

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 29th November, 1979

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Transport Concessions and Petrol Subsidy: Petition

MR McIVER (Avon) [10.33 a.m.]: I have a petition which reads as follows—

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned citizens of Western Australia express concern to the West Australian Government of the continuing plight of the unemployed in Western Australia.

We believe that the West Australian Government has a duty to assist in the well being of the unemployed.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the West Australian Government;

1. grant public transport concessions for unemployed people similar to those given to old age pensioners;
2. introduce a petrol subsidy scheme for unemployed people.

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

The petition contains 2 652 signatures and I have certified that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

See petition No. 113.

HOUSING

Coolbellup: Petition

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch) [10.35 a.m.]: I present a petition to the House in the following terms—

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, call upon the State Housing Commission to take some immediate action to upgrade its existing apartment accommodation, or take some alternative action to encourage occupancy of the large number of vacant apartments within the Coolbellup area.

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

The petition bears 81 signatures and I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

See petition No. 114.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I announce that I will take the questions which were on notice for yesterday at this particular point. I will not accept questions without notice following those questions. However, there will be another session of questions later today to deal with the questions which are on notice for today and an opportunity will be afforded at that stage for questions without notice to be asked.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

In Committee

Resumed from the 27th November. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Part 4: Minister for Agriculture—

Progress was reported after part 4. had been partly considered.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [10.53 a.m.]: I want to give a clear indication of what I believe has been an excellent performance by the Minister in his portfolio of Agriculture. Quite contrary to the remarks of the member for Warren, I believe the portfolio has been handled properly while agriculture has been going through an extremely difficult period. Certainly such difficulties have not been seen previously in Western Australia. We are going through a drought, and in some areas where agriculture has been carried on for

over a period of 70 years, the State has never previously had a four-year continuing drought.

The responsibility and understanding shown by the Government has been of tremendous importance to those involved in agriculture. Agriculture is very complex, and requires special understanding. It is to the great credit of this Government that it is understanding and that it has accepted its responsibility. I want to set the record straight in this area.

It was interesting to note the previous speaker, the member for Warren, castigating the Government about the Manjimup cannery; however, he omitted to mention the assistance given to the cannery. An article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 15th November, 1979, regarding the Manjimup cannery which, in part, read as follows—

The Manjimup cannery will get more financial help from the WA Government under a four-year support plan. The ceiling on total government subsidies during the period will be \$750 000.

Additionally, the Government has decided to write off an amount of \$259 305 in debts owing to the Government. Government financial support to date has amounted to a total of \$1 942 000. That indicates the Government has been involved and has provided valuable assistance. The cannery has employed up to 75 people, and some 300 growers are dependent on it. Those growers are vitally dependent on the actions of the Government to ensure the continuing operation of the cannery. It is sad to think the member for Warren did not mention that assistance at all; that is an important credit due to the Government. I intend to relate to the growers my appreciation of the actions of the Government.

I will now refer to drought relief. It seems the cost will amount to \$15 million. Notwithstanding that, the concessional loans at 4 per cent interest for the year 1979-80 have been increased from \$20 000 to \$30 000. It has also been indicated there will be a two-year repayment holiday on the interest due on that liability. Surely that type of action would not come from a Government without considerable understanding.

Another credit due to the Government is the Rural Housing Authority. It has been most important, and it is a most successful initiative of the Government. A number of people in my area have taken advantage of the loans available from the authority, and have benefited from the initiative of the Government. It has been in operation for some three years and it will prove to

be one of the most important of the initiatives introduced by this Government.

The Rural Housing Authority is the first of its type in Australia, and I believe it is the first in the southern hemisphere. This area of housing into which the Government has moved has proved to be of real benefit to people involved in agriculture.

It was interesting to note also there has been no comment by the member for Warren in relation to the affairs and activities of the Western Australian Meat Commission. Again, that was an initiative of this Government.

It is all very well for members opposite to speak of gloom, doom and despair. That seems to be part of the new policies of the alternative Government. The WA Meat Commission has been a most successful body. It was charged with a responsibility, and it has met that responsibility fairly.

The commission has performed very well and it has turned a loss into a profit. During the first three and a half months of this year the commission made a profit of \$670 000 compared with a loss of some \$548 000 during the same period last year.

Mr B. T. Burke: But that is socialism.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Midland Junction Abattoir was some \$200 000 better off this year than last year, and bear in mind that the Midland Junction Abattoir is not operating as a killing facility. That was a condition the Meat Commission set down. The Opposition bleats about the responsibility of government and tells us what the Government has not done, but no mention was made of the initiatives taken—

Mr B. T. Burke: You are not making any mention of the Busselton jetty either.

Mr BLAIKIE: —by the Western Australian Meat Commission.

Mr Skidmore: It dismissed 300 Midland workers.

Mr BLAIKIE: Although the Midland Junction Abattoir has not been operating Robb Jetty has been operating with a double shift for killing. Efficiency has resulted from the initiatives of the commission. As far as I can see, Robb Jetty is starting to operate as a commercial entity. No longer is it a dead albatross around the neck of Government. Over many years hundreds of thousands of dollars have been pumped into meeting abattoir deficits. The efficiency of the Meat Commission can only be of benefit to the total industry.

Mr H. D. Evans: But what about Midland?

Mr BLAIKIE: This is contrary to the attitude of the members of the ALP. The Government must have a policy that is conducive to agriculture and encouraging to those involved in it. The Government can take great credit for its attitude. The ALP will be doomed forever if it continues with its present attitude.

Members will recall the effects that the flour millers' strike had on agriculture, and also the dispute in regard to the export of live sheep. What a challenge that was to agriculture. The very framework of the system of producers putting their produce on the world market was at risk.

I am delighted to be associated with a Government that did not stand idly by—it upheld law and order. So the ships were loaded.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr BLAIKIE: The attitude of the ALP Government would have been to allow the sheep to die on the dock. Certainly they would not have been shipped out of Australia, and that would have been a disaster.

Mr B. T. Burke: Tell us about the Busselton jetty. What are you doing about the Busselton jetty?

Mr BLAIKIE: I draw the attention of members to the action of the South Australian Government in regard to the same problem of the export of live sheep. How negative was its attitude!

Mr B. T. Burke: The Busselton jetty is not being built.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr B. T. Burke: But he won't answer, Mr Chairman.

Mr BLAIKIE: We have a Government that is receptive to the demands of agriculture, difficult though the demands well may be. If we recall what happened during the Forrest Place incident, the Leader of the Opposition is reported to have inflamed the meeting when he told the story in derogatory terms of meeting a farmer who got out of his Mercedes Benz to seek change of a \$20 note for 5c for a parking meter. That ALP attitude has not changed at all and people involved in agriculture are well aware of it. Anyone who listened to the speech of the member for Warren would know that things have not changed.

Mr B. T. Burke: The most knowledgeable man on agriculture around.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! When I call for order I do not expect people to continue with

repetitious remarks that are not appropriate. I ask the Committee to come to order, particularly the members who are interjecting at considerable length.

Mr BLAIKIE: Farming embodies the very spirit of private effort and enterprise, and those attributes are the cornerstone on which this country was built. The less involvement by Government by way of legislation and regulation the better. That is the course our Government has followed. Restrictions and control ought to be limited as much as possible.

Mr H. D. Evans: Are you advocating the abolition of orderly marketing schemes?

Mr BLAIKIE: The nub of the argument put forward by the member for Warren was that he condemned the Government for its attitude, and he drew a comparison with the situation in agriculture when he was the Minister.

Mr Bertram: The best three years for agriculture.

Mr BLAIKIE: He said, "Over that period look at the amount of legislation and regulations we brought in to assist agriculture, and compare that with the attitude of the Government over the last six years." All I can say is: I congratulate this Government for the limited control it has exercised.

Mr B. T. Burke: Come on—you have done nothing.

Mr BLAIKIE: Legislation and regulations in this industry are total anathema to the people involved in it.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr H. D. Evans: You supported the meat scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! As the member for Warren knows, it is one thing to interject on a speaker and have him react to that interjection, but if he gives a clear intention of not taking any interest in your remarks—

Mr H. D. Evans: Or if he cannot answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not want members to interject when I am talking. I am sure the member for Warren is aware of the practice in this place. The member for Vasse was ignoring you, and I ask you to desist.

Mr Sibson: interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Bunbury will be quiet.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Government has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of agriculture are catered for adequately, and that

the industry is covered. However, that does not give the Government a blank cheque to legislate whenever it thinks it ought to do so. I congratulate this Government. I believe that the people involved in agriculture today will say they are pleased we have a Government and a Minister who understand their needs. Can I make one other point?

Mr B. T. Burke: No.

Mr BLAIE: No members on the other side have been prepared to tell us about the hue and cry of three or four years ago in regard to the beef marketing board. The beef industry was told a marketing board would be the panacea. The Government resisted that change, and it said, "Let us hold a referendum." When the Opposition saw the result of the referendum, it had the audacity to say the figures had been rigged and the Government did not ask the right questions.

How many members of the Opposition who supported the proposition of a beef marketing board over the years from 1973 to 1977 are prepared to stand up today to say they still support the idea and that if elected they would move for such a board? Thank goodness we do not have such a board. If the Australian Labor Party had been in office in Western Australia, we would have had one, and what a disaster that would have been.

Mr Bertram: But it will never be in power.

Mr BLAIE: A Labor Government would have had a beef marketing board whatever the results. So these are the real differences between our parties, and they are important differences. As I have said, the Government has performed extremely well.

I wish to comment now on the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board.

Mr McIver: Who introduced that?

Mr BLAIE: I wish to make a criticism about that board, and I ask the Minister for Agriculture to pay attention to my remarks. It is of concern to me, and certainly of concern to a number of producers, that the board's annual report for the year 1977-78 was not introduced into this Parliament until the 7th August, 1979. That in itself creates areas of concern and problems.

The operations of the board are most vital to lamb producers, and it is important producers be kept up to date with adequate information. It is important that accurate and adequate information is made freely available as frequently as is humanly possible so that producers know precisely what is going on.

Some fairly strong insinuations were made against the practice and operations of the board. Mention was made of the practice of the board to purchase stocks of lamb from the Eastern States. It is easy to understand why producers in Western Australia say, "If the board is going to purchase lambs from the Eastern States, perhaps it could give us a few cents a kilogram more for our lambs." Obviously, the board may have valid reasons for its purchasing policy, but these reasons should be given.

It also is important to inform the board of the sentiments of producers and members of Parliament. Of course, members can always ask questions in this place. However, if anything goes wrong in the sphere of operations of the Lamb Marketing Board, it is always the member of Parliament who is to blame. I am not attacking the operations of the board; I am seeking the provision of regular, adequate information.

Of course, the prices paid for lambs across Australia influence the attitude of producers. Only this week, we saw that Western Australian producers, both on the open market and through the Lamb Marketing Board, were the lowest paid lamb producers in Australia. The prices paid ranged from a maximum 98c a kilogram in Western Australia to the top price of \$1.76 a kilogram at Cannon Hill in Queensland.

The board's annual report is a review of the previous year's activities, and it does not do the producers any good to find that, on the day the report is tabled in this place, it is more than 13 months out of date. When the Lamb Marketing Board purchases over 100 000 lambs interstate, and when Eastern States abattoir proprietors purchase 30 000 or 40 000 lambs from Western Australia to transport and slaughter interstate, producers naturally ask questions.

Mr Grewar: The Lamb Marketing Board prices are scheduled at 20c lower than the actual market price paid.

Mr BLAIE: That is the point I am making. According to the Darowa market report, which is regarded as being the yardstick of the industry, that indeed is the case. In other States lamb prices are certainly well over 20c a kilogram—in some instances, they are approaching 80c a kilogram—more than the Lamb Marketing Board scheduled price. So, it is quite understandable why producers question the operations of the board.

I hope the Minister for Agriculture—understanding as he is—will take up this matter with the board to ensure information is disseminated as freely as possible

amongst producers so that they can make their own value judgments based on facts, instead of making the issue a political dogfight. This is not what they want; they want the board to operate in the best interests of all producers.

I turn now to the dairying industry. An interesting article appeared in the Press a couple of days ago regarding a predicted world shortfall of dairy products. As we approach the 1980s, it will be necessary for all Governments to examine world market trends, with particular emphasis on the dairying industry.

Great changes have been made in the recent past. As far as I am aware, all eligible people in Western Australia have obtained quota entitlements, which is giving stability to the industry.

More use now is being made of manufacturing milk, and we see more products like choc-milks, yoghurts, milk confectionaries and, my old hobby-horse, ultra-heat-treated milk products on the shelves of our supermarkets. There will be an increasing scope for expansion into this area. As we approach the 1980s, there will be a need for a new approach and involvement by government into areas of marketing and alternative forms of production, where there may be scope for improved methods of production using new technology.

I support the actions of the Government and of the Minister for Agriculture. The portfolio of Agriculture at times can be a rather tempestuous and tortuous path to follow. Occasionally we must deal with difficult people who are concerned with their particular sphere of agriculture. I believe the Government and the Minister have been most understanding, as they have an obligation to be. To sum up the actions of the Minister, he has appreciated the situation in the industry, and has been very understanding.

The role played by this Government in an industry vital to the growth of Western Australia has been an important and positive one. I am certain I speak for the great bulk of farmers in the south-west when I support the Government and condemn the parochial, narrow-minded, and political remarks of the member for Warren. The majority of these farmers support the Government.

I have pleasure in supporting part 4 of the Estimates.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [11.18 a.m.]: The Lamb Marketing Board came in for a little veiled criticism from the member for Vasse; this has been his attitude to the board almost since its inception. He has never really accepted the board.

I do not think I would do him an injustice when I say he would prefer to abolish the board rather than have it continue in operation.

I was also a little concerned when the member for Vasse referred to Darowa market quotations. It is always easy to misuse statistics in order to discredit something. However, when making comparisons, one must make them on a year-round basis, taking into account productivity in the various States.

Mr Grewar: It shows the same trend.

Mr STEPHENS: It does not.

Mr Grewar: You have not been studying your market reports.

Mr STEPHENS: Western Australia consumes only 30 per cent of its production, exporting the remaining 70 per cent. This is in direct contrast to the situation in Victoria and New South Wales, where only 30 per cent of production is exported, and the remaining 70 per cent is consumed on the domestic market.

Mr Blaikie: Those States have a disadvantage selling on local and export markets.

Mr STEPHENS: These factors have to be taken into account. Everyone knows there is a considerable disparity between local and export prices.

Another factor which has to be taken into account is the seasonal situation in New South Wales and Victoria. Basically, it can be said they have a summer rainfall climate. Therefore, because of the seasonal differences, it is very difficult to compare prices in one season in Western Australia against prices in those States. If a comparison were to be made it should be made with South Australia because that State and ours have similar geological and climatic conditions. That would be a fairer comparison.

The Lamb Marketing Board is to be congratulated on the size of the contracts it gained which gave it the ability to enter the market with confidence and to have some impact on the pricing situation in Australia. It is always argued that we must have market competition in Western Australia; but what a lot of people overlook is that before we can have that competition the processors have to go overseas themselves. We then have half the processors selling to one market. Who gets the contract? Of course, it is the one who sells at the lowest price. That is business; it is only natural. I do not quarrel with that. If we in Australia could go overseas on a one-seller basis we would be in a position of having a far greater say about the price.

It has often been said the Japanese have created an economic miracle. We all recognise the economic strength of Japan. When their buyers leave for overseas, notwithstanding their own internal competition, they organise a one-buyer situation. They are in a position then to have some say in the market price.

If members like to cast their minds back to the 1968-1970 period when we experienced difficult climatic conditions and harsh seasons, they will remember we experienced also a collapse in the mutton market. Growers were sending trailer loads of sheep to Midland only to get a bill for their trouble.

How did this come about? As far as the Japanese situation was concerned, it came about because one of the big operators in Australia—I will not mention its name—went to Japan and offered mutton at 10c lower than the going price. The Japanese immediately stopped buying. When they came back into the market they offered 14c below the going price. We had the effect of a weak seller forcing the Western Australian producers to accept ruinous prices.

The Lamb Marketing Board has made a tremendous contribution to lamb production in Western Australia. I can say quite authoritatively that within the region I represent the overwhelming number of lamb producers support the board and the continuation of the board. Recently there were a few people who criticised the board. I do not deny them that right as this is a democratic country.

Mr Bertram: Barely.

Mr STEPHENS: We are trying to maintain it as a democracy. I am talking about the expressed will of the majority of producers. I will come back to the question of the wishes of the majority of producers taken at a referendum, which did not contain rigged questions.

I am prepared to concede there could be one or two growers in different areas who, because of their own particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged. I concede that the Lamb Marketing Board, like any other organisation, is not necessarily infallible. Therefore, it is right that each and every one of us should keep an eye on its operations so that we can draw mistakes to its attention. I have always found members of the board to be approachable.

A few producers in my area have some criticisms and they were propagating the complaints they had. I am pleased to report that at my request—perhaps requests were made from other quarters also—members of the Lamb Marketing Board came to my electorate to meet

with producers. In the space of two days three meetings were organised which were attended by over 100 producers. In a couple of areas there were one or two questions asked which were answered to the producers' satisfaction. I recall several questions being asked at a meeting in Many Peaks. Perhaps one or two questioners were not satisfied, but I believe they were people who have never accepted the board and I doubt whether they will ever be satisfied.

The member for Vasse made reference also to the beef marketing referendum. Once again I say that the result was a democratic decision. The unfortunate part about that referendum was the way in which it was conducted. I am not being wise after the event, because I said at the time the three questions were designed to confuse the producers. The first question was a straightout reference to an orderly marketing scheme; the second question was slanted to create the impression of a slight improvement to the marketing situation; and the third question was purely to create the impression that question No. 2 would give the growers something different.

It is history that question No. 1 was overwhelmingly beaten. It is also history there has been no improvement in the marketing system. How could there be when the reference was to an expansion of the powers of the Meat Commission when that commission has a representative of the meat and allied trades—the processors? That seems a very peculiar way of improving returns to growers; that is, by creating a board with representatives of the people with whom one is in competition. It is like the Premier inviting the Leader of the Opposition to join his Cabinet. One would be continually disclosing one's hand.

It is not surprising there has been no real improvement in the marketing of beef. There will not be until we can have the classification fully applied and the grower has the opportunity to send his product direct to an abattoir, which is, after all, the most economic way of disposing of stock. It is a rather silly method to transport stock many miles to the market. There is much more handling and a subsequent bruising of stock and, therefore, a reduction in the quality of meat. The stock are always yarded up again and frequently moved over the same ground on which they travelled down to the markets. So the producers have added costs. There is also the cost of buyers flying to the areas. From all points of view, and certainly from the cost point of view, it is more efficient to sell the product direct to an abattoir.

I believe this is one of the great advantages with the Lamb Marketing Board, where the lambs can be disposed of direct to the abattoirs

with a subsequent improvement in the quality of the stock to the advantage of the producers.

I have heard from one livestock representative in my area that if it had not been for the operation of the Lamb Marketing Board this year, in the glut period of the year, the growers would have received only \$10 a head for their lambs; not the \$15 to \$18 they are receiving. I admit that was one man's opinion. He is a representative of a stock firm and I believe he was expressing an honest opinion; whether or not it is correct I do not know.

Mr Grewar: It was wrong.

Mr STEPHENS: It is a matter of opinion. At least he was prepared to make a statement.

While talking about boards—I will not go into any detail—I am aware of the considerable concern which has been expressed by producers about the management of the Potato Marketing Board. I hope the Minister will give some attention to this matter.

Mr Skidmore: And leave the chip industry alone.

Mr STEPHENS: Not one of the growers I have had discussions with wanted to see the board disbanded but concern was expressed about some of the aspects of management. I think this requires the close supervision and involvement of the Minister to ensure the complaints of the growers are adequately investigated and that the board is either exonerated for its inefficiencies or, if there are any weaknesses, corrective action should be taken. I repeat, although many of the growers who have approached me are apprehensive about the matter, not one of them wished to see the board disbanded.

I have no criticism whatsoever of the officers of the Department of Agriculture in Albany. They do their job very well but there is growing concern in the region that perhaps the building is not situated in the most suitable position at the moment. I am not blaming anyone for that—hindsight is a position which makes criticism easy. It seems, in view of the expansion of the town of Albany and the fairly central situation of the buildings, that plans should be made with a view to relocating the Department of Agriculture.

There are many areas where it could be relocated and still be of considerable convenience to the farmers using it. By taking it out of the central area of the town it will ensure that the area will not be disadvantaged in the future.

I would also like to repeat my previous comments about the research for suitable clover

and grain varieties in the area I represent. The south coastal strip is an exceedingly good area with a good climate and productivity could be tremendous if we had the right plants to maximise our advantages. I know this is a long and slow process as well as a difficult one but when one looks at the amount allocated in the Budget for plant research one will realise that that amount is inadequate for this day and age.

We have a problem with our clovers and also with oats and barley. The research must be speeded up so that suitable plants can be made available to farmers in the region. This would then greatly enhance productivity.

I have been advised that since I spoke during the general Budget debate, the problem of rye grass toxicity appears to have become worse. There have been more outbreaks reported and this is another area in which I believe additional funds should be made available to overcome this serious problem.

Another problem I wish to mention is perhaps not the direct responsibility of the Minister for Agriculture, but it certainly affects the agricultural community; and that is the application of the clearing bans legislation. This requires each and every one of us to take action to minimise this problem of the farming community. We have a Government which talks about not directing industry and I have no argument with that. We should assist industry in a way that will provide encouragement for it to use initiatives. Whilst the Government is not prepared to direct industry it is quite prepared to direct farmers and I think this is a double standard we will have to watch very closely.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [11.35 a.m.]: I am very proud to be presenting the CRF Estimates of the Department of Agriculture this year, as for the past five years, because the allocation to the Agriculture vote is one which has been very well treated by the Government. Although one could say there is no dramatic increase, I think 13½ per cent increase over the last year in actual expenditure is a fairly good contribution, especially when one takes into account the other parts of the Budget where funds have been allocated to items such as the purchase of property for the benefit of agriculture generally, despite the remarks of the member for Warren.

With respect to the member for Warren's criticism of the Government, I think any Government, department, or instrumentality is deserving of criticism at times, so long as it is constructive criticism. To try to compare

legislative programmes is quite pointless. It would be quite stupid to have legislation brought to the Parliament for the sake of introducing legislation.

Anything of importance to the industry or any matter which has been brought from the industry to the Government in a responsible and documented way receives the attention it deserves and legislation results.

I noted the usual criticism of the beef industry committee Act which was introduced at a time which, as so aptly described by the member for Warren, was a period of crisis in that industry. This cannot be denied. I would not deny the fact that the Act lacked teeth, to a certain degree. It was not intended as an acquisition Act, it was intended as an Act to assist the beef producers and, despite the criticism, I can assure the Committee this Act did exactly that.

In Western Australia we rely to a great extent on our meat exporting industry. I will enlarge on this a little later on in the light of the comments of the member for Vasse.

If one refers to the period of the beef crisis, and looks at the prices being received throughout Australia for baby beef—this was the commodity at which the Act was aimed—one will find that the prices being received in Western Australia were better than the prices received in the other States. In fact, Western Australia was the envy of the other Ministers for Agriculture when I attended Agricultural Council meetings during that time. So the member for Warren's criticism was not put in proper perspective.

The honourable member skipped over the Grain Marketing Act. I think this Act was probably one of the best for agriculture, and, I admit that some of the negotiations went on during the period of the previous Government. The actual work and fine tuning was done by this Government, and it was a very difficult piece of legislation to frame. Because of its good framing, it has worked very satisfactorily and efficiently.

The Meat Commission and the Meat Industry Authority—two organisations which have been provided for by legislation brought forward by this Government and which come in for undue and unjust criticism from the Opposition—are two organisations of which I am very proud. No mention was made of the Agriculture and Related Resources Act, which I think again was a major step forward in the agricultural industry. Apart from that, let us look at the Government's attitude towards agriculture. This Government has a record of which it is very proud and on which I am prepared to go on the hustings to the electors of Western Australia. Provision for

emergency loans for drought relief and natural disasters is unparalleled in the history of agriculture in Western Australia, and nobody can deny that. Never were producers so well provided for as they have been during the life of this Government. If members of the Opposition are prepared to refute that, I suggest they go up into the drought-affected areas and try to run down the Government's actions, to see how they go.

