

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 12 September 1991

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 10.00 am, and read prayers.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE

### *Report No 19 - Tabling*

**MR CATANIA** (Balcatta) [10.04 am]: I present for tabling the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee's report No 19 on follow-up procedures for committee reports.

[See paper No 571.]

**Mr CATANIA:** I move -

That the report do lie upon the Table and be printed.

The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee has been concerned for some time about the lack of effective follow-up to its report. It has been difficult for the committee to ascertain what actions have been taken to implement its recommendations. As with many committee reports, once presented, there is a tendency to forget them and move to the next project. This significantly reduces the effectiveness of the committee because its findings and recommendations are quickly lost to public view and are, therefore, more easily ignored. This problem is faced by most public accounts committees in Australia and it has led to a number of solutions being employed, ranging from formal and informal arrangements with the bureaucracy to provide follow-up on behalf of the committee to rolling reviews of past reports by the committee itself.

The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee considers that while either of these solutions may provide adequate information on the fate of committee findings, with the necessary level of bureaucratic commitment and committee resources, neither is a viable alternative in Western Australia at the moment. In order to ensure that committee reports do not find their way to the bottom of a dark cupboard and are not quickly forgotten as soon as the required response has been made to Parliament, the committee has instigated a new reporting follow-up procedure. This new reporting format is designed to ensure that the committee, and through it the Parliament, is given sufficient information on the implementation or otherwise of its recommendations. This will enable the committee to gauge its own effectiveness, as well as ensure that any necessary follow-up of recommendations can be made. It is important that the recommendations of committees, which are working on behalf of the Parliament, receive recognition, and that the proper and due follow-up procedure is adopted.

It must be strongly stated that it is not the committee's intention to try to compel the Government to implement its recommendations. That is not the committee's role and it understands that the Government will not always agree with its findings and that, after further examination by Government, at times practical reasons may emerge indicating that the recommendations cannot, and indeed should not, be implemented. However, the committee's reports are based on extensive research and are made after hearing evidence from a wide range of expert witnesses and, as such, they warrant due consideration by the Government. In order that the recommendations made by committees, particularly by the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, be considered fully, a new follow-up procedure has been adopted. The committee believes that the Government has a responsibility to Parliament, and through it to the public, to explain its decisions, particularly when such decisions are in disagreement with report recommendations.

The committee intends to adopt the following procedure: Committee reports will be tabled in two main parts, with a further supplementary part if necessary. The first report will constitute the main report and will contain the committee's findings and recommendations, as has been the practice with past reports. After the three month response period established by Standing Order No 41(5) has elapsed, the committee will send to the responsible Minister an extensive questionnaire requesting specific and detailed information on each of the

recommendations contained in the first report. The questionnaire will include a summary section in which the Minister will indicate one of the following for each recommendation: (a) the recommendation has been implemented in full; (b) the recommendation has been implemented in part; (c) the recommendation has been referred for review; (d) the recommendation will not be implemented; or (e) the Government's intentions regarding the recommendation.

The Minister will then complete the appropriate sections of the questionnaire in detail. The detail sought by the questionnaire includes intended implementation, non-implementation or review of the recommendations. Once again I stress that it is not the committee's object to force the Government to implement its recommendations. As I have said before, the Government may feel that it is not practicable to implement a recommendation. In that case the reasons for non-implementation or the impracticality of implementing the recommendations should appear in the questionnaire when it is returned to the committee. Responses or lack of response will be reported with appropriate comment. I commend all Ministers and their departments on the cooperation and feedback we have received from them about the questionnaire. As a result of the feedback the committee has received, I believe that the questionnaire will be accepted readily by Ministers and their departments. I commend the Minister for Services and his department for sending back the first questionnaire. I compliment the Minister for Services on the manner in which it was answered and the expert way in which it was handled. I am sure that other Ministers will provide similar reports as they are requested to do so. The committee believes that as the Parliament's major accountability agency its reports are a significant element of the accountability process. The committee believes that reporting as a matter of course not only its findings and recommendations but also the consequent actions taken by Government will greatly enhance the accountability of the Western Australian public sector.

I commend the committee's staff for the professional manner in which they have worked on this questionnaire and follow up procedure on recommendations made by the committee, particularly Michael Baker, who designed the implementation questionnaire. The questionnaire will have the effect of reducing the time and cost to departments and Ministers of reacting to recommendations of the committee. The staff and members of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee should be complimented on the design of the questionnaire and the professional manner in which it was reviewed. I commend the report to the House.

**DR EDWARDS** (Maylands) [10.13 am]: As a member of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee I too have some comments on the report. We have all heard in this Parliament, and in the community in general, about "increased accountability". I believe the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee has an important role to play in that undertaking. It is the most powerful Standing Committee of this Parliament. Its reports are an effective mechanism of accountability. A problem, both under Standing Orders and in the practice that has developed, is that reports that come back to the committee are not always as adequate as they could be; in fact, understanding all this it would be possible for a Minister to stand and say, "No action has been taken", a token response that would be acceptable.

After addressing that problem and the need for greater accountability the committee came up with the idea of a new reporting procedure. It is important for the Parliament to know that we looked at the procedures adopted in other States as all States suffer similar problems. After looking at what other people do it was decided that we should avoid solutions that were too bureaucratic or demanded a lot of resources. We believe, therefore, that the procedure that we are adopting of using reports in three parts will provide an extremely effective accountability tool that will also be effective for the committee while not costing a lot of money.

As the Chairman of the committee, the member for Balcastra, pointed out, part one of our report will be the actual report with recommendations. Within three months of that report being sent out a detailed questionnaire will be sent to the responsible Minister to be answered in five parts explaining what has happened to the recommendations. Within the following 12 to 15 months, after we have received answers to the recommendations and have decided what is to be implemented and the reasons for that implementation, we will prepare a second report commenting on that fact. As the member for Balcatta pointed out, the committee

never seeks to force the Government to follow its recommendations, but all of us need to know why a recommendation is not being followed, or sometimes why it cannot be followed.

After the second report is prepared an option is available to the committee to prepare a third and final report within the following six months in which it will make any follow-up suggestions or comments it has about previous answers. It is important to recognise that many resources and much effort goes into the reports of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, resources and efforts that a member of Parliament is not aware of until he or she sits on the committee. The committee believes it has a duty to ensure that its reports are taken seriously and are followed up adequately. Bearing in mind the call for increased accountability and the power of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, I believe this new procedure will enhance its effectiveness, the Parliament's effectiveness, and accountability in general. I commend the report of the committee to the House.

Question put and passed.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT - BY THE MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

#### *Indonesia - Sister Province Anniversary*

**MR GORDON HILL** (Helena - Minister assisting the Minister for State Development) [10.17 am]: I am pleased to report on my recent visit to Indonesia on the occasion of the first anniversary of the East Java-Western Australia sister province State agreement. The Premier officiated on 4 September, the main day of celebration in Surabaya. I was asked to lead a senior business delegation to fulfil additional duties both in Jakarta and for the remainder of the visit. I was in Indonesia from Sunday, 1 September, to Friday, 6 September. I was accompanied by a group of business leaders and members of the Overseas Relations Committee. Mr Kevin Minson, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, and Mr Dan O'Sullivan attended as representatives of the Overseas Relations Committee. The business delegation included Mr Harold Clough of Clough Engineering Group, Mr Peter Walker of Dominion Mining Ltd, Mr Harry Morgan of Mercer Mooney Fruit and Vegetable Merchants, Mr Ted Van Riel of Price Waterhouse, Mr David Clapin of the Heytesbury Pastoral Group and Mr Rich Maslen of the Geraldton Mid-West Development Authority. Without exception all members were well connected in the Indonesian market; some have been established there for many years and were able to add considerably to the effectiveness of the visit.

The main purpose of the anniversary celebration was to sign an exchange agreement between the two regions and to present the first annual progress report on activities to the Governor of East Java and the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister responsible for sister State relationships in the Republic of Indonesia. I seek leave to table the report on the first year of progress of this relationship.

Leave granted. [See paper No 572.]

**Mr GORDON HILL:** There were considerable achievements during the first year. Exchanges of personnel took place across a range of sectors including agriculture, forestry and land management, shipping, fisheries, education, culture, journalism, tourism, and airport management involving the Federal airports authority. These exchanges led to useful secondary opportunities. In particular, agricultural exchanges led to much commercial activity in the horticultural and livestock areas. The 1991-92 exchange agreement signed by the Premier will add three more sectors - health, environmental management, and youth - to the program. The exchange agreement is managed on a cost sharing basis. I seek leave to table the exchange agreement outlining the activities to be undertaken, personnel to be involved and cost sharing arrangements of the agreement.

[See paper No 573.]

**Mr GORDON HILL:** During the course of the previous year there were also a number of official visits. East Java took the first initiative in organising an East Java promotion week in Perth designed to coincide with the Perth Festival. The visit from East Java was organised by the East Java Tourist Promotion Foundation and concentrated on tourism promotion, and a food and dance festival involving public performances and visits to tertiary institutions and schools. It was sponsored by Garuda and the Hyatt Hotel, Perth as part of Visit Indonesia

Year 1991. As a result of a visit by the Deputy Premier to Indonesia in May 1991, invitations to visit Perth have now been extended to two senior journalists from the newspapers *Kompas* and *Jawa Pos* and two hospital directors from hospitals in Jakarta and Surabaya. Finally, during that visit a sister chamber agreement was signed by the East Java and Western Australian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Taylor: It was a good visit, too.

Mr GORDON HILL: Yes. It was well organised and an outstanding success.

Members should know that Western Australia participated in the Surabaya Expo from 9 August to 9 September 1991. That was an outstanding success also. Three hundred and seventeen thousand persons visited the Western Australian exhibition, where the Westpac Bank, Western Australian Stateships, Solahart, Associated Surveys and Armada Promotions - representing twelve shipbuilding companies - were represented. Over 1 000 inquiries have been made regarding more than 200 products. The exhibitors have recorded steady sales of products, as well as contacts for the future. The media coverage was excellent both nationally and in the East Java region. The expo has achieved a great deal in promoting in East Java knowledge of Western Australian products and services. It is pleasing that East Java recognised the relationship with Western Australia in organising this expo at the World Trade Centre in Surabaya and gave us a very prominent position at that centre, I think perhaps next in significance to the People's Republic of China, which had an enormous representation there, but we figured very prominently in advance of countries such as the United States and Taiwan and other areas in the world. It was pleasing that Western Australia was recognised in that way.

Indonesia is regarded as a strategic region for Western Australia and, indeed, in May 1990 the Western Australian Cabinet endorsed an Indonesian strategy supporting this view. This regional strategy is the only one of its kind. Although we do have other sister State and province arrangements, the one organised with East Java is unique in this respect. The East Java sister province/State relationship is the most important element of the Indonesian strategy. I am pleased to report that the East Java/Western Australian sister province relationship is producing very good results. The exchange agreements have provided opportunities for expanding first hand knowledge of each region. There is evidence that trade between the regions is already increasing steadily. Western Australian Stateships' regular monthly service to Surabaya and return provides not only a conduit between sister regions, but also acts as a barometer of trade. In recent months Stateships has expanded its container numbers from 11 to 20. Bookings are full for two voyages in advance, and the containers, after a slow start, are now starting to fill on the Surabaya to Perth leg. A second voyage each month could well become a possibility. In my view it is only a matter of time before that occurs. Similarly, a direct air flight from Surabaya to Perth and return would improve prospects not only for passenger travel but also for cargo in both directions, such as fruit and vegetables. This matter was highlighted during the discussions we had in East Java, in particular with the Surabaya Chamber of Commerce, and I understand that verbal expression of interest has been made by Garuda to undertake that direct flight, commencing early next year. One Western Australian company has entered into a joint venture arrangement in East Java during the past year, and it is clear that more will follow. There has also been evidence of increased trade in services, particularly engineering, education and health services. The agricultural sector has been particularly active in promoting trade.

During her visit the Premier announced the Government's intention to establish in Surabaya a Western Australian Government office. The objective of the Surabaya office will be to further develop trade opportunities between the regions. It is also our hope that the East Java Government will seek to establish a presence in Perth. There are a number of ways in which that may be undertaken, and that will be further examined in East Java. Further, Garuda has undertaken to offer a Perth-Surabaya return flight via Denpasar, to commence in April, which is a great initiative.

The business delegation also recorded a number of successes. Clough Engineering, through its Indonesian company, PT Petrosea, was successful in servicing significant contracts for a sub-sea gas project east of Surabaya and will establish a subsidiary operation in Surabaya. Price Waterhouse Konsultan Indonesia is also contemplating establishing a formal presence in Surabaya. I am confident both those companies will have a very strong presence there in

the near future. My discussions with Indonesian businessmen revealed a host of opportunities for Western Australian industry, including a market for fresh fruit and vegetables and advice on technical matters such as fisheries management techniques. One of the most exciting developments to emerge from my visit was the commission from the East Java Investment Board to provide a training program on investment promotion as a basis for jointly exploring investment opportunities for both regions.

There was extensive Press coverage both of the Western Australian presence at the Surabaya Expo and of the anniversary visit. Photographs and articles appeared daily in both the national and local press, and there was extensive national television coverage. Radio Australia broadcast throughout Indonesia an interview with the Premier.

The East Java relationship has the potential to be one of the most exciting economic opportunities available to this State. The Indonesian economy is booming, with East Java being at the forefront of economic growth. East Java covers an area which is 2.5 per cent of the total land area of the country. Census statistics indicate that the population in 1990 was about 32.5 million; this is approximately 20 per cent of the country's total population. East Java is self-sufficient in food production and contributes about 36 per cent of food production nationally. Finally, it is the aim of the East Java Government to have an annual industrial growth rate of nine per cent in the forthcoming fifth five year plan.

The success of the East Java/Western Australian relationship is a result of the commitment by the Governments of East Java and Western Australia as well as the Australian and Indonesian national Governments. I would like to acknowledge the personal support of His Excellency Philip Flood, Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, which has been greatly appreciated. Also, many individuals and groups have contributed to the success thus far of this relationship. I acknowledge, in particular, the support of WA Stateships in providing scholarships to two East Javan youngsters to join the Indonesian voyage of the *SS Leeuwin*, of TAFE in providing to East Javan officials scholarships in public health, environmental management and tourism, and of the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry in undertaking a sister chamber relationship with East Java, and also the work of the Confederation of Western Australian Industry with the Australia-Indonesia Business Council, which has resulted in the hosting of a joint meeting of the Australia-Indonesia/Indonesia-Australia Business Council in Perth in October.

I place on record the appreciation of the Government and of the delegation that recently visited Indonesia of the work of the staff of the Department of State Development - Dr Ross Field, Annemie Gilbert and Sally Williams - who worked extremely hard in putting together this mission and also in ensuring that Western Australia's presence at the expo in the preceding month was an enormous success. As a result of their hard work and efforts we have achieved a very strong presence in East Java, one which will be long lasting for Western Australia. It is one which will give our State the recognition it deserves in initiating the sister State province agreement, and assistance to the business sector in Western Australia to understand the opportunities to link up with businesses in Indonesia, and East Java in particular. As a result our State can continue to grow in this area. My congratulations go to those three people, in particular Annemie Gilbert and Sally Williams, who worked tirelessly on this mission, as they have on many others.

I regard the recent visit and the developments of last year to be the first steps in a very productive relationship with East Java. I invite all members of the House to take a direct interest in this sister State arrangement. I also thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his very valuable participation in the mission. It showed the business sector in East Java that we have a bipartisan relationship on trade issues. We believe that no party political issues should be involved in trade. Together we can work towards the advancement of this relationship across all political lines. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition worked well in that respect, so congratulations are due to him. I thank him for his involvement. I am sure that he will attest to the success of this mission and he will concur with me when I use the words of the Premier and state that in all senses it is vital that Indonesia is recognised as not only our nearest neighbour but also our closest one.

**MR MINSON** (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.32 am]: It gives me some pleasure to respond, on behalf of the Opposition and the Overseas Relations Committee, to the Minister's statement. It was a pleasure to accompany the delegation

which went to Java, and to East Java in particular. I should say that this country cannot be ignored. Before I went I did some research into Indonesia itself and I found to my surprise that 180 million people live about three hours' flying time from Perth, and 10 per cent of them are affluent by our standards. That means that there are about 18 million people, or more than the population of Australia, living that distance from Perth, or probably an hour's flying time from our northern coast, who have as much money as the affluent people in Australia. That is a market which we simply cannot ignore. Indonesia is a difficult country to understand. When one understands its geography, one begins to understand its Government, some of its history, and the way it was brought together. People still do not know how many islands there are in the Indonesian Archipelago. I suppose the satellite photos are there, but no-one has sat down to count them. The Governor of East Java made the point in his final speech that there were something like 16 000 islands in the archipelago. A startling statistic is that in the next 10 years the real income of Indonesians is expected to double. That means that around the turn of the century there will be 36 million people very close to Australia's northern shore who are affluent by Australian standards. If Australia ignores that country and that market, Australia, particularly Western Australia, will be very foolish.

As the Minister said, we were well received. The Government people in Jakarta, which is the centre of Government in Indonesia, received us very well and treated us courteously and kindly. As the Minister has pointed out, the Australian Ambassador did likewise. Any members of this House, in Government, in Opposition or as Independents, who go to Indonesia should call on the Australian Embassy. I have the word of the Ambassador, Mr Philip Flood, that they will be given any briefing or assistance which our embassy in Jakarta can provide. About 60 Australian staff and over 100 non-Australian staff are attached to that embassy, which is one of the biggest foreign embassies in the world. We were well received, particularly in East Java.

