wrong, farmers should be able to sell their meat, and the workers should be able to work in the abattoir.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Is Hon. Kay Hallahan going to say that she thinks picketing is wrong; that pickets should not be there and that they should obey the law? Yes or no?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have said that interjections are unruly and not to be tolerated, but the Leader of the Opposition is inviting them.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am concerned, as are all members on my side of the House, with illegal picketing and with the future of the farming industry. We would like to know that the Government is making statements about its concern for the farming industry. All we want to know is whether the Government is supporting the farmers in this dispute. Does it support the farmers? Does it support the rural community? Does it support those people who produce the beef and lamb? The answer must

be open to question. Even in the Governor's Speech we heard this statement, which is found on page 4—

Despite this productivity, many farmers are facing serious financial difficulties and the Government has made the strongest arguments, alongside industry representatives, to achieve some alleviation of Federal Government imposts.

These words were put into the speech as window dressing. To continue—

The Government has emphasised the need to reduce farm costs to help farmers overcome their financial problems and has urged the Federal Government to modify tariff and fuel policies to ease current farm cost burdens.

The Government has adopted a policy of working with farm organisations.

What I am saying today is that if the remark were genuine and the Minister and the Hon. Jim Brown will not answer perhaps another member who represents a country area would be interested in making a comment. Perhaps a member will say that the picket should be lifted and the people who export meat should be protected. If members opposite were genuine they would have some comment to make; but not one word has been said. That message has to get through to the community. Not one member of the Government would dare to raise a finger. The Government is acting out a charade. It does not mean a single word it says. It is dominated by the ACTU, the BLF, and other militant unions. This is a perfect example of that. If the Hon. Robert Hetherington had some integrity he would say, "I think the picket should be lifted", but there is dead silence. I am asking a simple question. We are talking about protecting farmer interests, and protecting and supporting exports.

Let me quote from an article in *The Weekend Australian* of 3-4 August 1985. It is headed "Union pays but buffalo meat quota in danger" and it states—

The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) yesterday paid a \$44 000 contempt-of-court fine to the Federal Court, but further court action by Mudginberri Station may be too late to prevent Australia from losing its \$10 million EEC buffalo quota.

That is not to be sneezed at. It is an important export market. It goes on to say—

Mr Pendarvis said Australia's buffalo quota with the EEC was in danger of being cancelled at any time.

"We are the only abattoir that can supply the 2250-tonne quota this year, and our failure to do so has placed us in the very real danger of losing them," Mr Pendarvis said.

It is a perfect example of how our exports are being threatened. They are probably lost already. I go on to quote from *The West Australian* of 9 August 1985 as follows—

It is already having a direct effect on exports of buffalo meat to West Germany and—paradoxically at a time when Australia is protesting vigorously about the European Economic Community's policy of dumping subsidised beef in Asia—giving comfort to a ruthless trade competitor.

There is remarkable evidence that the export industries are being threatened, and exports are being lost especially in the buffalo meat area. This dispute is likely to spread through the community, and it is absolutely imperative that this Parliament understands what the future holds. This dispute in Western Australia is led by Alex Payne.

We have a problem. The Federal Government has refused to authorise vets to carry out the necessary export inspection and it is to be condemned for helping to lose the markets we so desperately need overseas. A recent water-front stoppage received not one comment from the Minister. There was a 24-hour abattoir strike throughout Australia and at one abattoir in Western Australia the workers decided they would continue to work. That abattoir was at Harvey. As soon as that was known, down went the pickets and the heavies went to close the abattoir despite the fact that those workers wanted to work. There have been threats from the TWU in relation to our wheat, wool, beef, and live sheep exports. And so it goes on. We ask the Government what it proposed to do. It is prepared to make no statement either in view of these additional threats or in view of the possibility that farming products could be blocked and even left on the farms at a time when the question of survival is very important. We know that the Government is playing a charade in this area. If it is not prepared to answer a direct question in this House we can only make one assumption.