I have to reply to the honourable member later in the session in connection with his motion on the notice paper but I must bring the two matters together here. He again came in with his carping criticism of the Meat Commission. I point out that the honourable member has become confused with the Meat Industry Authority and the Meat Commission. I am not being unduly critical.

The Meat Industry Authority is responsible for recommendations to the Minister regarding the licensing of new abattoirs and for matching the State's kill to the facilities available. The Meat Commission, on the other hand, was set up to run efficiently the two State instrumentalities at Midland and Robb Jetty.

The honourable member said half the members of the Meat Commission were involved in the meat industry. I would like to put the record straight here. Although the honourable member always prefaces his remarks by saying they are men of integrity and men with whom he would be pleased to do business, he goes on to denigrate them. I do not think men of integrity should be denigrated in this place, even under parliamentary privilege.

Four of the eight members of the Meat Commission are producers. I am surprised the honourable member did not know that. They are Mr J. Crisp, Mr J. Thompson, Mr F. Hamilton, and Mr Max Cameron. In addition, I have a nominee on the commission (Mr John Craig, Assistant Director of Agriculture), and there is a chairman who has expertise in accounting (Mr Howard Wheatley). Then we have the representatives of that terrible meat industry, the "bogeys", who are Mr Malcolm Green and Mr Jim Webster. They are the sole representatives of the meat industry on a committee of eight. If those two members of the commission can influence the other members to do things which are not in the interests of producers, we will have to look at the producer representation and change it. However, that will not be necessary because I can assure the honourable member the producers representing their industry on that commission are doing a tremendously good job.

Mr H. D. Evans: Can you explain the limitation, and the reasons for it, placed on the trading of the commission?

Mr OLD: No limitations are placed on the trading of the commission. This is the point I intended to make in replying to the stupid remarks the honourable member made when putting forward his motion. It is time he researched what the commission is allowed to do. For his enlightenment, I will deal with that point right now; in other words, I will answer the motion now.

No restrictions are placed on the trading of the Meat Commission. It does not have to make a profit on every transaction it carries out, as the honourable member has alleged. The trading section of the Meat Commission is currently in deficit. The commission can operate in any trading manner it desires. It operates in the saleyards; it operates on weight and grade and on consigned stock. The Meat Commission is operating very efficiently, and whereas it previously had no business whatsoever, it now has a very thriving and flourishing business in Western Australia.

Mr H. D. Evans: Has it always been able to set off one against the other?

Mr OLD: Right from the time it was set up it has been able to do that. If the honourable member can bring forward evidence to the contrary, I will apologise. The trading of the commission is completely unfettered within the bounds of its charter.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about capitalisation?

Mr OLD: If it is a criminal action for this Government and for me, as the Minister responsible for this portfolio, to try to have our instrumentalities and boards trading in a manner which will bring credit to them and in a manner somewhat similar to that of private trading concerns, I will plead guilty to the heinous crime. But if the honourable member considers the commission should be able to go ahead and trade willy-nilly, for the sake of trading, he is out of order. On my last assessment and on the last intelligence I received from it, the Meat Commission was in deficit in its trading. That is all right—it happens in any trading concern—provided it sees that it can make amends for that deficit in the future. That is a reasonable way in which to run a trading concern.

I would like to lay to rest once and for all the "great innovation" of the Labor Party and the Labor Government in bringing forward and being responsible for the Lamb Marketing Board legislation. Certainly it put the legislation

through—because the Western Australian electors made a mistake in 1971, one which I do not think they will make again in a hurry. However, the referendum which allowed the Labor Government to put that legislation through was conducted by the Brand-Nalder Government, and that is something which I think the honourable member should acknowledge when he talks about his great initiatives. In December, 1970, the Hon. Crawford Nalder, who was the Minister for Agriculture, made the announcement that the referendum which had been conducted was in favour of setting up a Lamb Marketing Board, and that one would be set up. Let us get that matter in its proper perspective.

Mr H. D. Evans: And it has been opposed by this Government all the way along the line, but the producers stuck up for it. Was not \$50 000 promised to hold an inquisition in an attempt to get rid of the Lamb Marketing Board? He did that the minute he got into office.

Mr OLD: In reply to that iniquitous interjection, nobody more than I has made truthful statements about the Lamb Marketing Board, and nobody more than I has come to its rescue when it was been unjustly criticised. Let the honourable member show me where I have not done so. I happen to represent agriculture in this Government. Therefore it is the Government which is doing it.

Mr H. D. Evans: Do you know that the Rural and Allied Industries—

Mr OLD: I will come to that shortly. It is one of a great volume of matters of which the honourable member either has no understanding or refuses to understand. Another of his favourites which he brought up again is part IV of the Act and the fact that we would allow the board to trade only in summer lamb. That is rather old-fashioned, because I have here a declaration which reads—

IT is hereby notified for public information that I, RICHARD CHARLES OLD, M.L.A., Minister for Agriculture, pursuant to the powers conferred by section 24 of the Marketing of Lamb Act, 1971, on the recommendation of the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board, declare that Board to be authorised to accept the delivery of hogget during the period commencing on the date of the publication of this notice in the Government Gazette and ending on the 30th June, 1979.

That date was the 30th June, 1979. That is the second year in which that latitude has been extended to the Lamb Marketing Board; so the

member for Warren should not try to mislead the public of Western Australia.

Mr H. D. Evans: Why didn't you just declare it instead of killing the Opposition motion?

Mr OLD: It was declared. We declared it in 1978. Catch up with the times, man!

I noted also that the member for Warren skipped over or ignored the Wheat Marketing Bill which has just passed through this Chamber, and in respect of which complementary legislation was passed by the Commonwealth. I would like to assure members that the amount of work carried out by the Government, my department, and myself in respect of having that legislation framed was quite considerable. The legislation was discussed at Agricultural Council meetings and at standing committee meetings over the past three years. So if the member for Warren thinks that legislation just happened, let me assure him it did not. It was a matter of discussion and negotiation, and certainly the State of Western Australia was not left out of the discussion and negotiation.

Let me turn now to the Rural and Allied Industries Council, which the member is so sure is steering the ship. When the Rural and Allied Industries Conference—as it was mooted in the first place—was first suggested by the Liberal Party in its election policy, I was asked many questions about my attitude to it. My attitude to it then was and still is that if it will in any way assist agriculture and mean a greater input from the State Treasury into research for agriculture, I am all for it. I am all for anything that will assist agriculture.

The Rural and Allied Industries Conference, as it was then termed, was composed of people from all walks of rural industry and, strangely enough, it was composed of people of all political parties. If the member for Warren thinks it was dominated by the Liberal Party, I can assure him it was not. I can assure him also that the Rural and Allied Industries Council is not dominated by the Liberal Party.

I am quite happy to talk to the members of the Rural and Allied Industries Council and to listen to their requests. One of the requests of the council concerned discussion about the animal breeding institute. I was amazed to hear the member for Warren say the animal breeding institute would be run by a political body. Nothing is further from the truth. Again, I think it is time the Opposition did a little homework before making outrageous statements in the hope of getting publicity.

Mr H. D. Evans: The committee is run by a political party.

Mr OLD: The animal breeding institute is not being run by a committee. If the member waits for a moment, I will explain it to him. The institute is to be run by the Department of Agriculture. This has been clearly understood, and it is one of the conditions of the formation of the institute. There is a committee which I appointed to advise me on the location of the property to be purchased on which to conduct the affairs of the institute.

The member mentioned also the Great Southern Sheep Breeders' Council and said it was opposed to the animal breeding institute. I have frequent contact with Mr and Mrs Norman Lewis, who happen to be the mainstay of the sheep research council. Mr Norman Lewis was present when the decision was made at the Rural and Allied Industries Conference to recommend the formation of the animal breeding institute, and he was in agreement with the decision. Let me say further that I have frequent discussions with Mr and Mrs Lewis and at no time have they voiced any objection to the institute; and at no time has the Great Southern Sheep Breeders' Council written to me and voiced any objection to it. If there are any objections, let us have them.

Mr H. D. Evans: He has expressed his concern in respect of duplication and a possible starvation of funds.

Mr OLD: There is no duplication. Let me point out something else to the member for Warren: Currently a great deal of animal breeding research is being carried out at Avondale, and more is being carried out at the Mt. Barker Research Station. It is our desire to have the research carried out at one location, if that is practicable. It would not be practicable to try to breed sheep for particular circumstances outside the area for which they are being bred. For example, it would not be practicable to breed carpet wool sheep outside the wetter areas of the South coast, nor would it be practicable to experiment with genetic improvement to the merino flock of Western Australia in that area.

Let me say again it was the choice of the committee that the property should be in the central great southern which, of course, is the heart of the sheep industry of Western Australia. The chairman of the committee happens to come from the Calingiri area, and he is a stud breeder. That illustrates the amount of bias shown in this exercise.

I can assure the member for Warren that the strongest criticism I have received so far has come from him. Certainly I have received inquiries from branches of farmer organisations which have

sought information. I have gladly supplied the information sought and will continue to make it freely available.

We have yet another "political committee" which the member for Warren says will formulate policy for new land releases. Again, nothing is further from the truth. The RAIC asked me as an *ex officio* member whether I would agree with the concept of a committee to look into the policy of consolidation to which this Government has adhered. The current policy was the result of requests made by producer organisations, and it was made in the interests of the economy of the country. I believe we have reached the time when the policy may be changed, but it cannot be changed without taking a searching look at the whole situation in Western Australia.

Who better to be the executive officer of a committee to consider that than Mr Hogstrom, who happens to be one of my officers and who is well known to the member for Warren? He is a very knowledgeable person who has done a great deal of work on land releases. That "political committee"—if one can call it such—was formed; and it was formed completely outside the Rural and Allied Industries Council. Not one member of the committee is a member of the council.

The committee is chaired by Mr Dennis Whiteley, a commissioner of the Rural and Industries Bank, and the commissioner responsible for the administration of the Rural Adjustment Authority in Western Australia. The members of the committee were chosen partly because of their scattered location throughout the State. One comes from Southern Cross in the person of Mr R. Patroni; one comes from the southern part of the State, Ongerup, in the person of Mr Keith Graham; and another comes from Esperance in the person of Mr Riechstein. In addition, Mrs Mary Shearer was asked to serve on the committee to represent the interests of women. Anyone with a reasonably fair mind would agree that is a well chosen, non-partisan committee.

They are the people who will put forward a recommendation to the Government; and the Government will consider the recommendation with a view to altering its attitude to land release, or to leave the position as it is. No committee of inquiry ever hopes to have its recommendations accepted in toto. I do not think there has been a time when a Government has accepted recommendations in toto. If such were the case, then the Government virtually ceases to govern.

On the matter of our activities in the Middle East, I do not think any Government in the past

decade has done more to promote our products in that area than has this Government. I was interested to hear members talking about the mission which went to the Middle East headed by Sir Basil Embry, a man for whom I have very high regard and a man who worked hard not only for his country during wartime but also for this country and for agriculture during his lifetime.

My colleague who sits behind me, who was also a very active member of the RTC, cannot remember any offer being made by the Labor Government, despite the protestations of the member for Warren that those offers were made.

Mr H. D. Evans: They were made to Embry in the presence of John Tonkin. That is how clear it is.

Mr OLD: My colleague, who was on the executive of the RTC, said he would like to see the letter. Perhaps the member for Warren could give a copy of the letter to the member for Moore.

Mr H. D. Evans: I think the member for Moore had better do some brushing up.

Mr OLD: In regard to the criticisms levelled by the Opposition, let me say that the concluding remarks by the member that the Labor Party, were it the Government, would certainly support Kununurra to the extent this Government has is so much balderdash, because it was not very long ago that the then Leader of the Opposition said that we should put the whole show in mothballs and make it a tourist attraction.

Mr Jamieson: You are taking me out of context. Who supported the cotton growers? Who supported the subsidy when they needed it at that time?

Mr OLD: The money in the allocation for Kununurra vindicates the actions of this Government in standing behind the farmers up there. Believe me, they are grateful for the assistance they have received.

Briefly touching on the remarks made by the member for Vasse and the member for Stirling, I take the criticisms about the Lamb Board report. I can assure the member for Vasse that the new Lamb Board report will be tabled before this Parliament rises.

Mr Blaikie: That is appreciated.

Mr OLD: I have spoken to the Lamb Marketing Board about the necessity for it to use its public relations extension to convey the message to the farmers about what has happened. There is no doubt the people believed, quite erroneously, that the Lamb Marketing Board was operating in South Australia, buying lambs in pens. It was very hard to convince people that this

was not happening; but it was not happening. The board was in fact purchasing carcasses f.o.b. I think the statement made by the chief executive officer in that regard should clear up a lot of the misapprehensions being felt by some of the producers.

I mention also the new officer who has been appointed, Mr Bob Murry, the marketing manager. This gentleman, with his knowledge of marketing, will make a tremendous contribution to the operations of the Lamb Marketing Board. He will free Mr Malcolm McSporran for the duties for which his position was originally designed—that is, overall management and supervision. It will remove the necessity for Mr McSporran to have to make the many tiring trips overseas which he has made.

The member for Stirling mentioned the Potato Marketing Board. Let me assure him this matter has not escaped my attention. I am in consultation with the Potato Marketing Board, and I will certainly continue to negotiate with it.

With regard to the relocation of the office at Albany, I have written to the member in this regard. I find it difficult to justify relocating the office which, in my opinion, is very well placed from the point of view of farmers wanting to visit it. It has no objectionable characteristics; and we have acquired more land there only recently. I feel the objections raised are not valid; and I can find no evidence that the Albany Town Council at any time—

Mr Stephens: You had better communicate with them.

Mr OLD: The only letter I have received from them is regarding the zoning. They have made no protest at all. Until the Albany Town Council wishes to say it does not want the Department of Agriculture where it is situated, I am not prepared to do anything about its relocation. That would be very costly, and a charge upon the taxpayers.

The member for Vasse mentioned Darowa marketing. I would like to quote from the *Darowa Market Insight* of the 26th October—relative to comparative lamb prices in various states—

In W.A., score 3 lambs tend to be the dearer category, generally being scheduled at a substantial premium by the Board. This difference follows through to the auction system. In the East, the fatter grades normally attract the premiums. Therefore the graph, despite the treatment of a similar grade of lambs, does make W.A. lamb prices compare less favourably than what actually happens. The premiums for fatter grade

lambs in the East follow the greater dependence on the local market than occurs in W.A. The relatively high production in W.A., and its extreme seasonality and export dependence, mean that prices compare favourably for only a short period during the winter/early spring.

The big problem that this State faces is the dependence upon exports. As the member for Stirling mentioned, the average overall price of lamb in Western Australia vindicates the activity of the Lamb Marketing Board.

Vote: Agriculture, \$28 245 000—put and passed.

Part 5: Minister for Works and Tourism—

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [12.07 p.m.]: As members will realise, part of the responsibility of this Minister is the State's water supplies—

Chairman's Ruling

The **CHAIRMAN**: This matter was raised with me some minutes ago. It is my ruling that I will not allow a debate on the metropolitan water supply at this stage. There is no money allocated here for the metropolitan water supply. There is, of course, an allocation for the country water supplies. Obviously I do not wish to deny members the opportunity to discuss such a subject, so I point out that in the Loan Estimates, Item No. 23 deals with the metropolitan water supply. That will give members an opportunity to raise matters in relation to that.

Committee Resumed

Mr B. T. BURKE: My understanding was that this matter had been raised, and it was appropriate that it be mentioned now because there is no vote in the succeeding item concerning water supplies. I accept your ruling, and I will raise the matter at the time you mention, Mr Chairman.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [12.09 p.m.]: I make particular reference to water catchment areas and the resumption of land. A situation has arisen because of the recent regulations by the country water supplies; and there are several aspects of the problem which have emerged. They need clarification by the Minister.

The Public Works Department has acquired a number of properties—and I make the point, because this is where it is most appropriate—in the upper reaches of the Warren, the Tone, and the Pirrer Rivers. The acquired areas are cleared areas in some cases and in other cases they are bush country.

I have not been able to ascertain the number of properties finally purchased. However, it could be approximately six and it could involve an area of 10 000 acres; and that is what I am concerned about. A number of families are moving out of the area, but if the existing cleared land were consolidated it could be turned into farming properties and some of these families would stay there.

It is not clear what the Government intends to do, because there have been variations in the way in which the land has been obtained. If it is taken under one section of the Act, it can be made available for sale or lease, but if it is taken under another section of the Act, this cannot be done. As a result, farmers in the area are confused as to whether the land purchased by the PWD can be obtained from that department.

For this reason, and in order to seek clarification, I asked the Minister a question which reads as follows—

- (1) Can the Government sell or lease to farmers land which it has acquired by purchase in the Warren and Kent catchment areas?
- (2) If such land cannot be sold or leased, does it intend to amend the existing legislation before the conclusion of this session of Parliament?

The Minister's reply was—

- (1) Land purchased under part 11A of the Country Areas Water Supply Act may not be sold or leased. If section 20 has been used to acquire land, then sale or lease can be arranged under the provisions of the Public Works Act.

Under section 20 of the Act, the land can be resold or leased once it has been acquired, but under part 11A this cannot be done.

This matter is of some concern and I feel it is appropriate to ask why all land acquired by the PWD cannot be obtained by farmers under section 20.

Section 20 of the Country Areas Water Supply Act reads, in part, as follows—

The Minister may take and acquire under and subject to the provisions of the Public Works Act, 1902-1945, any land he may deem necessary, from time to time, for any of the purposes of this Act.

Those provisions are straightforward. Although direct reference is not made to the disposal of any land so acquired, apparently it is possible to use that section of the Act to make land available to

farmers, as a result of which some of these families will remain in the area.

I should like to refer to the problems which result from declining populations and, in doing so, I shall mention part 11A section 12E(4) which came from the amendment made in 1976 to the Country Areas Water Supply Act. It states—

Where any land, estate or interest is taken or resumed pursuant to subsection (3) of this section that land shall thereafter be so dealt with, by restoration if necessary, as to conserve the water resources, and for the purposes of the Public Works Act, 1902.

I will not quote the full section; but it appears that under that provision the land is available for use by the PWD only and, if necessary, restoration may take place. The question may be asked as to why that land should not be acquired under section 20 and an instruction given to the PWD on that basis.

If that were done the PWD would have flexibility and it could dispose of that land for regeneration purposes. It can be retained as virgin bush and the cleared sections may be made available to farmers under a leasing arrangement. This would be the most sensible and realistic approach to the problem, especially in the areas to which I have referred.

At the moment a number of families are leaving the area. In fact, approximately half a dozen sales have been made or are in the process of being made. Therefore, it would be desirable, provided it is within the provisions laid down in the Act as they affect the PWD in regard to security of water, to make those areas available to farmers so that they could build up a sufficient cleared acreage and continue a farming operation.

Mr O'Connor: You are talking about where a portion is taken away, are you?

Mr H. D. EVANS: I am referring to a property of, say, 1 000 acres of which 500 acres are cleared and 500 are in bush. If the 500 cleared acres could be made available to a farmer who is unable to clear any further, at least he would be able to use that land. Alternatively, several portions of land adjacent to farmers properties could be made available to them. That would overcome the difficulty to some extent.

I understand two leases have been made in the area. The terms and conditions are not clear, but it appears the leases are on a monthly basis and one of the conditions is that firebreaks are provided in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Act. The reason for that is obvious. I am aware of one farm which has been acquired by the PWD and the house has begun to fall into

a state of disrepair; the water pump has gone; the tank has gone; and several doors and windows in the shearing shed have gone. The wild oats on that property are four feet high. If there was one fire, the whole property would be ruined.

Mr O'Connor: Has it been abandoned?

Mr H. D. EVANS: It has been sold to the PWD. The family has moved off the property and a reasonable house exists there. A young fellow who is starting off could acquire the property and do something with it. However, after one fire it would be a different story.

Mr O'Connor: If you give me the address of that property I will ask the department to take some action on it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Such situations could be obviated. It is obvious that if a property is abandoned it will quickly fall into a state of disrepair. This is true of farming properties as well as holiday homes. In the group settlement days this problem was widespread. However, it can be obviated to some extent.

Such properties could be made available to one of the sons of a farmer in the area. He would have the opportunity to establish himself, using the land cleared already. In that way some of the families which are being lost to the area would remain.

When we look at the question of population, we must consider also the provision of schools and school bus services. Inevitably, in areas of declining population, problems of this kind will be exacerbated. Priority must be accorded to roads and the provision of similar facilities. If we look at the matter from a distance, it may not seem to be important; but it is most important to a farmer who lives in the area and who has to cart stock over a second-rate road. Farmers must also put up with gravel roads and there is little prospect of their being upgraded to bitumen roads. However, that is a different situation.

The concluding of agreements requires more rapid action. I received a call last week and was told of the experience of one couple. Their case went to arbitration on the 28th September, 1979, but they have not yet been paid out. A sum of \$101 000 plus an additional sum of \$2 500 is involved. The agreement was signed on the 18th July, 1979, and in this case the department has leased the property either to ensure that firebreaks are cleared, or for agistment purposes. The property has been leased to a farmer from Morawa. The agreement was signed in July, and arbitration was resolved in September, but that couple still has not been paid even though the property has been leased.

Mr O'Connor: Was arbitration finalised two months ago?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes, it was finalised.

Mr O'Connor: It is difficult to comment without having the details. If you give me the name of the people I will follow it up.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I will do that. I have raised the matter now because it is indicative of the situations which arise. The existing legislation needs to be clear with regard to specific directions given to the Public Works Department to ensure that flexibility is inherent in its future dealings.

I will refer now to the unfortunate aspect of the position which has occurred in the water catchment areas. An article in the *Western Farmer* dated the 22nd November, 1979, indicated that some farmers were moving to set up a fighting fund for three of their number who have infringed the clearing ban regulations, and who are subject to court action under those regulations. This is a matter which should be looked at in some detail. There should be an attempt on the part of the Government to ease the abrasiveness which has occurred because a portion of the responsibility must rest with the Government.

Although one cannot condone breaches of the law there has to be some reconciliation in the situation which has arisen. I believe the Minister should give an indication of what the Government proposes to do to resolve the problem.

Although there is an amending Bill on the notice paper with regard to water supply charges in country areas, I think members should know of some situations which have been brought to my notice. I will cite them and ask the Minister whether some concession will be allowed on the payment of sewerage rates in country areas. The reason I ask the question will become obvious when the figures I am about to quote are understood.

The owner of a block of land in Manjimup was charged \$64 for water rates last year, and he used 17c-worth of water. This year he has been charged \$624 for rates, and he has used no water at all. His business premises went from \$110 to \$350. That is a very steep increase and I am wondering how the formula proposed by the Minister will work in that case.

Mr O'Connor: The premises which were rated at \$110 last year will be charged \$165 this year.

Mr H. D. EVANS: In another case the rates increased from \$200 in 1978-79 to \$450 for 1979-80.

Mr O'Connor: That will be reduced also.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Will the full assessed rate be payable in 1980-81?

Mr O'Connor: No. No-one will pay more than 50 per cent over and above the previous year's rates.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Within four years that person will pay the full assessed rates.

Mr O'Connor: The reduced rate will not apply in the case of a vacant block of land on which, say, flats were built. The member probably understands that.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I will refer now to sewerage rating. One account went from a nominal charge of \$10 last year to \$2 174 this year. That was in the town of Manjimup. Another example is \$4 300 for water rates and \$2 800 for sewerage rates. The increase in sewerage rates probably was due to the fact that the shire council put in a sewerage scheme some years ago and the nominal rate formerly charged was to cover the cost of maintenance. Now that the scheme has been connected to the PWD system, the rates have suddenly gone from \$10 to \$2 800, which is a tremendous increase. The other account I mentioned went up to \$2 174. The rates are assessed on the gross rental value, and individual ratepayers are paying 22 per cent—10 per cent on water and 12 per cent on sewerage.

So 22 per cent on the gross rental value is a very considerable increase, and it probably applies in many other towns. I have not had an opportunity to follow this through. With amounts of this size, relief given through the water rating would be very much appreciated, and would be quite significant to such clients.

Mr O'Connor: In one case you said it went from \$10 to \$4 300, and \$2 800 for sewerage.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That is right, \$2 800 for sewerage and \$4 300 for water. The other one I mentioned went from \$10 to \$2 174 for sewerage and \$1 800 for water. So the impact is considerable, and whether it was the intention of the Government to extend that to sewerage ratings in towns where this predicament has arisen would be—

Mr O'Connor: If they were paying only \$10 for sewerage, they were not paying much.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That was under the shire scheme.