Mr Graham: It is north Port Hedland, actually.

Mr MINSON: The Indonesians refer to Bali as northern Australia, which worries me a little. It was particularly interesting that the Governor of East Java, when he abandoned the notes of his final speech and spoke off the cuff, said that he had considerable feeling for the relationship developing between his province and Western Australia.

Before continuing I must express my thanks to the Minister assisting the Minister for State Development, Mr Hill, and to the Premier for the courtesies they extended to me as a member of that delegation. These were courtesies which they need not have extended because I was representing the Overseas Relations Committee. However, they made sure that I was always in places where I could talk to the top people, and I was given every courtesy. I thank them for that. It is essential that whichever party forms the Government in Western Australia - because Governments change from time to time - Opposition members be included in these sorts of delegations. One of the dangers is that where these relationships are struck up by a Government of long standing, there may be a vacuum when a change of Government occurs. It is essential that members of all Opposition parties, whether as representatives of industries, of overseas relations committees, or just as members of the Opposition, be included in those visits.

I have a message for the manufacturing and business sectors of Western Australia. Before doing anything in that country they must take the trouble to study and understand it. The temptation these days is to go straight to Japan, or more recently to Malaysia, to do business. I guess Malaysia was one of the first so-called "tiger" economies; it is a little ahead of Indonesia. I received the distinct impression from the businessmen and Government people of East Java in particular that they preferred to do business with Australian companies rather than with companies from many other countries, especially Japan and America. There were very good reasons for that. They said that they felt businessmen in Western Australia were more attuned to their approach to life than many other businessmen. They found the Japanese particularly difficult to deal with, and I guess Australian companies feel the same. On more than one occasion they made the comment that if they had negotiations with Australian companies and struck a deal, that deal would be adhered to. It disturbs me somewhat to hear of many of our American cousins that, if they strike a deal, two days later the deal may be completely different. For that reason the Indonesians were a little apprehensive about doing business with the Americans.

I believe it is becoming easier for Western Australia to do business in that part of the world, by reason of its history. Because its islands are spread out and it has different languages and religions, in order to draw it together the Indonesians have had to adopt a very pragmatic approach. The tolerance in Indonesia compared with that in other parts of world is quite striking, especially when we consider that it is only now emerging from being a third world country. Indonesia has a number of racial groups and although there are some tensions - one would be less than honest if one did not acknowledge that they exist - certainly the Indonesian people make very real attempts to overcome the problem. I was interested to learn that, in a country which I believe is 90 per cent Muslim, there is one Christian member of the Cabinet and the rumour is that in the next Cabinet there will be two. I believe that is unique among those countries which have adopted Islam as their national religion, and it attests to the fact that the Indonesian Government is very serious about adopting a policy of tolerance on racial and religious matters.

It has become easier for journalists to operate in Indonesia now. Most members will recall the unfortunate time a few years ago when the Australian Broadcasting Corporation was not allowed to have journalists in that country. I want to sound a note of caution to members of the journalistic profession that they have a responsibility, and while total freedom is allowed in this country they must be sensitive when they report what is happening in other parts of the world because the events which occurred a few years ago undoubtedly set back by some years the relationships and business and economic ties between our two countries. Although journalists may well very proudly say they are telling their version of the truth, by their doing so and getting headlines and some degree of fame or even notoriety, this country bears the brunt for years to come. I ask journalists to display some respect and restraint when they visit that country and report on it.

I believe that in the past some problems with the legal processes in Indonesia have been experienced, in that people who have gone into business there, often into joint ventures, have found that they have been diddled, if I can put it that way, and have not had proper recourse to legal processes. I know that is changing and that a real effort has been made by the Indonesian Government to address the problem. The only other problem I saw there, which I believe is also being addressed very quickly, is that of communications. There is no doubt that from time to time in business hours it is difficult to ring out of the country. The Indonesian Government is well aware of that and is doing its best to overcome it.

Before I finish my comments which are directed mainly to the business sector, I must say that I was a little surprised that, despite the fact that the Government had offered to pay air fares and accommodation expenses for two representatives from any industry and to underwrite 30 per cent of the cost of displays at the Surabaya Expo, it had very great difficulty getting manufacturers and potential exporters from Western Australia to join that exhibition. That disturbs me a little as it indicates that in this State there simply is not the awareness of Indonesia that there should be.

There is very good news for primary producers in that part of the world. Certainly I believe a market exists there for lupins, and rolled lupins in particular. It could be used for stockfeed and definitely it is being used now on an experimental basis as a blending mix with soya beans in their national dish of tempe. A market also exists for what are becoming known as the boutique wheats. The Indonesians need specific wheats for the type of noodles they like and I have initiated some inquiries to find out their exact requirements for the flour they use. I believe Western Australia could be a major supplier of a variety of wheat species to that part of the world.

I was very surprised to learn that an Australian company is setting up a feedlot in Indonesia which will house 50 000 head of cattle under cover for fattening. By any standards that is an enormous operation. Of course, that has a spin-off for Western Australian agriculture, in that they will want to take young live cattle from Western Australia to fatten in this feedlot, and will need high protein supplement feeds. This augurs well for our coarse grains and lupin industries. Bearing in mind that Stateships already visit that part of the world, delivery will not be a problem and our geographic location should afford us a freight advantage.

While in Indonesia I also heard that inquiries were being made about meat of all types. Indonesia has an enormous labour force which is quite cheap by our standards. One group wants to set up a very large meat processing works there to manufacture processed meats

such as salamis for re-export to the rest of the world. That is a potential market for lower grade meats, of which Western Australia produces quite a lot. I also heard rumours of a woollen mill being set up in Indonesia, and I believe this will prove to be an outlet for Australian wool which currently does not exist.

Indonesia offers considerable opportunity for Australian manufacturers and exporters. The way to go at this stage is definitely with joint ventures, because with a joint venturer one can overcome the problem of being able to master the Indonesian system of business. It is probably a little difficult for people to go it alone in that country at this stage, but any number of companies and financiers in Indonesia are very interested in joint ventures of all types. I see quite a market there for technology and information and the Minister assisting the Minister for State Development has already mentioned several other outlets, including the one with respect to health. I received the impression that some people in Australia would like to set up hospitals here for wealthy Indonesian people to visit and have operative procedures that were not available in their own country, to spend some money here in a tourist capacity and then go home. That was not the message I received from the Indonesian people, who want us to go there and transfer our expertise to them. We would probably gain considerably in standing if we followed that path.

I have some apprehension about what the future holds for Australia because the wage rates in Indonesia make it difficult for us to compete. That country's tax structure, business incentives, power costs and general energy availability will be such that perhaps it will be more attractive for industry to go there, in which case many of the dreams we have of downstream processing will become that much more difficult to achieve. However, I want to leave this message with the House: What is happening in Indonesia will proceed no matter what we do. It will not proceed because we go in and help them, or because we become part of the scene; it will happen in any event. We have a preferred position in that part of the world and in East Java in particular, which has some 34 million people. My advice to this House and this State is that we should become a part of it, in whatever capacity we can, because if we ignore it we will lose our trade and other people will benefit from it, particularly those in America and Japan who are being very aggressive in their efforts to become a very big part of the economy in that area. While that is referred to as a tiger economy - and I guess it is - many people thought that it was to be the next one. I suggest that it has already arrived and that we cannot afford to delay any longer. We must become part of that economy. I also suggest that as a future project we should begin to lay the groundwork for what might well be the next tiger economy - and I refer to South Vietnam. Again, I thank the Minister and the Premier for their courtesy to me during that trip.

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION

### *Report Tabling - Extension of Time*

On motions by Mr Kobelke, resolved -

That the date for presentation of the report of the Joint Select Committee on the Constitution be extended to 24 October 1991; and that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and its concurrence sought therein.

## JUSTICES AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell - Minister for Lands) [10.51 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Legislation was proclaimed on 1 January 1989 to establish an alternative method of enforcing unpaid and uncontested infringement notices - INREP. Since that time, approximately 53 000 matters have been diverted away from Western Australian courts and enforced under the INREP scheme. However, the 1989 Act did not apply to a person under the age of 18 years, although juveniles can be issued with infringement notices. Action against juveniles required court proceedings to be commenced immediately.

The Bill now before the House seeks to amend the INREP legislation to include persons 16 years and older, but will contain the following safeguards -



The INREP registrar will not have the power to issue a warrant against a juvenile offender should the order remain unpaid; and

where the INREP order to pay remains unpaid, the matter will be referred to the Children's Court to have the defendant brought before the court.

The advantages of the proposal are that it will assist in keeping more juveniles out of the court system, and it will also enable juveniles to make arrangements for time to pay at an earlier stage. The President of the Children's Court, Judge Jackson, has been consulted and fully supports these provisions.

Also included in the Bill are other amendments to the INREP legislation. These provisions will -

- Enable adult offenders to perform community work in lieu of imprisonment on INREP registry orders;

- allow agencies to refer matters registered at INREP to Courts of Petty Sessions. This will overcome problems which arise where offenders give false names to authorities;

- clarify the status of registry certificates when referred to Courts of Petty Sessions so that they may be treated as complaints made under the Justices Act;

- confirm that no fee is payable by prosecution authorities in respect of enforcement certificates when matters are lodged at the registry.

The Bill before the House also proposes to amend section 135 of the Justices Act. Section 135 provides for hearings in the absence of defendants and for the receipt of affidavits of evidence in support of complaints laid under Acts prescribed for the purposes of subsection (2) of section 135. Difficulties have arisen where persons fail to enter pleas to charges relating to parking offences. These are offences under the Local Government Act, and council staff must sometimes spend long hours at court waiting for the matters to be dealt with. In such cases it would be more convenient if the actions could be dealt with by affidavit.

Section 135 presently provides for the prescription of the whole of an Act. In many cases, of which the Local Government Act is an example, good reasons exist why complaints should not proceed on affidavit evidence in respect of all offences created under the Act. However, it frequently will be the case that certain offences can be identified where the interests of justice will be served by allowing for the complainant to prove the case on affidavit evidence when no plea is entered to a charge. It will still be necessary for the complainant to prove service. It is therefore proposed that section 135(2) be amended to provide that Acts, portions of Acts, subsidiary legislation and portions of subsidiary legislation can be selectively prescribed for the purpose of the subsection.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

## **APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL**

### *Second Reading - Budget Debate*

Debate resumed from 11 September.

**MR STRICKLAND** (Scarborough) [10.56 am]: I will continue my comments on libraries and library books. The population of Western Australia in 1981-82 was 1.34 million, and in 1991-92 it is 1.66 million; that is, an increase of 25 per cent. A satisfactory level of book exchange and replacement in libraries to maintain the currency and condition of books is in the order of 320 000 books each year. Yesterday, I pointed out that I had some concerns because the figures in last year's Budget indicated that only 214 000 books were to be provided. If we do not provide enough library books, including replacements, they soon wear out. It is not obvious, but over the years problems can build. In effect the Government is putting off expenditure that should be made in the current Budget. I will be interested to discover what will happen. The overall figures for library expenditure show a disturbing downward trend since 1989-90; the Budget allocation in this area has continued to decrease. We all know about value for money, but a cut in dollar terms indicates a fairly hefty cut in

real terms has occurred. I am concerned about the accuracy of the figures regarding libraries in the Budget papers. At page 8 of the Supplementary Budget Information, under the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the estimated expenditure for the Library Board of Western Australia is \$21.42 million; at page 11 the figure is \$22.42 million; whereas under Division 41 of the Program Statements the figure is \$22.20 million. The figures differ throughout the Budget papers. I want to know the reason, and perhaps I will find out during the Estimates debates.

I will now recap some of the fundamental issues touched on yesterday. I used the example of the Alexander Library. The Government has made arrangements to repay a \$30 million loan by stretching the term to something like 30 years. That will have a severe impact on many areas. Other members have provided figures which indicate that the level of debt of this State is about \$5 500 per head of population. Therefore, every baby born in King Edward Memorial Hospital faces a bill of \$5 500 although, obviously, these babies are not yet in a position to earn the money to pay this back. I have reflected a little on the level of debt the State faces and upon how the Government will repay the debt. Taking the Alexander Library example, and if that debt is repaid at a rate of 3 per cent per year over 30 years, that will extend for 33 years. A calculation based on the figure of \$5 500 will result in a yearly bill of \$1 000 for every child and adult in this State stretching over 30 years. Why is it that the Government has decided not to send out a cheque for \$100 for each secondary school student and \$50 for every primary school student? It is because the money has run out and we are on a 30 year treadmill of debt. Why did the Government not tell the children and the parents that a \$5 500 debt hangs over their heads? High school students will be repaying this debt over 30 years, and it will be handed on to their grandchildren. This State has a debt which is the equivalent of two years' income. The people of this State have been mortgaged up to the hilt. That is why I referred to the Budget as a wallpaper Budget. This Budget requires two sets of books - last year's Budget papers along with this year's - to uncover the web of deception.

I have uncovered some deception in the capital works area of the Community Services portfolio, an area for which I have responsibility. Members may recall that last year I questioned the shortfalls from estimated expenditure in capital works projects. I discovered that for three years this area was underspent: In one year it was underspent by 72 per cent and in the following year the figure was 33 per cent. This was debated vigorously by the Opposition in the Parliament last year. In examining this year's Budget papers I noted that the capital works estimate for Community Services last year was \$4.4 million, but the actual expenditure was \$4.7 million. Therefore, it appears that the work has been completed and a good job has been done, but upon comparing the Budget papers item by item, one item suddenly appears from nowhere. An allocation from the Office of the Family appears for \$2.3 million and in fine print it is indicated that this was provided from the Family Foundation trust fund. Why is it that the Government suddenly picked up these funds and whacked them into the Community Services area? In truth, last year's estimate was underspent by \$2 million, which is nearly 50 per cent of the \$4.4 million estimate.

The member for Cottesloe alerted the House to the fact that the Government had underspent an amount of \$192 million across the board in capital works. The Government indicated last year that it had borrowed \$152.7 million.

Mr Blaikie: It is disgraceful; there is not one Minister on the front bench and only four Government members are in the House. It is a mockery and a disgrace!

Mr STRICKLAND: They cannot face it. The actual figure for borrowings was \$193.8 million, yet the capital works allocation in the Community Services portfolio was underspent by \$2 million. I ask the Treasurer: Where has the money gone? The Treasurer must be prepared to answer such questions. We believe we know where the money has gone, but let us hear the answer from the Treasurer who, as Premier, said that she wanted to be open and accountable. Where are the missing hundreds of millions of dollars from these accounts? The Government has contrived to cover up with a web of deception by picking out items and moving them to other parts of the Budget. The totals at the bottom of the columns may look in order, and it may appear that the money has been spent; however, upon investigation the example in capital works I gave has been underspent by 50 per cent. For year after year this Government has told members of Parliament and the people of this State that it will build facilities such as child care centres. However, every year this does not

happen. The Government relies on the fact that members of Parliament do not know the names of the streets in which the projects are located. We are not in a position to crosscheck what is actually taking place. The Government states that these things will be done, but when the stocktake comes around we find that they have not been done.

Mr Blaikie: Are you saying that the figures are rubbery and the results have been crunched?

Mr STRICKLAND: I say a deliberate deception is occurring.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You're right. The deception of Premier Lawrence is worse than the deceptions of former Premiers Burke and Dowding and former Treasurer Parker.

Mr STRICKLAND: We are aware why this is happening: The chickens are coming home to roost and the money is all gone. Since I have represented the seat of Scarborough it has been fairly difficult to generate many capital works projects as a Liberal Party member - although I realise that many facilities already exist. However, I was very pleased that a facility for the Newborough Primary School is to be built in my electorate. The former member for Scarborough committed the Government to half a new primary school, but he could not deliver as he was not re-elected. Crosschecking the situation I found that the Government had not undertaken detailed investigations into this project and no preparation had taken place. I headed a delegation to see the then Minister, the current Premier, and we were able to convince her that this project was needed. Last year \$400 000 was allocated to this project by stages 1 and 2 for the school. This made me and members of my electorate happy. However, this year's Budget papers indicate that only \$100 000 was spent and the estimated total cost is now \$337 000. I wondered what had happened, whether the cost had come down. That did not seem to add up as I saw that the balance left from the allocation of \$327 000 was \$237 000. I went to the school and asked the principal what was going on. I was told that the school had the toilets it needed but there had been a cost overrun and the \$200 000 project would cost \$327 000. That meant that instead of listing stages 1 and 2 as work to be done - there is no explanation in the Budget Papers - the figure is a little bit less, and there is no allowance for stage 2. The principal has been told by word of mouth that it will be fixed in 1992-93. The Opposition will try to make sure that sort of verbal commitment is honoured. The school expects stage 2 to be completed because it was sanctioned in a previous Budget, and that should flow on.