Hon. Mark Nevill: Industrial disputes have been reduced by half.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We will debate that question another day. What I am saying now is that two members who are sitting side by side in this House surely have an interest in the pastoral and beef producing areas; but when I ask a question about whether they are prepared to protect and fight for the interests of the people in their electorates by supporting the abattoirs they remain silent.

Point of Order

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: Under Standing Order No. 106(e) it is an offence for a member to wilfully disregard the authority of the President and to consistently call for interjections across the House throughout the debate.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. The President is quite capable of determining when there has been an infringement of Standing Order No. 106.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That puts into true perspective exactly what that member thinks. He thinks it is a joke. People are losing their jobs in his electorate. Others rely on the resolution of this matter so they can get on with the job yet he stands and talks about the authority of the President.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member will come to order when I call. I suggest that he forget about talking about somebody who raises a point of order. Whether the point of order is legitimate or not is for the Chair to decide. It is not for the honourable member to reflect on the fact that it was raised.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I and my colleagues have directed a question as to whether the Government is prepared to make a statement at all about protecting people who want to work. Is the Government prepared to condemn illegal pickets and the like? That is a question that the public are asking and there has been no acknowledgment at all from the Government members that they are concerned about this matter. It is a very serious matter and if I tend to get carried away it is because I am deeply concerned for the people involved.

I now quote from *The West Australian* of Friday, 9 August concerning disputes. It is a quote from the last two paragraphs of an article in that newspaper—

A ban by tugboat crews remains in force in many ports, against ships carrying farm produce for export. The crews will meet today to review the ban.

The Association of Employers of Waterfront Labour estimated that the maritime bans had cost the shipping industry about \$300 000 nationally.

I think we should take note of that sort of comment. Let us look at another aspect. Let us consider the seriousness of what has been happening with the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and its powers.

One might ask: What powers? That is a fair question when the Full Bench headed by Sir John Moore makes a decision and brings down an award and the AMIEU then brings in pickets which have remained in total contempt of the commission and the courts of this land. The union has been backed by the ACTU and the TLC, and Federal and State Labor Governments. The umpire—the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission—has been treated with utter contempt in this matter.

We are used to the Labor Party's reaction in this respect. When the situation suits the Labor Party says it is a fine operation, and when it does not suit the party walks away and ignores the problems. The Government is undermining the system regardless of the statements made by the Minister and his colleagues. The commission is powerless except when it makes decisions which suit certain unions or their leadership.

We now have an Australia-wide issue—a dispute which could get worse. I understand the union may be prepared to go to arbitration tomorrow. I hope it is, but if it takes no more notice of the commission finding than it did last time and the decision does not suit the union, it will simply walk away and ignore the direction. All the commission did previously was to say to the employers and employees at Mudginberri, "If you want to make your own contract and agreement, that is fine by us." The workers made that arrangement. They said, "It suits us, you others keep your noses out." They negotiated and doubled their pay. Now they do not earn \$500 a week, but more than \$1 000 a week. Sure, they work hard and slightly longer hours, but they get \$1 000 or more a week, and they think it is wonderful.

They have been expelled from the union because they are doubling their pay and they are not prepared to accept union direction. The union says they cannot do that sort of thing. What sort of madness is it when people cannot double their pay and increase their standard of living through increased productivity? They are working harder and maintaining their markets

because they can compete and produce at the right price. They are trying to save our meat industry. That is one of the issues of this dispute.

On 6 August *The Australian* said this—

But this is not just another industrial dispute. One side is fighting for flexibility and respect for the right of individuals to make up their minds for themselves. the other side is determined to retain a system in which collectivism and regimentation dominate individual effort, and brains and inventiveness are forbidden to show us a better way of running our economy and our nation.

That is what the dispute is about, and it should be written in headlines for the Labor Party to look at so it can find out what the issues are. The article went on as follows—

Under the terms of the arrangement which they entered into there was to be a change in the system whereby the employees' hours of work and rates of pay were to be calculated. Since the agreement came into effect production has increased dramatically. The cost of slaughtering and processing a beast has been reduced to less than a quarter of the cost at the Katherine meatworks, which continues to function under the union award. And the Mudginberri workers have gained a large rise in their weekly pay.