Mr O'Connor: I cannot give an answer offhand.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I know many people would appreciate the Minister's looking at it and replying.

Mr Laurance: Is this a valuation which was adopted this year?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes, it was an increase in valuation.

Mr O'Connor: Changed circumstances from a shire operation to a board operation.

Mr Laurance: It must have been a long time since the land was revalued.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It was a matter of some years anyway. These were the matters I wished to raise now to give the Minister the opportunity to reply.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [12.34 p.m.]: I acknowledge the comments of the honourable member. I will endeavour to answer off-the-cuff his remarks about the build-up of areas where clearing bans apply, and I will obtain replies from the Minister for Water Supplies at a later stage.

We are quite sympathetic to those people who are prevented from operating an economic unit because of the clearing bans. The Public Works Department has investigated to see whether something can be done to obtain some adjoining property which is not under a ban. However, the honourable member must understand also that we have the problem of trying to keep the area as salt free as possible in the interests of the whole farming community. I am sure we have no disagreement about that.

The member referred to one property that had been purchased and was deteriorating. Amongst other things, it is now a fire hazard. If he will give me the details, I will take this matter up with the department to see what can be done. The suggestion that some person operates the cleared area may be feasible, but the reason for the repurchase may have been to allow a regrowth because of problems in the area.

The member for Warren referred also to the speed of purchase. Certainly I believe we should inconvenience people as little as possible. He referred to a figure of \$101 000. Again, if the member will supply me with the name of the person involved and other details, I will endeavour to expedite the purchase. Once arrangements are made we are keen to get things cleaned up.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Looking ahead, is there any problem with funding?

Mr O'CONNOR: No. I understand sufficient funds are available. However, if too many claims were made at the one time, there may be difficulties.

The reason for the bans is well known to all members, and well known to the people in the farming community. Initially some people were inconvenienced and we want to minimise the

inconvenience and ensure they are compensated adequately.

In the case of the three individuals referred to, if the breaches were not of consequence, something may be done, but in the case of people who break the law deliberately, despite advice from the department, I have very little sympathy for them.

While the member was on his feet I tried to explain my opinion about the rating system. He said one individual had paid \$110 originally, and it went up to \$350. The increase in the next year was \$55, making his payment \$165. The year after that the increase was \$82, making a total of \$247. The year after that the increase was \$123, making a total of \$370 at that stage. That is how I see it on a quick calculation. If the member wants a copy of the figures I have written down I would be quite happy to give it to him. By way of interjection I asked him about the case where the increase was from \$10 to \$4 328. What town was this?

Mr H. D. Evans: Manjimup.

Mr O'CONNOR: As I said, this was originally a shire scheme, obviously subsidised very heavily by the shire to keep the figure down. I cannot give an answer to this off-the-cuff. However, I will follow it up with the Minister over the luncheon suspension and I will give him an answer.

Vote: Public Works and Buildings, \$54 472 000—put and passed.

Vote: Department of Tourism, \$3 482 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$1 630 000—

Mr BERTRAM: As in so many other divisions, there is a listing here for "Provision for salary adjustments". In this case the estimate for 1979-80 is \$57 000. There is no point at all in simply having estimates plucked out of the sky. Perhaps the Treasurer himself does not know how the amounts are worked out, but his advisers must have an idea. How can this Committee say that \$57 000 is acceptable if it does not have the faintest idea how it is calculated?

As is his wont, when I asked the Treasurer for some information on this matter, he produced a slurry of words, after which the Leader of the Opposition—who had been listening intently—said, "One would need to be Einstein to understand that."

The Opposition wants to know whether this amount of \$57 000 is right or wrong, and whether it is realistic and can be justified. How has it been calculated? There must be some figures

somewhere which provide so many dollars for certain contingencies, and so many dollars for other contingencies.

We know there are some 14 000 civil servants in this State who are seething with dissatisfaction as to their maltreatment in respect of remuneration. I am not one of those people who enthuses greatly about salaries being kicked up and up; I think many people, including members of Parliament, are overpaid.

Mr Nanovich: Are you overpaid?

Mr BERTRAM: I think I am. However, while I may have doubts in respect of my own situation, I have no doubts in the case of the member for Whitford; he certainly is overpaid. Many people are overpaid, and a lot of them are white-collar workers.

Mr Nanovich: You have never done a good day's work in your life.

Mr BERTRAM: That is utterly untrue. The member for Moore is laughing at the member for Whitford; he should try to be a little more astute in choosing his interjections.

This \$57 000 has not been plucked out of the heavens; if it has, the Government should confess, and tell us about it. The 14 000 civil servants who feel they have a very real grievance recently expressed their grievances at an overflow meeting at the Concert Hall, which they are going to repeat shortly at the Entertainment Centre, the first venue being inadequate for their numbers. If there is any substance to their grievance, this \$57 000 sounds thoroughly inadequate.

Sitting suspended from 12.45 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr BERTRAM: When the Leader of the Opposition heard what was purported to be information supplied by the Treasurer in respect of this item—provision for salary adjustments—he said one would need to have the wisdom of Einstein. We should at least have the record clear in that regard.

As frequently occurs, the Treasurer let fly with a splurge of verbiage which was very difficult to follow. I may have mentioned earlier that approximately 14 000 civil servants are aggrieved because they are not receiving a fair deal in regard to their salaries. They are not asking for huge pay increases. They are simply asking for something that faintly resembles justice.

On the face of it, that will mean a sizeable increase in wages. The current wages bill for the State is approximately \$618 million. If we add 15 per cent to that, members can see the dimensions of the increases involved.

A number of other instrumentalities and organisations usually benefit from increases given to civil servants. The amount of money involved, therefore, assumes significant proportions.

Most responsible people are concerned about wages getting out of proportion in terms of the economy; but I do not believe the people of this State are happy to see civil servants, or anybody else, getting a rough deal and being required to work for an unfair rate of pay. I do not believe Western Australians think that is decent or fair and I am sure they are not prepared to allow that to happen.

It is not uncommon—in fact it occurs quite frequently—for Governments to score from industrial strikes and disputation. Generally conservative Governments score as a result of industrial strife. In fact, they go out of their way to do so. Learned people of standing in the community acknowledge that. Governments create situations so that industrial strife will occur as a result of which they will score. Conservative Governments feast off strikes; prior to elections being held they go to bed praying that they will occur.

Mr Grewar: Where did you get that from?

Mr BERTRAM: This is my opinion as a result of observations and experience over a number of years.

Mr Grewar: You have made the wrong deductions.

Mr BERTRAM: A number of learned people support my arguments in this regard. These people are more learned than the member who has just interjected.

At the present time I understand the Public Service Board will not even discuss matters let alone negotiate with civil servants. It must be remembered also that the civil servants do not have a right of appeal.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order! I ask the member to relate his comments to the item he is discussing, which is provision for salary adjustments.

Mr BERTRAM: I would be delighted to do that, because the \$57 000 involved in this item concerns the matter to which I am referring; that is, allowance for increases in salaries. It does not necessarily mean increases in the conventional sense, but upward adjustments of salaries. That is the very matter I am discussing at the moment. Unless the Government stirs itself, tremendous inconvenience will be caused to the public as a result of industrial upheaval. The Government is

sitting there and allowing this situation to develop.

Mr H. D. Evans: Praying for it.

Mr BERTRAM: Not only is the Government praying for it to happen, it will also prey on the situation when it occurs. That is obvious to members on this side of the Chamber. We know what is happening; but the general public do not know and it is my duty to inform them of the situation. The Opposition is no happier about the matter than are the civil servants.

Against that background, I ask the Minister handling the matter to give us clear, concise answers which are readily understood in arithmetical terms. We do not want a splurge of words which are difficult to understand. We want an arithmetical sum which is easily understood.

We would like a table to show that "X" represents salary adjustments, "Y" represents such-and-such, "Z" represents such-and-such, and unclassified, such-and-such, with a total of \$57 000. That would not be a very hard task and I feel quite sure members of the Government understand our request. We do not want to strain the friendship or waste any time, but we ask the Minister to provide that information.

Mr JAMIESON: Item No. 1 provides salaries and wages for offices set up in various parts of Australia. Indeed, it covers the salary of the director, and the salaries of his officers in the Perth office. For a long time I have been suggesting we should reach out further with regard to tourism. We have a very good direct international airline service. I understand that Garuda has now joined the Perth run, which is already serviced by Cathay Pacific, Malaysia Airlines, and Singapore Airlines.

I believe it is time we encouraged JAL to arrange flights to Perth because the Japanese people are tremendous tourists. They travel all over the world and we do not seem to be getting our fair share of their tourist traffic in view of the fact that we do a considerable amount of trade with them.

I have suggested previously that we should look at establishing tourist premises in other countries. If anything failed in the direction of tourism, particularly in this 150th year, it was the failure to promote our State in Hong Kong and Singapore. The publicity was concentrated too much first of all on our own people and, secondly, on people living in the other States. There was very little necessity to advertise to our own people because they know what is going on, and their cousins in the other States are usually the next to know what is going on here.

Very little advertising of our 150th year was done in the places visited by the majority of tourists. Long ago I suggested that we should set up a tourist office in Singapore. That would be a very good public relations exercise, and it would allow the tourist people to enter the scene. Possibly, an office could be opened in Hong Kong also.

If we had a tourist office in Singapore we could probably direct a good percentage of tourists to enter or leave Australia through Perth. At present, vast numbers of tourists fly directly to the Eastern States. Tourists are very important from the point of view of the money they would spend here, and also because as a result of their association they would become aware of what is available in this State. The more visitors we have, the more ambassadors there will be for Western Australia.

Despite my protestations and cajoling the Government has opened an office in Brisbane. The climate in Queensland is somewhat similar to that in our State and I do not believe great masses of tourists would want to come to this State from Queensland. Queensland is also the State which is furthest away from Western Australia. I think it might have been better to set up a branch of the tourist bureau in Hobart, Tasmania, because of the difference in climatic conditions in that State and this. I noticed that Tasmania is setting up an office in Perth so that State must believe it will be able to get tourists from Western Australia.

The Tasmanians probably are more akin to travel than people living in the other States. Tasmania is a small State, and the people there are tuned to travelling to other States during their holidays. I think it is important that we establish an office there.

I want to place on record, again, that I think it is a failure on the part of conservative Governments not to move into the Singapore tourist market. It is close to us, and one we can be associated with readily. We have friendly airlines. I understand that some agencies act indirectly for Western Australia, but it would be far better if we had our own direct agency for tourism. I do not understand why we do not branch out.

Our office in London comes under the Premier's Department, and it handles any inquiries. Presumably, our Tokyo office does the same thing, to some extent. However, it does not act to the extent which is necessary if want to get into the tourist market which is readily available from Japan.

Sir Charles Court: On the question of a Singapore office, I have announced a timetable

for its establishment. I made that release this morning. It will provide a Singapore/Malaysian network. The timetable is for us to go into Jakarta the next year, and to have a link with the whole of the Asian area. I agree there is potential.

Mr JAMIESON: Will it be a direct branch of the tourist bureau?

Sir Charles Court: Yes, a branch of the tourist bureau.

Mr JAMIESON: Something has been achieved at last. I cannot remember when I first advocated an office in Singapore, but it was during the time of the Brand Government. It is not a good reflection on any past Government, whether Liberal or Labor, that an office has not been set up.

Anyway, it is good to know there are some moves along those lines, and eventually we will see the results. In view of our influence and association with the Japanese people, it is high time we encouraged the JAL airline system—which is rather big in the international field—to think about direct flights or one-stop flights via Taipei from Japan to Western Australia. They could be beneficial in the years to come, particularly if the North-West Shelf project gets off the ground and many international companies are engaged for a number of years on projects associated with it and moving personnel back and forth.

I suggest we should be looking at an office in Tasmania and also in Canberra itself, which is another place where we are out of it. Canberra is now virtually a State. It is a Federal territory which has a population nearly as large as that of Tasmania. It is a good place to get out of at some periods of the year when it is very cold and very hot. There seems to be less unemployment in Canberra, too, and perhaps there are more people who have the money to go on tour. It would be a distinct advantage to open a small office in that area. We might be able to set up our own CIA-type system on a permanent basis to find out what is going on in Canberra, rather than rely on our representatives.

They are some suggestions I make in respect of expanding the tourist industry, which is beneficial to us not only from a financial point of view but also from the point of view of establishing better contacts with other parts of the world.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I was disappointed to see the allocation to tourism, particularly with regard to assistance which is available in a number of ways.

I draw attention first of all to a matter to which I have referred in the past and about which I have

subsequently asked further questions to see whether tourism could be stimulated in the lower south-west to take up the slack which will result as other industries decrease. The timber industry south of Donnybrook will not be very progressive. Hardwood cutting has been reduced by 19 per cent. The woodchip industry has come up to the level permitted under the agreement and it cannot go beyond that. During the currency of the next five-year working programme laid down by the Forests Department we can expect a further cutback in intake to the mills by, I suspect, at least another 20 per cent. That being so, the level of the timber industry will not increase but will remain on a plateau or steadily decline.

The softwood industry will provide some employment and will probably take up the decreasing employment opportunities in the hardwood industry, but only in the plantation work, haulage, and similar operations. Processing and manufacture will be undertaken in the Dardanup-Donnybrook region. Therefore, no real prospect of advancement can be seen for the major industry in the area south of Donnybrook.

The trends in farming are very clear until the year 2000. These show the number of farmers will decrease but there will be a corresponding increase in the size of properties. This will reflect on commercial activity in the towns throughout the lower south-west.

This trend is indicated in the most recent report to which I have access; that is, "Employment and Population in the South-West, 1976-1990", compiled by the Department of Industrial Development. The population figures for the four shire areas of Bridgetown, Greenbushes, Boyup Brook, and Manjimup in the Blackwood subdivision were 16 149 in the 1966 census, 14 940 in the 1971 census, and 14 400 in the 1976 census. So we are looking at a decline over six years of something like 2 000. The opportunities to increase population and economic activity are not great.

Vegetable processing and horticulture offer a good long-term resolution, although it will not be dramatic or significant unless an export market develops, such as that with cauliflowers to Singapore. Even so, it could not be expected to be dramatic in the short term up to the year 1990. The only immediate opportunity is through the tourist industry, and development through private industry will not be rapid enough to take up the slack in population and economic and commercial activity to which I have alluded.

There is a need for grants, advances, and a form of assistance perhaps through concessional

rates of interest to those who establish a facility, be it a caravan park, a lodge, or any other form of activity.

I see the scenic railway between Pemberton and Northcliffe as being a central point and certainly a major attraction. I believe further investigation of this line has been called for. If so, it could well be that the future of the line is in jeopardy. It is probably one of the costliest sections of country railway line in this State. The bridges of concrete and steel and the one remaining bridge of wooden piles—seven in all—must have considerably increased the cost per mile of that 22-mile section, but the route has a mixture of scenic attractions. It follows three river courses, goes over the watersheds, and covers a great diversity of scenic beauty from the pure karri forest to farmland, jarrah, and the sandplain type of flora and fauna.

This is the sort of innovation which would provide a focal point for tourism, and the cost of it would not be extreme; it would be somewhere in the order of \$30 000 initially, and \$60 000 would cover its provision plus its operation for a full year. Certainly even if the worst happened and it was discarded, the total loss would be in the order of \$10 000, even allowing for the operating expenses of personnel and the like. That would be a small sum in the overall capital expenditure.

This is a matter which should be examined closely, and a pilot scheme should be installed. I know the Leader of the Opposition is committed to do this should he be in a position to provide the innovation. I would like to feel the present Government would do the same.

The answer to the question I asked on the 28th October indicates that a feasibility study is being conducted by a committee, and the whole matter is under examination. That means another tourist season will be over before even a decision is made in respect of the feasibility study.

Funds should be made available for the purposes I have suggested. Priority should be given to the areas about which I have expressed immediate concern; these matters should be high on the priority list from the point of view of decentralisation, as well as from the point of view of the establishment of a tourist facility in the State to relieve the pressures on the existing facility as the metropolitan area expands.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am rather surprised by the comment made by the member for Warren which indicated a depressing attitude exists in the south-west of the State. No doubt that depression will continue while we have depressed members representing the area who do not do what they can to assist. We have a limited amount of money

available for tourism and it must be spent not only in the south-west but also throughout the rest of the State.

The member for Welshpool referred to Singapore, and the Premier advised him that action has already been taken in that respect. We must get our priorities right and endeavour to place our money where we believe it will be of the greatest benefit to the community.

The member for Warren says the Government should do certain things in the south-west. Frankly, if he and his party did a little more to help, we would have more stability and activity in the area. Almost every project to bring activity to the south-west has been opposed by members opposite in one way or another. I refer to Alwest, the wood chip industry, Wagerup, and various other operations. Members opposite have not said "We support this; let us get on with it." Instead we have had tacit opposition all the way through, which has caused some of the problems referred to by the member for Warren.

Mr H. D. Evans: That is utter rubbish.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Opposition has not supported these things.

Mr B. T. Burke: We originally sponsored Alwest; have you forgotten that?

Mr O'CONNOR: At the moment we have a proposition to train people for work on the North-West Shelf project; and obviously some of those people will come from the south-west. Has the member for Warren supported that scheme?

Mr B. T. Burke: We have not opposed it.

Mr O'CONNOR: No, but the Opposition has not supported it. Here we have fence sitters; they are people who should be helping to get things moving, but instead they are sitting by and doing nothing.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are wrong about Alwest and the wood chip industry, and now you are changing your tack on the other matter.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am not wrong, and the member for Balcatta knows it.

Mr B. T. Burke: We supported that industry.

Mr O'CONNOR: Initially members opposite raised opposition to it; I am referring to wood chips.

Mr B. T. Burke: We signed the contract.

Mr Bryce: Who signed the contract?

Mr O'CONNOR: It does not matter who signed the contract; I am referring to what happened initially. That industry has provided jobs for people in Western Australia.

If we had the support of members opposite in connection with these projects we could get more done. I believe we could do with more money for tourism, just as we could spend more money in any area. However, the increase in the vote is 13 or 14 per cent, which is not a bad increase in these times. If we had more money we would spend it, but if we put more money into tourism now we would have to take it from another area. Why do not members opposite come forward and support us in respect of these projects?

Mr H. D. Evans: You have the support now. What are you going to do?

Mr O'CONNOR: Are members opposite supporting all these projects?

Mr H. D. Evans: We have, haven't we?

Mr O'CONNOR: No.

Mr H. D. Evans: We initiated the wood chip project.

Sir Charles Court: Don't talk rot; it was initiated by me when I was Minister for Industrial Development.

Mr B. T. Burke: Here is old "Sir I Did Everything".

Mr O'CONNOR: The Tonkin Government did not initiate the wood chip industry; it was opposed to it initially. Now members opposite are trying to take the credit for something they did not do. That is typical of them.

Mr H. D. Evans: The Leader of the Opposition and myself went east to get that licence.

Mr O'CONNOR: They might have gone east then but they went west in 1974, and that is where they will stay.

In reply to the member for Warren, I say members opposite are sitting on the fence now even in connection with the job training programme which will train our young people in preference to letting them go away. Members opposite are not concerned about those things any more than they are concerned about tourism; they are concerned only about making a noise.

Mr H. D. Evans: You are a bit short on argument.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Government believes it should try to keep things moving. We will try to get more to spend on tourism throughout the State; but to do so now we would have to take it from some other place. At the moment we feel the amount allocated to tourism is fair. As and when funds become available we will spend them in the areas of greatest priority.

Vote put and passed.

Part 6: Minister for Labour and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Immigration, Fisheries and Wildlife and Conservation and the Environment—

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [2.47 p.m.]: It is with great reluctance—

Mr Bryce: Yes, with great reluctance.

Mr SKIDMORE: —and some personal loss—

Mr O'Connor: I will meet you half way.

Mr Bryce: A man of honour.

Mr Sibson: We will give you half a case for five minutes.

Mr SKIDMORE: —that I rise to speak, due to an arrangement which is well known to the Minister and the member for Cottesloe.

I would like to deal with the part in general. In speaking to officers of the Department of Labour and Industry I find morale is extremely low. I find the Government has instituted a system of not increasing the number of officers available to carry out the work of the department. The department has some dedicated servants who are endeavouring to do a job under extreme difficulty due to the attitude of the Government and its failure to recognise the need to expand the department. I am not aware whether the overtures made by the officers—or by whoever made them—to the Government are receiving attention.

All I can say is that recently I took to the department the question of underpayment of wages in several areas of industry in the Midland district. One of those complaints was taken up at my request, and it was looked at by a senior officer of the department. He did a time-and-wages book investigation. That is a waste of a resource.

If one is to have a senior departmental officer doing what is virtually a junior industrial officer's job, one must then say, "What is wrong with the department? It must be understaffed?" If it is not understaffed, one must say, "What is the department doing, having such a highly paid public servant doing a job which could be done by junior staff?" I believe this shows that the Department of Labour and Industry is undermanned.

It should be remembered that the demands on inspectors in the department for the policing of awards will increase in the future. This Government saw fit to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act, or to bring in a new Industrial Arbitration Bill, which destroyed the ability of unions to have members to look after the underpayment of wages, especially. There will be an increasing number of workers who will not be members of unions. Those people will have to

come under the protection of the department on industrial issues. That relates particularly to the underpayment of wages, which is rife throughout industry and rife in my electorate. Small businesses, which are feeling the pinch of the Government's economic planning, are passing their problems to their workers. The ones asked to help the businesses to become viable economic identities are the workers who are subject to the underpayment of wages. If the department is not aware of that, it should be.

I am told that officers in the department who wish to complete briefs on prosecutions are not allowed to work overtime unless they receive permission from a superior officer. That is a calamity. The morale of the people in the department is so low they feel it is a waste of time inspecting time-and-wages books because they cannot process complaints and they cannot take prosecutions against employers because they are not allowed to complete their briefs.

If the officers complete a brief to go before the industrial magistrate, in some strange, inexplicable fashion the departmental head decides that no prosecution will be taken. That is not right.

If the Government has said to workers covered by union activity, "You shall not go on strike; it is unlawful", I agree with that. It is a fair statement to be made. However, when it applies to an employer robbing a worker of his wages, the department invariably declines to prosecute the employer. It means the employer merely pays the back wages due to the worker, with no penalty. If the employer is able to do that, he may do it again. If he is prosecuted and given to understand that he cannot break the law with impunity, that protects the workers and their wages.

I do not want to be misunderstood by the Minister. I am not criticising the employees of the department, or the job they do. The officer handling the case I have mentioned was a person of integrity. I believe he did the best he could under the circumstances. All I am saying is that it is not right or proper for these officers not to be able to complete their work because they are not able to work overtime.

There is a snowballing effect. Eventually, the policing of awards stops completely. Unless a complaint is made to the department, there is no effort made to service the workers.

By the Industrial Arbitration Bill the Government has removed from the unions the people who need the protection. Such people will look to the department for protection, and the department will be in big trouble unless there is

an increase in funding and an increase in the number of inspectors to do this job. There will have to be a change of attitude by the department. The present attitude is, "If the worker breaks the law, slam him; stick a fine on him—\$500, \$200." When an employer breaks the law, the negotiations in the past have been to recover wages, but not to do anything to the employer because he is breaking the law. I find it abhorrent that those standards should prevail in a department which has as its mandate the policing of awards.

Mr Shalders: Do you suggest, if he is overpaid, he ought to be fined for taking it?

Mr SKIDMORE: There is a clause in the new Bill which says people are not allowed to contract outside the terms of the award. If they do, the benefits derived from the contract are theirs to keep.

Mr Shalders interjected.

Mr SKIDMORE: I think I gave the member for Murray his answer.

Mr Shalders: It is totally one-sided. I am not suggesting that sometimes it may not be deliberate; but it could be accidental.

Mr SKIDMORE: I think some members of the Minister's Industrial Relations Committee learn from me about industrial relations. I suggest they do their ruddy homework in the future.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order!

Mr SKIDMORE: "Ruddy", Mr Deputy Chairman. They should do their ruddy homework in the future, and let me talk about the things with which I want to deal.

Mr Shalders: You are confusing the issue entirely.

Mr SKIDMORE: So much for the part before us. I could possibly go on to other matters in relation to the activities of the department, but I will leave that until the specific divisions.