I will now comment on some of the impacts on local Government. I sympathise with the Government about road funding. Commonwealth grants have been reduced from \$167 million to \$119 million; that is a 30 per cent drop. That is an indication that the Federal Government will not provide money for roads as a priority. The net receipts for the Main Roads Department have decreased by \$27 million and the main reason is that for the first time in a couple of years the Main Roads Department is borrowing money. The Main Roads Department must find \$19.5 million in borrowings to bring the figure up. Who will bear the brunt of this cost? A few new categories have been introduced such as provincial cities and rural highways as well State highways, national arterials and highways. Statutory grants to local authorities have been reduced from \$81 million to \$30 million, a drop of \$51 million, which is a 65 per cent cut. The Federal Government did the wrong thing by the State; it reduced the money to the State. However, the State and the Main Roads Department will not wear any of the problem, the local authorities will wear the problem. There must be an impact on roadworks. When an authority runs a team of men it requires a certain level of funding, and many local government authorities will not have the funds to maintain the level of work and employment for those teams unless they find the money from elsewhere in their budgets. That means the pressure the Federal Government has put on the State, the State is now putting on the local authorities. The Opposition understands, as I am sure does the Government, that there are severe pressures on local authorities for the funding of roads. The news may be bad in this Budget, but it will only get worse.

I will refer to some parts of the Police budget. Statements made by the Treasurer in the 1991-92 Budget speech do her credibility no good. In the Treasurer's 1990-91 speech under "Other Initiatives" she said -

Excluding funding for motor vehicle replacement, outlays by the department will increase by \$17.5 million or 8.1 per cent.

In this year's Budget speech the Treasurer said -

In total the Police Department and the Police Licensing and Services Division have been allocated \$243.5 million in 1991-92 representing an increase of 7.9 per cent after motor vehicle acquisitions are taken into account.

The Treasurer excludes vehicle acquisition one year when she is cutting them out, but the next year she puts them in and claims an increase. It makes a mockery of her credibility. Motor vehicles are either in all the time or out all the time. It does not give the Treasurer much credibility to make statements like that. In the Capital Works Program the Police Department wants 20 mobile and 30 stationary radar units, another 50 roadside preliminary breath testing and 10 Dräger Alcotest breath testing units and traffic violation cameras and housings to the value of \$393 000 - about three quarters of a million dollars worth of extra equipment. On the revenue side the Law Courts show receipts from infringement penalties increasing from \$17.8 million to \$21 million; an increase of \$3.2 million or 18 per cent. The Government is looking at the Police Force as a revenue raising mechanism. It needs to spend three quarters of a million dollars and it expects to get \$3.2 million in extra revenue. If one is in the business of raising money - which this Government must be because of the money it has lost - that is probably good business. However, the people of Western Australia had better watch out because much more emphasis will be placed on apprehending traffic offenders, but will it be done in a fair way? I have had a report, and this will interest the Speaker who lives in Rockingham, about patrols on Rockingham Road, which is a four lane highway with a big median strip with plenty of bush for the police to hide behind. On one morning two motorcycle policemen with radar guns were issuing tickets at Kwinana Junction; about a kilometre down the road at the lights at the Baldvis Road intersection another car was using a radar detector; another two kilometres down the same road near the Western Mining building there was a Multanova unit; and in a further three kilometres there was another motorcycle policeman with a radar gun. Anyone travelling on Rockingham Road on that day would have been wondering whether there was a revenue raising stunt in progress. People were quite angry about that because there is a big difference between someone doing 80 kilometres down a narrow street with houses with the likelihood of kids running onto the road and getting killed or injured, as opposed to a four lane highway where there are no houses. We must ask what is going on.

Mr Wiese: Does the member for Scarborough not think they were making a good contribution to road safety?

Mr STRICKLAND: I think they were making a contribution to road safety, but why have four sets of policemen on Rockingham Road, a four lane highway which is not a dangerous situation? Why not have a policeman in another place?

Mr Pearce: It is a police operational matter and they make those decisions. However, the police know that there are motorists like the member for Scarborough who when they see a police car or speed trap think, "Ha, ha, I can speed now because I have got past the police", and that those motorists will get caught by the second or third policeman and get a big shock. After that they drive according to the speed limits.

Mr STRICKLAND: I will make a couple of comments on the community services area. Most of the detail in this area will be considered in the Estimates debate. Last year the staffing levels in the Budget for the Department for Community Services were to be reduced by only 10, but in fact the staffing levels were reduced by 26. Of course, this year the Government is carrying that on by reducing the staffing levels by another 102. The Government's priority in community services is to reduce the allocation in dollar terms, but when inflation is taken into account it means a cut in real terms because salaries keep going up and that affects the staffing levels. The Department for Community Services' staff has been cut by 128 people over two years.

Mr Graham: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mr STRICKLAND: It may be good if the Government is worried about saving money, but the problems with which the department deals are escalating and it needs the manpower to cope with them. Therefore, the staff are forced to say to a girl of 15 years who has run away from home that they are not interested in her unless she has been assaulted or sexually abused. That is a serious situation. The staff are under great pressure because there are fewer of them to handle those problems. The House should recognise that increasing pressures are being placed on the department - pressures caused by the Government. The

Premier made great play of the \$20 million allocated to combat juvenile crime. Last year the vote for juvenile crime was \$19.457 million, but it was underspent by \$450 000. The staff working in that area have been reduced and the department will receive only a one per cent increase.

[The member's time expired.]

**DR EDWARDS** (Maylands) [11.22 am]: I base my remarks on the Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill as it applies to my electorate of Maylands. The John Forrest Senior High School in Embleton, established many years ago, is an excellent school with a very good reputation. However, it is apparent that it requires considerable upgrading and I am pleased that the Budget will allocate \$1.24 million over two years to upgrade the school. The school has an excellent music program and attracts many students from all over the country. The school also has an excellent academic record. In the last year I have become involved with the science club, whose activities have centred on the environment, in particular on the Bayswater foreshore. This school is an excellent example of a secondary education institution involving itself in worthwhile projects in the community.

The Cyril Jackson Senior High School is another school in my electorate. I congratulate the Government on the changes that will affect this school. The high school is located on the edge of Ashfield and Bassendean, and the system is failing some of the students in that school. There is no doubt that many students at the school will not enter tertiary institutions.

Mr Cowan: Do you blame that on the school or the education system?

**DR EDWARDS**: Part of the problem lies in the system. I acknowledge the excellent work the school has done in the past year in recognising the problems affecting the students and for coming up with solutions to those problems. It will now have the opportunity to implement those solutions. Many students in that area do not desire to go to university and what is needed for them is vocational training. Ashfield and Bassendean have high unemployment rates, in particular high youth unemployment, and we should do everything we can to stimulate employment in that area. The pathways program, which will apply to years 11 and 12, will be beneficial to the community.

Another issue which concerns me and which is receiving some support from the Budget is the development and upgrading of the catchment management plan for the Bayswater main drain. The Bayswater main drain is the largest urban drain and causes considerable pollution in the Swan River. The major source of that pollution is from sewage and nutrients. Much of that pollution is caused by the use of septic tanks. Effluent is made up not only of nutrients but also of microbiological and chemical pollution. In my electorate that problem is compounded by Bassendean sand, which is composed of tiny particles like glass and which has no capacity to absorb moisture or nutrients in the soil. Consequently, the nutrients which come from the sewage flow straight into the ground water, the Bayswater main drain and then into the river. About 36 per cent of Perth is unsewered, but it is estimated in the catchment of the Bayswater main drain that that figure may be as high as 60 per cent. Of the areas that are unsewered the industrial area is of great concern because only about 10 per cent of that area in my electorate is connected to the sewer. It is interesting to compare these figures with the figures in the cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane, where approximately 10 per cent of the city areas are unsewered. Therefore, we have a significant problem in Perth. The situation in my electorate is a result of the planning decisions made after the Second World War and up to the 1960s.

What concerns me considerably is the extra pollution which occurs as a result of septic tank failure. In my electorate it is very difficult to get any figures on that problem. A large section of Bassendean near the river is still unsewered and allegations have been made that septic tanks in that area are failing, yet it is difficult to get any real evidence of that. That problem is also occurring to a lesser extent in the rest of my electorate. Fortunately, in the City of Bayswater all sewerage contractors are licensed with the city and people who want their septic tanks pumped are obliged to employ one of those contractors. So, at least for the City of Bayswater reliable figures are available on the failure of septic tanks. Another advantage of having those contractors registered with the city is that there is some benchmark and the consumer is able to work out what is a fair price for having a septic tank pumped out. That is important because many people have complained to me that the prices for that job range from between \$300 to over \$700. That is a wide range for such a simple procedure.

Mr Bloffwitch: Perhaps you should draw that to the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs so she can do something about it.

Mr Clarko: I bet if you looked in the Yellow Pages you would see that what you say is quite right.

Dr EDWARDS: The Yellow Pages are quite helpful in that regard. Many people do not think to look in the Yellow Pages. Many more local authorities should be encouraged to register those people who carry out the pumping of septic tanks because it is a good initiative. The figures on septic tank failures could be found by using Health Department statistics, as all waste pumped from septic tanks must go to registered waste disposal dumps.

Assuming there is not a lot of illegal dumping going on, we should be able to obtain the Health Department figures and work them out by postcodes to see the extent of septic tank failure. It is important that, in tackling this problem, we adhere strictly to the Government's sewerage policy and that we take a long term view of such things as aerobic treatment units and other options that are being investigated, because I am of the opinion that there is no point in putting in a short term solution for such a major problem. It is also critical that planning continue to incorporate sewerage because it is at least three or four times more expensive to provide infill sewerage in an area that has been developed. Therefore, it must be done at the developmental stage. For those reasons, I welcome the \$19 million provided in the Budget for infill sewerage in metropolitan Perth. Not only will it solve developmental and sewerage problems, but also it will help to alleviate some of the pollution problems.

Having said that about nutrients, I should point out that septic tanks are not the total problem. A major part of the problem is being caused by fertilisers being put into the ground, especially in areas near the river. I commend the Swan River Trust for carefully monitoring this problem and also some local authorities which are working out plans to use less fertilisers on their ovals, for encouraging the community to accept slightly less green ovals and for using less water. With less water and fewer nutrients being put on the Bassendean sands in Perth, less pollution of the ground water, our wetlands, the river and, ultimately, the ocean will occur. One important aspect of the work being done in the main drain area is that being done on the industrial drain in Bayswater. As I said previously, only about 10 per cent of that industrial area is seweraged. Therefore, there is a potential for industry and effluent pollution to run into the drain and the river.

Mr Fred Tubby: I do not think it will make any difference. In the member for Armadale's electorate - he is also the Minister for the Environment - there is an open drain next to a sewerage pumping station and with regular monotony, about every six or 12 months, that pumping station breaks down. Do you know what they do with the raw sewage? They flood it into the open drain from the Minister's electorate, all the way down to the Southern River, into the Canning River and into the Swan River and nothing has been done about it for the three years I have been complaining about it.

Dr EDWARDS: We are certainly aware of those problems. The sewerage task group is looking at the Bayswater main drain.

Mr Fred Tubby: This is raw sewage.

Dr EDWARDS: That is right, and we need to make sure that raw sewage does not flow out.

Mr Shave: Will you give us an undertaking that you will talk to the Minister for the Environment about this?

Dr EDWARDS: Certainly. The integrated catchment management plan involves working out a plan of the pumping stations, obtaining figures on breakdowns of pumping stations and obtaining further information on backup systems. Most sewerage pumping systems have very good backup systems. There are at least two backup systems in Bayswater. We need to find out why they fail. Usually they fail because of a coincidence of bad circumstances.

Mr Graham: The difference between what the member for Roleystone is proposing, which is a cheap shot at the Minister for the Environment, and what the member for Maylands is proposing is that she is suggesting that we do an integrated catchment management plan for the area, and set out all the problems and address them. She has got off her bot and done something about it.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The member for Maylands was doing quite a good job on her own without the assistance of the member for Pilbara. This is not assisting the debate.

Dr EDWARDS: The member for Pilbara grew up in Maylands so he has an affinity with the area. I do not know whether he has an affinity with sewerage. In some ways, the member for Roleystone has pre-empted the point I was about to make. In the industrial area, we have not beaten industry over the head with a stick and said, "Only 10 per cent of the area is sewered, have you thought about the sewerage problem?" We have tried to talk to industry and look at its solutions in a cooperative manner. In fact, we tease many of the people in the industrial area and call them greenies which is a shock to us all. The concept of an integrated catchment management is to get on the ground and see what happens. We need people there who know the area well and who can share the solutions and suggestions so that something constructive can be achieved. It is an excellent initiative. I believe this first plan in an urban area will be watched closely and I hope that other areas will formulate similar plans.

Community policing is of concern to my electorate. There appears to have been a deterioration in the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the Bassendean area in the past few months. In fact, claims have been made that there are more break-ins than ever. In that area of my electorate we are grateful for the increased police patrols recently, and particularly for the patrols in the evenings because that is the time when older people are worried about security. One thing for which I will continue to push - I think the member for Morley will join me - is the physical presence of a police station in Bassendean. There is no doubt that a police station in an area gives people a sense of security. At the moment, the people of Bassendean rely on the Lockridge Police Station and, although the police respond promptly and in the best way possible, it is not quite the same as having a police station in one's area.

Recently the member for Perth and I attended the launch of the Medisafe scheme. I probably should say that the member for Perth launched the scheme. It is another new community policing initiative that is being piloted in the Perth and Maylands electorates. It was launched in the Perth electorate at the St Anne's Mercy Hospital and in my electorate at the Two Pines Nursing Home. The idea of the scheme is not, as the member for Perth suggested, to keep an eye on doctors, but rather to make sure that hospitals and health centres are safe places for the staff, the patients and the surrounding community. There was an incident in the Two Pines Nursing Home in my electorate recently. Someone started a fire in a car belonging to one of the staff members. If the fire had been allowed to continue it would almost certainly have caused the car to explode. As the car was close to the nursing home, it could have caused a fair amount of damage and possibly loss of life. The Two Pines Nursing Home is quite isolated and it was only by chance that someone saw an unusual light in the car and brought the fire to the attention of the people in the nursing home so that it was put out. It is important that communities help take care of these institutions and that both the community and the staff are clear about how to report incidents so that major problems can be prevented.

I have also received complaints in my electorate from nursing staff about robberies occurring while they are at work. They leave their bags in what is meant to be a secure place. However, because hospitals and institutions are accessible to the public, there is always a certain amount of security risk. The idea of Medisafe is to educate people involved in health care about these issues and to make sure that protocol and procedures are in place so that these sorts of incidents can be prevented. I will be watching the evaluation closely. I guess the member for Perth and I are hoping to learn from this so that it can be instituted in other parts of our electorates.

Also in the community policing area, I refer now to services for the victims of crime. I was pleased to note that the maximum amount of compensation available to victims of crime was increased recently from \$20 000 to \$50 000. I have had considerable experience in this area having worked as a medical officer at the Sexual Assault Referral Centre for many years. I worked there at a time when very little compensation was granted and the limit was extremely low. Therefore, the limit of \$50 000 is a move I really welcome. Not only does compensation, in a small way, make up for what happened, but it serves a very useful secondary purpose; that is, it helps finish the episode for a victim. To be awarded compensation a person has to outline what happened to him or her and to explain clearly the consequences of the assault. Members can imagine how traumatic that process would be, but it does serve as part of the healing process and assists in concluding what was an unpleasant incident.

I have some concerns that during the course of the compensation process the victim of the

assault has to come face to face with the perpetrator. That can be extremely unnerving for the victim. It is also unnerving to the victim to know that the perpetrator can have access to the reports on how the crime has affected him. I know we have an assessor for criminal injuries compensation who is sensitive to these problems, but I ask members also to be aware of them. Although we must have a just system, we must ensure that the victims' needs are met. I have taken the opportunity to visit the pilot unit at Fremantle for victims of crime; it is an excellent initiative. Among those things which I admire about that service is that it is not seeking to duplicate existing services in the community, but is seeking to make sure that people are made aware of what is available in their area. Many services are available to victims of crime and it is a question of them being directed to the right service to meet their needs.

Another important facet of the victims of crime unit is that victims are informed of the progress of their case. In the past, just when the victim of crime was getting over his experience - it may have been nine months, a year or even two years after the crime - he would receive, out of the blue, a summons requiring him to be a witness in his case because the offender had been caught and charged and the case was about to go through the court process. The pilot unit will provide the opportunity for victims to be informed of the progress of their case and they will be given some warning of when they are likely to go before the court. In addition they will receive offers of support to help them go through the court process which can be very daunting to the victim and has the ability to engender fears in him which make him feel guilty. It is important that support is offered to alleviate his stress. I will be watching the results of the pilot unit with interest because there is a need for a victims of crime unit to be more accessible to people in my electorate. If the Fremantle unit is shown to be successful, and I think it will be, I will be pushing for a similar unit in Morley, Midland or in another area east of Fremantle.

I refer now to Guildford Road, which intersects practically the whole of my electorate. I refer to it in the context of the statements made in the Budget under the Department of Planning and Urban Development. I welcome the statements which indicate that the department is happy to listen to the needs of the community and, to some extent, meet its needs in the planning process. The eastern sector roads study was released in 1989 and recently the Department of Planning and Urban Development and the Main Roads Department have brought the study to the public's attention and are holding public consultations on it. The study recommended that the road reserve along Guildford Road be reduced and that sections of Guildford Road be widened. It is important this happens now because the people who live near Guildford Road have had this issue hanging over their heads since 1963. In that year it was decided that the road reserve should be 40 metres wide because it was thought that in the future a six lane highway would be required. In 1972 it was recognised that the width of the reserve could be narrowed to 32 metres. The proposed plan is that the road reserve be either 26 metres or 27.5 metres, depending on the particular section of the road. This road reserve width would allow for a four lane highway with a wide median strip and fairly generous verges. It would also provide for the widening of turning lanes at intersections and bus bays.