That is the type of operation which is working. That is what the problem is about. *The Australian* of 2 August 1985 said this—

According to the National Farmers Federation's industrial relations officer, Mr Paul Houlihan, the cost of slaughtering and processing at the Katherine meatworks was \$158.40 a beast, compared to only \$34.43 a beast at Mudginberri, where the employees earned about double the wage.

That is the madness of what is happening today. Yet there are Government members who condone the operations of the AMIEU and say the men at the meatworks should not be allowed to earn double their pay and beasts should not be slaughtered at the rate which is being achieved at the works.

In *The Weekend Australian* of 9 August 1985 we see a picture of the meatworkers. It is headed "Willing Hostages in a Workers' Paradise". Mr Piantadosi shakes his head in wonder. He cannot understand that someone is prepared to work hard and earn double the money.

He cannot understand why a person should be happy to do so. Mr Piantadosi thinks that person should be miserable and earn half the amount and do what he is told. That is his philosophy—"Do what you are told and to hell with what you want, and if your standard of living gets worse, too bad because we are in charge of the workers." That is the philosophy of far too many members of the Government. Not a single member of the Government has raised a finger or shown any great concern about the issue we are discussing today. They are all shaking their heads in wonder and have nothing to say. The fact that anyone dares to work under a private arrangement whereby he earns double his money and produces more is an awful situation according to members opposite. The union is prepared to ruin anyone rather than accept a contract system no matter how much it benefits certain people.

We have to look at where we are going. Every time we as an Opposition talk about people making their own arrangements and entering into private contracts, Hon. Peter Dowding and his colleagues start screaming and shouting about lowering standards of living. It is absolute poppycock. Here is a perfect example of people receiving more pay, not less. The Government's opposition to the contract system is based entirely on the premise that people will get less pay. That is not so; they will have more secure jobs and earn more money. That is what this business is all about. Government members remain silent because they have nowhere to go.

The Government and the unions are paranoid when it is suggested that people should make their own arrangements in these matters. They cannot understand that enterprise and initiative generate wealth and jobs and a high standard of living. It is beyond their comprehension. Members opposite do as they are told, or else.

It comes back to the question of who is running the country and this State. Mr Piantadosi, who always carries his union badge and proudly holds it up, says the unions are running the State. He is so right. The militant union leaders are in total control and Mr Piantadosi accepts that.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You do talk rubbish!

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Hon. Mr Dowding had better tell Mr Piantadosi off afterwards—he is a serious embarrassment.

There is no law and order when it comes to this sort of issue. We know who is running the country; there is no doubt at all about that. There is a bigoted, elitist group who are nothing more than gangsters and they are running the Government of the country.

The dispute has demonstrated that point as has no other dispute in years. It typifies the situation in the community. We have seen how trade unionists control this State and this Government. We know Hon. Des Dans was certainly sacked by the TLC. It said to the Premier, "Sack him; he is making too many mistakes", and by golly, the Premier did sack him. We saw Hon. Joe Berinson subvert the course of justice. He interfered with the course of the law, if you like, for political purposes.

Hon. Peter Dowding: That is outrageous! You should withdraw that remark.

The PRESIDENT: Order! All the interjections are out of order. I ask honourable members to cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition should stop inviting interjections.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am sorry, Mr President. I was talking about the letting off of John O'Connor, the trade union leader.

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon. PETER DOWDING: Mr President, I rise under Standing Order No. 92 and ask the honourable member to withdraw the inference that the Attorney General subverted the course of justice, a most improper allegation to make.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister cannot raise the point of order under Standing Order No. 92. Perhaps he meant Standing Order No. 87.

Hon. PETER DOWDING: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition knows that he cannot reflect on another honourable member in this House. I did not hear what the Leader of the Opposition said because of all the interjections at the time. I will not tolerate any member reflecting on the integrity of any other honourable member. I now ask the Leader of the Opposition, if he did reflect on the Attorney General, to withdraw that reflection. I repeat I did not hear what he said.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I withdraw, Mr President, and say that the decision to let John O'Connor off an extortion charge certainly appeared to the public of Western Australia as subverting the course of justice.