I want to deal with the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. I find the lack of funds for research purposes in the department is a calamity. There is a great deal of research being done into the rock lobster industry, and this is right and proper.

The rock lobster industry is a good export income earner. It is an industry into which there is controlled entry. It is policed. Where research is carried out, a fishery can be established in Western Australia and it can be profitable to those in the industry and to the Government. However, the manner in which this Government has gone about the question of research into fisheries in Albany is an absolute disaster. It has

left it to private enterprise to provide funds for the fishing industry. It has said to the industry, "You can go into the fishing grounds, and if you prove them, your capital expenditure for your factories, your luggers, and your trawlers will be justified."

When I lived in the Albany area I learnt of the experiences of the fishing ventures at the time. Trawlers were fishing in the Bight but they failed because the fishing in the area had not been proved. The Southern Ocean Fish Processors Pty. Ltd. trawlers failed; there was a great loss of capital and a loss of employment to the people the company was forced to put off because of the closure of that industry. The responsibility for this rests squarely on the shoulders of this Government. The Government failed to recognise the fact that the fishing companies should not have to go out and research the areas for new fisheries. They have to be proved first. It is similar to having a bad sand plain which is sold off to people without finding out beforehand whether it can be developed for the growing of wheat, etc. That is the barren attitude expressed by this Government when it comes to the question of research into the fishing industry.

If research had been done in the Albany area, it would have shown that there were a diverse number of fish which could be trawled from the Bight. It also would have shown that the plant put in by the Southern Ocean Trawlers was not suitable because the fish filleters could not handle the catch. They were losing too much; some were going through and all sorts of fish were being chewed up; it was just one big mess. If the research had been done we would have known about this problem.

Hunts Canning Company Pty. Ltd. which is now known as Hunts Foods Pty. Ltd. is another example of a company which has shouldered the research into fisheries over the years without any help from this Government.

However, what we find today is that we have overseas fisheries—the Korean and Taiwanese and others—coming in to establish that we can have a well-developed fishing industry. The squid industry is an example where the fish are caught and exported without any benefit whatsoever to the fishing industry in Western Australia. The majority of the catch is sold overseas by these entrepreneurs who have come in and proved that it is possible to fish because they have the expertise to carry this out.

If we went to our local industry and said we wished its members to convert their deep-sea prawn trawlers for squid fishing, the capital expenditure would not allow them to do this. The

Federal and State Governments have failed to recognise the problems of finance in the industry.

The squid-fishing industry will probably prove to be viable, but I doubt very much that any benefit will accrue to our fishermen because they have not been able to proceed in a proper way. There has been a farm-out arrangement where companies have been tied up in a cartel arrangement with fishermen by virtue of the fact that they are lending money to the fishermen to get them started. There is then a tied market and this is not good.

Another problem of research is highlighted by the example of the tuna fishing down south. These companies started off in the early stages of tuna fishing with totally inadequate boats. These boats went out into seas for which the boats were not built, but they were dedicated fishermen and proved that they could develop a very good tuna fishing industry. This is in Albany and along the south coast, and particularly in Esperance where many tuna fishermen are established.

There is a complete lack of understanding by the Government with regard to the question of helping the fishing industry. The industry should have assistance to enable it to buy larger boats which have adequate refrigerator and freezing capacities so that the fishermen can stay out week after week, as some foreign fishing vessels do.

According to Press statements—I may be wrong but this is my understanding—there will be an improvement in the fishing industry when Hunts Foods Pty. Ltd. receive assistance from an overseas venturer. Hunts at least had a “go”; it tried fishing down south, and at long last its efforts have been recognised. However, the State Government is not contributing any of the capital; it has all been provided by private enterprise.

One may say, “Why should not private enterprise contribute?” The failure of the Southern Ocean Fish Processors Pty. Ltd. in Albany and the previous trawling venture in the Bight were the result of capital not being available and because the Government did not support the industry in the first place.

Mr O'Connor: In other words, the Government should lose the money first.

Mr SKIDMORE: This is a food resource for Western Australia and it would be expected that it would be the responsibility of the Government to prove whether or not the proposition was viable and whether or not it should be proceeded with. It should research the matter so that the fishermen would know whether the tuna, jack mackerel, or whatever, would be sufficient for a viable fishing industry and whether it could be developed.

As an example, in the Eastern States the gem fishing industry started out of Port Lincoln. It was found to be a winner and it was thought it would be the salvation of many of the fishermen there. However, it was overfished, the market was oversupplied, and people became sick of that type of fish. Now, that industry is almost redundant.

Mr O'Connor: There is very little of it here.

Mr SKIDMORE: The point I am making is that if it can be established that so many tonnes can be fished in a season it could be done on a regular basis; that is, if research has been carried out. I do not deny that a lot of research has been undertaken in regard to the rock lobster industry, and especially with the marine centre at Marmion.

The Government should realise that research should be carried out to establish our food resources of the future and to allow our fishermen to upgrade or alter their vessels or even obtain new fishing vessels with refrigeration plants, etc.

I do not think I have to remind members that the South Coast Fisheries Study indicated the lack of research by the Department of Fisheries on the salmon and herring fishing in the south. The figures for that type of fishing indicated a great lack of research and understanding of that industry.

After something like 30 years of competitive fishing on the south coast, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife does not have accurate and up-to-date statistics on catches. It has some nebulous statistics which establish nothing other than that a catch takes place at Cheynes Beach or somewhere else. No research has been undertaken to establish why or where there are fluctuations in the salmon industry. It is time we had information along those lines. The report of the South Coast Fisheries Study was rather critical of the department in this regard.

Mr Shalders: The crayfishermen are most appreciative of the fact that the study group did not recommend any alteration in the classification of herring. You, as a member of that committee, should be congratulated.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not want to canvass the matter of herring as a food fish. I am happy to express an opinion on it but this is not the time to do so. I have already addressed 14 or 15 public meetings on the matter. There is no secret about where we stand.

Mr Shalders: I am saying the recommendation was appreciated.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is fine.

I want to pay a tribute to the officers employed in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Without a progressive department or a progressive Government looking after the department, their motivation will taper off and the sharp edge of officers who are professionally interested in fisheries will be blunted. However dedicated they are, if they are subjected to the pressure of no development and no research because the Government does not want it, why should they prove to the Government that these activities should be undertaken?

I move on to conservation and the environment. I believe in the future this area of endeavour of Governments will become increasingly important in the life of Western Australians, Australians, and other people throughout the world. As we progress to the year 2000 we will find an ever-increasing need to provide places where people may undertake various activities because they will probably not be working but will be receiving a remuneration. They will need to engage in sporting or other activities in the forests and at the beaches so that they will retain some dignity. We must consider the question of increasing the staff of the department.

I find it rather strange that a document which was prepared by officers of the EPA in March, 1979, was not made public by the Minister for Industrial Development until yesterday. It sets out the EPA's thoughts on the Worsley alumina project. I do not know why it was kept so secret.

Mr O'Connor: It is not secret.

Mr SKIDMORE: It was not released until yesterday. I checked with the Minister's office half an hour before we resumed today and was informed the report was given to the Minister for Industrial Development as soon as it was prepared in March. He has had it ever since and would not release it.

Page 1 of the report contains a very good explanation of the needs of land use in the Darling Range environment. It says—

In the south west of Western Australia there is a combination of factors which results in a delicately balanced and fragile environment and which presents considerable technical difficulties to its land use development. Geological history is such that old landscapes with low relief, poor drainage and deep and extreme weathering are widely preserved. The development of bauxite ores in the Darling Range is one result of this combination but it also means that the top ten metres or so of soils in this area are

coarse textured and deficient in the major and many of the minor nutrient elements.

Reference is made to the natural eco-systems, and I repeat what has been said in previous debates about the removal of the forest and the ability of plants with extensive root systems to seek out the salt water and draw it off instead of leaving it to be carried into the rivers and streams.

The report deals with the salinity of rivers which could be dammed in the future. The Hotham and Williams Rivers are already saline. If we could get to the headwaters and tributaries and take that water off, we would have fresh water in those headwater streams. However the Hotham and Williams Rivers would become more salty and destroy thousands of hectares of productive land in those valleys. The EPA is aware of this situation and expresses its concern.

The report states further—

Integrated planning of mining and water supply development is clearly required. Further, it is in the State's long term interest to conserve the forest cover, or to replace it effectively if it is removed by mining.

The next part is very significant. In relation to reforestation the report states—

There are as yet no tested and proven techniques for reafforestation of low rainfall areas, and their development is an urgent research requirement.

Again we come back to research. Again in a matter relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Industrial Development we have the EPA saying it is about time some research was undertaken, but to my knowledge no research at all is being undertaken into reforestation in the low rainfall areas, if I read the report correctly.

I would like to have much of this report recorded in *Hansard*. I am not taking extracts out of context; I am highlighting matters which indicate concern on the part of the EPA about the Darling scarp, the south-west forests, and the eco-system. I continue quoting from the report—

These problems clearly call for research. Since mining is unlikely to take place outside State Forest for a number of years there will be time to make some progress in investigations if the work is begun soon.

We have a Government which professes to adopt a responsible attitude towards the environment and conservation, but a Minister who has had an important report such as this since March of this year does not table it for nine months. Environmentalists and members of the Hunt Committee and other committees have not been

able to see it until now. The report states that it is time this matter was investigated.

Mr O'Connor: Aren't the members involved on that committee on the Hunt Committee?

Mr SKIDMORE: I could indicate the degree of overlapping.

This report confirms what we have been saying for some time—there is a disjointed effort by many dedicated people in regard to the environment, not only in regard to the Darling Range, but also in regard to our wetlands, the wood chipping industry, and many other matters. There is a fragmented professional approach—no one has an overriding control of the whole problem.

We find that 50 per cent of the work of one committee has already been undertaken by another committee. Certainly there is a great waste of manpower. In the case of a Government such as the one we have which badly needs production to get it out of its economic mess, it is obvious that it wishes to proceed at any cost to develop the industries which the EPA feels will be detrimental to our environment. Because this Liberal Government wants development so badly, we may never see it accept overall control of this problem. Very clear indications exist that certain activities must be stopped. Statements to this effect are made not simply by the "econuts" but also by many of the people who have the responsibility to care for our environment.

In this report a section is headed "Land Use Planning and Research", and under the subheading, "Salinity Control", the following appears—

They include, for example, the hydraulic properties of soil materials, the salt loads in the soils, water use by plant communities, native or established, and the effects of various engineering type treatments of the land surface.

In the section on dieback the following appears—

The responses of the fragile ecosystem to such impacts can only be understood and manipulated if we know how the system functions.

This is the EPA making recommendations on the Worsley alumina project, and it is saying that the systems and functions are not understood at this stage. The Government is going ahead with a project while the professional people in authority do not know whether it will be good, bad, or indifferent. Under the heading of "Rehabilitation" the report reads—

Revegetation of mined and diseased areas is required, primarily to control the water and salt balances of catchments, and secondarily to permit the restoration of such forest values as timber production, recreation and conservation of flora and fauna.

I wish to quote at reasonable length from page 5 where it says—

Seven State Government departments, CSIRO, the two Universities, WAIT and Alcoa are already involved in various ways in the research.

At present coordination is only partial, and is mainly carried out by the Hunt and Kelsall Steering Committees which oversee a total of 12 projects, often overlapping.

So the overlapping I referred to is verified by the EPA. The report continues—

The Western Australia Water Research Council is promoting research on water use by plant communities (evapotranspiration), and the "Dieback Research Foundation" is arranging to distribute funds contributed by Alcoa.

The summation of the authority's recommendation on the Darling Range authority is as follows—

We therefore repeat here the relevant recommendations from our report on the Wagerup Alumina Refinery Proposal:

that the State establish a means for developing land use policies and options for the Darling Range—

I pause there to point out to members who may be sufficiently interested that the EPA is suddenly saying it is about time we developed policies and options for the Darling Range. I say it is about 10 years too late for that. To continue—

—and for co-ordinating land use planning by the several government agencies concerned.

- (a) that a single research co-ordinating committee be established; it should include adequate representation of the industries contributing funds, together with an equal number of representatives from the State; its function will be to draw up a budget and negotiate contributions from industry and from the State; it will also be responsible for assessing research priorities

- (b) that in addition, there should be specialist committees of scientists responsible for directing and co-ordinating research in particular areas of concern, and for publishing the result.

It is quite obvious that the co-ordination between the departments and the Government is fairly loose.

It is about time the Government gave the EPA the teeth it needs to play the substantial role it should be playing in Western Australia. I know that some members will refer to *Hansard* and say that the Labor Government introduced the legislation to set up the EPA. However, I am not criticising the Government simply to score a political point; I am saying this in the hope that we can benefit the whole community.

I am not unmindful of the fact that on one occasion the EPA reported to the Minister and to the Government on the Darling Range but the Government thought its recommendations were too restrictive. The Government suggested to the EPA that it ought to bring down more amenable recommendations, and of course, the public servants did just that.

I would like to refer to the ERMP which is supposed to be undertaken before mining commences on Herdsman Lake. Of course, my view is that the lake should not be mined at all. There is no need for it. There is no shortage of the minerals the company is seeking in other areas, but of course, they are not so centrally situated. The mining company, with its rapacious appetite, would find it very easy to get the minerals out of Herdsman Lake, and it would make a healthy profit. So again the Government is putting the cart before the horse.

I understand the Minister for Mines has given permission for exploration, and he told us that this would be hand-boring only. There was to be no destruction of the environment in the first instance. My concern is that if attractive deposits of minerals are found, the Government will be only too happy to give him the go-ahead to a commercial undertaking without worrying about the effect on the environment. We must remember that we have lost as much of our wetlands as we are prepared to lose.

I know it will be said, "When we mine the area, we will leave a beautiful spread of water, with no bullrushes. Water fowl and other birds which have disappeared will return to the area." I agree that probably will take place.

However, I believe the Government should be conducting its own research into Herdsman Lake. It should not wait until it has been established that a mining venture could be economically established in the area. If Herdsman Lake needs to be dredged, and if the bullrushes—which I understand to be an exotic plant—should be removed to restore the area to its former significance as wetland and as a haven for bird life, that work should be carried out by the Government, as part of its contribution to the welfare of our society.

The Government should not say it cannot spend the money in this area because it will be criticised; it will not be criticised. People today are seeking guidelines from the Government. They are pleading for something to be done to protect the environment.

No mining should take place at Herdsman Lake; there is no need for it. If there is a need for an area of water to be created, then so be it.

I refer members to that terrible thing called a drain which was installed at Herdsman Lake in the early days, and which was supposed to do so many wonderful things.

Mr O'Connor: You are going back to the 1920s now.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is right; what a disaster that has turned out to be; it is the cause of today's calamity. Bullrushes could not survive in the ecosystem which existed before the drain; however, since the lowering of the water level, the bullrushes have flourished.

The same situation applies with mining. We do not know whether it will do any harm, and we should not proceed simply on the basis we will be left with a nice stretch of water which, supposedly, will encourage water fowl and other birds back to the area. We will not encourage these birds to return to a sterile stretch of water; they want a natural environment.

Mr Coyne: Isn't Lake Monger a classic example of proper development.

Mr SKIDMORE: Lake Monger is a classic example of environmental disaster. Each year, many birds die from botulism because of the pollution of the lake from the leachates from the nearby rubbish tip which are poisoning the entire area.

Mr MacKinnon: One cannot see the lake for birds.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is correct, but the death rate is very high. People driving past do not see the dead birds. The member for Murdoch

would not know how many birds are dying there each year.

Mr Tonkin: He does not care, either.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is right. We should act to protect birds which become endangered. Three species of water fowl are at risk at Herdsman Lake. Surely we should act to protect those birds and in so doing, keep the environment in a better condition.

That concludes my remarks on this part; I will leave my more specific queries to particular items.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [3.34 p.m.]: One of the items in this part is headed "Public Service Arbitrator". Therefore it is timely to recall that the Bill which established the Public Service Arbitrator became law in 1966. That legislation was introduced by a Liberal Government without any consultation with civil servants and, as a result, before it became an Act, 48 amendments were made to that very small Bill.

In consequence of the Government's oppressive stand, and its refusal to deal properly with the civil servants, a huge meeting was held on the 10th November, 1976. There is every reason to believe another huge meeting will be held in the near future, just as a huge meeting was held on about the 9th November this year, which was very close to the 12th anniversary of the 1967 meeting.

It is interesting to observe that whilst the overwhelming preponderance of members of the Civil Service are being shamefully underpaid, the Public Service Arbitrator is in no such position. He is one of those fortunate people who are bracketed with members of Parliament, judges, and others whose remuneration is fixed by a different process, and which increases from time to time without any problems. He would have no reason in the world to be upset about his remuneration.

Politically, it was a great manoeuvre on the part of the Liberal Government of the day to establish a Public Service Arbitrator who was in one realm of wage fixation to administer and adjudicate on people who were in a completely different ball game and who currently are seeking an across-the-board wage increase of some 15 per cent. Of course, they are getting very little response from the Public Service Arbitrator, who I imagine is in rather close consultation with the Government; apparently they are getting no support from the Government, either.

These civil servants can do very little about their dilemma, because section 24(1) of the Public Service Arbitration Act of 1966 states as follows—

24. (1) The Arbitrator may make such awards, orders or decisions as in his opinion are necessary for the proper exercise by him of his jurisdiction under this Act and effect shall be given to those awards, orders or decisions according to their tenor.

It goes on to state in section 25 as follows—

Subject to provisions of sections twenty-one and twenty-six of this Act, no award, order or decision of the Arbitrator made under this Act shall be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed or called in question, or be subject to any prohibition or mandamus, in any Court on any account whatever.

In other words, we have a unique and intolerable situation where these people have no right of appeal, from which it is axiomatic to say that the Public Service Arbitrator never has done any, and can do no wrong.

That is thoroughly unsatisfactory for members of the Civil Service, and, I imagine, a lot of servants of other instrumentalities and authorities whose salaries flow on—in this case do not flow on, because there are not any. They are greatly aggrieved and they believe they should be given a right of appeal. What responsible person believes in this day and age there should not be a right of appeal for these people? Unless something is done about this total position of the correction of wages of civil servants, and through those of servants of instrumentalities, and unless something is done about the ordinary and decent thing, which is the provision of appeal for these people, this State will have industrial disputation once again.

This is not a position which has occurred overnight; it has been developing for years, more particularly in the last couple of years. In this context it is important for us to remember that we are only three months away, or thereabouts, from an election. The public of this State would be well advised to take heed of this developing position and instead of allowing the Government to score from them, they should deal with the Government for its maladministration, humbug, and mischief on this question. The public should not allow the Government to get away with what it has been doing. If the public do not take action they will deserve the consequences which will follow.

I have asked the Treasurer for information on this recurring item in the Estimates; that is, the provision for salary adjustment. I got no satisfaction from him; all I received were words, generalities, and vagueness which might go down with the uninformed members of the public, but does not wash with us.

When speaking to part 5 I asked the Minister for Labour and Industry for some very ordinary information; it was not complex but the sort of thing I am sure he should have understood. Unlike the Treasurer he took a different tack; he totally ignored the inquiry. That means I have to repeat my inquiry, which is time-consuming and exasperating. However, the people are entitled to this information. I point out to the Minister that I am referring to the salary adjustments on page 83. I illustrate that point because it involves an amount of only \$2 000. This is possibly the simplest instance I could put forward to have information supplied.

As we are shortly to break for the afternoon tea suspension, if the Minister does not have the information, I ask that he make the appropriate inquiries with his department or whoever it is who has the key to this apparent mystery as to how this figure is made up. The Opposition wants to know whether the estimate is a serious one or just nonsensical.

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr BERTRAM: I imagine the people of Western Australia also would like to know whether these estimates are real or purely a figment of the Treasurer's imagination.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.02 p.m.

Mr BERTRAM: During the afternoon tea suspension I was reminded of a couple of matters, one of which related to the comments I made about the Public Service Arbitrator when I pointed out that his remuneration is fixed by a different tribunal and under different circumstances altogether from the remuneration of the other 14 000 or so civil servants. I think it is true that when the Public Service Arbitration Act became law in 1966, that was not the case. There was no Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Act at that time, and neither was there other parallel legislation. That seems to me to be not all that unimportant because it puts the Public Service Arbitrator in a different arena in wage and salary fixation and that may be very important with regard to the way he treats the other 14 000 civil servants.

The other point I want to raise may sound cynical. I do not recall an instance myself, but I noticed a correspondent in *The West Australian* had some misgiving about a salary increase to be given to the Civil Service at or about the eve of polling early next year. Well, having observed the lengths to which the Liberal-Country Party conservatives will go in order to win electoral points, one cannot just dismiss that very real possibility. This is what will occur: The civil

servants will receive a substantial increase—or, perhaps more correctly a substantial adjustment—to their salaries at or about election eve, 1980.

The 14 000 civil servants, and the others who will benefit from such an increase should heed that possibility because if the increase is delayed for that length of time, in all probability it will not be made retrospective. The civil servants should not allow themselves to be used in that manner. Their votes may be bought for electoral purposes.

Another matter which one should touch on is that of the State Government Insurance Office which appears in part 6. This Parliament, the 29th Parliament inexorably is drawing to its close. I suppose it will sit for another three or six days, but not for much longer in any event. That means, therefore, yet another Parliament will have reached the end of its deliberations and this Government continues its obsessive role of denying the people of Western Australia freedom of choice. The Liberal Party has a "Big Brother" attitude; it is a manifestation of the Liberal Party policy in 1977; a policy which stated, "You will do what we tell you to do."

Mr B. T. Burke: Firm hands around your throat!

Mr BERTRAM: Yes, a strangle-type grip.

This Government says to the people of Western Australia, "You will buy your insurance from the insurance company from which we tell you to buy your insurance. It is true that you have a State Government Insurance Office in this State, it was born here, it is yours, and we are thankful for all the benefits that flow from it, but we will not permit you, in a large number of cases, to do business with the State Government Insurance Office." That is what the Government tells the people of Western Australia. The Government simply says, through legislation, or through a ministerial direction, that the State Government Insurance Office shall not deal in certain types of business.

Why is that still happening in 1979? The people of Western Australia believe they have reached a degree of maturity where they should be the ones to decide with whom they will do their insurance business, what kind of insurance they will buy, and from whom they will purchase it. They should not be treated in an infantile way.

The State Government Insurance Office has contributed magnificently to this State in many ways. It was, of course, conceived illegitimately, and operated unlawfully under the same forces which now deny the people of this State a choice

in so many things. I am speaking currently about the SGIO which operated here for years illegally, thanks to the courage and determination of certain people who saw the need for it. In any event, it became lawful but ever since then its area of activity—its jurisdiction, if one likes—has been pruned right back.

Endless attempts have been made by the Labor Party in this Chamber, and elsewhere, to try to see that the people of Western Australia were given freedom of choice generally but, particularly at the moment, freedom of choice in respect of insurance.

There is shortly to be established in this State, I imagine, a situation where legal practitioners will—either of their own volition or by force of law, or a mixture of both—be required to insure themselves against possible negligence. Possibly that will be a good thing for the legal practitioners, and certainly efficacious for their clients. I believe the SGIO should be given an opportunity to participate in that form of insurance. If there is a reason that the SGIO should not be allowed to participate, then this Parliament should be told what that reason is. Why should the 1 000 or more legal practitioners in the State of Western Australia be denied the right of choice—their right of choice—to decide which insurance company or organisation they will insure with? Why should the people of Western Australia not be given a choice as to whether they will deal with their own insurance office which is owned by this State; an insurance company which is not controlled from overseas?

Most insurance companies operating in Western Australia, I believe, operate from—and I imagine their profits are siphoned back to—foreign countries. I have no objection to their operating—good luck to them—but why should they have to be protected? Why should foreign organisations be protected against local ones? What is the reason—what meritorious reason is there for that? In fact, there is no good reason at all. Favouring overseas interests in preference to local ones is bad enough, but I am mainly concerned at the moment with the fact that all the citizens of Western Australia, from the northern extremity to the southern extremity, and from the east to the west, are precluded by this Government from contracting insurance with the SGIO in many areas of insurance business. It is not as though there is some degree of restriction; it is an absolute unfettered bar. It demolishes completely the freedom of choice of Western Australians with respect to large segments of insurance interests.