It has been projected that up to the year 2006 there will be between 25 000 and 45 000 vehicle movements per day on that road. It has been established, and I believe it to be true, that four lanes will be adequate as long as there is appropriate intersection flaring and restrictions on right turns. The study revealed that the proposed plan would result in the prevention of at least 114 accidents per annum on Guildford Road and that is very important. I have received many complaints from residents on Guildford Road concerning the number of pedestrians who have been killed crossing the road in the last few years. It has been estimated that by cutting down the non-intersection accidents there will be a cost saving of \$600 000 per annum. The widening of Guildford Road will be welcomed by the people who live near the road reserve because they will no longer have its future hanging over their heads and there will be increased safety for them and for the people who use the road.

Public interest in this plan has been unprecedented and is evident by the number of people who have attended the great number of public meetings that have been held. I pay tribute to the officials of the Main Roads Department and the Department of Planning and Urban Development for their preparedness to talk to people about the proposed plan and to listen to the problems encountered by the people who live in the area. There has been much anxiety



about a number of aspects of the plan. For instance, the old Commercial Hotel on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Guildford Road, Maylands, will be lost under the current plan. It is likely that studies will reveal the building to be of heritage significance and that it is important it be preserved. The Main Roads Department officers have shown a willingness to listen to the concerns of the local people.

The proposed changes to Guildford Road will present a number of opportunities to my electorate. For example, it will provide the opportunity to beautify what is known as the mad mile in Bassendean. It is not an attractive part of Bassendean to drive through, but once the proposed plan has been finalised the road verges could be beautified. The main concern in Bayswater is for safety, particularly for the residents of Camellia Court CMLA, which is an institution for aged persons. A resident from that institution was killed earlier this year when trying to cross the road. The proposed plan, while increasing pedestrian safety, will not restrict their access.

A spin off from the proposed plan is that it has generated discussions about the future planning needs of Maylands. Maylands is bisected by Guildford Road and a railway line, and the plans to close some of the bridges over the railway line is of great concern to the residents in the area. If they are closed there will be no access for pedestrians to go to the business centre of Maylands to do their shopping, go to the library or to the churches. It is important that when we consider plans for major roads we must consider the effect on the area as a whole. To some extent the planning process for Guildford Road is allowing that to happen.

Another critical issue is that with limiting the right turn access it may prevent access to the river and to other amenities. I will make a submission on that aspect and I know that many people in my electorate will make similar submissions. The problem in some of these planning areas is to balance the transport need - I acknowledge that there is a big transport need because of the volume of traffic on this road - with the needs of the local community. I am pleased Government departments are recognising that these concerns are valid and that the people should be listened to. I have commented on aspects of the Budget that indicate a recognition of people's concern about conservation, heritage and, in particular, the quality of life issues.

**DR TURNBULL (Collie)** [11.50 am]: I comment on the Budget presented by the Treasurer in this House with regard to my electorate and the state of the economy of Western Australia in general.

The first item I raise is the charges imposed by the State Energy Commission of Western Australia. The Government will raise additional revenue of \$21.2 million by increasing the turnover tax on SECWA from three per cent to four per cent. In the Budget speech the Treasurer said under the heading "Revenue" -

The Government has decided to increase the statutory authority levy on the turnover of the Water Authority of Western Australia and the State Energy Commission of Western Australia from three per cent to four per cent. . . It will not result in any consequential lift in charges applied to consumers.

She stated further that the price of electricity in Western Australia had increased by only two per cent in this financial year. The electricity costs in Western Australia have increased by only two per cent in this financial year because of the productivity changes in the work force in Collie and the power stations that SECWA manages at Muja and Kwinana. It is correct that the Government's increasing turnover tax will not impinge on the consumers of Western Australia; however, it has a very heavy impact on the people in my electorate. I commend the workers and companies of the Collie coalfields and the power generation industry in Collie for their activities which have resulted in a fall in electricity costs, despite that increase in turnover tax. This turnover tax is a tax on the productivity of the coal industry and it is made possible only because the workers, the Collie coal companies and the Muja workers have accepted great changes in their industry. The workers have accepted a reduction of more than 15 per cent in their total take home packages. The Government is being exceedingly harsh in its revenue raising activities by placing the load on this industry and increasing the turnover tax from three per cent to four per cent. It expects the coal producers, coalminers and power generation workers of Western Australia to accept income cuts, but in return for the increase in productivity it has imposed additional taxation. That

means next year the cost of electricity in Western Australia will increase. The present fall in electricity costs is a one-off reduction in the price as a result of the increased productivity in Collie. The turnover tax will continue and it will increase the cost of electricity in this State. The Treasurer does not seem to understand the most basic point that Western Australia will not have economic development or activity, with a subsequent increase in revenue generated by that economic activity, if the price of electricity is not kept at a reasonable level. Raising an additional \$21.2 million at the expense of people who are already attempting to reduce the cost of electricity is the most opportunistic way of helping to balance the Budget.

The price of electricity in the Eastern States is approximately 40 per cent less than that in Western Australia, and it will reduce even further in future following the introduction of the integrated grid system. Western Australia cannot take advantage of an integrated grid system and for that reason it must manage its utility in a different way from those managed in the Eastern States. Therefore, it cannot be said that a turnover tax that is applicable in the Eastern States is also justified in Western Australia. The Treasurer said in the Budget speech, under the heading "Microeconomic Reform" -

Our decision to proceed with a privately owned and operated coal fired base load power station at Collie was consistent with the overall aims of this policy and will generate significant economic benefits for Western Australia.

That is all very well, but I ask a question relating to an issue raised in the south west Press, principally by the Minister for South-West, Mr David Smith; that is, when will the next coal fired base load power station be built? Mr Smith is quoted in the *South Western Times* of 3 September as follows -

What people should be assured about is that the government has made a decision to proceed with a power station and we're not going to be screwed by changing the conditions of the tender.

The Government has made a commitment to build a coal fired power station in Collie, but it is becoming apparent that some activity is going on which is delaying the implementation of this decision. The signing of the contracts was delayed at the end of July and no anticipated date for signing has been given. The conditions under which the power station will be built have also been altered but we do not know what is happening. We are not certain whether further delays will occur. Mr David Smith is quoted in the *Collie Mail* of 5 September as follows -

I understand they are no longer asking for that guarantee so, there should be no further delays.

He is referring to Mitsubishi Transfield. Will any further delays occur? It is well known in Western Australia at the moment, particularly in Collie, that SECWA is not concerned about any delays. What is the reason for that? Is it because the demand for electricity supplies in Western Australia is not increasing at the predicted rate as a result of the economic downturn in Western Australia? There is a reduction in the consumption of electricity in the mineral sands industry and all other industries serviced by SECWA. However, that is no reason for not continuing with planning for the future of this State. Do the people making planning decisions, which includes the Government, think that the economy will stand still and wait for electricity supplies once the economy starts moving again? This is the most severe indictment of this Government I have seen or heard; that it is prepared to wait until it knows when the economic turnaround will be before it gets on with the job of producing cheaper, more cost effective electricity in Western Australia. We cannot expect people to plan for the future, take risks or go out and raise finance to invest in our economic recovery while the State is not on track with its planning for cost effective, economic, world competitive electricity.

Another matter concerning Collie people greatly about this Government's commitment to the new coal fired power station and therefore the development of further economic electricity supplies is that the Collie TAFE extension is not funded in this Budget. Collie TAFE has appeared in the Budget for a number of years. Last year it was left out. The Collie Shire Council wrote to the acting Education Minister, Geoff Gallop, and requested an assurance that the TAFE extensions were going to be included in the Budget. This year an article appeared in the *Collie Mail* as follows -

It received a letter from acting Education Minister Geoff Gallop at its Tuesday night meeting, assuring council the workshop had been "accorded a high priority" in the department of TAFE capital works submission.

This workshop has been recognised as important by the Collie task force set up by the Minister for South-West, David Smith, to ensure that the south west and Collie benefit from the employment created by the new coal fired power station. The task force has been pressing for this extension to the TAFE college. What has happened? The Budget contains no item for that extension. That is the greatest rebuttal to private enterprise and anybody trying to create jobs in Western Australia that the State Government could give - that it will not even commit funds to the extension of TAFE in the area to produce the programs necessary to train people to work in the new power station. How can we believe the Government when it says that it is committed to economic development in Western Australia when money for the institution which is to develop programs to provide training essential for people in the south west and Collie to get jobs in the new power station does not appear in the Budget?

It is interesting to see that two child-care centres are to be provided in tertiary education centres and will be funded by the Government, yet it cannot provide money for a new TAFE centre in Collie. It may be that the Government, along with the Minister, is hoping that industry will put up money for that project. Why should it when the Government has made no commitment in that area? Which industry does it think will contribute the money - the companies building the new coal fired power station? That is possible. However, civil works are not expected to start until the middle of 1992. No-one can assure either the Minister for South-West or the Collie people precisely when the power station will start or finish. Therefore, how can we expect companies to put money into a TAFE centre?

Training should commence before the 1992 TAFE year. I condemn the Government for omitting that funding from the Budget, as do all the people of Collie and Mr Doug Wenn, a Labor backbencher in the upper House whose office is located in Collie. Mr Wenn says that he is extremely disappointed that Collie TAFE's funding has been missed out of the Budget. That accords with the comments from people in the Collie region. I am sure those comments will be noted by people attempting to contribute to the economic development of our State by becoming involved in building the new power station.

I move now to the impact of this Budget on the Health budget of Western Australia. As members well know, the Health budget for Western Australia takes one quarter of the total State Budget or \$1.4 billion. I will direct my remarks today to a restricted area of the Health budget. I think the Government has shown an extremely facetious attitude to the Health budget in the way it has dealt with it in the Budget papers. The Program Statements consists of 760 pages of which 25 are allocated to a quarter of the total Budget. Five of those 25 pages are allocated to one fifth of the total Budget, \$900 million. How can we possibly analyse figures if the Government's accountability is insufficient in these papers? It is absolutely farcical! The only way I could find out what the Minister for Health thinks will happen with this Budget was to read Press releases. I did not find that in the Budget Papers. There is no way I can assess from them whether the Government is performing in an accountable fashion. Therefore, I will concentrate on a small aspect of the Health budget; that is, waiting lists. The Minister has allocated \$8 million to reduce waiting lists for urgent elective procedures. Why does Western Australia have these waiting lists? It is because the services provided by our hospitals are not being provided at a rate at which the citizens of this State require those services. Therefore, they have to be put onto waiting lists. These waiting lists relate principally to the tertiary hospitals; that is, the big teaching hospitals in the State, which have actually had a cut in their budgets.

The Health Department's budget has been increased by only 2.8 per cent. The rate of inflation has been calculated in this Budget at 4.1 per cent, so that allocation represents a cut in real terms. Hospitals have suffered an even greater cut because their budgets will increase by only two per cent. What will be the consequence of such a cut in the budgets of hospitals? I will take the situation at Royal Perth Hospital as an example because that is one of the few hospitals where we are able to find out what is happening. Royal Perth Hospital has had a cut in its budget of about \$6.6 million in real terms; just about equal to the \$8 million which has been allocated by the Government to reduce waiting lists. As a result of that cut, the hospital has decided to declare the last Friday of every month a work free day.

That is a very interesting concept. That will save the hospital money in real terms because on that Friday once a month the hospital will not have to expend money to pay penalty rates to its staff for any hours worked over and above 37.5 hours a week, that is to 40 hours a week.

Hospitals operate on a 40 hour a week roster system. The Minister for Housing, who was formerly the Secretary of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, will know that for many years hospitals have been struggling to alter their roster systems. Alterations to the roster systems could assist hospitals in managing their budgets more economically and at less cost to the State. The Program Statements state on page 391, under the heading "Planned Achievements for 1991/92" for secondary hospitals, that "nurse rostering reform will continue to be pursued". However, the "Planned Achievements for 1991/92" for tertiary hospitals do not mention nurse rostering reforms. The Program Statements state also, under the heading "Issues and Trends" on page 389, that one of the ways in which to improve efficiency is alteration of work practices. It is well known that at Royal Perth Hospital an attempt is being made to introduce roster reform. However, roster reform has not been accepted. I believe that money could be saved merely by reducing the overlap time of two hours every afternoon between the morning shift and the afternoon shift. That overlap period is important for handovers, and I am not saying we should abolish the two hours' overlap altogether, but there could be a reduction in that two hours, which would reduce the number of hours for which the hospital had to pay penalty rates. Rather than have the hospital theatres and other equipment lie idle for one day a month, the rosters during the day could be reduced by an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

Hospitals should be required to achieve roster changes in order to save money for the taxpayers of this State. However, this Government does not look favourably on roster reform to achieve reductions in the payment of penalty rates. The Government philosophy and policy is one of the reasons that there are waiting lists in this State. The Government inactivity on roster reform has created those waiting lists, and then in the nice, warm, fuzzy feeling way of this feel-good Government it has allocated a measly \$8 million to reduce waiting lists. The Government has created its own waiting lists by not allowing tertiary hospitals to introduce roster reforms, not only for nurses but also for kitchen, laundry and domestic staff, orderlies, and doctors. Roster reform has been denied to the managers of hospitals because it is against Cabinet policy. This Government cannot talk about microeconomic reform when it is not willing to apply it to the economy of this State, not only to industry, farming and transport, but also to health. This Government will be judged as not genuine if it does not encourage and support microeconomic reform in the Health Department and in the hospital structure, particularly tertiary hospitals. Roster reform should occur from the bottom of hospitals to the top of hospitals, and if this requires some areas of activity to be contracted out, that factor must be addressed. It is possible to contract out the catering services. I believe that the managers of some large hospitals in Perth and elsewhere in Western Australia have asked Qantas for a quote to provide catering services, and that that quote has indicated that it would be far more cost-effective than the current catering system. The Geraldton Hospital kitchens were told that they were not cost effective; they would have to use the Health Department's frozen foods system. As a result the Geraldton Hospital kitchen introduced its own microeconomic reform, it introduced its own roster restructuring, and now the cost of those meals is competitive with the cost of meals from anywhere else in Western Australia.

Mr Bloffwitch: They also do not use frozen foods; they have gone back to using fresh foods at a lower price.

Dr TURNBULL: That is correct. That proves that if the managers are allowed to introduce rostering reform in their own areas they can reduce costs.

Another area where the State could save money in the Health budget is in laboratory services. Laboratory services in Western Australia should be contracted. That is the easiest and quickest way for the Government to transfer costs from the State Budget to the Federal Budget. The State-Federal Medicare financial agreement is an absolute nightmare. If the Minister for Health's hair were not already white it would turn white over this problem. As we know from many of his statements over the past few weeks, he is completely frustrated by the Federal-State Medicare funding agreement. One of the quickest ways to prevent the Federal Government from obstructing the State in its attempt to reduce costs is to contract

the public health laboratory services. That would result in the transfer of costs from the State to a private institution, and that private institution would debit the Federal Medicare system. I recommend that to the Minister, and the National Party will introduce that initiative when in Government.

The waiting lists in Western Australia are being created by this Government because it is not allowing the managers to introduce their own roster reforms, yet the Government is now proposing to provide \$8 million to reduce those waiting lists. The proposal is to spend that money in both private and public hospitals. Previously it has been the public hospitals which have taken up that money, but on this occasion the Minister hopes that the private hospitals will take up the challenge and put public patients into private hospitals. The private hospitals are resisting that move because they do not see their role as putting public patients next to private patients. I can understand that point of view, as can many other people, but the people who can really appreciate that point of view are those who still keep up their private insurance in this State. They deserve some consideration for keeping up their private insurance when it is now so extremely expensive. The \$8 million which the Government is providing to reduce the waiting lists should be spent in the secondary hospitals such as Bentley, Swan District and Osborne Park. Those hospitals could then work to their maximum capacity and that would help to deal with the waiting lists. I recommend that that \$8 million should not be spent in private hospitals but should be used to increase the services in the peripheral hospitals.

As the member for Scarborough pointed out, community services are extremely important at this time. I refer to child care centres. The Budget, as presented here, is related only to prescribed child care centres in Western Australia. Home based child care within families is dealt with to a reasonable degree in the Federal Budget, but the State Government has not paid any attention, as far as I can see, to child care in the home. This is really the only way in which we should be going with child care. Child care should not only be in an institution; it should also be provided in the home. Again Geraldton is a very good example of this, and Busselton is another, where child care can be provided without great cost to the State. It is not necessary to provide funds in the General Loan and Capital Works Fund to build more child care centres. Child care is the business of Federal-State financial arrangements. The Federal Government determines the policy in Western Australia, and the Federal Government has determined that we shall have child care based in institutions. The Federal Government provides the State with the money to assist in building these child care centres, but this policy is very counterproductive. In the non-residential building program set out in the Budget is a great list of child care centres planned by the State Government and by the Federal Government. This is a waste of valuable funding resources when child care should be encouraged to be home based. Home based child care is a policy directive which is essential, and it is a policy directive which the National Party will pursue. The provision of child care centres is an expenditure of money which the State and Federal Governments cannot afford in a recession.