Hon. PETER DOWDING: I rise on a point of order and ask that the honourable member unequivocally withdraw the suggestion that the actions of the Attorney General could be characterised as subverting the course of justice.

The PRESIDENT: That is not a point of order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to proceed. He has withdrawn.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Minister who has just risen from his chair appears to be grovelling at the feet of the militant trade union leaders who endorsed him quite recently. We cannot expect anything else from that sort of man, a man who is prepared to sacrifice anyone for his political future. We can see from this type of dispute who is running the Government. That becomes perfectly obvious when we see that certain people get away scot-free and that court decisions are totally ignored. We have to ask ourselves what an industrial commission can do when people just walk away from a given direction and a lawful award.

The Mudginberri dispute is of great importance to the community. It is of importance not only to the farming and rural community, but also to everyone who lives in rural areas and to every business big and small in Australia today. If people are prepared to work hard, produce more and earn more and to make their own employment arrangements, if an industrial commission has given them that authority and a court of the land has directed that the pickets be lifted and the workers be allowed to go about their jobs freely, and if militant union leaders simply thumb their noses at those directions, where on earth are we going? We talk about law and order. There is no law and order when that sort of thing happens.

The Opposition is desperately worried about the resolution of this dispute. It must be resolved in the right way. Members of the Opposition to a man pledge their absolute support for rural people and the farmers.

Hon. Peter Dowding: What about your Whip?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will honourable members cease their audible conversations and interjections so that they can listen to the honourable member's concluding remarks.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: What can we do about a militant trade union leader in this State who threatens to close the ports? He has said that if the union is fined \$44 000, heaven help

the farmers because the union will stop the handling of wheat and wool and the killing of lambs. "They will hurt", he said. I would have thought such threats to be in contempt of court. A heading in *The West Australian* of 10 August reads, "Threats fly in meat row". In the face of these disputes and the contempt shown by some people for our system, what does Mr Dowding do? He was reported in *The West Australian* of 13 August as having said that the Government's way was best. He must have been joking.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Read the rest of what I said.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am in charge of this speech and I know that we are short of time. Mr Dowding said that the Government's way was best.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Yes.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is the only comment he has made so far. When I asked about the pickets he did not say a word. The Opposition pledges its absolute support to those farmers and the rural people in our community. We condemn the vicious actions of some union leaders. If ships in our ports are prevented from being loaded the farmers have warned that they will take matters into their own hands. That is a very serious statement, but one that shows the desperation of the farmers. They have to survive and are not prepared to stand aside and watch. The dispute itself and its seriousness is summed up by the president of the Primary Industry Association. He wrote—

This Mudginberri dispute has implications which go far beyond the meat industry. It is about whether we are going to have law and order in this country or anarchy.

It is about whether the ACTU can back a member union, belt a small business into submission by sending him broke. It is about whether Federal Court decisions are worth the paper they are written on. It is about whether or not the Federal Government is going to see law and order by the courts is upheld, not law and order by the ACTU.

Small business and farmers have no alternative but to win this dispute on the ground. It will not be easy, but it needs to

be recognised that to lose would mean no court decision would be safe from union intervention.

That would be an untenable situation and one which we will not allow to happen. No-one has the right to be above the decision of the courts or the law of the land.

Those words were signed by A. W. Crane, the General President of the Primary Industry Association. They put the dispute in a nutshell.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. Fred McKenzie.

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CRIME: MICKELBERG CASE

Gold: Recovery

1. Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Can the Minister inform me whether or not any of the gold missing in the so called "Mint Swindle" has been recovered in the Eastern States?
- (2) If so, what quantity and when was it discovered?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) No gold was recovered in the Eastern States.
- (2) Answered in (1).