This Government has put out its feelers, and it has got the message back from the public that the people are enthusiastic about freedom of choice. The Government has put out special publications, and at every chance W. W. Mitchell starts squawking about freedom of choice.

Mr Bryce: Perhaps you had better explain who he is.

Mr Jamieson: He is the unofficial Premier.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I suggest more progress will be made if the member confines his remarks to the item.

Mr BERTRAM: That seemed to be a very constructive interjection. I can reply to the interjection by saying that when I read Press comments, I do not know whether they are written by Mitchell or by the Premier. The people are beginning to wonder who is the Premier.

Mr B. T. Burke: They are interchangeable for public purposes.

Mr BERTRAM: If one removed the signature, one would not know who had written something. The Premier should not be a mere puppet. The present situation is embarrassing to the State, and overseas interests are beginning to wonder what is going on here.

The people are told they have freedom of choice because it is electorally helpful. Nobody questions that freedom of choice is denied to the people time and time again by this Government and by this Parliament. If we could pile up the regulations laid on the Table of the House in the last three years, they would reach higher than the ceiling, and each regulation confined the people's rights and their freedom of choice. And yet the Premier tells the people that they have freedom of choice.

I am not concerned at the moment with the general pruning back of the rights of the people; I am concerned now that the freedom of choice of the SGIO virtually does not exist. This efficient organisation could be much more efficient if this Government allowed it to be. The continual pruning back of the activities of the SGIO is an un-Western Australian activity. There is no common sense or logic in it.

I am looking forward to the reply of the Minister. Several times I have asked him about the salary adjustment figure of \$2 000.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [4.17 p.m.]: I would like to mention briefly a few matters under this part. On the 20th November a question was asked about bank holidays over the Christmas period in other States and the Minister replied as follows—

Victoria and Tasmania—both the 24th and 31st December granted as bank holidays.

I will interpolate here to say that if the Monday holiday were granted, bank officers would have a five-day break. That would be of considerable advantage to this section of the industry. The reply continues—

New South Wales—the 31st December only granted as a bank holiday.

South Australia and Queensland—Neither day granted as bank holiday.

This information is not correct. I have checked it out with the Bank Officers' Association and I learnt that in Queensland Christmas Eve has been gazetted a bank holiday. When the Minister was asked why the holidays could not be granted, he replied as follows—

The 24th and 31st December are normal working days in the private sector. It is considered that closure of banks on these days would cause considerable inconvenience to business and the community generally.

As they are normal working days, the banks will close at 3.00 p.m. This means many people will still require to use the bank's facilities after they are closed.

I agree that closing the banks on Christmas Eve could cause some inconvenience to the community, and certainly businesses, but the same does not apply in regard to New Year's Eve.

Trading is very quiet on New Year's Eve, and as I have pointed out, the banks would close at 3.00 p.m. anyway. Most businesses make other arrangements to cover the situation, such as night safes and armoured escort services. I have placed another question on today's notice paper in an effort to gain some updated information on the Queensland situation. No doubt the Minister has been able to find out.

Mr O'Connor: Unfortunately I have not, but there is an indication that there has been a variation.

Mr DAVIES: Yes, I received my information from the Bank Officers' Association. A number of bank officers wrote to me on this matter—it appears as though there has been a "write to your friendly local member" campaign! The member for Gosnells and the member for Dianella received letters also.

Mr O'Neil: I have had six to eight letters myself.

Mr Bryce: Did you make any recommendations?

Mr DAVIES: I am sure the bank officers feel that something will be done.

Mr O'Neil: I have a recollection that when the five-day banking week was introduced, the Bank Officers' Association volunteered not to seek these extra days as holidays. I believe some such deal was agreed to.

Mr DAVIES: That may be so, but as I have said before, we must update our thinking. It was either the Minister or the Premier who based a current attitude on a decision made by the late Mr Strickland in the 1960s. It is certainly time we updated our thinking.

I suggest to the Government that it might win a great deal of support—although members must understand I do not want it to win too much support—if it at least granted the New Year's Eve holiday.

We have had the situation in other years of the banks being closed for a five-day period and it did not cause a great deal of inconvenience. If my memory serves me correctly, the agreement referred to by the Deputy Premier was made many years ago, I think about 1965.

One bank officer wrote to me and asked whether I would be working on the Monday. I replied to him that as this is an election year, I most certainly would be working. However, I added also that if it were not an election year it is London to a brick on that I would not be working. Many other people are receiving this concession from their employers and I do not feel it would be too radical to extend it to bank officers.

The next matter I wish to mention is the printing of pamphlets by the Government. What has happened to the 50 000 pamphlets that the Government had printed to explain away its unexplainable position on industrial arbitration? The printing of these pamphlets cost \$2 311—a blatant example of stealing from the public purse to help the Liberal Party in the forthcoming election. The Government has used similar tactics on a number of other occasions, and it is time to call a halt. Another example was the printing of pamphlets to explain the Government's action in regard to the closure of the Fremantle-Perth railway line. These pamphlets were distributed in the area represented by the member for Cottesloe.

Mr Rushton: You want to get your facts right.

Mr DAVIES: I admit that a few pamphlets were scattered in other areas, but the bulk of them were distributed in the electorate of Cottesloe. That is a gross abuse of power.

Mr Rushton: Are you suggesting the public ought not be informed?

Mr DAVIES: If the Government must justify its decision, it should use its own money. The Opposition uses the media to explain its position on any matter. Why should the Liberal Party be entitled to special conditions? Why did it spend \$16 000 on a newsletter over the past 12 months?

Mr Young: The whole Labor Party campaign will be financed out of public money from Curtin House.

Mr Jamieson: That is a lot of nonsense.

Mr Young: That was the most scurrilous thing that ever happened in the history of Western Australia.

Mr Jamieson: As an accountant you ought to know better.

Mr Young: Absolutely disgusting!

Mr DAVIES: The Minister for Health is throwing a red herring across the trail.

Mr Old: He knows what went on.

Mr DAVIES: The records of Curtin House are open for him to look at at any time. I will take him down there personally. He knows that the Public Health Department had a good deal there.

Mr Jamieson: If it had been paying a reasonable rent, it could have stayed there.

Mr DAVIES: I would be quite happy to show the books to the Minister for Health, the Minister for Transport, and the Minister for Education.

Mr P. V. Jones: A principle is involved.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr DAVIES: There is no principle involved in this.

Mr Rushton: The principle stinks.

Mr DAVIES: It was a normal business transaction. The Minister for Education said there was a principle involved. The Government is without principle because it has looked after its friends for years. One need only look at Vapech House, Claver House, and others which were built under agreements which were entered into before the first sod was turned. It was agreed that the Government would take certain space in those buildings.

Mr Jamieson: All the space.

Mr DAVIES: I want to know what has happened to the pamphlet. Will we see a copy of it? Has it been presented? Where is it to be distributed? How much will it cost to have it distributed? Who wrote the material in the pamphlet? We have posed these questions during

the debate, but the Government has remained silent.

Mr O'Connor: Incorrect.

Mr DAVIES: It cost \$2 311. Where is the pamphlet?

Mr O'Connor: The information was given to the Chamber. How many copies of the pamphlet do you want?

Mr DAVIES: The Minister was going to rush off helter-skelter and table one the following day.

Mr Jamieson: We will take 50 000.

Mr DAVIES: Yes, we will take 50 000 copies—out to the Lake Monger tip.

Mr O'Connor: You are too slow, otherwise you would have got it before.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister is hazy about the distribution of his pamphlets. He said he would rush off helter-skelter to get a pamphlet and table it the next day. This is a 1 400-word pamphlet, of which 50 000 were printed at a cost of \$2 311. That is a matter of stealing from the public purse. The Government spent \$8 246 on pamphlets over the Fremantle rail issue; and it spent \$16 000 on the purchase and distribution of a newsletter designed to promote the Liberal Party concept of development. I am pleased to see that after we queried the latter one, the Government cancelled its contract. That was the kindest thing it could have done.

The Government spent \$11 000 on printing 1 000 copies of the record of its achievement at the time of the last election. Every time we mention this the Premier will not talk about the last one his Government printed; instead he talks about the publication produced by the Tonkin Government.

When section 54B of the Police Act was under attack the Government spent money throughout Australia on full page advertisements in a newspaper in each State. It spent \$6 000 or \$7 000—it might even have been \$18 000, I cannot recall.

This has to stop. It is no wonder our charges are going sky high; they have gone through the ceiling already. All this expenditure is for the glorification of the Government in its endeavour to explain away its inexplicable policy. It is stealing from the public purse to do that, and it is not good enough.

This part also concerns the Consumer Affairs Bureau. I have received more than a few complaints from farmers who find they are unable to have matters dealt with by the Consumer Affairs Bureau, because farmers are considered to be businessmen. Of course, many of the matters

about which they wish to complain are relatively minor ones. They might not be happy about the performance of a vehicle or a piece of machinery they have bought. I am entitled to complain about a vehicle or a piece of machinery I buy, but a farmer does not have that right. The Government has been extremely slow in acknowledging this demand by the farming community. Once again, the National Country Party has been fast asleep. It is time the Act was amended to allow farmers the right of appeal to the bureau.

I make it known that an incoming Labor Government will do that, because I believe farmers have as much right as any other person to complain about faulty equipment which may be delivered to them. This is a bad gap in the jurisdiction of the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the reluctance of the bureau to deal with complaints of persons who have bought housing units. A number of units are being sold at the moment. These are old units in various places in and around the city which are given a new name and dressed up a little, and their price is increased considerably. They are sold as an investment. As they are old units, many of them require considerable repair. They are sold on the basis that they are in first-class condition, and many people who have bought them have found they are not in first-class condition. Some people have bought them as an investment; perhaps they have used a lump-sum settlement or their superannuation payment. Then they find the units do not come up to standard.

When they complain to the Consumer Affairs Bureau they are told the bureau cannot help them because they are considered to be landlords. When the people go to the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia, they are told the same thing. They cannot take the matter to the Builders' Registration Board, because the units are not new. Private citizens are being disadvantaged by this and they have no recourse to obtain redress. I believe they should have a right of appeal, and they should be given an *entree* to the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

The Opposition has asked a number of questions in recent times regarding stamp duty charged on a premium paid for fire insurance. Members might have noticed that when they receive an assessment notice from an insurance company, various items are shown. The premium is shown as a separate amount, and the fire brigade levy also is separate. Then stamp duty is listed, and the amounts are totalled. A person complained to me that the fire brigade levy was subjected to stamp duty. The Government does

not know whether or not that should be so. We should get a clear indication from the Crown Law Department whether the fire brigade levy is part of the premium.

I would like to refer the Minister to some questions I asked of the Treasurer over a period of weeks. The answers I received only further confuse the position. None of the answers has helped to eliminate the confusion, and it would be useful if the Treasurer or the Minister for Consumer Affairs would obtain the view of the Crown Law Department on the matter. In question 2154 on Tuesday, the 13th November, I asked whether the levy was considered to be a commission or a discount paid in respect of the premium for the purposes of the Act. Under the old Act, a commission or a discount was not eligible for stamp duty, as it was not considered to be part of the gross premium. The Treasurer said the levy is not considered as a commission or a discount.

In part (2) of my question I asked—

- (2) If "No", to (1), why is the levy included in the gross premium for the purposes of stamp duty?

The answer was that no-one seemed to know. I was referred to section 92 of the amended Act, and I found that to be vague.

We had the situation where for a long time the premium included the fire brigade levy, and stamp duty was charged upon the total premium. Then insurance companies, no doubt to impress upon the public how much they pay in respect of the fire brigade levy, separated the levy from the premium. It appears that the fire brigade levy should not be part of the premium and, therefore, should not attract stamp duty. However, no-one can tell me whether that is so. As I said, I was referred to section 92 of the Act, which left me as much in the dark as ever.

An elector wrote to me on the matter, and I have been unable to satisfy him. I have sent him copies of the questions and answers; and I have referred to the Act for my own enlightenment. I am no more enlightened than when I started.

The fire brigade levy either should be considered to be part of the premium and attract stamp duty, or it should be considered a commission or discount and should not attract duty. While it is considered as part of the premium at the moment, it could be subject to challenge. But who will challenge it when the amount involved is probably only \$1 or \$2? I would be grateful indeed if the Minister will consider that matter.

Mr O'Connor: I can't give you an answer now.

Mr DAVIES: No, but my comments are recorded in *Hansard*. The Minister can refer to them, and I will be grateful if he would obtain further information on the matter.

I have many other matters with which I could deal, but I will mention only one because of the time and the state of the Parliament. The matter concerns the Minister for Conservation and the Environment. I was sorry indeed to see no grant has been made this year to the Tree Society of Western Australia. Until last year the Government has made a grant of \$7 000 a year to enable the society to maintain a full-time office, open to all sections of the community. Funding ceased on the 1st July, 1978.

The Tree Society is really a splendid organisation which was founded some 25 years ago. I must say that although I am a member, I do not take an active part in the society. However, I am a member because I believe it needs support.

Mr Tonkin: Good on you!

Mr DAVIES: When I read its publication I am distressed to discover how difficult it is for the society to carry on now that the Government has withdrawn its grant. The society was pioneered in the community interest, to deal particularly with the propagation and use of native trees and plants. It was a mile ahead of the Metropolitan Water Board and the nurserymen in suggesting that we should plant native trees and shrubs.

After the Government told the Tree Society in September, 1977, that its grant was to cease, the society wrote a letter to the acting Minister for Forests (Mrs Craig) seeking bridging finance. That was refused. A subsequent submission to the Government resulted in a grant of \$3 500 on the understanding it would be the last assistance the society would receive.

When one looks at the list of organisations which are helped by the Government, one would put the Tree Society ahead of quite a few of them. Some organisations are offered handsome sums of money. I realise it is always hard to discriminate; but, as we pointed out the other night, some funds are always available to the Government. It pulled out an extra \$5 000 for Telethon, and \$10 000 for an earthquake appeal. There is always some money available. I suggest the kindest thing the Government could do is to forget the fact that the Tree Society has been critical of it from time to time and to give it some funds once more to enable it to carry on the splendid work it is doing.

We need the society to continue. I am certain every member has attended a school function on Arbor Day or an official tree-planting ceremony somewhere, at which the Tree Society has been

represented. Often it donates trees or seeds to schools and provides instructions on the planting and care of native trees and shrubs.

The Government has never given a full explanation of why the society suffered a cut-off of funds. I hope it was not because the society took a stand on the matter of bauxite mining in the Darling Range. It is entitled to take a stand. No doubt the Government classified the society as a bunch of economic saboteurs, fifth columnists, or persons not loyal to their State because they were inclined to take a stand.

If the grant ceased as a result of that—and I would remind the Chamber we have never been given a satisfactory explanation—I can only say it is disgraceful that the Government should be so mean as to try to make extinct or inoperative an organisation which dared to be critical of it.

This is another example of the way the Government deals with the people who dare to criticise it. We have seen it happen in other instances. Now we have a society 25 years old which has done some splendid work in regard to fostering trees generally, and encouraging people to use native plants in their gardens, years ahead of the Water Board and years ahead of the nurserymen. Because the Tree Society dared to cross the Government, it no longer receives funds.

I ask the Government to reconsider making available to the Tree Society some kind of sustenance so it can continue its work, which is done in a most minimal way now. It is a shame that such an organisation is likely to go out of business because of the Government's attitude.

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [4.46 p.m.]: Part 6 of the Estimates provides me with the opportunity to make comments in relation to the Minister's responsibility in the wildlife area. In the time I have been here, I have had drawn to my attention several problems dealing with the activities of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Normally the complaints by my constituents have been couched in terms of emotive fears and tribulations. The one I raise today is no different.

I was rather surprised to discover that amongst my many very fine constituents I had a well-known herpetologist. For those who do not know, a herpetologist is a person who is interested in reptiles.

This person tells me that since the age of seven he has had a very keen interest in reptiles of all sorts, and in snakes in particular. He has found it of interest to keep snakes, lizards, and all those sorts of things. In having this interest, he has been able to help to cultivate that interest in other

people. In fact, he is in great demand to visit schools and other places to talk about reptiles, and to tell children about snakes. His interest extends also to exhibits of the reptiles he has in his collection at various wildlife shows.

There are many occasions when people in the metropolitan area find they have a poisonous reptile in or around their home, and this man, quite voluntarily, in his own time and at his own cost, goes to collect the snakes so that the frightened people can be relieved of their presence. Many a time he has been in people's bedrooms and under their beds, to rescue them from an errant dugite.

It is because of this interest that this man has the ability to handle snakes and extract venom from them. It came to the notice of the University of Western Australia that he kept snakes. The university had a research project in progress at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital which required venom for use in experiments. They went to him, and asked him to supply them with their venom needs. I might add that the research relates not only to the development of anti-venenes but also to research relating to various muscular complaints, the details of which are unfamiliar to me.

This person applied to the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for a licence to keep reptiles for the purpose of providing the university with venom.

It should be pointed out that there are some snakes in this State which are found only in this State. In particular, they are the dugite and the western brown.

The department wrote to this man in February of this year and said it had approved a licence, but he would be able to keep only four dugites, four tiger snakes, and one king brown. He wrote back to the department in March, and he pointed out that the amount of venom obtainable from dugites is very small indeed, and that to be able to meet the needs of the university medical centre he would have to keep a lot more. He sought an extension of his licence so that no limit could be placed on him in the keeping of dugites.

In doing that, that man had the support of the officer at the university who was directly responsible for that research. It is well to quote from the letter so that the Minister realises it was a genuine case of service that this person was attempting to provide. The letter was directed to the director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, and it read—

Dear Sir

Under the direction of Professor R L Dawkins we are investigating autoimmune muscle disease. To pursue these studies we require the use of snake toxins. As we discussed at a recent International Conference on Neurotoxins held in Adelaide, the venom of the local snake, the Dugite, is of considerable help.

Our supply of the venom of this snake and others is dependent on the assistance of local herpetologists. Mr G Doyle and Mr M True, recognised experts in snake handling have been of great assistance, and I request that they be allowed the facilities to continue the supply of venom to enable us to continue our studies.

I indicate that this approach was made at the beginning of March of this year. Despite numerous requests by Mr Doyle for the department to give him an answer to his request for the extension of his licence, no reply was forthcoming until the 16th November. It is incredible that a simple decision like that should take nine months to reach. Possibly it would not have been reached if it had not been that the person concerned continually pursued the matter.

In his reply, the director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife said—

Further to your application to collect and hold Dugites for the purpose of extracting venom for the Sir Charles Gardiner Pathology Services, I wish to advise that approval cannot be granted.

Discussions are currently being held between this Department and the Zoological Gardens Board with regard to keeping snakes for that purpose.

There are two points I wish to make to the Minister in regard to that reply. Firstly, it came back as a bald "No" without any reasons being given. I believe that a department, which is vested with the responsibility of administering certain laws on behalf of the taxpayers, through the Parliament, has a responsibility to justify its decisions to the members of the public who have made approaches. I find it appalling and, indeed, very bad public relations that this sort of answer should be given. It does not give the person with whom the department is corresponding an opportunity to say that the reason behind the decision is incorrect.

It could be implied that, as the letter contains a paragraph relating to discussions being held with the Zoological Gardens Board, perhaps there was something associated with the discussions that relates to the refusal. However, that is drawing

the long bow, and one cannot draw any conclusions from that.

It is also worth noting that it has apparently taken nine months for the department to reach the point of raising these discussions with the Zoological Gardens Board. This does not indicate a great deal of diligence in reaching its conclusions. That is not satisfactory, not only to my constituent, but also to the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital which needs venom for its research.

I hope that in the first place the Minister will ask the department, when it deals with the public, to take the public into its confidence a little more. I believe it has a responsibility to do so. I might add this is not the first occasion on which a reply such as this one has come to my notice.

Mr Bertram: Very unsatisfactory altogether.

Mr HERZFELD: Secondly, I ask the Minister if he could establish and let me know the reasons for the refusal of this application. Was it because the department had fears that this person would go out and collect dugites from the wild? If that is so, I can allay the fears of the department by assuring the Minister that Mr Doyle has no intention of going into the wild and collecting the stock of dugites he needs to assist the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital research programme. He collects dugites from the places to which he is called by citizens in the metropolitan area. Is the refusal because the department fears the dugites cannot be kept safely? If that is the case, perhaps it could indicate some way in which Mr Doyle could satisfy their demands. I am sure man is more clever than beast, and could safely keep the snakes secure. Perhaps the refusal is because the department feels that, if unrestrained, Mr Doyle may cause a plague of snakes. All these things could be explained, if he was given the reason for the refusal of the licence.

I know my constituent to be a responsible person. He has served the nation by being in the Army for a period of nine years. That period included overseas service in Borneo, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Indeed, when he was in Vietnam he was requested by the Sydney Museum to supply it with snakes from the region, and I believe he did that. A person who spends that sort of period in the Army would not be an irresponsible person.

I conclude by requesting the Minister to look into this matter and to take note of the points I have made on behalf of my constituent. Indeed, I make the point on behalf of many more people, because the research being carried out has implications for many.

It would be tragic if that research came to a halt or did not proceed at the rate it should because the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife could not see its way clear to allowing sufficient dugite venom to be made available for that research.

At the same time, it would also be depriving the people in the metropolitan area of the services of a person skilled in handling snakes. This person is skilled in removing reptiles which cause concern to people if they discover them in their houses. I hope the Minister will prevail upon his department and come back with an answer to the problem.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [5.01 p.m.]: I will endeavour to comment on the remarks made by members. The member for Swan referred to the fact that morale was low in the Department of Labour and Industry. If the employees of the department took note of the attacks made on them by the Leader of the Opposition, I would agree that in fact morale would be low, because the Leader of the Opposition has been very scathing in his attacks on those officers.

However, generally speaking, morale is not low within the department. We have a number of good employees and they work well. At times certain individuals object to particular matters and they themselves have low morale and try, in some way, to affect other workers; but as a result of discussions I have had with officers of the department, I believe the morale is as good as it is in any other department.

The member for Swan said also that the Industrial Arbitration Bill has destroyed the opportunity for unions to protect their members. I do not agree with that, because many members of unions feel the unions are destroying them. We are giving workers the freedom to do as they want.

Mr Skidmore: It removes industrial protection.

Mr O'CONNOR: Individuals have industrial protection.

Mr Skidmore: Only if the department accepts it.

Mr O'CONNOR: I agree with the member; but, of course, previously some people did not have that protection and if a person who was not a member of a union was dismissed unfairly, his protection was virtually nil.

Mr Skidmore: I was thinking of wage claims.

Mr O'CONNOR: If a person has been dismissed unfairly or has not abided by the regulations, there are ways in which an individual

can seek redress. He can go to the commission through the Attorney General. The Attorney General can apply on behalf of an individual if he feels that person has justification on his side.

The member for Swan commented also on the fact that departmental heads may decide whether or not to proceed with summonses. This is a normal procedure. In the Police Force summonses are processed by individual officers and they decide whether a case is viable. If a fair or reasonable case has not been put up, the matter is dropped. It is reasonable for someone over and above the individual concerned to make a decision. In certain circumstances a person may have a bias against an individual or company. We all know how easy it is for a person who is dealing with the same type of material all the time to have a bias and to issue a summons when there is doubt about whether one should be issued.

I see nothing wrong with departmental heads having an overriding say as to whether a summons should proceed. The same situation applies in the Consumer Affairs Bureau where the head of the bureau signs some of the summonses and some of them are sent to me for final approval.

Mr Skidmore: There is a difference between the cases handled by the Consumer Affairs Bureau and the direct breaking of the law by a company.

Mr O'CONNOR: There are different degrees of breaches of the law and there are minor and major breaches.

Mr Skidmore: According to the person who is giving the consent, it may be a minor breach, but section 54B slams it.

Mr O'CONNOR: We can debate that particular issue, if the member desires; but a number of cases are borderline and it is difficult to decide which way to proceed. In the case of borderline matters, they should be dropped and individuals should not be sued for trivial offences when there is some doubt in relation to their validity.

The member for Swan referred to fisheries research and the South Coast Fisheries Study. He referred to the fact that this study had been of great assistance to the fishing industry. I am hopeful that these sorts of studies will continue, and that members from both sides of the Chamber can work together in the interests of the country or of an industry to achieve the sorts of results we obtained in this case.

Whilst I am aware all the recommendations made by the study group have not been implemented, I should like to point out the

majority of the important recommendations have been put into effect. We have certainly endeavoured to implement the recommendations of the study group in order to assist the fishing industry.