Why should we encourage more women into the work force at a time when jobs are so scarce for everyone - men, women and young people? Some 53 per cent of the work force of Western Australia are women. Where is the equality for men? This is not a victory for feminism or for women, it is an indictment on the current economic situation in this State. It is an indictment that women are having to support this economy at the moment; it is an indictment that men are being laid off and thrown on the dole queues and that women are having to go out and support their families. Many families in Western Australia are existing solely on a woman's income. Why should we drive more women out into the work force? Why should we provide child care centres so that women who do not want to go out to work can do so? This State is moving in a direction which is leading to low wages and part time employment. It is exploitation of women, and readily available child care centres are only exacerbating the situation. The State does not have to spend money on building child care centres at the moment. If women are the only ones in their families who can get a job, why can they not get a job in their home, using their home as a family based child care facility? This would increase the income of many women, who could look after children in their own homes.

Mr Cowan interjected.

Dr TURNBULL: I endorse the remarks of the Leader of the National Party, who has

supported my case by explaining that I am not saying that women should not go to work but that women are being forced to work. I am not saying there should not be child care centres for those women who are forced to work; I am saying there should be home based child care. The State could then save the money allocated to building all these new child care centres listed in the Budget. I know the State is taking advantage of the Federal-State agreement in relation to child care, I know it is taking advantage of money being offered as a bribe by Canberra, but in that respect the Federal Government and the State Government are ill directed.

Mr Graham interjected.

Dr TURNBULL: The member for Pilbara is correct - we do not need new hospitals, we simply need hospitals which are better managed and systems whereby people can have health care in their homes. It is the same with child care. Home based child care should definitely be promoted and that will be one of our policies. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for listening to my remarks on this Budget and how it has impinged on my electorate. In the Budget the Government has not shown any commitment to the economic development of the State because it has excluded the Collie TAFE college; it has not shown any commitment to my region in the Health budget because it has not given any support to microeconomic reform within the management of large tertiary hospitals. As for building new child care centres, that represents expenditure of very scarce resources which could be diverted into another area, such as providing child care places in home based child care facilities.

**MR KIERATH (Riverton) [12.35 pm]:** The people of Riverton have, over the past several years, experienced an increase in crime. It was evident from the Rally for Justice held outside this Parliament some weeks ago that other people in this State have had a similar experience. More than 20 000, and some say 30 000, people rallied here to express their lack of faith in the judicial system and its ability to deliver justice.

An issue that has been of great concern to my electorate is the establishment of a police station in Riverton, and I presented a petition of 4 500 signatures to this House requesting that. As a result, officers from the Police Department met with the local authority. They invited me to attend that meeting, at which they discussed the possibility of establishing a police station in Riverton and laid down certain requirements. They said that the new way of providing police stations was to have shopfront police stations, of which two were being trialled in Ballajura and Forrestfield. They said that if that trial proved successful they would consider putting one in Riverton. Then came the bottom line: They said the Police Department wanted a shopfront office rent free for a time. My interpretation of that was that the Government did not have any money.

Mr Clarko: Which is right.

Mr KIERATH: It is dead right; however, that was one of the conditions and another was that after that rent free period the shopfront office would be available at a negotiable rent.

Recently an opportunity came up in the place where my electorate office is situated. The centre management was complaining about the level of crime in the area; I gave them the acid test and said I had been trying to have a police station established at Riverton but the only suitable premises were across the road in the proposed Riverton community centre. When a new library is built the library will be transferred from the existing building. We have been waiting and hoping for that building to become the police station. However, as this opportunity presented itself I asked the centre management why it did not make some space available for a police station. The management asked what would be involved and I replied that the premises had to be rent free for 18 months and thereafter available at a low rent, because a commercial retail return was not within the reach of the Police budget.

To cut a long story short, a great deal of negotiation ensued between the centre management and the Police Department and a suitable area of 70 square metres was made available. Then some hard bargaining took place. The Police Department said it did not just want the office space but also wanted someone to put up the partitions, the counter and so on, and all the department had to do was provide the police officers and a car. Finally the centre management agreed to that; then came the next crunch. Before the Police Department would sign the documents the centre management was told that the matter had to be put forward for approval and the department did not know whether it would get approval for a car because

funds were tight. That message was relayed to me and I said that if the department promised to provide the staff - and it was indicated to us that two police officers were likely to be made available from the November graduation of the police cadets -

Mr Kobelke: Are you recommending we take up Greiner's proposal of having voluntary police?

Mr KIERATH: No, not necessarily; I am saying that at that stage the Police Department offered us two policemen yet wanted us to provide the facilities, which we did. We were even prepared if necessary to go out and raise funds to buy a vehicle, if the lack of a vehicle was the only reason we would not get a police station in our area. I must say that it took a great deal of effort on the part of the centre management, because it had an existing tenancy which it had to break up and offer to other people in order to accommodate this shop front police station. However, having got everything set up, at the very last minute - on the day the Budget was handed down - word came through that the two policemen would not be made available. Members will recall the Beat Crime campaign the Government ran prior to the last State election whereby, in order to win support in the electorate, it promised to provide an extra 1 000 police officers, first over three years and subsequently over four years. It was then announced that there would not be a commitment this year to increase the staff and, as a consequence, those two policemen for the proposed Riverton police station will not be available. Again my area is being asked to suffer because of the incompetent financial dealings of this Government, and that is a shame.

The SPEAKER: Are you saying that your area does not have a police station?

Mr KIERATH: Our is covered by two jurisdictions: Cannington and Brentwood. I am glad you raised that, Mr Speaker. I will tell you about the Cannington Police Station -

Mr Kobelke: How can you make that argument when the increase in the Budget for police stations is twice the inflation rate?

Mr KIERATH: The answer was that the Government could not agree; the negotiations reached the eleventh hour; everything was ready to go but it was said that the police station could not proceed because the Government could not provide the manpower. During all previous negotiations manpower had not been mentioned. Money was mentioned and capital works; the cost of providing a vehicle was also mentioned as a possible obstacle, but never manpower. The administration was apologetic but the Government has knocked on the head the provision of additional policemen. A promise was made to increase the numbers of policemen by 1 000 officers over four years. The Government failed to deliver.

Mr Lewis: The Government broke its promise.

Mr KIERATH: Exactly! It broke an election promise. Magnificent glossy brochures were sent around the electorates and a television advertisement featuring the Commissioner of Police was run to promote the Beat Crime campaign. It was a disgraceful performance. The Government cannot deliver. My advice to the Minister is that if the Government cannot deliver it should not make promises in the first place. The Government is aware that the Opposition always delivers when it makes promises.

Mr Marlborough: You don't deliver on a political basis, never mind when in Government.

Mr KIERATH: The member for Peel is not in his correct seat. Can the member interject from that seat?

The SPEAKER: He is the Acting Whip.

Mr KIERATH: The last time I tried to do that I was frowned upon. It is a sad indictment -

Mr MacKinnon: That he is acting Whip?

Mr KIERATH: Yes. If the Government stoops that low it is in terrible straits. I am prepared to deliver brickbats but I am also prepared to deliver bouquets because I am very evenhanded.

Several members interjected.

Mr KIERATH: Members should bite their tongues while I pay the Government a compliment. I compliment the Government on its allocation for sewerage. My electorate includes Shelley and part of Riverton which is not sewered. When one considers that the

Canning River forms the northern boundary of my electorate, one realises Riverton is low-lying. I have been told that many years ago anyone could have bought all of Riverton for about £5 because it was low-lying swampland. Drains were installed to make it suitable for housing. The drains feed into the Canning River. Over the past 12 months we have seen sensational headlines arising from comments by the Environmental Protection Authority and other Government departments that the Swan River is in danger of dying. The major problems affecting the river were sewerage and phosphorus which is contained in dishwashing liquids and household detergents. Because a small part of the area contains septic tanks, liquids leach into the drains and subsequently into the Canning River, adding to pollution.

*Mrs Beggs:* Women should stay home and make their own soap, and that would not happen.

*Mr KIERATH:* I am attempting to throw a bouquet to the Government; at least the Minister should have the decency not to interject when I am paying the Government a compliment. I could understand such an interjection were I throwing a brickbat. I will ignore the Minister.

Last year the Speaker played a part in my area's not receiving sewerage earlier because the allocation for south of the river was to go to category 2 areas - down to Rockingham. That area was to be finished first. Shelley is more important than Rockingham. However, I can understand that the Speaker would have a different point of view. Recently, however, a public meeting was held, and we were told that it was proposed to attend to part of the area in this year's Budget. It has gone in and a commitment has been made of almost \$1.9 million over the next four or five years. I think this year \$494 000 has been allocated. I commend the Government for that initiative; it is tremendous. It is not something for which people give credit or glory; it is a long term fundamental issue which must be resolved. I pay the Government that compliment. However, another side to the compliment is that an area south of Leach Highway has been designated as category 4. I fail to understand how anybody could have classified the area in that way when it fulfils all the criteria of category 2. A local action group has been formed to have the category upgraded. If we are successful, that redesignation will go a long way towards solving the problem.

I turn now to the schools in my electorate. Maintenance remains a major problem for schools in my area. I notice in the Budget and in the circulars to schools that an attempt has been made to redress the problem. An effort has been made to look at maintenance budgets and to do something about the situation. Unfortunately, considering past Budgets, the level of maintenance has declined from high levels in 1983 to historically very low levels. I am thankful that the Government has allocated more money this year to the maintenance of schools - although this smacks of the usual ploy of turning the problem into a political issue. The Government has allocated \$1 500 to P & C associations for maintenance programs; it has allowed \$500 to be spent at the discretion of the principal. However, the real solution lies in the allocation of appropriate and proper funding for schools maintenance.

Over the last couple of years I have heard the Minister for Education ridicule members who raise maintenance items but the Government fails to understand that to the people in the school system it is critical that schools are maintained. Another area of school maintenance is that of graffiti removal. One school in my electorate was daubed with rude words. The principal of the school was most distressed about the words and at whom the words were targeted. The principal contacted the Building Management Authority which sent out an officer who, instead of removing the words, removed only the first letter of each word. Members should understand what happens with graffiti. If graffiti is removed after it first appears it returns in waves but eventually it dies down and disappears. If left in place, it brings out an element in people who might otherwise have resisted the urge to become involved. It encourages those people to contribute to the graffiti. It is ludicrous that an officer sent out to remove graffiti should remove only one letter of each word. Considering the call-out fees and associated costs it would make more sense to require that person to remove the graffiti completely.

It is unfortunate that I must report that my electorate has the two largest primary schools in the State; that is, Parkwood Primary school and the Rostrata Primary School. The Parkwood Primary School has close to 1 000 students, which is larger than many high schools in the State. However, I must deliver another bouquet, this time to the previous Minister for Education, the member for Victoria Park, who made a special allocation to Parkwood Primary School for an additional grant to re-establish a library which had burnt down.



However, the Rossmoyne Primary School has an asbestos roof which is starting to break down. Parents are concerned about that. They have not asked for the roof to be replaced; they would like the roof to be encapsulated.

The SPEAKER: What category is it?

Mr KIERATH: I am not sure. It is said to be on a list of improvement works, but the Government does not have enough money to do all the schools on the list. We should take no risks with asbestos roofs on primary schools.

The SPEAKER: I agree.

Mr KIERATH: If there is any doubt, something should be done about it. The parents at this school are extremely concerned, and I can understand that. They can accept that maybe the Government does not have enough money to replace the roof, but at least the roof should be encapsulated to seal the fibres.

The member for Kenwick is the chairman of the steering committee of the Canning River Regional Park. That committee owes the City of Canning \$800 000 in promised funds which have not been delivered. That is a disgraceful situation! When the proposal for this regional park was first mooted, I was asked to comment. I said that it should not involve joint management because that leads to double the problems. One authority should run the park and I suggested the Royal King's Park model. The City of Canning is administering the park under joint management with the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Various Government agencies own land which forms part of the proposed park, yet the Government is not paying its way. The City of Canning has been left to pick up the bill, and the Government is not showing a genuine commitment to this park. A committee should not be formed to claim all the credit and glory without doing the substantive work in providing adequate funding. A progressive devolution of functions and powers to the City of Canning should occur.

The Minister for Transport has disappeared from the House; nevertheless, I have made a number of calls for the Leach Highway traffic lights to be synchronised. The stretch of road between the Shelley Bridge and Brentwood contains around 14 sets of traffic lights - it can take 20 minutes to cover four kilometres if the lights are unfavourable. This is a major route in moving freight to the Port of Fremantle and the haulage trucks are slow accelerating from traffic lights as they must go through the trauma of changing gears; this presents an air and noise pollution problem. Last year I went to the United States of America and saw some synchronised traffic lights in operation. The Minister for Transport suggested that I visit the Main Roads Department for an explanation of why these traffic lights could not be synchronised. I was told that the number of right hand turns on the Leach Highway prevented it from being implemented. A solution would be to reduce the number of right hand turns. In the United States and parts of Canada stretches of major roads have synchronised traffic lights, and this system discourages people from speeding because speeding results in catching red lights. These traffic lights reduce the number of traffic problems with a minimum of inconvenience. Normally one has to wait a little longer at the start of the stretch of road, but one passes through green traffic lights for the rest of the stretch. People are avoiding the Leach Highway and using minor roads in the area, which is leading to complaints from local residents. The solution to this problem requires a comprehensive approach. I hope that when members on this side of the House occupy the Government benches we will take up the issue of synchronised traffic lights. This is not a glamorous issue, but it provides a solution to traffic and pollution problems. The Minister for the Environment should chip in because the planting of many trees and shrubs can reduce the noise problems for residents.

I now refer to the general content of the Budget. I will not enter into the detail raised by some of my colleagues. This is not a balanced Budget. Anyone who believes that is either a fool or a con man this Government has cooked the books. This Budget has a deficit of \$396 million, and no-one can claim otherwise.

Mr Pearce: If you are going to argue that way, you should compare like with like.

Mr KIERATH: The Budget compares apples with oranges; the Government changes the format so that members cannot follow the Budget through. The Government has been caught out this time. It may seem complicated to the electors, but they understand the simple fact that the Government has deferred a \$25 million payment in the Budget. Many figures are

lost on people, but they understand that the Government has cooked the books. One can be pedantic about the figures, and people forget the detail; however, the issue at the moment is that people remember the principles: They remember that a Labor Government cannot be trusted with money; a Labor Government will not come clean when it makes mistakes and is in a bind; and a Labor Government covers up by cooking the books. Whenever one mentions money and the Labor Government people just laugh. I have attended two P&C meetings and I attended a staff development day at a school in my electorate this morning and when one mentioned the lack of money and this Government people fell around laughing. They understand the economic incompetence of this Government.

I refer now to the fundamentals of debt. Anyone who follows the path of increasing debt to the extent that this Government has done exhibits economic incompetence. Sadly, when people who follow this course realise that, it is too late.

Mr Pearce: How come you were giving a political speech at a teachers' development day? The students are cared for by their parents so that you can give a political speech to the teachers - that is interesting.

Mr KIERATH: As usual the Minister for the Environment comes into the debate half cocked. He has been conducting his own conversations and not listening to the debate; he has only half the information.

Mr Pearce: Give us the rest.

Mr KIERATH: The Minister for the Environment is the only person I know who can speak with both feet in his mouth. I did not make a political speech.

Mr Pearce: You said you were talking about funding for education.

Mr KIERATH: No.

The SPEAKER: Order! Everybody is obviously hungry, and I suggest now is a good time to suspend proceedings.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2.00 pm*

## STATEMENT - BY THE SPEAKER

### *Members' Behaviour*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett): Members may have noticed that during question time yesterday I took the opportunity to sit in the Speaker's Gallery and I am sorry to say I was decidedly unimpressed.

Mr Shave: You were no, overawed by the level of intelligence?

The SPEAKER: It was not the intelligence, but the behaviour of members. If what I saw is the appearance that we are presenting to visitors in the Speaker's Gallery and the Public Gallery we should change immediately. Let us try today.

[Questions without notice taken.]

## BILLS (2) - RETURNED

1. Criminal Injuries Compensation Amendment Bill  
Bill returned from the Council without amendment.
2. Human Reproductive Technology Bill  
Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

## APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

### *Second Reading - Budget Debate*

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR KIERATH** (Riverton) [2.24 pm]: Prior to the lunch suspension I outlined to the House the effect of the Government's incompetent financial dealings on my electorate. I mentioned police stations, school maintenance and the synchronisation of traffic lights on Leach Highway.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! At this stage the background conversation is far too loud and I ask that it be reduced.

**Mr KIERATH**: I failed to mention that slow moving traffic on highways should remain at all times on the left hand side of the road. It is a common practice for a number of trucks to line up side by side along Leach Highway. After stopping at traffic lights they accelerate very slowly as they move through the gears, as a consequence of which the traffic banks up behind them. This causes traffic jams in the area, and members may be aware that Leach Highway is a ring road and major feeder road to the port of Fremantle from the industrial areas of Welshpool and Kewdale. The focus is on getting the cargo to the port of Fremantle, which is very important, but these truck drivers must have some consideration for other users of the road - the general motorists. It is time this situation was investigated. I think that existing regulations require slow moving traffic to keep to the left-hand side of the road, but that relates only to the top speed of the vehicle and not its acceleration rate.