PRISONS

"Jail News": Allegations

2. Hon. JOHN WILLIAMS, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware of the article in the editorial column of the "Jail News", volume 8, No 2, dated 17 July 1985, under the authorship of Peter Wilshire, a convicted felon?
- (2) Does the Attorney General intend to totally or in part refute the allegations contained therein?
- (3) Does the Attorney General intend to take any action in regard to the article, the author or the publisher in respect of the published matter?
- (4) Is the "Jail News" printed, published or distributed from within any corrections department in Australia or any of its institutions?
- (5) Does the Attorney General intend to take steps to ensure that the newspaper ceases to be published if such is within his control?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) I have previously made a statement to the House in respect of the Mickelbergs.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not to my knowledge. It is not printed, published, or distributed by the WA Prisons Department.
- (5) Answered by (3) and (4).

"GOVERNMENT GAZETTE"

Expurgated Edition

3. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for the Arts:

- (1) Is it a fact that the *Government Gazette* is now issued in expurgated and unexpurgated editions, the first excluding the titles of pornographic publications released for adult reading and viewing under the Indecent Publications Act?
- (2) If so, what is the reason for this unprecedented move?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) No, earlier this year it was decided to publish the list of titles of classified publications as a separate *Gazette*. This move followed complaints received from people, including the Country Women's Association, whose sensibilities were offended—often with just cause—by the sometimes vulgar names given to a number of the publications concerned.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Heroin: Addicts

4. Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many known heroin addicts are there in Western Australia?
- (2) What is the estimated amount and value of heroin trafficked in Western Australia each day?
- (3) How many people, below the age of 25 years, are known to be addicted and in categories of five years which groups are they in?
- (4) What is the estimated total number of heroin addicts in Western Australia?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) Unfortunately, there is no reliable data on which estimates of the use of illegal drugs, including heroin, can be based.
- (2) This question should be referred to the Minister for Police.
- (3) and (4) As per (1) above.

CRIME: MICKELBERG CASE

Inquiry: Report

5. Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Will the Attorney General table the recent Crown Law Inquiry documents into the Mickelberg case?
- (2) If "No", will the Attorney General inform the House whether these documents expose evidence of police malpractice?
- (3) Do they provide evidence or further evidence which reinforces the fact that the Mickelbergs were guilty as found by the court?
- (4) If answer to (3) is "Yes", what is that further evidence and which of the Mickelberg family does it show were guilty of the "Mint Swindle"?
- (5) Do they disprove the published belief of the falsification of the fingerprints?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) No. It would be inappropriate to table the report of the Solicitor General or to give detailed answers to a number of the other questions asked as legal proceedings are in progress in the Supreme Court which involve these issues and because further proceedings in the Court of Criminal Appeal must be anticipated.
- (2) They do not. As I have already indicated to the House, the Government has received advice from the leading fingerprint experts of the FBI, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the US Secret Service, New Scotland Yard, the British Home Office, and the Victoria Police; and none of these authorities finds any reason to conclude that the fingerprint was forged. They find nothing to suggest that the fingerprint is other than a genuine fingerprint.
- (3) to (5) See answers to (1) and (2).

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Staff: Miss Judith Fellows

8. Hon. G. E. MASTERS to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is Miss Judith Fellows attached to the Minister's personal staff?
- (2) If so, for how long has she held this position?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) and (2) I really do not know how to answer that question. Miss Fellows has always been attached to my personal staff. She occupied a similar position to that which Mr Jack Charman occupied, but recently she was elevated to the position of ministerial officer.

STATE FINANCE: BUDGET

Union Meetings

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

- (1) Has the Government recently held special meetings with trade union leaders to discuss Budget strategies and the State Budget?
- (2) If the answer is "Yes", will the Government extend the same courtesy to peak employer groups?
- (3) If not, why not?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) We have already done so.

TRANSPORT: SHIPPING

Tugs: Geraldton

10. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the circumstances where a director of the Geraldton Tug Co, Mr Mark Newbold, is being denied the right to skipper his new company tug?
- (2) Does the Minister support Mr Mark Newbold's right in this matter; that is, the right to skipper his own boat if he wishes?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) and (2) I have had referred to me matters concerning the problems in Geraldton to which the member referred. I understand that there are arguments which the honourable member may not find compelling, but

which relate to the safety and the employment of people who are to skipper those tugs. The matter is not one which has been raised directly in any context of an industrial dispute in which the Government should be involved, but it has been drawn to my attention.