Many people say insufficient money is being channelled into fisheries research. However, this may be said in relation to research into health and a number of other matters. We have one cake and we have to cut it up as we see fit.

I believe also that private enterprise should participate in the field of fisheries research. The majority of benefits we have achieved in this State as a result of improvements to the fishing industry have been due to the work of private enterprise. Individuals have achieved a great deal in this area despite the fact that frequently they have had little cash at their disposal. An example of this is the situation in which Mr Kailis went to Exmouth Gulf and did a great deal of work in connection with the prawning industry. We now have a very viable industry in that area.

Mr Skidmore: There is West Whaling also.

Mr O'CONNOR: Many individual fishermen have found different types of fish in various areas. The Government will do whatever it can to assist the industry. At the present time we have approximately \$500 000 in a research fund and we are endeavouring to implement the recommendations of the South Coast Fisheries Study.

British United Trawlers has been mentioned also. We are all sad about what happened in relation to that company, because it is one of the biggest groups in the fishing world. We would have expected it to have the expertise necessary to cope with the problems and to set up a viable industry. Unfortunately, British United Trawlers failed and Hunts Canning Company has been able to take over some of its operations.

One of the problems experienced by British United Trawlers, or Southern Ocean Fisheries as we know it—it joined with a local group to make up the team—was the lack of expertise in filleting. When this company operated in the North Sea it dealt with a stable 20-pound fish which could be put through a filleting machine. In this State it had to deal with 20 or 30 different varieties of fish and this caused the company some problems.

I support the action we are taking in regard to fisheries by joining with overseas groups and, on a joint venture basis, endeavouring to examine various areas so that our own people are given the opportunity to go into them in the future.

It was mentioned that there is little research and co-ordination in the field in which the EPA operates. We are endeavouring to carry out as much environmental research as is possible, and the EPA has done a great deal in this regard. The EPA supports mining in the Herdsman Lake area.

Mr Skidmore: No it does not.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have spoken with the Director of the EPA who published an article in the paper. In the long term he feels mining could be of benefit to the wildlife and would overcome the unsightly fires we have in the bullrushes.

I have made my position clear in regard to bank holidays. The Leader of the Opposition said he would put a further question on the notice paper.

Questions were asked in relation to the pamphlets to which I referred. Last week I advised the Leader of the Opposition, in reply to a question, that a number of these pamphlets were available, and if members want them, they may have as many as they require, within reason.

Mr Skidmore: What would you say would be a reasonable number for a member to have—3 000?

Mr O'CONNOR: I am talking in terms of 300 or 400. I should not imagine members would require more than that; but if, for special reasons, a member feels he needs to have more, I will endeavour to provide them.

I shall reply briefly to the comments made by the member for Mundaring. He referred to one of his constituents removing snakes from under beds. That would be a rather hazardous operation. If the member refers the matter to me, I shall ask the department to look at it.

Vote: Labour and Industry, \$4 359 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$3 213 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: I have made a comparison between the number of inspectors employed in this department and I referred to it in a general way in my opening remarks on this portfolio. The comparison substantiated what I said to a great extent. The Government has failed to recognise the expanding needs of the department and the work force necessary to service it. In particular, workers have been exploited by employers as a result of breaches of awards.

Under the heading "Industrial Training" a total of 13 apprenticeship officers appeared last year. We have only 12 such officers now. There could be a valid reason for that.

Mr O'Connor: I think you will find that another officer has been employed. I will confirm that later.

Mr SKIDMORE: In regard to the industrial training section, I notice there are two vacant positions and, of course, as a result expenditure has not been incurred in that regard in 1978-79. Therefore, this year there is a carryover of \$31 100.

If these positions are vacant and funds are available to fill them, it is about time they were filled. If we say, "There are two vacant positions and we shall do something about them", but in fact nothing is done, it is not good enough. We need a great influx of people into this area and I am surprised that this has not occurred, bearing in mind the necessity to provide trained tradesmen and better equipped tradesmen's assistants for the North-West Shelf development.

I am surprised that the amount allocated to industrial training has been reduced, except as far as the amount laid down for the director is concerned. I would have thought an increased vote for industrial training would be required.

Under construction safety we had 14 inspectors in 1978 and the same number appears at the present time. The Estimate has increased by only \$22 000. I suggest the Government has no intention of increasing the number of people involved in construction safety. An increase of \$22 000 this year would cover only increases in salary. It is obvious the Government does not intend to increase the number of construction safety inspectors.

There is a desperate need for a greater number of these inspectors, particularly in view of the North-West Shelf development, the Wagerup project, and the Worsley project. At the present time the inspectors available are overworked. In previous debates the Minister suggested we ought to ask union members to phone the department and complain that an accident had occurred and an inspector should be sent out. However, inspectors should be out and about on the job to ensure people are not hurt or killed. This is especially true in view of the union-free shops which we will have in the near future. Who will police safety aspects? This certainly indicates a lack of concern for construction safety in factories and shops.

In the factories and shops section there were 19 inspectors in 1977-78 and 22 in 1978-79. I imagine this year it will remain at 22. In this area we have had an increase of three inspectors. It is in this section of the department that the major leg work is done in regard to the policing of awards. Had the three extra inspectors been put on to police awards, I would have been happy, but I know they were not. The people in the

department have indicated to me that they are not satisfied with the present position.

I know the factories and shops section is concerned with other matters in addition to policing industrial awards. It deals with health in factories, safeguards, inspection of machinery, and so on. I understand the inspectors function in a dual capacity in some areas. Again we will not have an increase in the number of inspectors because the Estimate is only \$28 000 more than the amount expended last year, and it will cover only increased wages.

Under inspection of machinery there has been an increase from 36 to 37 inspectors, an increase of one, and, an indication that there will be no further increases, because the Estimate is only \$24 000 more than the expenditure last year and, spread over 36 inspectors, it is equivalent only to salary increases.

In view of the development envisaged—and, contrary to what Government members say, we support these projects and hope they will go ahead provided all is done to ensure there are no environmental or industrial safety problems—if we do not dramatically increase the number of machinery inspectors we will be running ourselves ragged. We will have the Wagerup refinery, Worsley under construction, the North-West Shelf getting off the ground, and a possible development in the iron ore industry at Goldsworthy, yet we will have nobody looking after industrial safety.

There has been no increase in the number of inspectors in the weights and measures branch. There were 13 in 1977-78, 13 in 1978-79, and there will be 13 this year. In a period of three years the department has seen fit to increase its vital inspectorial staff by only two—an increase of three from 19 to 22 in the factories and shops section, a decrease in inspectors of machinery from 37 to 36, and the weights and measures and construction safety inspectors remaining at the same number. I leave out industrial training because that is not part of the inspectorate to which I referred.

The Government must do some accounting in this item. It is not good enough for the Government to say it is concerned with these industrial issues when in a period of three years it has not made one advance to relieve the situation in relation to industrial safety. Safety on construction sites is left mainly to the unions to police. When union members get out in the street and say in no way will they go back onto a site, the employer threatens to sack them. The workers go to the Department of Labour and Industry,

and the department does not prosecute for obvious breaches of an award condition.

Mr O'Connor: It does prosecute.

Mr SKIDMORE: I said the employer should be prosecuted. We cannot protect workers unless we provide the means to do so. By saying there will be no closed shops, we have taken away from unions the ability to look after and service union members. The Government may think a union which looked after its members in a closed shop will continue to look after those employees who are not union members after the Industrial Arbitration Bill becomes law, but I doubt that unions will be prepared to do that in the future. It is obvious the Government will not service them with the expenditure proposed for 1979-80.

Item No. 5: Industrial Training, \$498 000—

Mr BERTRAM: The Estimate of \$498 000 for this year is a heartening figure but it is important that the Committee know how it is calculated, because it is dramatically different from last year's figure. I ask the Minister to supply us with a break-up of that figure.

Mr O'CONNOR: Where there has been a reduction in the number of inspectors, the indication I have is that there were some vacancies which have been filled. I recently signed a document in connection with this matter. I think the member for Swan will find those three inspectors have been replaced.

With regard to the industrial training scheme, an additional allocation has been made this year because of the projects in the north-west, and to allow for some of the training schemes we have in progress at this stage.

Item No. 6: Construction Safety, \$58 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: The increase of \$4 500 for construction safety is not a great increase. I am concerned that not enough funding is being allocated for construction safety. It should be considered thoroughly. The department should be able to put up something better than this if it is conscious of the need to provide more for construction safety. Bearing in mind the tremendous emphasis which will be given to these issues in the future, why is this such a low figure?

Mr O'CONNOR: This position is continually being watched. We could probably put more money into these areas if we had it, but we have only a certain allocation.

Mr Skidmore: Would not that be a priority?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes. In an area which we felt was urgent we would take the matter to Cabinet, but this is all we are able to do at this stage with the funds available.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Industrial Commission, \$637 000—put and passed.

Vote: Public Service Arbitration, \$90 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$55 000—

Mr BERTRAM: When speaking to part 6, I drew the Minister's attention to the provision of \$2 000 for salary adjustments. I mentioned this before the afternoon tea suspension to give the Minister an opportunity to supply particulars as to how that figure was arrived at. This is only the third or fourth time I have raised in the course of this debate the question of how provisions for salary adjustments are arrived at. The figures may be guesses and irresponsible figures which the Committee should not accept. One would hope the figures have been calculated with some responsibility. In this item the figure allowed is only \$2 000. It is therefore a classic figure, as far as simplicity is concerned, on which to be given a guide to some of the other items.

Mr O'CONNOR: Figures of this nature have been supplied in the Estimates for many years. When the honourable member was a Minister he made allowances in various ways. When he was Minister for Railways in 1973, there were contingencies amounting to \$16 million. This item is reflected in various sections right throughout the Estimates. It has been explained by the Treasurer and I refer the honourable member to the answer previously given.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: State Insurance Office, \$10—

Item No. 2: Administration Expenses, \$2 866 000—

Mr BERTRAM: It appears no provision is made for pay-roll tax. On the next page we find the Consumer Affairs Bureau must pay pay-roll tax of \$20 590; yet strangely enough no provision is made for the State Government Insurance Office to pay pay-roll tax. I would be interested to hear the Minister's comments on why an item for pay-roll tax does not appear in this vote.

The same item has a heading of "Less Recoups from State Insurance Fund, Government Workers' Compensation Fund, and Government Fire, Marine and General Insurance Fund." I imagine if the State Government Insurance Office is receiving a distribution from the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust, that is where it would show.

It is interesting to notice in recent times the SGIO has not received any dividend from the MVIT. The maximum amount distributed by the MVIT to participating insurers is 5 per cent of

the annual premiums. Annual premiums at present exceed \$35 million, and 5 per cent of that is an amount approaching \$2 million. The SGIO could be entitled to as much as 70.72 per cent of that. I would like the Minister to tell us what is the attitude of the SGIO in respect of the distributions of profit of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust.

So far the trust has distributed \$3 332 984. I can understand that when the trust was first established, the insurance companies would have been entitled to some compensation for their loss of business. I do not complain about that. The Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act became law in 1943. It is now 36 years later and it is possible for third party insurance premiums still to be distributed by way of dividend to insurance companies, as well as the SGIO. For example, the Commercial Union group is entitled to 10 per cent; Sun Alliance Insurance Limited, 5.5 per cent; RAC Insurance Pty. Ltd., 5 per cent; Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited, 5 per cent; and then half a dozen or so other companies are entitled to smaller amounts.

I am at a loss to understand why those companies should be entitled to a distribution or, for that matter, why the SGIO should be entitled to one. It is interesting to note that none of the companies is required to bear any loss of the MVIT; only the taxpayer bears that. I would like to know where the SGIO stands on this matter. I do not think the SGIO or any other company should be making a profit from the MVIT. Participating companies have shared in profits to the tune of \$3.3 million, and have borne absolutely no risk. Presumably if third party insurance premiums are increased sufficiently, participating companies would once again be in a position to receive a huge dividend without bearing any risk.

The participating insurance companies were entitled to some compensation for loss of business, but it is now 36 years later and a distribution of profit can still occur. Where else does this situation occur? It is a case of "Heads we win, and tails they lose"; and "they" are the people who paid third party insurance to the tune of over \$35 million this year. You, Mr Chairman, and I, and thousands of others who drive motor vehicles are obliged to pay a third party insurance premium when we pay our vehicle licences.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hear, hear!

Mr BERTRAM: I would like—and I am sure the member for Balcatta would insist upon it—

Mr B. T. Burke: Quite right, you can speak for me.

Mr BERTRAM:—some explanation as to why the SGIO should still be able to participate in a distribution of surpluses of the MVIT, along with the insurance companies.

Mr O'CONNOR: In reply to the first part of the member's query, I advise that the SGIO pays pay-roll tax just as any Government department does.

Mr Bertram: It does not appear in the Estimates.

Sir Charles Court: The member has probably noted that the SGIO is included in the Estimates in a special way purely to give members the right to talk on the office. It is not set out in the normal way, but is styled deliberately in this way so that members can speak on it.

Mr O'CONNOR: It pays pay-roll tax just as any department.

In respect of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust, the member for Mt. Hawthorn asked questions of the Minister for Local Government, and I would have thought he would know the trust is under her jurisdiction. The fact that the SGIO receives 70.7 per cent of any surpluses indicates that many insurance companies have pulled out because they are not happy to be involved. It is not a profitable operation, and some other companies have indicated their intention to pull out. If that occurs the SGIO will accept more than 70 per cent of the business; in due course it may accept the total business. However, the MVIT is not a part of the SGIO.

Vote put and passed.

Votes: Consumer Affairs Bureau, \$545 990; Immigration, \$830 000—put and passed.

Vote: Fisheries and Wildlife, \$4 710 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$2 983 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: Last year, 43 wildlife research and conservation officers were employed by the department; this year, 49 officers will be so employed. Fisheries research employed 38 officers last year, and anticipates employing the same number this year. Some 49 inspectors were employed last year; this year, the number will rise to 54.

It would appear there will be no increased research activity in this area because the estimate provides for an increase over last year of \$78 500, which will barely cover the salaries of the five additional officers. Not enough is being done in the field of fisheries research.

I am unable to agree the Government has accepted its responsibility towards the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. The

department cannot be run adequately without additional staff. The Government cannot, on the one hand say, "We want to carry out adequate research programmes" and, on the other hand not be prepared to provide the funds. Who is kidding whom?

I should like the Minister to tell me precisely how it is envisaged this additional work will be carried out by the same number of people. In fact, the department's staff has remained at the same level for the past three years.

I am also concerned about the heading "Vacant Positions". In 1978-79, there were 23 vacant positions; this year, there are only 20 such positions. It appears there has been a net reduction of three in the number of positions available. These officers could easily have been taken from the research division.

Mr O'Connor: There are three additional staff for wildlife research and conservation.

Mr SKIDMORE: I accept the Minister's point; it may be a simple transfer. However, it highlights my argument: I would prefer to see these people in fisheries research as a distinct priority of the department. The Government has the money to fill these 20 vacant positions, and should do so immediately. This would get the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife off the ground in a proper and practical manner.

The south coast fisheries study heard evidence to the effect that for years estuarine fisherman had been submitting statistical data to the department. However, we were unable to obtain this information. It appears it is submitted to the department and filed; nothing is done about it. What a waste of everybody's time! This data would be invaluable to the additional officers who could be appointed to the department.

The Estimates provide for \$224 200 to meet the 20 vacant positions. I suggest the Government immediately commence filling those positions. These people could be gainfully employed in research. The study indicated the work needed to be done.

I appreciate the remarks of the Minister when he said he believed a parliamentary fisheries study should be an ongoing thing. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to serve on such a committee. There is a need for more inspectors. The study heard evidence that "shamateurs" were taking large numbers of rock lobster and abalone, transporting their catch across properties and on back tracks, and flying it out by light aircraft. This was to the great detriment of the industry.

Mr Tonkin: When I am in charge of the department next year, you will head the inquiry.

Mr SKIDMORE: I ask the Government to act immediately to fill these positions and motivate the department to carry out additional research work.

Mr O'CONNOR: I assure the honourable member that some of these positions already have been filled. For example, the fisheries study recommended the appointment of a journalist; he has been appointed. However, these appointments do not appear in this year's Estimates, because they have been only recent. In addition, some of these people are difficult to find because of the type of research work involved on the south coast. Again, I assure him the Government will act to fill these positions as quickly as possible.

Item No. 5: Fisheries—Inspection and Research, \$522 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: This year's Estimate provides for an increase over last year of some \$118 000. I would like to see that entire amount go into research. I cannot emphasise strongly enough the importance of this area of activity. However, I doubt very much whether the entire \$118 000 will be devoted to additional research activities.

Perhaps the Minister could tell me—not necessarily today because I realise it might not be within his knowledge—how much of the \$116 000 will go into research, and what types of research will be involved in this.

Mr O'CONNOR: On top of that there is \$500 000 more. I have instructed the department to get that out into research as quickly as possible. Possibly there will be \$500 000 more than that figure.

Mr SKIDMORE: I raise that question. Perhaps the Minister will give a considered answer later.

Item No. 6: Wildlife—Conservation, Research and Inspection, \$401 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: Under this item, there is an increase of \$43 000. That does not give me much hope that conservation, research, and inspection will receive much of a fillip. I have already suggested that there are emphases which need consideration under fisheries—inspection and research—so I am not greatly concerned.

We should try to be a little more circumspect in the presentation of these areas. We do not have documentation, but I would like to know what contingencies are included in the sum, and where the money will go.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am quite happy to provide them later.

Item No. 8: Fisheries and Wildlife—Special Projects, \$8 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: Would the Minister have knowledge of what is contained in the special projects, \$8 000? My interest is—

Mr O'CONNOR: There is research into herring and salmon going on. I do not know if that is it. I would like to qualify it.

Mr SKIDMORE: I was hoping it might have been that project, because there has been a lot of agitation about it. If that is so, I would like to receive the results of that project as soon as possible. I leave my remarks at that stage, and I hope the Minister may be able to inform me what his attitude will be. I look forward to hearing from him.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Conservation and Environment, \$1 822 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$951 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: I want to raise the question of the staffing of the department. I want to point out the ineptitude of the Government in dealing with the needs of the department. In 1978-79 there were 25 professional staff, and that has increased over the last 12 months by two. It is envisaged there may be salary increases, but I doubt very much that an increase of \$28 000 for 1979-80 will provide for extra professional staff. If it does provide for extra professional staff, there will be nothing left for increases in salary.

There should be increases in the professional staff. The Worsley ERP report of the EPA clearly indicates the need for something to be done in the field of professional attention to our environment in the south-west, particularly in relation to forests, wood chipping, the Donnybrook sunklunds, bauxite mining, water, and reforestation. Apparently they are desperately understaffed.

When I requested assistance in relation to the Margaret River and Prevelly Park, the department was absolutely tremendous with its limited resources. As a matter of fact, the other day I had the pleasure of ringing and thanking it for its work with the shires and conservation groups down there, particularly the Augusta-Margaret River Shire. That was in relation to that shire's higgledy-piggledy approach to its development, particularly on the Margaret River-Prevelly Park road.

I was pleased that the Minister said that something firm had to be done about that. As far as I was concerned, that was a good thing.

I could name three or four of the staff with whom I have dealt, but I will not do so. They

could not do enough. They were not working in office hours only. They must have spent about 70 or 80 hours a week working in the interests of the people down there. I congratulate them. It is about time they had a bit of help.

There is a faint hope we will get somewhere in this aspect. I note that in 1978 there were three vacancies, and this year it is proposed that there will be eight vacant positions. Nothing was done about the vacancies last year, and this year there will be another five vacancies created. We have \$121 000 allocated for 1979-80, which would cover those vacant positions. I hope when I speak in the Budget debate at this time next year I will find that the whole of the \$121 000 has been spent on those vacant positions. That would indicate the desire of the Government to do something about conservation and the environment.

Mr BERTRAM: I was going to speak on this item, but I recall that earlier in the day Mr Speaker said he would make sure we had questions on notice and questions without notice today. The time has slipped along, as it tends to do in this place. Therefore, I propose to refrain from commenting on the matters I was going to raise. I will deal with the various provisions when we reach them.

Item No. 4: Field Projects, \$639 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: I am interested in what is envisaged in those projects, and where they will take place. I note that the amount is being decreased by \$40 000. I hope there is a reason for that. There might have been a project which has been finalised, and which does not need funding now. I would be interested if the Minister could tell me what is involved in this.

Mr O'CONNOR: In relation to the number of staff, there are not eight vacancies all the time. The department employs staff on various projects, and these are begun at different times. There may be one, two, none, or six vacancies during the year. They are temporary positions only.

In connection with the variation in the amount, a large sum was spent last year on the Chittleborough report and the Cockburn Sound study. It was an amount approaching \$600 000.

There are other amounts in connection with other projects, and if the member wants details, he can have them.

Vote put and passed.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE:
SPECIAL**

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [6.09 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 11.00 a.m. on Tuesday, the 4th December.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TELEX FACILITIES

Government Departments and Instrumentalities

2387. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What were the—

- (a) installation and rental costs; and
- (b) operating costs,

last financial year of telex services for the WA Lamb Marketing Board?

Mr OLD replied:

The WA Lamb Marketing Board telex costs, 1978-79—

- (a) The charge for installing a telex machine in 1972 was— \$80.00
- Rental costs \$990.00
- (b) Operating costs— \$5 278.00

STATE FINANCE: TAXES

Revenue

2413. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

What is the estimated revenue for 1979-80 and actual revenue for 1978-79 for each of the following taxes—

- (a) Westrail freight rates;
- (b) State Shipping Service freight rates;
- (c) levies on petrol and diesel fuel;
- (d) stamp duty on cheques;
- (e) metropolitan bus and train fares?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) to (e) The member refers to taxes.

It is assumed that he is referring to charges and taxes as appropriate to the items listed because the overwhelming amount of revenue from items (a) to (e) is from charges for services given, and not taxes.

The information requested by the member is available in the Auditor General's Report for 1978-79 and in the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates for 1979-80.

WATER SUPPLIES: SERVICES

Restriction

2414. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

Will the Minister outline the Metropolitan Water Board's policy for restricting water due to non-receipt of bill payment for—

- (a) domestic consumers;
- (b) commercial consumers?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) Supply of water restricted.
- (b) Legal action taken.

WATER SUPPLIES

Country Area Scheme: Final Notice

2415. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

Do consumers receive a second account or a final notice after their first bill under country water supply schemes?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Consumers who have not paid their accounts by the final date for payment receive notices, "Advice of Impending Water Supply Cut Off Action".

RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK AND STATE ENGINEERING WORKS

Taxing

2416. Mr BERTRAM, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Is it not a fact that the Rural and Industries Bank and the State Engineering Works are taxed?
- (2) If "Yes", since 1974 how much tax has become due from each of them in each year and how much have they paid?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No. Section 96A of the Rural and Industries Bank Act provides that one-half of the net profits as certified by the Auditor General shall be paid to the Treasurer for payment into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In the case of the State Engineering Works, section 18 of the State Trading Concerns Act provides that any profit or loss shall be treated in such manner as the Treasurer shall direct but any profit available in cash and not required for the purposes of the concern shall be paid to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- (2) Payments made to the Consolidated Revenue Fund in accordance with the above requirements as reported in the Auditor General's Report are as follows—

	Rural and Industries Bank \$	State Engineering Works \$
1974-75	1 026 356	374 717
1975-76	1 302 286	—
1976-77	1 768 505	—
1977-78	2 147 333	—
1978-79	2 536 607	—

POVERTY

Persons Affected

2417. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

How many people in this State are still living on or below the poverty line?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

There is no current information available on estimates of persons on or below the poverty line.

The most recent information on this subject that I am aware of, is contained in the report of the Commonwealth Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, which was published by the Commonwealth Government in 1975. The member is referred to that publication.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION

North-west

2418. Mr BERTRAM, to the Treasurer:

How much of the cost of air legal aid service to be commenced in the north in February 1980 will be borne by—

- (a) the Commonwealth; and
- (b) by this State?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) and (b) The ratios of Commonwealth and State expenditure for the future are currently under study and negotiation between Commonwealth and State Governments.

TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE TRUST

Surpluses: Shares

2419. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Local Government:

Further to her answer to question 2354 of 1979 relevant to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust, how much has so far been paid by the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust, to participating approved insurers and how much, if any, is currently owed to them?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I am advised that a total of \$3 332 984 has been paid since the inception of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust in 1949 and that payment has been made in respect of all distributions that have so far been determined.