A further issue I raise is the State's level of unemployment, to which the Deputy Premier referred earlier. The latest figure shows an increase of 300 in the number of people unemployed in this State. The Deputy Premier claimed that the unemployment rate had decreased from 11.2 per cent to 11 per cent, and that is correct. However, the sad fact is that the actual number of Western Australians who are out of work and looking for a job increased from 93 600 to 93 900. I heard the Deputy Premier say that the Budget targeted the unemployed. I have been through the Budget documents and I cannot find any targeting of unemployment. Certainly the documents contain no good news whatsoever for people looking for jobs. The Budget does not contain any mention of the unemployed or programs for them. It is interesting to note the looks on the faces of Government members; some of them are looking towards the ceiling and others are looking away. Their colleagues in Federal Parliament decided to do something about the unemployment rate; the backbench revolted and demanded that something be done about this problem. As a result a committee was set up and a summit was called. In March this year the State Opposition asked for a summit to be held on the unemployment problem. We said that if the Government was bereft of ideas about how to deal with the unemployment problem, the Opposition could make some suggestions. At the time the Government ridiculed those suggestions, although I note that the Deputy Premier claimed credit for increasing the capital works expenditure. The Opposition recommended that as a short term initiative some time ago because it knew that Queensland and New South Wales had taken that action. At long last the Government has seen the light but, as my good friend and colleague the member for Cottesloe said, the Government is coming from a very low base and any positive action it takes looks good in percentage terms.

**Mr C.J. Barnett**: The capital works this year is 18 per cent less in real terms than it was two years ago.

**Mr KIERATH**: That indicates that we cannot catch up to previous levels. The Minister for Health is laughing but obviously he does not have a solution to this problem.

**Mr Wilson**: You just made an immediate change in your argument after listening to your colleague.

**Mr KIERATH**: The Minister did not listen to my comments. I said that the Government was coming from a very low base.

**Mr Wilson**: That is a contradiction in terms.

#### *Point of Order*

**Mr MINSON**: The member on his feet assumed that he would not be speaking in this debate at this time and, consequently, he does not have all his notes. In the normal course of events, we would not be dealing with this debate at this time of the afternoon. If the member cannot get his notes to complete his speech now, he should be allowed to continue his remarks at a later stage.

The SPEAKER: I think that is a very good point of view. However, I am aware that there is a matter of public importance to be dealt with. I am aware of the Standing Order that states that an MPI is to be taken at 2.30 pm. I am aware also that the member has 16 minutes left of his time, and that he does have his notes. I am making investigations into the state of the clocks in this place to determine if they are accurate, and I expect to be able to make a ruling on that at the end of the member's speech.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

[Continued on p 4612.]

The SPEAKER: My investigation into the clocks having been completed, I am told that they are accurate.

## MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

### *Health Services*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett): I advise members that today I received a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, seeking to debate as a matter of public interest the crisis that exists in health delivery in this State. If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Sessional Order, half an hour each will be allocated to the Government and the Opposition and a further five minutes, if necessary, will be allocated to any Independent who wishes to make a contribution.

MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.31 pm]: I move -

That this House, as a matter of public interest, recognises the crisis that exists in health delivery in this State, and accordingly -

- (1) Calls on the Government to move at the forthcoming Special Premiers' Conference for full State control of the delivery of all health services.
- (2) Supports the State Minister for Health's view that the Commonwealth practice of tied grants is blackmail and that Medicare is one of the worst examples of this.
- (3) Calls on the Federal Government to immediately introduce a system of tax rebates for private health insurance and to allow "gap" insurance.
- (4) Urges the Premier to commission a public audit of the cost burden on the Western Australian health system caused by the Federal Government's duplication and interference.
- (5) Censures the Federal Health Minister and the Commonwealth Government for their roles in jeopardising the quality and availability of health services in Western Australia and for failing to address the shortcomings of Medicare despite longstanding warning signals.
- (6) Requests the State Government to examine its priority of expenditure in all areas to recognise efficiencies that might be initiated to allow funds to be directed to the area of health delivery thus allowing the restoration of full health services.

Recently a considerable amount of debate has taken place in the Press about the delivery of health care in Western Australia. I will address in particular points (1) and (3) of this motion, and refer in passing to point (2). Other members will address the other points that are raised in this motion. Many years ago the Medicare promise was that we would have universal health care in Australia and that it would be free for all. Since that time we have seen a steady deterioration in the standard and promptness of the delivery of health care. Worse than that, as far as I am concerned, we have seen a continual cover-up all over Australia of the fact that the standard has been deteriorating and that Medicare has never lived up to its original promise and never will. This has come despite warnings at its introduction that this would happen. It has come despite repeated warnings over the past few

years that it was happening and that the system was coming apart. I remember a very eloquent speech made by the previous Opposition spokesman on health matters, Mr Bill Hassell, in this place in 1989, where he spoke for 45 minutes about the shortcomings of Medicare, why it was failing and where it was failing. Anyone who wants to look at a clear and concise, but complete, summary of what is the problem and the way it has developed would do well to read that speech.

It is of concern to me that we have reached the point where the Federal Government has proposed a surcharge or contribution charge of \$3.50 on visits to a medical practitioner. I am concerned not because patients have to make a contribution - I have always believed that where possible people should make some contribution to their health care out of their own pocket, because the unfortunate fact is that the provision of totally free services encourages overcharging - but because I regret that we had to get to this point before we saw the State Minister for Health and this State Government go into action, acknowledge the system is falling apart, and seek to get the Federal Government to back down and do something about what has become a serious situation.

We have a paradox in Australia; namely, that the Federal Government is the primary tax gatherer, and it has the constitutional prerogative, because it is the Federal Government, to set the national health strategy in terms of a national insurance scheme. Some people would argue about that, but I suspect, and my advice is, that a High Court challenge to that constitutional right would probably not succeed. However, it is undoubtedly a State constitutional responsibility to actually deliver health services; and therein lies the paradox. We do not control the purse strings, and we have no say over the national health strategy; nevertheless, it remains a State responsibility to ensure that people are catered for with respect to the delivery of health services. I believe that the Minister's recent call for a constitutional challenge with respect to the Federal Government's meddling in the delivery of health services is sustainable and that we may well win that case. I do not believe we have a ghost of a chance of winning a case with respect to the setting of the national agenda, and I would think twice before I could back that approach. We see a number of conflicts in the system which, in my opinion, lead to duplication and a waste of money. The fact that the Federal Government meddles in the delivery of health services leads to more expensive services and to a deterioration in the quality of those services.

Some good examples of this can be seen in the area of nursing homes. I believe nursing homes are quite properly the province of State Governments. A good illustration of what can happen when we have demarcation disputes about what is a nursing home and what is a hospital or some other kind of care centre is the case of the Lefroy Hostel in Bull Creek. That centre caters for 35 or 40 dementia patients, specifically those suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and the Federal Government will not fund it as a nursing home but rather wants to class it as another type of institution, thereby cutting its funding, which will see it either close down or have its weight thrown upon the State Budget. A similar kind of duplication and meddling is evident in the area of home and community care, where we have virtually dollar for dollar matched funding but it is always the Federal Government which sets the agenda and it is up to the State Government to follow. History will show that very seldom does the Federal Government follow the example we set and adhere to our agenda.

Another example is that of Swan Cottage Homes. That institution would like to build a hostel but because it is not in keeping with the ideology and the plan of the Federal Government, the Federal Government refuses to fund that which properly should be funded and for which the State Government, in consultation with Swan Cottage Homes, might well plan a joint strategy. It is well and truly time for the Federal Government to butt out of the delivery of health services, and for that reason the Opposition very strongly supports any move the Minister for Health or the Premier might make to have the Federal Government hand over completely the delivery of health services in this State; and, indeed, in all States.

I refer to part (2) of the motion, which deals with tied grants. The Federal Government should allow us to use the money in the way we think fit. I notice, even without delving too deeply, that the Supplementary Budget Information provides a number of examples of specific purpose grants. There are grants for the alternative birthing program, the blood transfusion service, the breast and cervical cancer screening program, the geriatric assessment program, the head injured program, the home and community care program, the hospital enhancement program, the hospital funding grant, the Medicare pathology services

grant and a number of others. I make the point in passing that I think it is appropriate that some preventive programs that are best approached from a national perspective can quite properly be funded from Federal funds. For instance, the Australian bone marrow donor register is a good initiative and one which deserves support, and it would be quite proper for the Federal Government to become involved in that. Similarly, I suggest the Federal Government might well properly become involved in the national better health program, although most States run their own health promotion programs. The national campaign against measles is another one, and so the list goes on. However, I point out to the House that most of those programs, even those which it could be argued would be better delivered from the national scene, are already delivered locally.

I turn now to the health insurance scheme itself and the fact that it badly needs an injection of money. The problem we face is simply that inflation in the medical world is far greater than it is at the supermarket, which is something I have said a number of times in this House. It is no good simply increasing by the consumer price index the funds that are fed into the health system; we must aim to attract more money into it so as to free up beds and thus provide better access. We do not have a problem in this State with bed numbers, but rather with access. It is obvious that the best way to inject more money into this system is to attract private health insurance. Although there are a number of ways of doing that, the big stick being one of them, I suggest the best way is via either tax rebates or tax deductions. Rebates would be the more equitable and effective way to proceed, simply because those people who are on higher incomes are more likely to be insured in any case, and those who are in the middle and lower income brackets - who are now opting out of health insurance because they cannot afford it - would, if there were a set rebate, receive the maximum benefit and therefore would be more likely to take out insurance. Of course, we must allow gap insurance, which arguably needs a lid on it, so that people are not disadvantaged if they use their private health insurance. Unless we dangle that carrot in order to attract private funds back into the health industry the situation will deteriorate.

**DR TURNBULL (Collie) [2.46 pm]:** I compliment the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on his motion and his remarks in support of it. This subject is an extremely important one. The health service in Western Australia is a very high quality, well managed health delivery system compared with others in the world. It is also a very high quality, well managed and well delivered system in relation to other health systems in Australia, but it is at crisis point now because the budgetary cuts made over the past 10 years are now starting to have an effect and the standard of health delivery cannot continue at the level which we in this State all expect. Because of that, the Minister for Health has become extremely frustrated with the controls that the Federal Government and the Medicare Federal-State funding agreement impose on Western Australia. The Federal Minister for Health, Hon Brian Howe, said in his Budget comments that he would be reducing the Medicare rebate for general practitioners by \$3.50 and therefore we would see a cost to patients of \$3.50. That prompted the Western Australian Minister for Health to lash out at the Federal Government and the imposition it is placing on our health care system.

We know now, of course, that the Federal Government has been forced to review this \$3.50 charge but I still believe that the comments of our Minister for Health are valid; that is, that people should make some contribution towards using the outpatient systems in our State hospitals and that these should not be regarded as totally free, particularly if there will be a cost associated with attending general practitioners.

I support part (2) of the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The National Party endorses the remarks of the Minister for Health which were quoted in *The West Australian* newspaper on Tuesday, 10 September as follows -

The State Government is looking at mounting a constitutional challenge to tied grants after the November Premiers' Conference in Perth.

The challenge may go ahead if the Federal Government continues to refuse to give States more power to make their own decisions about how money is spent.

Health Minister Keith Wilson, whose anger about Federal Government Medicare changes has sparked the constitutional push, said yesterday that Premier Carmen Lawrence had agreed to consider the challenge.

He said he had also asked Attorney General Joe Berinson to begin researching the grounds for a challenge.

Mr Wilson described tied grants as blackmail, and said Medicare was the mother of them all.

I do not know why the Minister called it the "mother of them all".

Mr Wilson: I was quoting Saddam Hussein.

Dr TURNBULL: Medicare is an extreme example of blackmail. I offer the Federal Government arrangements regarding nursing homes as an example. This is slightly separate from Medicare but it relates to health-tied grants in the same way as Medicare. The Federal Government guidelines indicate that a nursing home must have 30 beds to be an institution. That is not suitable for Western Australia, especially country Western Australia. At the moment the Health Department in the central wheatbelt region is conducting extremely costly bureaucratic discussions with the Federal Government regarding the provision of support to nursing homes with fewer than 30 beds. That is an extreme example of Federal Government tied funding arrangements. Other such situations have applied to pharmaceutical supplies to hospitals. The deputy leader of the National Party indicated that these grants could be used in Western Australia provided we could apply them according to Western Australian conditions. Medicare funding agreements relate to maintaining control on hospital expenditure, and this relates to the relationships between the hospitals and the service provided by visiting surgeons. This is being reviewed by the Western Australian Government.

The surgeon and doctor visiting arrangement in Western Australian hospitals should be based on the unique conditions in Western Australia. An enormous amount of surgery is conducted in public hospitals in Western Australia. This State once had the best equipped public hospital system in Australia. In 1974 when Medibank agreements were introduced, the ratio of private and State hospitals in the Eastern States was approximately 50:50. At the same time more public hospital than private hospital beds were provided in Western Australia. It is a definite disadvantage that we have fewer private hospital beds because much of the work conducted in public hospitals could have been conducted in private hospitals. Now that private health insurance is so expensive, the other States are also suffering because the work is being shifted from the private to the public health system. Agreements were made by which certain work that would otherwise have been done in public hospitals was transferred to private hospitals without the loss of private hospital status. This was an advantage to the private hospitals, and did not change the conditions under which surgeons operated in private hospitals. Perhaps Western Australia could look at the payment of visiting surgeons and doctors to provide services in public and private hospitals. The Federal Government has guidelines in this area and it is attempting to influence decisions made in Western Australia.

Another aspect is the provision of free services to outpatients in country hospitals. In Western Australia practitioners provide a service in a manner which is unique to Western Australia. We have a spread of manpower and womanpower which is different from other parts of Australia. These factors prove that Federal Government guidelines in determining how money is to be spent in the State health systems disadvantages this State. We could make better use of the Federal health dollar if its allocation were determined by the State Government. We support the Minister for Health's comments in that regard, because the State could apply the funds according to Western Australian conditions.

Part (6) of the motion is not an indictment on Western Australia at all; it is indictment on the Federal Labor Government and its advisers. In 1984 the Federal Government sought advice from the Commonwealth Health Department, and a paper was prepared entitled "Revised Estimates of Medical Manpower Supply". The paper was an analysis of what would happen if the Federal Government introduced policies which would increase the medical manpower of Australia and reduce the number of patients per doctor. This document clearly spells out the situation. In 1984 the Federal Government received advice that if it allowed the number of patients per doctor to increase, it would increase the cost of a Federal free health system. Members may think that it is not unusual that a doctor would be arguing in this way. However, I am not suggesting that doctors would be better paid if they had more patients to deal with; I suggest that Medicare would cost less under that system.

I realise that Brian Howe has agreed with this conclusion at this belated stage, but many people, apart from the policy bureau, were offering this advice to the Federal Government, which would have brought home the bacon, and this was not adhered to. This situation is costing Australian taxpayers an enormous sum of money. It is a pity I do not have time to deal with further items. However, I strongly support the Minister for Health in his demands that Federal money should be provided directly to the States for distribution.

**MR WILSON** (Dianella - Minister for Health) [3.00 pm]: For many reasons this is perhaps the most propitious time for us in this House, and desirably for as many people as possible in the community, to place into sharp focus the need to review the health service funding and delivery arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States. In introducing his motion, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition implied at least that this latest development is the first time that I, as Minister for Health in Western Australia, have taken up the issue. I do not want to take up much time in defending myself individually; it really does not matter that much who takes it up, as long as it is taken up. However, since I became Minister for Health in 1988 - when we were renegotiating the Medicare agreement - I have contested, firstly, the unequal distribution of funds to Western Australia for health services and, secondly, the undue and inappropriate interference by the Federal Government in the delivery of those services to Western Australians.

**Mr Minson**: You must have been saying it to your advisers, because I didn't hear you.

**Mr WILSON**: I have said it in this Parliament and it is on record by unlikely supporters of mine in the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Surgeons Association that I have been doing that over a number of years. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should speak to Dr Jones, Dr Bott and to the President of the Surgeons Association and they will tell him that has been a consistent approach of mine. That has certainly been the nature of my representations at several Ministers' conferences. In fact, during the last renegotiation of the Medicare agreement Western Australia held out beyond all other States in reaching agreement about that. Ultimately it could not hold out otherwise it would have been denied Federal funds.

**Mr Lewis**: That is blackmail.

**Mr WILSON**: The member for Applecross is agreeing with me.

**Mr Lewis**: There is no argument about that.

**Mr WILSON**: I make that very insignificant point - I do not want to get bound up in defending myself -

**Mr Minson**: This House must send a message to that side.

**Mr WILSON**: It is good to try to send messages and I applaud that noble sentiment. I can assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition we will all keep trying.

The Government is concerned about the adequacy of the funding provided to Western Australia and the degree of the State's control over the delivery of services. They have been the common threads that have governed my representations to the Commonwealth over the past three and a half years. The point about the current situation is that we do at last have a real opportunity in the lead up to the Special Premiers' Conference in November to resolve some of those issues effectively. On that agenda is the possibility of disentangling those which are properly Commonwealth and those which are properly State responsibilities. We have an opportunity to seek redress for the unequal share of Federal revenue we receive in response to our need for service delivery in Western Australia. Our latest calculation is that that is in the order of \$99 million a year for Western Australia. On the other side of the ledger New South Wales receives \$500 million - in excess of a fair share. It is unlikely New South Wales will be willing to surrender any of that money to allow Western Australia to receive a more equal share. However, that is the argument in which we will always be involved.