HEALTH: MEDIBANK

Fraud: Charges

2420. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

What were the circumstances which, as he said in *The West Australian* of the 24th November, 1979, justify the recent dropping of charges against a person for defrauding Medibank and which caused him to not allow the law to take its course, which he so often says is his policy?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I can find no reference such as the member attributes to me in *The West Australian* of the 24th November, 1979. In any case, I should imagine a Medibank offence, such as he refers to, would be a Commonwealth prosecution and not a State matter.

COURTS

Charges: Dropping

2421. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

How many charges in respect of offences has his Government dropped during each of the last three years, and why?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

None to my knowledge.

STATE FINANCE: CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

Fuel: Payment

2422. Mr BERTRAM, to the Treasurer:

How much did he pay out through the Consolidated Revenue Fund for fuel for—

- (a) the production of power;
- (b) transport;
- (c) other purposes,

in each of the years ended the 30th June, 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1979 and what are the expected figures for 1980 and 1981?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) to (c) Costs have not been recorded in the past in a form to enable the information requested by the member to be obtained for expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

A recent survey of departments and instrumentalities which impact on the Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget was conducted and showed that, on the basis of fuel usage for transport for the September, 1979, quarter, the estimated total cost of fuel for this purpose will be \$21.7 million in 1979-80 at current prices. The cost of fuel for the production of power is met by the State Energy Commission which operates outside the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

DEATH SENTENCES

Criteria

2423. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Are the following criteria applied when his Government decides as to whether a

person who is sentenced to death by hanging will be hanged—

- (a) sex;
- (b) age;
- (c) antecedents;
- (d) occupation;
- (e) previous convictions;
- (f) the number of capital crimes committed;
- (g) the proximity to an election;
- (h) race;
- (i) the reservation that in fact the sentence to hanging will rarely if ever be carried out by his Government?

The SPEAKER: This question incorrectly implies that it is a matter of Government decision whether a person sentenced to death is hanged.

The exercise of the Royal prerogative in these cases is a matter for decision by the Governor, acting on advice of his Executive Council.

The Premier may not be questioned on advice given to the Governor. This rule is expressed among those printed inside the cover of the question books provided to members.

I rule the question inadmissible.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Comments in "The West Australian"

2424. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Was he correctly reported in *The West Australian* of the 24th November, 1979 as having said—

We are now at a stage where we have to get the whole of Australia to think a little bit bigger, be a little bit more optimistic than in recent years and get back to the time when the will to win in Australia was the predominant thought?

- (2) If "Yes"—

- (a) when does he say that we reached that stage;
- (b) when did the will to win—according to him—cease to be the predominant thought?

- (3) Is it a fact that many people believe that his policies are divisive, lopsided and often manifest favouritism?
- (4) Why does he place so much emphasis on "getting back to the time" instead of going forward and being positive—lifting his sights—encouraging honesty and integrity, advocating the imperative need to carry out promises and substantial definable things of this kind in the future?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) If the honourable member is referring to when the will to win was the dominant thought in the community, then I would assess it was during the period when Menzies was Prime Minister and Australia was emerging as a nation confident of itself both at home and abroad, although I have never sought to put a precise time on it.

Several Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pearce: You should not tell jokes!

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Gosnells previously about interjecting at times when I am restoring order in the House and I would ask him to give me some co-operation.

Mr Pearce: I apologise Sir.

Sir CHARLES COURT: To continue—

- (b) The will to win—expressed as a general community attitude—ceased to be a driving force in Australia in the 1972-75 Whitlam period when winning became pointless. Anyone who was successful in that period very quickly found his pockets being picked by the socialists through punitive taxation, a jungle of unnecessary regulations, runaway inflation fuelled by Labor's irresponsible economic policies, centralist policies aimed at weakening the States, and a fear of "Big Brother" in Canberra confiscating private enterprise, as we saw attempted by the Whitlam Government on the North-West Shelf in this State.

Mr Bryce: It sounds like W. W. Mitchell has been working hard.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am thanking the honourable member for the Dorothy Dix question.

Mr Bryce: Are you going to answer seriously?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Just listen. To continue—

- (3) No. But it is a "furphy" the member for Mt. Hawthorn and some of his Labor colleagues are desperately trying to get off the ground because they are more concerned with mischief-making than with facts.

Mr Bryce: The man who wrote this must be paranoid.

Sir CHARLES COURT: To continue—

- (4) I fail to see how the member for Mt. Hawthorn can possibly interpret my desire to see Australia regain its will to win as not being positive and forward looking. It is people with the negative and carping approach of the member for Mt. Hawthorn who make those with that essential spark of energy wonder whether their endeavours are worth the effort.

I thank the honourable member for his question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Microprocessors

2425. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What estimated number of—

- (a) primary schools;
- (b) secondary schools,

are currently utilising or experimenting with microprocessors as a form of computer assisted instruction?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) and (b) With respect to this question and to the questions 2426 to 2434 inclusive; the information sought by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is being prepared as a collective answer and will be forwarded to him by mail.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Computer Equipment

2426. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Western Australian Education Department established a list of approved computer equipment for primary and secondary schools?
(2) If so, will he please provide details?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Software Programmes

2427. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What stage has planning reached to produce specially adapted educational software programmes for Western Australian primary and secondary schools?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Computer Equipment

2428. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What is the Education Department's current policy in respect of—

- (a) providing computer equipment in primary and secondary schools;
(b) financial assistance programmes for the purchase of computer equipment by school parents and citizens groups?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) and (b) See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Computer Equipment

2429. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

Does the Education Department propose to establish a computer centre in all secondary and certain primary schools?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Computer-assisted Learning Programmes

2430. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What arrangements, if any, have been made to retrain or educate practising teachers at primary and secondary levels to appreciate the significance and potential of computer assisted learning programmes?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Training: Computer Technology

2431. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

Has the Education Department made representation to any or all of the colleges of advanced education concerning the need for all trainee teachers to be able to appreciate the significance and potential of computer technology in schools?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION

Computer-assisted Learning Programmes

2432. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

In which particular subject areas does the Education Department believe computer assisted learning programmes are—

- (a) most significant;
- (b) most successful?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) and (b) See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION

Computer Keyboarding

2433. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Education Department have a policy in respect of the most appropriate age at which students should begin instruction in the art of "keyboarding"?
- (2) If so, will he please supply details?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) See answer to question 2425.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Computer Equipment

2434. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What arrangements are currently made for the maintenance of computer equipment in Western Australian primary and secondary schools?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

See answer to question 2425.

LAND: QUEENSLAND

Purchase: Minister for Works

2435. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Did the State Government purchase lot 136 Edred Street, Carindale, in Queensland, on the 8th June, 1979, for \$43 360 in the name of the Minister for Works from Orlit Homes?
- (2) If "Yes", for what purpose?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Housing for the Manager, Brisbane Branch of the WA Travel Centre.

WAGE INDEXATION: NATIONAL WAGE CASE

State Government Submission

2436. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Is he now in a position to give details of the Western Australian Government's submission to the current national wage case?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Yes. The Western Australian Government submitted that, on this occasion, a maximum wage increase should not exceed 60 per cent of the movement of the Consumer Price Index for the June and September quarters 1979—that is, a 3 per cent wage increase—on the basis that the full price index movement be discounted for the effect of import parity pricing of petroleum products, the state of the economy, unemployment, industrial action, and recent award wage increases that have occurred throughout Australia.

WATER SUPPLIES: SERVICES

Restriction

2437. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

Does the Metropolitan Water Board differentiate between domestic and commercial consumers in its procedures for restricting water due to non-payment of accounts?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Yes.

FIRE BRIGADES

Campbell Committee

2438. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it a fact that a working party known as the Campbell committee was established in August 1976, to consider

changes to the method of meeting fire brigade costs?

- (2) Who were the members of the committee and whom did they represent?
- (3) By whom were they appointed?
- (4) Is it a fact that their report was made to the State Government in January 1977?
- (5) What action has the Government taken on the report?
- (6) (a) Is it fact that the report has never been made public;
(b) if "Yes", why not, and is there any intention to make it public?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Mr C. W. Campbell, Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department (Governor).
Mr P. Farrell, State Treasury Department.
Mr H. Strickland, President, Local Government Association.
Mr R. Coffey, Secretary, Local Government Association and representing country shires.
Mr R. Trigg, Insurance Council of Australia (WA Division).
Mr F. W. Bertram, Chief Executive Officer, WA Fire Brigades Board.
- (3) The Chief Secretary.
- (4) The report was made to the Minister in January, 1977.
- (5) The report has been used by a subcommittee appointed by Cabinet to make further studies of the subject. This resulted in the changes in some areas as were recently approved by Parliament.
- (6) (a) Yes.
(b) The report is an interdepartmental working paper. It is not normal to make such papers public.

PRISONS: INMATES

Escapees

2439. Mr BATEMAN, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) How many prisoners have escaped from the various prisons in Western Australia during the past 12 months?
- (2) From which prisons have they escaped and the numbers from each prison?
- (3) What are the main crimes of the prisoners when at large?

- (4) Why are dangerous criminals stationed in minimum security prisons such as Geraldton instead of being placed in a maximum security prison such as Fremantle Gaol?
- (5) How many security prisons have we in Western Australia?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Including East Perth Police Gaol, 242 prisoners escaped from prisons in the period from 1.11.78 to 31.10.79.
- (2) For the period 1.11.78 to 31.10.79, escapes from the various prisons were—

Albany Regional Prison	19
Bandyup Training Centre	19
Barton's Mill Prison	15
Broome Regional Prison	6
Brunswick Junction Prison	6
Bunbury Regional Prison	8
Fremantle Prison	15
Fremantle Work Release Hostel	6
Geraldton Regional Prison	29
Kalgoorlie Regional Prison	5
Karnet Rehabilitation Centre	21
Pardelup Correction Centre	7
Roebourne Regional Prison	13
West Perth Work Release Centre	9
Wooroloo Training Centre	53
Wyndham Regional Prison	6
Highgate Work Release Centre	2
East Perth Police Gaol	3

It should be noted that prisoners listed as escaping from Fremantle were all located outside the prison—for example on work parties—with one exception. That prisoner was apprehended by prison staff before he could make good his escape.

- (3) The main crimes committed by prisoners at large relate to the unlawful use of motor vehicles and breaking, entering and stealing.
- (4) Where prisoners are considered dangerous, steps are taken to transfer them to maximum security. Some prisoners are transferred to Geraldton after undergoing departmental assessment procedures; others are received direct into Geraldton from the courts and are processed locally.

- (5) At the moment Fremantle Prison is the only maximum security institution in this State. However, work at Albany Regional Prison has progressed to the stage where it is ready to be considered a maximum security prison. Over the past year steps have also been taken to upgrade security at Karnet Rehabilitation Centre, Barton's Mill Prison and Geraldton Regional Prison and it is expected that the new facilities will shortly come into operation.

HOSPITAL

Collie: "C"-class

2440. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Since he advised me on the 19th November, 1979 by letter that Dr R. B. Lefroy considered that there was no acute situation at Collie in relation to the availability of permanent care accommodation, is it a fact that there is no "C"-class accommodation at Collie and that old residents are being required to leave the town and find accommodation at Bunbury and other centres to meet their needs?
- (2) In view of the foregoing will he have the matter re-examined?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) It is true that there is no "C"-class accommodation at Collie but provision exists in the Collie District Hospital for the accommodation of a number of long term care patients and future proposals for the hospital provide for an increase in this accommodation. The Director of the Extended Care Service has visited Collie and seen people requested by the doctors, but has not been acquainted with any "acute" situation. This assessment was made after a careful evaluation of medico-social needs in each patient who was referred.

HOUSING

Collie

2441. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it a fact that there is an excessive housing shortage at Collie?

- (2) Is it the Government's intention to build additional State Housing Commission homes in the town to overcome the possible housing crisis?
- (3) Is it a fact that no finance is available to paint any interior of any commission homes at Collie?
- (4) If answer to (3) is "Yes", would he state what action the Government is going to initiate to overcome the situation?

Mr O'Connor (for Mr RIDGE) replied:

- (1) and (2) No. There are no families who have been waiting longer than May, 1979. This period of waiting compares very favourably with other country towns and well within the waiting time desired by the commission.
- (3) and (4) No, but due to limitation of funds, internal painting will only be done where essential.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Voltage Variation

2442. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Does the State Energy Commission continually monitor the voltage of State Energy Commission power being supplied to consumers in the Geraldton area?
- (2) Do variations occur in the level of voltage supplied?
- (3) Between what limits does the voltage range?
- (4) Is the problem—
- isolated to the Geraldton area;
 - experienced in country areas generally;
 - experienced throughout the State Energy Commission network?
- (5) What is the cause of this range of voltage?
- (6) What action has the State Energy Commission taken to remove or reduce this problem and what further action is proposed?
- (7) What are the implications for electrical appliances, both household and industrial, of such a range of voltages?

- (8) Has the State Energy Commission received complaints or reports of damage to electrical appliances due to such variations?
- (9) Can he provide any statistics or estimate relating to damage to electrical appliances due to variable voltage?
- (10) What voltage level does the State Energy Commission attempt to monitor as its standard level?
- (11) Is this the same as in other States, and if not, will he please detail the difference and the reasons for the difference?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Minor variations occur but well within statutory limits.
- (3) Well within the statutory limits of ± 6 per cent of nominal voltage.
- (4) (a) to (c) Not applicable.
- (5) Variations in loading conditions.
- (6) To maintain voltage well within statutory limits voltage regulators are installed and to further improve supply conditions to the Geraldton area a second high voltage line between Three Springs and Geraldton is in the course of construction.
- (7) Not applicable.
- (8) Isolated local cases of voltage complaint are occasionally received and dealt with as a matter of course.
- (9) No. The commission has no such information available.
- (10) 250 volts.
- (11) The standard voltage in the Eastern States is 240 volts. Reasons for this difference are historical in that a higher voltage was adopted in Western Australia in the early 1900s.

ALUMINA REFINERIES: ALCOA AND ALWEST

Environmental Review and Management Programmes

2443. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) When is it intended that the environmental review and management programme of the Alwest project be tabled in Parliament?

- (2) (a) Will the public of Western Australia and specific interested bodies have the opportunity of commenting on the environmental review and management programme of Alcoa, and having submissions considered;
- (b) if so, what are the details of procedure to be followed?
- (3) If there is to be no opportunity to comment publicly by interested bodies and persons on the Alwest environmental review and management programme, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) As announced by the Premier recently, the final environmental review and management programme, together with other documents relating to the Alwest project will be released shortly.

DAIRYING

Dairy Industry Act

2444. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has the Dairy Industry Authority recommended that amendments be made to the Dairy Industry Act in the past year?
- (2) If "Yes", what were the suggested amendments recommended?
- (3) (a) Does the Government intend to introduce these proposed amendments; and
- (b) if so, when?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) In relation to aspects of milk vendor licensing.
- (3) (a) and (b) The Government considers the Authority should be able to resolve these matters administratively within the existing framework of the legislation.

ALUMINA REFINERY: ALWEST

Conveyance of Bauxite

2445. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Does Alwest propose to convey bauxite from Mt. Saddleback area to the refinery by conveyor belt or railway?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The alternatives are currently being examined by the joint venturers.

HOUSING

Tone River Mill

2446. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Have tenders for the purchase of houses at Tone River mill closed, and if so, when?
- (2) Have successful tenderers been notified of acceptance, and if not, when is it expected that they will be?

Mr O'Connor (for Mr RIDGE) replied:

- (1) Tenders for the purchase of the 23 properties with the land in the Tone River Townsite closed at 12 noon on the 3rd September, 1979.
- (2) No. All tenderers will be advised of the result of their tenders within a fortnight.

RAILWAYS

Northcliffe-Pemberton Line

2447. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has the south-west regional development committee recommended that a feasibility study for establishing a scenic railway/vehicle run on the Pemberton-Northcliffe line be set up?
- (2) (a) If "Yes", does the Government intend to conduct such a feasibility study; and
(b) when will it commence and finish?
- (3) If "No" to (1), will the Government undertake such a study, and if not, why not?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) This matter is presently under examination by the Department of Tourism.
- (3) Not applicable.

EMPLOYMENT AND POPULATION

South-west

2448. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has he received the report on employment and population in the south-west 1976-1990 (Crimp report) yet?
- (2) (a) What specific measures does the Government intend to take to overcome the declining trends and tendencies in employment and industries in the Blackwood subdivision; and
(b) when and how will any such measures be introduced?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The honourable member appears to be confusing two reports. The so-called "Crimp report" is a review of land-use planning in the south-west commissioned by the South-west Regional Development Committee. I understand this report is still under consideration by the committee.

The Department of Industrial Development released in April, 1979, a report entitled "Employment and Population in the South-west 1976-1990".

- (2) (a) The Department of Industrial Development report shows no decline in overall employment in the Blackwood subdivision over the period 1976-1990.
(b) The Government in any event continues to play an active role in promoting industry in the area. The Manjimup cannery and the woodchip project are two important examples. The Government will continue to investigate every means of promoting further industry in the Blackwood subdivision.

HOSPITAL: PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL

Downe's Syndrome Patient

2449. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) In regard to the death of Christopher Derkacz at Princess Margaret Hospital, has his attention been drawn to the

coronial file and the finding of the coroner dated the 13th November, 1979?

- (2) In respect to the hospital record which contained the words "No resus (no ECM) no intubation", can he advise who wrote these words?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The Coroner's file is being examined by Crown Law Department officers and I am unable to comment until the Government has received their advice.

HOSPITAL: WANNEROO

Completion and Casualty Facilities

2450. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When will the new Wanneroo Hospital be completed and operative?
- (2) Will the Wanneroo Hospital have casualty ward facilities?
- (3) If not, why not in view of the population growth in the area?
- (4) What hospitals in Western Australia have casualty ward facilities?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Handover by contractor on the 25th May, 1980. Planned opening early July, 1980.
- (2) The casualty service will be limited to patients requiring urgent attention provided by local doctors.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) All teaching hospitals, apart from King Edward Memorial Hospital, have accident and casualty services. Regional hospitals have similar type of facilities to Wanneroo in which patients who require urgent treatment have such provided by the doctor at the hospital. Complex cases and major accidents are referred to the adult and children's teaching hospitals.

FIRE BRIGADE

Wanneroo

2451. Mr CRANE, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) At what stage is planning for a fire brigade station at Wanneroo?
- (2) When will this station be built and operative?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The proposal is still subject to negotiation.
- (2) Not known.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Superannuation Scheme

2452. Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is it a fact that the local government superannuation scheme is under review?
- (2) If so, can she inform the House for how long the matter has been under review and what, if anything, has been determined?
- (3) Can she inform the House when local government employees can expect the present system to be replaced with one that provides benefits and entitlements equal to most progressive superannuation schemes in Australia?
- (4) Will the proposed legislation remove the monopoly granted to one life assurance office?
- (5) Can she assure the House that negotiations and discussions concerning the proposed scheme will involve all interested life offices (parties) and not just one, so that local government employees can obtain the best available benefits in terms of death and disablement protection for their families and adequate retirement funds when the time occurs?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A review that was initiated by my predecessor about four years ago has produced a comprehensive proposal for a new scheme based on a managed fund accumulation plan.

In March, 1978, a draft scheme was circulated to local government employee organisations and the associations of local government. Following submissions from and discussions with those bodies, a revised draft was again circulated in April, 1979.

- (3) I have undertaken to submit legislation to allow implementation of the proposed scheme, just as soon as all interested parties have indicated their agreement. To the present, the Municipal Employees' Union has been unwilling to agree.
- (4) The draft scheme provides for the establishment of a local government superannuation board and for that board to make appropriate arrangements for investments and insurance.
- (5) The proposed local government superannuation board would have a responsibility to make investment and insurance arrangements that were in the best interests of members of the scheme.

REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS AGENTS ACT

Licences

2453. Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Pursuant to the Real Estate and Business Agents Act, is it a fact that a person licensed under the repealed Act on behalf of a company (long engaged in real estate transactions) is now, as well as holding a licence as a real estate agent on behalf of the company, also required to hold a real estate licence in his own right?
- (2) What was the position under the repealed Act in these circumstances?
- (3) What was the standard fee payable under the repealed Act for a person to renew registration as a land salesman (woman)?
- (4) What is the corresponding fee payable pursuant to the present Act?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The Real Estate and Business Agents Act requires that separate licences be held by a company on the one hand and a qualified person in *bona fide* control of the business on the other hand.
- (2) Only individuals were required to hold a licence.
- (3) Fifty dollars per year.
- (4) One hundred and eighty dollars for a three-year licence.

SAFETY OFFICERS

Employment by Government

2454. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) How many safety officers are employed by the State Government?
- (2) In which departments, authorities, commissions, etc., are they located?
- (3) What is the salary classification for each officer in each department, authority, commission, etc.?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) This information is being obtained and will be made available to the member as soon as possible.

HEALTH: ASBESTOS

Building Materials

2455. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

Adverting to question 912 of 1979 concerning health risks associated with the use of asbestos in building materials, is the report of the sub-committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council to hand, and if so, can he table the report?

Mr YOUNG replied:

Yes, the reports are tabled.
(See papers Nos. 518 to 520).

WATER SUPPLIES: SALINITY

Whittington Interceptor Salt Affected Land Treatment Society

2456. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Was an approach made by representatives of WISALTS for concurrence in extending the Whittington interceptor drain bank system in the Batalling Creek area?
- (2) If "Yes", was an agreement entered into by the Government for the extensions to be installed?
- (3) If so, what are the terms of the agreement?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) The proposal to extend the interceptor drains at Batalling Creek is entirely the responsibility of WISALTS.

The trial set up by the Public Works Department will be discontinued and all equipment specifically installed for the purpose of the trial will be removed. However, the main gauging station at Batalling Creek is to remain and will continue to be operated by the department as part of its routine activities. This station is part of the permanent network on the Wellington catchment and was established two years before the interceptor drain trial was commenced. The data from the gauging station will be made available to WISALTS in accordance with the normal policy of making such data publicly available.

RAILWAYS

Profits and Losses

2457. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How are the freight rates and fares charged by Westrail determined?
- (2) What amount of profit or loss was made in 1978-79 by Westrail from Westrail's charge to the MTT for city and suburban services in 1978-79?
- (3) What amount of profit or loss was made in 1978-79 by Westrail for the road passenger service provided by Westrail within the State?
- (4) What amount of profit or loss was made in 1978-79 by Westrail for the road freight service provided by Westrail within the State?
- (5) What amount of profit or loss was made in 1978-79 by Westrail for the country rail passenger services provided by Westrail within the State?
- (6) What amount of profit or loss was made in 1978-79 by Westrail for rail passenger and rail freight services provided by Westrail for interstate connections?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Freight rates and fares are basically determined by considering all market forces—including competitive modes—which will affect both the volume and revenue to be achieved from that traffic. There are services provided which may not reflect the economic cost of providing that service.
- (2) The charge to the MTT for the operation of suburban rail passenger services is on the basis of the assessed costs attributable to the service, without any provision for profit.
- (3) to (6) Because of the existence of so many overhead and other indirect costs which are common to various functions and activities, it is not practicable to compile profit and loss figures other than on a total Westrail basis.

HEALTH: NOISE

Industry: Workers' Compensation

2458. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he or his department aware if the United States environmental protection authority has made an estimate of the savings in costs related to workers compensation claims by reducing industrial noise exposure levels from 90dB (A) to 85dB (A), or to 80dB (A)?
- (2) If "Yes", what is their estimate?
- (3) Is he or his department aware if the United States environmental protection authority has estimated the cost to industry of workers compensation claims for compensable noise induced hearing loss?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), what is their estimated cost?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The potential additional benefits of reduced workmen's compensation by lowering the noise exposure levels from 90 dB (A) to 85 dB (A) is about \$16.1 million (US) annually. The magnitude of benefits depends upon the working definition of "hearing impairment". No cost estimates have been found for lowering the noise exposure levels to 80 dB (A).
- (3) Yes.

- (4) In 1977 the total estimated claims paid to both State and Federal programmes amount to \$30 million (US).

The above estimates should be balanced against the additional investment necessary to move from full compliance with a 90 dB (A) standard to full compliance with a 85 dB (A) standard which has been estimated at \$8 billion (US) due to engineering controls.

RAILWAYS: LOCOMOTIVES

"N"-class

2459. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What number of bauxite trains have been cancelled due to "N"-class diesel locomotives failures in the last four months?
- (2) What loss of revenue due to failures of "N"-class locomotives was recorded on the following services—
 - (a) bauxite services;
 - (b) coal traffic;
 - (c) alumina services?
- (3) Are extra bauxite services being worked to make up these losses; that services are now finishing Sunday morning instead of Saturday afternoon, thus possibly disrupting the social life of train crews, whose rosters allow for little social life at Kwinana?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) One.
- (2) (a) to (c) In most cases, locomotive failures on any of these bulk haul traffics do not cause loss of revenue because the backlog is usually made up, although there can be additional costs associated with the running of additional trains.
Westrail does not have figures on revenue losses, if any, or on consequential additional costs.
- (3) No. At the client's request, additional trains have been run on Saturdays resulting in two services being unloaded early a.m. on Sundays. These additional trains are due to increased production and not due to loss of loading brought about by "N"-class unit failures.

RAILWAYS: LOCOMOTIVES

"N"-class

2460. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the number of "N"-class locomotive failures since being brought into Westrail service, these failures to include the following—
 - (a) dynamic brake failures;
 - (b) units catching fire;
 - (c) other general failures?
- (2) How many years' guarantee has Westrail been given on "N"-class locomotives?
- (3) Is it not a fact that an average of three locomotives are being returned to Comeng for these failures at the same time, thus making three locomotives out of 11 not available for rail traffic?
- (4) Is it a fact that an "N"-class locomotive is being tied up for six months waiting on a replacement alternator from the United States of America?
- (5) Are not these locomotives that he is so proud of as he appears to mention them every time he speaks of upgrading of Westrail, the most unreliable locomotive purchased in the history of the Western Australian Government Railways?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) (a) 31;
(b) 2;
(c) 104.
- (2) Design performance warranty—five years.
Materials and workmanship warranty—two years.
- (3) No, although three locomotives have been out of service at the works for short periods, the average number of units at Comeng in 1979 for modification or repair, is less than two.
- (4) No.
- (5) The question is frivolous and does not warrant an answer.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Norseman

2461. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) How many faults causing an interruption to the State Energy Commission power supply to Norseman have there been in the last eight weeks?

- (2) For what periods has the power supply been interrupted in each case?
- (3) In what area of the town was the power cut off in each case?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Two faults have occurred in the past eight weeks which have affected more than one customer—no records are kept of faults which affect only one customer.
- (2) (a) One fault occurred on the 22nd October, 1979 at approximately 3.00 p.m., all power was restored at 7.40 p.m.—cause, a willy-willy lifting a roof off a nearby house causing debris to strike the commission mains.
- (b) One fault occurred on the 7th November, 1979, 8.45 p.m. to 4.30 a.m. and affected all customers connected to the south feeder circuit—cause, high winds blew a tree over the main high tension line.
- (3) (a) Customers served by Robert Street transformer—approximately 30-40 customers.
- (b) Customers served by the south high tension circuits—approximately 220 customers.

BANK HOLIDAYS

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

2462. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Will he confirm that the information given in answer to question 2252 of 1979 relevant to bank holidays is correct, especially in regard to Queensland?
- (2) In view of the fact that bank officers in most other States have the 31st December as a holiday, which would possibly indicate that business and the community generally are not inconvenienced, would the Government give consideration to granting this day as a holiday in Western Australia?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The information available to me in respect to bank holidays in other States when answering Question 2252 was correct at that time. I have since been advised that Queensland has granted the 24th December as a bank holiday.
- (2) No.
- (3) For the reason given when answering question 2252.

TRAFFIC: PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Wanneroo Road, Wanneroo

2463. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Main Roads Department prepared to install traffic lights for a pedestrian crossing in Wanneroo at the intersection of Wanneroo Road and Hastings Street, in view of the fact that the Wanneroo Shire Council has offered to pay its share of the cost of such installation?
- (2) If not, when will lights be installed?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) No. Pedestrian safety is adequately catered for during relevant school hours by a guard-controlled crossing in Wanneroo Road to the north of Hastings Street-Conlan Avenue. Guard-controlled crossings offer a very high level of safety for school-aged pedestrians. Other pedestrians are adequately catered for by the median islands.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Charges

2464. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) In view of the suggestion that the State Energy Commission may issue monthly accounts instead of quarterly, will this mean that an additional fixed charge will be imposed for meter reading, etc.?
- (2) If so, what is the estimated monthly fixed charge, and how does it compare with the present quarterly fixed charge?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) The commission is considering a number of alternatives to its billing period of which monthly accounts is one. However at this stage, no decision has been reached.

The fixed charge relates to the period of supply and is not a meter reading fee. It is made up mainly of interest and depreciation charges on generating plant, electricity and gas supply lines and household connections.

No addition to the fixed charge is anticipated as a result of any variation to the billing cycle.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Carine

2465. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that the principal of Carine High School has refused to allow a 12th year student to receive an English prize and public speaking prize because his parents have not paid school book hire fees in full?
- (2) Has the principal also refused to give the same student a reference for the same reason?
- (3) Is the principal acting according to Education Department policy in apparently punishing this student for the attitudes and actions of his parents?
- (4) Will he take action to see that the student concerned is treated according to his merits and in a way that will not unfairly harm his future employment prospects?

Mr Mensaros (for Mr P. V. JONES) replied:

- (1) No. I am advised that the student concerned has been recorded as the winner of the two awards.
- (2) No.
- (3) and (4) Not applicable.

WASTE DISPOSAL

City of Stirling: Truganina Road

2466. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Public Health Department reached a decision on the proposal by the City of Stirling to deposit municipal

waste on a site in Truganina Road, north of Dianella?

- (2) If "Yes", what was the nature of the decision and what provisos did the department make?
- (3) If the department has approved the council proposal, what further grounds of appeal are available to local residents and others who are opposed to the plan?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) Not applicable.

2467. *This question was postponed.*

EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY CENTRE

Swan-Guildford

2468. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that an accident occurred at the Swan-Guildford pre-primary school involving a child named Matthew Lockyer on the 23rd August, 1979?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) when was the ambulance summoned to attend the child;
 - (b) when did the ambulance arrive at the pre-primary school;
 - (c) when was the child actually placed in the ambulance to be conveyed to the Princess Margaret Hospital?

Mr Mensaros (for Mr P. V. JONES) replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) At 2.55 p.m. on the day of the accident, the 23rd August, 1979.
- (b) At 3.15 p.m.
- (c) At 3.20 p.m. when the child's mother arrived to accompany the child to hospital.

ABATTOIRS: SHEEP

Slaughter under Islamic Rites

2469. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Further to my question 2358 of 1979 relevant to the killing of sheep for export, will he answer the questions

raised regarding the names of the persons having the contract for the killing of sheep for the export market to Iran and other Moslem countries?

- (2) Is Mr Kamal Badr who is the holder of an authority issued to him by the Ayatollah Mohd Minhaj, that allows Mr Badr to ensure that the animals slaughtered for the Islamic Republic of Iran are correctly killed in accordance with the Moslem laws, known to the Robb Jetty management?
- (3) Has a complaint been made to any persons responsible for the slaughtering of animals for export to Iran on the grounds that the non-Moslem slaughtermen are not adhering strictly to the Moslem laws for killing such animals?
- (4) Is it a fact that Mr Irfan Oktem who is employed as a slaughterman at Robb Jetty has complained to the management that he has been told by non-Moslem slaughtermen not to cause any trouble and to cease complaining about the way they carry out the slaughtering of these animals?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr OLD) replied:

- (1) I am assured by the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation that each of the Muslim slaughterers who carry out slaughtering procedures at export works in Western Australia has been reviewed and certified by Mohammed Nakhai as a suitable person for the purpose of Islamic slaughter for the Iran market.
- (2) This person is not known to management.
- (3) I am informed that no such complaint has been made to the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation.
- (4) Management has indicated it has received no such complaint.

LAND

Reserve No. 25211

2470. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Further to questions 735 and 850 of May 1979 relevant to reserves and the letter received from the Minister on this

matter dated the 28th June, 1979, did the Lands Department take up the matter of encroachment and utilisation of the reserve class "C" 25211 with the owners of the adjoining land?

- (2) Will he make available a full report on the outcome of such exercise by the department and on which date this exercise took place?
- (3) Is the landholder carrying out the department's recommendations?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3). Certain proposals arising from negotiations with the landholder have been referred to the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River in whom the reserve is vested. Council reaction to these proposals is awaited and I will advise the member when the matter is finalised with council.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Margaret River: Sand Pit

2471. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Will he have an officer of the Department of Conservation and Environment revisit the area of the sand pit on class "A" Reserve No. 8431 and report on eventual rehabilitation progress made since the Hamilton Report of the 9th November, 1978?
- (2) Has this pit, to his knowledge, been clearly closed and signposted to prevent access?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Will he take the necessary steps to have this ruling executed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes. Officers of the Department of Conservation and Environment routinely inspect this area when working in the Margaret River district.
- (2) The pit has been clearly closed by blocking of the access tracks. However, signs have not been erected.

- (3) and (4) The Lands and Surveys Department is the responsible authority in dealing with the Augusta-Margaret River Shire in matters relating to "A"-class Reserve 8431. The Department of Conservation and Environment recommendation to close access to the quarry, signpost and rehabilitate it was forwarded to the Lands and Surveys Department on the 9th November, 1979.

TOWN PLANNING

Prevelly Park

2472. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Further to question 1724 of 1979 relevant to specific coastal development between Dunsborough and Augusta, will she fully explain what is meant by expressions such as "small sheltered area" and "limited development"?
- (2) Will she explain the norms which form the basis for the decision of the place and size of such development to the windward of the Leeuwin/Naturaliste ridge?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) "Small sheltered areas" depend on topographic features and can only be determined by on-site inspections and analysis. "Limited development" would suggest a restriction in the total number of dwelling units to be introduced into an area, as well as the type of development. It is not possible to put a figure on the numbers involved, because of the varying extent of the "small sheltered areas" in which the development would occur. The type of development should be of a holiday accommodation or tourist nature rather than a traditional residential subdivision.
- (2) It is accepted that any development west of the ridge will need to be subject to very careful siting requirements because of the generally exposed nature of the coastline, and in addition to those requirements other considerations would include the availability of services, an assessment of demand for proposed facilities and any overall proposals which may be contained in town planning schemes.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge: Reserves

2473. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Further to question 1989 of 1979 relevant to alienation of Crown land, will he supply full details and sketch regarding alienation of vacant Crown land on the Leeuwin/Naturaliste ridge on or about October 1976?
- (2) What was the rationale for such alienation?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) No land was alienated during 1976 on the Leeuwin-Naturaliste ridge.

LAND

Reserves Nos. 8431 and 13404

2474. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Further to question 289 of 1979 relevant to reserves, will the Minister table a progress report including full details and maps, with regard to all alterations to the boundaries of Reserve Nos. 13404 and 8431 which are proposed or under consideration, as well as those specifically concerning that portion of A 8431 which is controlled by the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and that portion of A 13404 which adjoins the western boundary of Sussex location 815?
- (2) Will the Minister indicate if an exchange of land or a resumption of land has taken place or is proposed to take place between the owner(s) of Sussex location 815 and the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River?
- (3) Will the Minister indicate the rationale behind such exchange or resumption and a costing of such exercise?
- (4) Will the Minister indicate who will pay, or has paid, the cost of such exercise?
- (5) Will the Minister table maps showing where such exchange or resumption mentioned above has occurred?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) The information and maps requested by the member will take some time to compile and will be supplied when available.
- (2) to (5) Resumption of 1.0331 ha for road purposes has recently been effected. Lands Department has not been involved with any other negotiations with the landholder or the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River which may have taken place.

LAND

Reserves Nos. 8431, 26228, and 33793

2475. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

Further to question 288 part (5) of 1979 relevant to reserves, will the Minister table copy of all the proposals made by the Soil Conservation Commissioner or copy of such rehabilitation programme for this area, if such programme now exists?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Proposals are submitted for tabling. The Shire of Augusta-Margaret River has agreed to undertake rehabilitation in accordance with option three.

FLORA

Donnybrook Sunklands

2476. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

Further to question 2006 of 1979 relevant to flora survey of Donnybrook sunklands, will she table copy of the comprehensive vegetation/site classification survey, as indicated in the final paragraph of the reply to this question?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Yes. The Statement of Intent is submitted for tabling.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Reserve No. 8431

2477. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Further to question 2120 of 1979 relevant to reserves, would he table copy of the recommendations as developed by the National Parks Authority concerning Class "A" Reserve No. 8431?

- (2) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The recommendations are a matter for internal discussion at this stage.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Swan Electorate

2478. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many State Housing Commission rental units are empty in the Swan electorate?
- (2) What type of units are they, and what are the reasons why they are not occupied in each instance?
- (3) Would he set out the addresses of the unoccupied units?
- (4) How long has each unit listed above been unoccupied?
- (5) How many applications are outstanding for rental accommodation in the Swan electorate?
- (6) What types of accommodation are required?

Mr O'Connor (for Mr RIDGE) replied:

- (1) There are six rental units currently empty (29th November) in the Swan electorate.
- (2) to (4)

Units Vacant—Swan Electorate as at 29th November, 1979

Vacant Details				
Address	Type of Unit	Length of Vacancy	Reason Why Vacant	Current Action
Flat 4, Hynam Crt., Ferguson St. Midvale.	3 B.R. Flat	3 Wks.	Under Maintenance	Under Offer
Lot 409, 4 Hooley Rd. Midvale.	2 B.R. Hse.	2 Wks.	Under Maintenance	Under Maintenance

Address	Type of Unit	Vacant Details			Current Action
		Length of Vacancy	Reason Why Vacant		
Flat 7, Mallowa, Ferguson St., Midvale.	2 B.R. Flat	1 Wk.	Under Maintenance		Under Maintenance
Flat 12, Lukin Wy., Bassendean.	Bedsitting Room Flat	2 Wks.	Under Maintenance		Under Offer
Lot 209, 20 Wagoora Wy., Koongamia.	3 B.R. Hse.	2 Days	—		Under Maintenance
Lot 169, 27 Banjine Rd., Koongamia.	3 B.R. Hse.	3 Wks.	Extensive Maintenance		Under Offer

- (5) and (6) Waiting lists are not maintained under electoral areas.

Applications on hand for assistance in the Midland area as at 31.10.79

No. of Bedrooms:	5	4	3	2	1	S.U.*	Total
	Nil	3	7	57	13	49	129

*Single Unit Applications.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Pawnbrokers

2479. Mr WILSON, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is his department satisfied that the present legislation governing the operations of pawnbrokers is adequate?
- (2) Is it a fact that some pawnbrokers appear to be taking advantage of some people who have been adversely affected by the current difficult economic situation by charging interest at the rate of 10 per cent per month?
- (3) Is he prepared to consider amendments to the Pawnbrokers' Act of 1860 to protect vulnerable members of the public against such exploitation?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is understood that the six pawnbrokers licensed to operate in Western Australia charge interest of around 10 per cent per month. This is not considered excessive, having regard to the nature of the business of pawnbroking.
- (3) If the member can demonstrate a need for amendments the matter will be considered.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Off-road Vehicles: Policing of Act

2480. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Shire of Wanneroo and the City of Stirling are not enforcing the provision of the Control of Vehicles (Off-roads areas) Act in respect of complaints from residents in the vicinity of Beach Road east of Mirrabooka Avenue about continuing use of vacant land by unlicensed trail bikes?
- (2) In view of the apparent inability or unwillingness of these authorities to police the provisions of the Act in this area, what action is she prepared to take to ensure that these provisions of the Act are made effective?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) I think that it would have been best if the member had referred this matter direct to the two municipalities concerned as they, not I, would be in a position to provide a comprehensive answer. However, inquiries by my department with the two councils indicate that they are taking an interest in these complaints and have taken reasonable measures to enforce the Act. I understand that the City of Stirling recently issued several infringement notices on alleged offenders.
- (2) On the information given to me, this question is based on an incorrect premise.

HOUSING

Homeless Young People

2481. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 773 of the 10th May, 1979 relevant to homeless young people, can he say whether the final report of the committee established to research the problem of accommodation for homeless young people which was anticipated within six months is now available?
- (2) If the report is available, when will it be released to the public?

- (3) If it is not yet available, when is it now expected to be finalised?
- (4) Who was appointed to direct research?
- (5) How were the funds allotted to be spent on the research?
- (6) What time was allocated for the conduct of the research?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) The report is not available.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) It is expected to be finalised on the 7th March, 1980.
- (4) The Social Work Department of the Western Australian Institute of Technology.
- (5) The Western Australian Institute of Technology is providing the majority of resources at their own expense. The Department for Community Welfare has agreed to provide \$1 000 which will cover travel, printing and stationery expenses.
- (6) The research commenced on the 23rd August, 1979. Data collection will be complete on the 22nd February, 1980. The final report will be submitted on the 7th March, 1980.

FISHERIES

Prawning: Swan River

2482. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) In view of the popularity of prawning on the Swan River, is there any danger of the prawn stocks being seriously depleted?
- (2) Have any estimates been made of the quantity of prawns caught by amateur fishermen per year in the Swan River?
- (3) If "No", will he give consideration to assessment being made?
- (4) Is it necessary to obtain a licence to prawn in the Swan River?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No. The quantities of prawns available each year seem to be more dependent on environmental factors than the size of the spawning stocks. However, in any year the quantity available to each fisherman will depend on the number of fishermen.

- (2) A few spot checks have been made on the prawning activities of amateur fishermen, but no quantitative assessments have been made.
- (3) Although this would be desirable it is unlikely with the present availability of staff.
- (4) Yes.

HOUSING: LAND

Karawara

2483. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission own any more residential land in the East Manning (Karawara) area?
- (2) If so, when can it be anticipated that further building development will take place?

Mr O'Connor (for Mr RIDGE) replied:

- (1) and (2) There are 36 vacant residential lots, including some for medium density development, in the State Housing Commission sector of the Karawara Estate. This land is under option to the Western Australian Institute of Technology, and discussions with the institute are proceeding.

The commission is not able to indicate at present when the land will be utilised for housing.

TOWN PLANNING: METROPOLITAN REGION PLANNING AUTHORITY

Regional Open Space Land

2484. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) When did the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority purchase land west of Alexander Drive between Yirrigan Drive and Marangaroo Drive for regional open space and what was the area and price of this purchase?
- (2) If this area has not yet been purchased for regional open space, what priority has been given for its purchase and ultimate designation for this purpose?

- (3) Is it now the practice of the authority to erect signs in areas purchased for regional open space indicating that the land has officially been acquired for this purpose?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), when was this practice introduced and why have such signs not been erected in the Dianella regional open space or the regional open space west of Alexander Drive in Turana and Koondoola?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) April 1978; area 29.5200 ha; price \$30 000.
- (2) Balance of land is being purchased over the next 15-20 years as part of parks and recreation for the whole metropolitan region. Ultimate designation is parks and recreation.
- (3) In selected areas only.
- (4) 1977; Dianella area is leased to and managed by City of Stirling; signs are in the process of being made and will be erected in the area west of Alexander Drive in Turana and Koondoola, by the 15th December, 1979.

DAIRYING

Dairy Industry Act

2485. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Did the Dairy Industry Authority submit amendments to the Dairy Industry Act for consideration by himself and/or Cabinet in March 1979, after two years of industry discussion and consultation with the Crown Law Department?
- (2) Is it fact that Cabinet is not prepared to put the amendments to Parliament?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), why not?
- (4) Will he outline the amendments?

Sir Charles Court (for Mr OLD) replied:

- (1) to (4) In my reply to question 2444 I indicated that the Government considered the authority should be able to resolve the matters raised in respect of milk vendor licensing administratively within the existing framework of the legislation.

If this approach proves to be ineffective in practice further consideration will be given by the Government to any recommendation which may be made by the authority.

TENDER BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Tender 97/79: Rehabilitation of Gravel Pits

2486. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What was the winning tender price for tender No. 97/79 for rehabilitation of gravel pits, including any extra conditions?
- (2) Who won the tender?
- (3) Was the tender which was accepted the lowest tender?
- (4) If not, why was it accepted?
- (5) How many other tenders were received?
- (6) What were the tender prices for each of the tenders?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) \$24.00 per hour plus \$50.00 for each shift to a new site. Three sites involved.
- (2) G. R. & R. J. Rigoll.
- (3) No.
- (4) The lowest tender was not acceptable as insufficient detail was provided concerning the machinery to be used as required by condition No. 2 of the general conditions of tender.
- (5) Three; two of these tenders were submitted by one person.
- (6) \$24.00 per hour plus \$50.00 for each shift to a new site (3 shifts involved).
\$25.00 per hour with no charge for shifts.
\$21.50 per hour plus 35c per kilometre for each shift—this tender not acceptable as insufficient information provided concerning the machinery to be used.
\$45.00 per hour plus \$1.10 per kilometre for shifting machinery to new site (3 shifts involved).

HEALTH: RADIOACTIVITY

Monte Bello Islands

2487. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has a recent survey been undertaken to test the present level of radiation that

may still exist in the Monte Bello islands?

- (2) If a survey has taken place, would he present and table a report on the results of such survey?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) A draft confidential report only has been received. However, the Prime Minister has indicated that the report will be printed and released to the public.

TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE TRUST

Pedestrians

2488. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is it a fact that in some cases the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust is now refusing to pay damages to pedestrians struck by motor vehicles whilst on crosswalks?
(2) If "Yes", what is the reason for this action and does she intend doing anything about it?
(3) If "No", why?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) to (3) I am advised that the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust deals with claims by pedestrians who are struck by motor vehicles whilst on a crosswalk on exactly the same basis as any other claim.

HEALTH: TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Cost of Disease Treatment: Comparison with Accident Costs

2489. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Did he recently state in *The West Australian* of the 22nd November that accidents cost Western Australia \$22 million?
(2) Did he also state in *The West Australian* of the 22nd November that accident costs to the Australian nation reached \$1 800 million a year?

- (3) Is he aware whether the cost of tobacco-caused disease is greater or less than the figures mentioned in questions (1) and (2) above, and if so, will he provide the actual figures involved?

- (4) If "No", why?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
(3) and (4) I am not aware whether the cost of tobacco-caused disease is greater or less than the figures mentioned in parts (1) and (2) above. In any case, I should imagine any figure would be substantially a "guesstimate".
I would like to add that, in respect of the figures for (1) and (2) I queried them when I was making a statement at the seminar. I asked about the apparent disparity between the figure of \$22 million for Western Australia which has 8 per cent of the population and the figure of \$1 800 million for the whole of the nation. It did not seem to add up. However, that was the best figure I could get at the time.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Recommendations

2490. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

How many recommendations from the Law Reform Commission requiring legislative action by the Government remain to be complied with?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Information as to those reports not yet implemented by the present and previous State Governments is contained in the appendices to the Law Reform Commission annual report which will be tabled in Parliament shortly.

2491. *This question was postponed.*

EDUCATION

Schools Performing Arts Advisory Committee

2492. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When was the schools performing arts advisory committee formed?
(2) Who are its members?

- (3) At whose request or direction was it formed?
- (4) What are the terms of its charter?
- (5) How often has it met?

Mr Mensaros (for Mr P. V. JONES) replied:

- (1) The committee is being formed at present.
- (2) The final membership has not yet been determined.
- (3) The Education Department.
- (4) The committee is being formed to review, monitor and assess all companies and artists who wish to perform in Government schools.
- (5) Not applicable.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

ALUMINA REFINERY

Atwest: Worsley

Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What reason can the Minister give for his failure to make public Bulletin No. 56 of the EPA which was published last March and which he tabled only yesterday?

- (2) Has the EPA reported on the final ERMP of the Worsley alumina project, and if so, would the Minister table that report?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) I am at a loss, because the member quoted numbers and I did not follow what was behind his question. If I understand the member correctly, he asked why the Worsley ERMP had not been tabled earlier; is that correct?

Mr Skidmore: No, it is not. I asked why a report of the Department of Conservation and Environment of Western Australia, Bulletin No. 56, bearing the date of March, 1979, was not made public. It was handed to the Minister and it was not tabled until yesterday.

Mr MENSAROS: I will have to ask the member to place the question on the notice paper, because I cannot follow the numbers he used.