The overall situation is governed by the fact that, as I think the member for Collie indicated in her comments, prior to the Medicare arrangements Western Australia received a more generous provision of publicly operated health services than the rest of Australia. Therefore, when Medicare came into operation it was able to take advantage of the fact that in Western Australia a more generous delivery of public health services existed than in any other part of



Australia. In other words, we were in a position to put into operation - in fact we subsequently did - the best response to the Medicare ideal throughout the country. That can be seen from the fact that, per head of population, residents of Western Australia continue to receive markedly lower Commonwealth benefit payments for private health services. Medicare benefits are 15.6 per cent below the national average; nursing home benefits are 17.2 per cent below and pharmaceutical benefits are 19.1 per cent below. As I said, in aggregate terms that represented an imbalance of \$99 million in 1989-90.

Since the introduction of Medicare, the Western Australian population has grown by more than 16 per cent and inflation has increased the Consumer Price Index by 48 per cent. During the same period the number of people aged 65 years and over increased by nearly 22 per cent. In that period the Commonwealth decreased funding of public hospitals in Western Australia by 21 per cent. Thirty five per cent of the cost of running public hospitals in Western Australia in 1989-90 was contributed by the Commonwealth Government. In other words, from declining revenue the State Government has had to fund an increasing proportion of the cost of running public hospitals and the public health system in Western Australia.

As has been mentioned, at the same time in our public hospital system we are required to deliver a service which is free and open to everybody, irrespective of their income. That is the scene which currently confronts us and has done for some time. However, what is different about the present situation is that for the first time in many decades we will have a real opportunity at the November Special Premiers' Conference to unravel some of those problems. That will make a real difference to our share of funds and to our ability to decide about the different services. They are the important factors.

I have no quarrel with the six points contained in the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's motion. With reference to the second point, one starts to worry when the Opposition supports a Minister. That should happen most of the time; most of the time it does not. That flippancy aside, the first paragraph of the motion which calls on the Government to move at the forthcoming Special Premier's Conference for full State control of the delivery of all health services indicates that the mover of the motion has never been to a Ministers' conference or a Premiers' Conference. I attended a meeting of all State and Territory Health Ministers and two Commonwealth Ministers last Friday at which I made points, none of which the other Health Ministers, including one of the Opposition's colleagues in New South Wales, supported.

Dr Turnbull: That is because Western Australia is unique and Western Australia is losing out in this agreement. New South Wales actually benefits from it.

Mr WILSON: Indeed. There is not much point in asking our Premier to move at the Premiers' Conference the first paragraph of the motion if we do not have the support of the Premiers of the other States.

Mr Minson: You don't know until you move it.

Mr WILSON: If the member does not know he should read the newspapers. I will suggest an amendment to that paragraph.

In relation to the third paragraph of the motion, it is a little difficult to be so prescriptive because, while I think that the revision of health insurance arrangements is very timely and needs to be addressed - I suppose it is being addressed in the national health strategy review although we are yet to see the recommendations on Medicare hospital funding that came out of that review - we need to continue to recognise, and most people do, that we should retain at least that aspect of Medicare from its principles of equity and access for public coverage of the health needs of pensioners and lower income people in our community. We should make a clear statement about that and, at the same time, be less prescriptive because, if we start to get down to the detail of what is called "gap insurance", we may ignore some of the more complex arrangements that we need to put in place in respect of private health insurance.

While I think that the use of tax credits linked to level of income to provide an incentive for people to take out private health insurance is important, it is also important to continue to ensure that private health insurance is affordable to individuals and families who are on more modest incomes. We have a very complex situation in Australia at the moment. Everybody who works pays the Medicare levy. Medicare has been sold on the idea that, because we pay

a levy, we should be covered. For a long time, people have not realised that the levy contributes approximately \$2 billion to health services, whereas the full cost of health services is approximately \$13 billion. At the same time, people paying the levy also may have top private health insurance and, if they used a private hospital, they would find they would have to pay more on top of that. The signals are very confused. We need clear pricing signals to ensure that the community understand the real cost of health care. That real cost is very high if people want everything that modern medical care offers. There is no way we can underestimate what is a high cost. If we want an entitlement, somebody must pay and those who can afford to pay more must be encouraged to pay more towards that full cost. That means that, at the same time, there is a risk that a significant and increasing number of low to middle income individuals and families will be caught in a health services and health insurance cost price squeeze, which has occurred in the past and which was the basis on which the principles of Medicare were first espoused as being better than that which had been held out before. A number of complex issues must be resolved to better address adequate health insurance cover for all Australians. History has shown that it will not be possible to reorganise the Australian health system in a way whereby the consumers, the providers and the funders will all come out winners and about which we will get some sweet reasonable agreement. Somewhere along the line, rational understanding must be reached between those three sectors.

Mr Minson: What you are saying is the Minister for Health's job is probably a rotten one!

Mr WILSON: I thought I had given a clear indication of that before. Some people in the media have suggested that I do not seem very interested in what I am doing. I am very interested in it, but the more interested one gets -

Mr Shave: We reckon you are going to pull the pin.

Mr WILSON: That is wishful thinking on the member's part. I am making the point that, moving from where we are to some simplistic solutions will not leave us any better off. The three elements in the system must come to some sort of agreement. I am hopeful that, with the contributions that are being made by more elements in the community, we will get closer to that outcome. Certainly, the most recent recommendations put forward by the Australian Private Hospitals Association are very welcome as positive contributions to the debate. Some quite promising solutions have been proposed.

Paragraph (5) of the motion is negative. We may all feel very strongly about Federal Ministers and Federal Governments, none more than I, but I do not see any point in censuring people from afar. They will not take any notice of it and it will not have any effect. We would be better served by getting on and using our energies towards achieving as many positive outcomes as we can. I do not object to paragraph (4) which urges the Premier to commission a public audit. In fact, we are engaged already in that exercise in the lead-up to the Special Premiers' Conference. We will continue with that. I do not object to paragraph (6) which requests the State Government to examine its priority of expenditure. It is already doing that. We did an exhaustive study of that in the lead-up to the new Budget. The percentage allocated is the best we could get. It matches up well with the situation existing in other States of Australia.

Finally, let us not pretend that these problems are faced only by this State. We have our particular problems because we have one-third of the continent servicing 10 per cent of the population which is scattered across a great distance with all of the associated problems. We need to get fair recognition for that from the people in Canberra.

#### *Amendment to Motion*

Mr WILSON: I move -

To delete all words after "accordingly" with a view to substituting the following -

- (a) Calls on the Government in the lead-up to the forthcoming Special Premiers' Conference to seek the support of other States in moving for full State control of the delivery of all health services;
- (b) supports the State Minister for Health's view that the Commonwealth practice of tied grants is blackmail and that Medicare is one of the worst examples of this;

- (c) calls on the Federal Government to examine options to provide incentives that will encourage more people to take out private health insurance for hospital services, while ensuring that Medicare continues to provide adequate health cover for socially disadvantaged people;
- (d) urges the Premier to commission a public audit of the cost burden on the Western Australian health system caused by the Federal Government's duplication and interference; and
- (e) requests the State Government to examine its priority of expenditure in all areas to recognise efficiencies that might be initiated to allow funds to be directed to the area of health delivery thus allowing the restoration of full health services.

**MR BRADSHAW** (Wellington) [3.22 pm]: It is good to see that in general we have some consensus in this Parliament today. I remember that when Medicare was introduced in 1983 the Opposition was accused of opposing it because of the Liberal Party ideology. I disagree, but at the time we were simply saying that Medicare had no future. We said that it would create problems, and those problems have now come home to roost. It is more of a socialist ideology and, just as communism is a failure, so too is Medicare a failure. The Opposition encourages the recognition by State and Commonwealth Ministers of Health that Medicare has many problems. The Federal Minister for Health, Brian Howe, was reported in *The West Australian* of 28 June as follows -

Health Minister Brian Howe revealed yesterday that Medicare was on the verge of collapse and needed immediate corrective surgery.

It is good that the Federal Minister in some way tried to overcome that difficulty with the co-payment plan, which has now run off the rails thanks to the nervous Nellies in the Labor Party.

**Mr Wilson:** It would not have helped our hospitals.

**Mr BRADSHAW:** No, but that could have been overcome as the Minister had intended. I could not foresee any problem arising with that proposal. In fact, the costs of Medicare have blown out considerably, and since the inception of Medicare the value of benefit payments has increased by 70 per cent from \$2.3 billion in 1984-85 to \$3.8 billion in 1989-90. Estimates indicate a likely increase in expenditure of 12 per cent a year during the next three years, reaching \$6.1 billion in 1993-94. We cannot afford to increase the costs at the present level.

In general the Opposition supports the amendment to the motion, but at the same time the Opposition believes that it should be possible for consumers to take out gap insurance. It is the fundamental right of people to insure themselves, and the Opposition will continue to oppose the removal of gap insurance, as it did when it was removed in 1984. People are allowed to insure their houses, boats, cars and so on in full, but for some reason the Government has some difficulty with allowing the people of Western Australia to have gap insurance for their health costs. The system in Australia is such that people on lower incomes are being disadvantaged the most by a system that was supposed to help them the most.

It is important to find ways of overcoming the problems that have arisen with Medicare; it is sick and it needs radical surgery. I hope that we can overcome those problems. The co-payment is one way of reducing the cost of Medicare and other services. I tried to obtain some statistics on the effect of the introduction of the co-payment by pensioners for their medicines. However, even though some figures were available, I was unable to quantify them. Certainly the number of prescriptions dispensed for pensioners since the introduction of the co-payment has reduced significantly. A reduction will also be achieved if a co-payment is required from people visiting the doctor. It is interesting to note that the Australian Medical Association supports this policy. An article in *The West Australian* on 27 May 1991 referred to the AMA's wanting the bulk billing abuse to be stopped. Even though the co-payment will probably hurt the pockets of doctors, they realise that the present situation of increasing costs cannot continue. In fact, the Government has been cutting back on funding even though this Parliament was sold a pup by the former Minister for Health, Barry Hodge, when he indicated in the debate on complementary legislation for the Medicare

system that if services rose by a significant amount the Federal Government would give more money to cover them. That has proved false, and the funding to the health system of Western Australia has been reduced ever since.

Amendment put and passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

Motion, as amended, put and passed.

## APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

### *Second Reading - Budget Debate*

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR KIERATH (Riverton) [3.29 pm]:** I was previously taking an overview of the Budget. I referred to the imbalance and the fact that this Government is in the red to the tune of \$396 million. I commented on the increasing debt, which my colleague, the member for Cottesloe, indicated had risen to almost \$10 billion. If we continue down that path of escalating debt, we shall be on the way to certain bankruptcy. I am appalled at the lack of interest in and concern by the Government at those alarming indicators. If the debt level continues to rise there can be only one result - an inability to service that debt. That means bankruptcy. The Government has shown no concern about that whatsoever. When the Opposition tries to deal with this matter in an intelligent way, the Government does not wish to debate it. Perhaps it cannot debate the subject because it is condemned by its own policies. The Opposition has been pleading with the Government to acknowledge what is happening and to do something to reverse the situation. In reply to a question about how far down that path we were, I said that we were 75 per cent on the way towards bankruptcy. If we do not change direction the inevitable consequence is that we shall become a third world country. We are becoming a third world country. We are ironically facing up to those infamous comments about becoming a banana republic that were made a few years ago.

Mr Minson: Sometimes I think he actually set out on that course of action.

**Mr KIERATH:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is dead right. We are seeing the chickens come home to roost; the consequences of the most appalling, disgraceful and incompetent policies this State has ever seen! If one takes an overall view of Federal and State Budgets one sees disastrous economic policies, high interest rates and no attempt to address the fundamentals - no genuine microeconomic reform. We have seen the designer labels and heard lip service instead of the real thing. We have seen no concerted attack on restrictive work practices. A company in this State made a concerted attack on those practices and all we saw was a campaign of hate and denigration by this Labor Government which caused a member of this House to move a certain motion the other day.

We have seen not the slightest attempt at labour market reform from this Labor Government. The Treasurer said she wanted to bring the might of the State and Federal Governments together against that company for having the gall to go outside the centralised industrial relations system. What did the Government do when its Minister went outside that system and agreed to a \$12 a week increase? There is no answer from the Government benches. I asked the Minister for Microeconomic Reform what action he would take regarding that matter. I received a nonsense answer. He confirmed that he is the Minister for virtually no portfolio, especially microeconomic reform. The worst aspect of the Federal Budget is compulsory superannuation. That is a compulsory Commonwealth payroll tax with, in effect, no threshold. It will grow to six per cent by the end of this decade on the Government's admission. Therefore a company that has currently a payroll in excess of \$2 million and is paying a six per cent payroll tax will, with the addition of this compulsory superannuation, be paying a 12 per cent payroll tax. Companies which avoid the State payroll tax will have to pay that six per cent Federal tax on every job in this country. How the Federal Government can pay lip service to the unemployment problem when it is doing that is beyond me. The Opposition predicted that 45 000 jobs would be lost in Australia as a consequence of the compulsory superannuation payment. Western Australia's share of that job loss is in the vicinity of 4 000 jobs.

I turn to the State Budget. This State has lost nearly \$1 billion in various disgraceful

business deals. We have seen huge increases in State charges despite assurances that that would not happen. This Government has the happy knack of imposing all its price increases prior to the Budget coming down and then saying that there is no bad news in that Budget. For instance, we saw a hefty rise in third party insurance recently without a "beg your pardon" or any explanation. This Government is financially incompetent. I have looked in the Budget for the microeconomic reform the Minister talked about but could not find it. I could not find incentive for businesses to employ more people. I found hardly any reference to unemployment. The Budget contains no attempt to estimate the level of unemployment or target programs to deal with it. The closest thing to that was the broad, but false, claim about the creation of 9 000 extra jobs made by the Minister for Housing who under close questioning admitted that those jobs are basically replacements and not new jobs.

In 1988, with this Government in power, Western Australia had the best employment level in Australia and New South Wales had the worst. In 1991, on the latest figures New South Wales is the best. We have said that State policies make a difference of about 2.5 per cent to the unemployment level. We have heard State Governments say that it is the fault of the Federal Government that so many people are unemployed. Certainly, a large proportion of the blame is due to the economic policies of the Federal Government. However, State Governments can have an effect on unemployment which has been quantified at 2.5 per cent. New South Wales went from the worst employment figure to the best in Australia and we have gone from the best to the worst. Therefore, we have a quantifiable aspect to look at. We have suggested previously to this Government that it look at New South Wales to find the policies it implemented to turn around its unemployment level. At present 93 900 Western Australians are looking for a job. That involves a lot of hurt and pain. We have seen no concerted attack in this Budget on unemployment levels, absolutely none! Where are they? Where are the packages? What programs have been put in place? Absolutely none!

I have not checked the TAFE budget but last year during rising unemployment it was cut in real terms by seven per cent. What is there in this Budget to help the creation of wealth? Where is the focus on that and productivity? Where are the payroll tax incentives? What about targeting unemployment? What about investment levels in Australia? It is interesting when one looks at the levels of investment and compares them to the level of unemployment to find an inverse relationship between the figures; as investment declines unemployment rises. That phenomenon occurs not only in Australia but also is well known around the world. It has a lot to do with the policies of Governments. What incentives does this Government give people to invest and produce? There are certainly none in this Budget.

It is interesting to compare the performance of our State with the other States, which are doing their best to attract industry. We should be doing the same. We should be asking how we can attract good, established companies to set up in this State to create jobs and produce goods. Do we offer land, payroll tax or stamp duty incentives? I have been through this Budget and can find none of those. Do we see a genuine program or outline for labour market reform in this Budget? None whatever! The term "microeconomic reform" is bandied about. The term should be "labour market reform". What have we seen with restrictive work practices? What have we seen happen in an attempt to remove the rorts from the waterfront? Nothing! We have a dispute at present which epitomises rorts on the waterfront - feather bedding, nest eggs, the whole shebang where people have privileged positions and extravagant conditions allocated to them. What is this Government doing about that? It should be helping the company involved remove restrictive work practices; the Minister for Microeconomic Reform should have assisted the company to make changes on the wharves. Instead we have seen the most vindictive, vicious, hateful and vengeful attack on the company for having the guts to get in and do something about restrictive work practices and the rorts that exist on the wharves.

This Government has said in the past that one of its main claims to credibility is its policy on pay rises, its "accords" at the Federal level. Do we see an attempt to focus pay rises on productivity, bearing in mind that productivity creates wealth? Without questioning the ownership of such wealth, productivity is all about creating wealth in Australia. Do we see a focus on that? No. Do we see a focus on enterprise agreements, which even the trade unions agree should exist, although they argue about the form they should take? Do we see leadership or initiatives to focus on enterprise agreements? We see none; the Minister for

Productivity and Labour Relations is stark, staring barren in that area. No initiatives, no features whatsoever in that vein. We must create wealth if we want to reduce our international debt. It is all about assets and liabilities. If one's liabilities reach the stage where they are far out of proportion with one's assets, something must be done about increasing the assets. Assets are increased by creating wealth and lifting production. It is interesting to see what the imposts have been on business and industry in this State. It is a little like the ship of State slowly sinking. When that happens, it is time to remove some of the restrictions, but this State Government has taken the attitude that that is the time to increase the burden. The result is that the ship sinks faster.

Nothing illustrates this attitude better than the ridiculous and stupid action of the Government's borrowing \$50 million to finance 3 000 redundancies. That says it all! It illustrates the Government's incompetent economic management. If the Government wants to borrow money, it should put it into an asset for the State; something to help the community, or some capital works. I do not say that is a panacea; it obviously is not. But if one borrows \$50 million, one would either put it into something worthwhile, or into something which will earn an income. One does not borrow money to remove 3 000 jobs. The Leader of the National Party commented that the people who are most likely to take advantage of those redundancies are the highly skilled or clever people; in many cases they will be the people who will be able to take their golden handshakes and find work elsewhere. Where this has happened in the past we find people in consultancies, sometimes on contracts with the same departments. They have adjusted to a different lifestyle in a very positive way. In effect the departments have been unable to manage without them; they have had to retrain people, so the net result is no net gain whatsoever.

Mr P.J. Smith: The offer may not necessarily be taken up. They can apply, but they may not be allowed to take it up.

Mr KIERATH: I do not think the member for Bunbury has understood what I have said. I ask him to reflect on the stupidity of that action.

This is the only chance I shall have to comment on workers' compensation, because it is an off Budget item. Last year about \$585 000 was taken out of the workers' compensation premium pool and given to the WorkSafe Australia campaign run by the Department of Occupational Health and Safety. That was disgraceful. The money was given to fund the advertising budget for that campaign.

[The member's time expired.]

**MR SHAVE** (Melville) [3.43 pm]: In commenting on this Budget I shall stress the sorts of problems facing people in this State as a result of this Government's actions. The Labor Party is doing exactly what it has always done. It has not been able to divorce itself from the socialist ethic. It wants to control everything from business to welfare and from building to health. It can get away with it in the good times when the taxes are coming in, inflation is running well and plenty of revenue is coming in. The Government can do what it likes and there is not much control. But when money becomes tight, taxpayers cannot afford the luxury of having a badly run business, and this is what we have in Western Australia at the moment.

Instead of addressing the major problems, the Government has introduced a whole range of cuts to minor spending. The taxpayer must pay. The Government jacks up third party motor vehicle insurance; it leaves the control of the hospitals and the Laundry and Linen Service in Government hands; and the maintenance of buildings continues to be undertaken by the Building Management Authority. Once again the Government believes it is able to run things better than the private sector.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Socialism in action!

Mr SHAVE: I knew the member for Cottesloe would not be able to resist the temptation to interject there. This Government cuts dollars from a whole range of areas. It cuts comparatively small amounts from people who provide invaluable services. It props up its insurance company, it props up its bank, and it continues to support the BMA, which is totally ineffective; its spending is an outrage. It is not the bureaucrats who work in the BMA who are affected; they receive their money. It is not the substandard politicians in this place who are affected; they receive their money too. It is the pensioners out on the streets who

suffer. I wonder what people like the member for Bunbury think when they sit in this House and watch \$70 million being pumped into the R & I Bank Ltd, and all this money being spent on various Government departments. They watch the BMA running inefficiently, yet at the same time many people in their electorates cannot get a decent meal. I wonder what members opposite think they are achieving by running the Government in this way.

Mr Kierath: May I say that there are many good people in the BMA.

Mr SHAVE: I am not disputing that.

Mr Kierath: However, they have been reorganised so many times that they have become frustrated. Those at the top are the only ones who seem to benefit. There are some good people, but the real problem is the way the BMA has been reorganised.

Mr SHAVE: The member for Riverton has no argument from me on a properly run Government instrumentality, but every Government run instrumentality should be run efficiently. Not one member of this House can tell me of any Government instrumentality which is run more efficiently than the private sector.

Mr Troy: Come on! There is a big difference. Some parts of the private sector are excellent, but some are appalling.

Mr C.J. Barnett: But they do not cost the taxpayer.

Mr SHAVE: The member for Swan Hills knows that there is no substitute for efficiency.

Mr P.J. Smith: I receive an equal number of complaints about inefficiencies in the private sector.

Mr Lewis: You are missing the point. The point is that the Government is not paying.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think the member for Melville can speak for himself.

Mr SHAVE: How can the member for Bunbury justify the fact that the Port Authority continues to be run by the Government, and these various agencies lose \$20 million or \$30 million a year, yet at the same time this Government cuts funding to groups like the Salvation Army?

Mr P.J. Smith: Which port authority loses that amount of money?

Mr SHAVE: The Port of Fremantle has been losing money for years.

Mr P.J. Smith: The Port of Bunbury has been making money.

Mr Troy: Do you say that all private companies are as good as you are?

Mr SHAVE: Some are better.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The bad ones go out of business; it does not cost the Government anything.

Mr SHAVE: What happens in the private sector? If a company goes broke it does not get paid money for staff to be made redundant. That is the reality. If I were to take on a hotel and did not make money, I would go broke.

Mr Troy: Employees in the private sector are not paid a redundancy package when a company is reorganised.

Mr SHAVE: I am talking about small businessmen. The member is twisting the situation.

Mr Troy: I am not.

Mr SHAVE: The member has referred to publicans. My point is that publicans who go broke end up with nothing. Their doors are closed; they have nothing.

Mr Troy: What would you say about employees of a private sector company?

Mr SHAVE: If a private sector company goes broke, how can it pay out money when it has no money?

As I asked the member for Bunbury earlier without getting an answer, with the recession and the ever-increasing unemployment rate how can the Government justify cutting funds to

groups such as the Salvation Army? The Government is aware that the Salvation Army runs efficiently; it does not dispute that. Yet the Government continues - because of its crazy ideology - to prop up a State Bank which is an admission in effect that it does not have the capacity to operate efficiently. The Government pumps taxpayers' money into that bank instead of sending the bank to the marketplace. The public would not be disadvantaged if that happened. Why should it be? Dozens of banks provide a facility -

Mr Troy: The R & I Bank Ltd performs in the same way as private sector banks; they all suffer the same problem.

Mr SHAVE: Not quite. Private sector banks do not have big brother to prop them up with taxpayers' and pensioners' money. That is inexcusable.

Mr P.J. Smith: They could go to the Government for assistance.

Mr SHAVE: Which private bank has the Government funded?

Mr P.J. Smith: The Teachers Credit Society -

Mr SHAVE: We know why Rothwells and the Teachers Credit Society went to the Government.

Mr P.J. Smith: What about Swan Building Society? The Permanent Building Society may end up in that situation.

Mr Troy: The member for Melville does not play with a straight bat.

Mr SHAVE: The member for Swan Hills does not listen to what I say. He knows that I am right, but because he has been raised on the big brother ideology he cannot divorce himself from it

Mr Troy: The member should be informed on the shortcomings of private enterprise.

Mr SHAVE: Let us look at what has been achieved in the past eight years under a Labor Government. The Government has climbed into bed with all the crooks in the town: It has prostituted the taxpayers' money; Government members know that. After eight years under a Labor Government the public is sick of being in pain while queuing up for surgery; the homeless are tired of being on a four year waiting list for Homeswest housing. How long do people wait in the member for Bunbury's electorate?

Mr P.J. Smith: Not for four years.

Mr SHAVE: How long do they wait?

Mr P.J. Smith: Two years.

Mr SHAVE: They must be receiving preferential treatment because in every other area people receive a standard letter. I will give examples of that. I will indicate how some people are bearing up, the people that Government members purport to represent. After eight years under a Labor Government more than 11 per cent of the Western Australian work force is unemployed; they are on the scrap heap. Members opposite call that social justice!

Mr Troy: What did we have eight years ago - something more than 11 per cent!

Mr SHAVE: Is the member for Swan Hills aware that at one stage earlier this year the children at a school in my electorate had to take umbrellas into the classroom to keep off the rain? Is that social justice or is it socialism?

Mr Troy: Are your figures on unemployment correct?

Mr SHAVE: Under the previous Liberal Government children in the Labor areas of Willagee did not need to carry umbrellas into the classroom.

Mr Troy: I would like to take the member to visit a school in my area, a school which we inherited in 1983.

Mr SHAVE: Did the children take umbrellas into the classroom then?

Mr Troy: They almost had no roof over their heads.

Mr SHAVE: Transportable classrooms are still in place.

Let us consider refugees and single, homeless men, and one parent centres. It is incredible that any Government at this time of high unemployment -



Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: Members may say that I am a hypocrite, but the difference between the member for Swan Hills and me is that I believe in social justice. I do not believe in socialism. As the member for Perth said yesterday, at a time when the member for Swan Hills was a Minister the crooked deals were sold to Caucus on the basis of proper socialism. Was the member for Swan Hills a Minister at that time, and did he try to sell that to the backbenchers? No wonder the member for Perth had a gutful.

Mr Court: They told him that it was socialism in action.

Mr SHAVE: Yes, that is what they said. They said, "Trust us." Last night I saw a program on television which featured a Mr Hoeneker - another of the Government's mates. We saw his indoor swimming pool. Members can laugh!

Mr Troy: That sounds like bar talk.

Mr SHAVE: No.

Mr Clarko: The pool looked like one which could accommodate a town of two million people but it was at his holiday house.

Mr SHAVE: Yes, and he is a good socialist. I wonder how the member for Perth felt if he saw that program last night.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member should not bring the Chair into debate, when I cannot reply.

Mr SHAVE: I apologise for that, Mr Deputy Speaker. You are one of the few people on that side of the House who has any honour. At least you have the courage of your convictions; you are not like the Minister for the Environment. I will come to him in a moment.

It is unacceptable that any Government close one parent centres at a time of rising unemployment and when people need support thereby causing emotional distress for single parents. I refer now to a letter to me which outlines how out of touch and hypocritical is the Government. The letter is from Stephanie Hearn who lives at 49 Rinaldo Crescent, Coolbellup. It is dated 4 September, 1991. The member for Swan Hills should not leave the Chamber. This is obviously starting to hurt. The member does not want to listen because he is hurting. The letter reads -

Dear Mr Doug Shave

My name is Stephanie Hearn. I am a single parent. I have been a client at the one parent centre in Fremantle for six years. I recently got the sad news our centre is closing down in late October. I believe this decision was made from the government budget cuts and not the service the centre provides for the single parents. It cost \$50 000 a year for the upkeep of the centre . . .

There is 8 resource workers, 2 social workers, 1 secretary, 1 full time childcare worker, which I have grown to respect them as a friend and not think about them as someone who is just doing their job. Like a lot of government agency I have been to in the past, they really understand you as single parent. I think they have been trained in that area to understand us that much. The service provides childcare for 0-6 years which I feel is important to separate children from their parents which is hard when the child only has 1 person they know in their world. It gives the child independence and social skills so they can adjust when they start school or other activities in their life childcare is only a minor service the centre offers. There is courses which is good for learning skills and confidence for our future. Such as self-esteem . . . adult learning skills . . . I couldn't do these course any where else and get as far as I have today, people think I am stupid because I have a language problem. I am damaged because I come from a bad father who treated me wrong the course help me heal the pain and come more stronger.

The resource workers provide a good caring service with the training and support. I have been going through a crisis the first 5 years of being a member of the centre. I am still need the centre to get my feet back on the ground. . . they refer me to speech therapy . . . adult literacy . . . therapy for my son . . . I couldn't live through the crises and survive without help.

... I believe the centre is helping single families get a second chance in life and in time get of the sole pension ...

That is a classic example someone in the member for Cockburn's electorate who attends one of these centres.

Mr Thomas: How many of those services were available in 1983? How many are now available through family centres, which were not even thought of when Mr Shave's party was in Government?

Mr SHAVE: After \$70 million was pumped into the R & I Bank Ltd what was the member's reaction when his colleagues on the front bench closed this centre by not providing \$50 000?

Dr Gallop: If the \$70 million had not been pumped in the R & I Bank - to use the member's expression - that money would not have been available for other things, so it is a silly question.

Mr SHAVE: I know which other things.

Dr Gallop: It is a totally separate allocation.

Mr SHAVE: Why was it necessary to pump \$70 million into the R & I Bank?

Dr Gallop: It has been well answered by the Premier. Mr Shave should look at the *Hansard* record.

Mr SHAVE: This Government, over a period, has managed to substantially reduce the living standards of most Western Australians.

Mr Thomas: That is not so.

Mr SHAVE: Is Mr Thomas saying that the living standards of most Western Australians have increased in the last eight years?

Mr Thomas: Yes.

Mr SHAVE: Mr Thomas implied that this centre did not exist in 1983.

Mr Thomas: I asked how many services that are available through that agency were available in 1983. I further asked how many services are available elsewhere through family centres.

Mr SHAVE: Let us talk about this centre, because the member has raised the issue. An article in a local newspaper concerning the announcement of the closure of the centre says -

Emotions were running high down at the One Parent Centre in East Fremantle last week.

The announcement the centre has become a victim of budget cuts and is set to close, has angered and dismayed many parents who use the facility.

... Single parent Amanda Weldon said the decision was unbelievable and the social cost to the community would be great.

Currently the only one of its kind in WA, she said the centre had been running for 15 years and currently provided support for around 300 sole parents.

The centre has been operating for 15 years. Is Mr Thomas saying that because after 1983 some of the services in that centre were improved and increased it now justifies the Government's chopping its head off?

Mr Thomas: Not at all. The member must understand that those agencies provide services that come through different programs. Those services are also available through other programs such as family centres which provide services not only to single parent families but also to all families in that area.

Mr SHAVE: The member for Cockburn and the Treasurer would have done the people of Western Australia a much greater service if the Budget speech had addressed the major problems that are facing this State. The Treasurer should have addressed those areas that have been running inefficiently for far too long such as the R & I Bank, hospital workers and linen services, and the Building Management Authority. Does the member think they are run efficiently?

Mr Thomas: Yes. The Government runs most of its services very efficiently and it adjusts them marginally.

Mr SHAVE: The Government has also broken commitments to the Police Force. An article in *The West Australian* on 30 August states -

The State Government will break a commitment to provide an extra 1000 police over a four-year period . . . Police Minister Graham Edwards admitted last night that the 250 recruits needed to fulfil the promise by June 30 next year could not be provided. But he said the Government eventually would provide the 1000 officers.

That is a great commitment but we could wait three, five or 10 years for it. What have some Ministers had to say about the way the Government was going and about its business activities? A report in *The West Australian* on 30 August 1991 states -

In May 1988, Micro-Economic Reform Minister Geoff Gallop said profits which flowed from WA Inc would increase Government revenue and improve a range of public services.

I wonder when that little package was sold to the Caucus whether those particular comments were referred to. I would be interested to know whether the Minister for the Environment was one of the salesmen, and when he was doing the selling job whether the Caucus members might have been convinced by taking a drive down to Peppermint Grove to look at Holmes a Court's property or a drive down South Western Highway to look at the Heytesbury Stud Pty Ltd. It is a beautiful property. Do members of the Government know what Mr Holmes a Court used to do? I know a little about what he used to do because my wife's family are farming people and live near the Heytesbury Stud. Mr Holmes a Court wanted to have the best looking property on the highway, so when he was putting in new fence posts and while his workers were painting them, he would have the iron pickets - which were worth about \$8.50 each - pulled from the ground and taken to the Byford dump. My father-in-law who has been a farmer in that area for 35 years would see those posts being taken to the dump and would immediately drive to the dump and pick them up. I asked why he did not just ring Mr Holmes a Court and ask him to drop them outside his back gate so my father-in-law could pick them up from there. I told my father-in-law he could then send a letter of thanks to the taxpayers of Western Australia for those iron pickets.

Mr Marlborough: That is probably why he did not do it.

Mr SHAVE: The taxpayers paid for those posts out of the \$850 million that was paid to Heytesbury Holdings Pty Ltd. The member for Peel knows that and he does not like to hear it. He knows that a single parents' centre was closed because large amounts of money went into Mr Holmes a Court's pocket, to which the Government agreed. Did the member for Peel object to that? I have not received an answer from the member for Peel. Normally the member for Peel interjects well.

Mr Marlborough: I said that is my business.

Mr SHAVE: Of course it is the member for Peel's business because he has to live with that decision, that is if his conscience finally gets to him. What about the member for Bunbury? He usually interjects when I am talking about these issues and calls me a hypocrite. Am I a hypocrite on this issue or a ratbag like the Premier said, or is the member for Bunbury a hypocrite for sitting there and not doing anything about his mates giving money to Connell, Bond and Holmes a Court? It was obscene! What was the Minister for the Environment doing at that time?

Mr Pearce: If I could get a word in I would ask the member what was the Government's motivation in enriching Mr Holmes a Court.

Mr SHAVE: The Government pulled Mr Holmes a Court out of bankruptcy because he would not have been able to go to any other businessmen in Perth and sell \$791 million worth of assets after the share market crash. Mr Holmes a Court would probably have received only \$300 million for those assets if he could find a buyer. The Government saved him from bankruptcy. I am glad to see that the Minister for Microeconomic Reform is back in the Chamber because I have a few quotes for him. A newspaper article from 30 August 1991 stated -

Dr Gallop also said in 1988 that the bigger role being played in the market by the

State Government Insurance Commission would enable the Government to raise more money for West Australians.

The Minister certainly did that and the money was given to Mr Holmes a Court. The article also stated -

But in the next few weeks Dr Gallop will put to Parliament legislation aimed at allowing the Government to pump \$80 million into the SGIC's subsidiary, the State Government Insurance Office.

Was the Minister for Microeconomic Reform carrying out these stinking deals and was he, at the same time, trying to turn the backbenchers into pure socialists? We have heard that he was.

Dr Gallop: To start with, I was not the Minister at the time. We were proud on this side.

Mr SHAVE: Of course the Minister for Microeconomic Reform supported those moves. He also said in 1988 that there was a bigger role for the socialist ethos in Western Australia.

Dr Gallop: Of course we did.

Mr SHAVE: How does the Minister feel about what is happening in Russia now as all of the statues are being pulled down? He does not like it.

Dr Gallop: You are an idiot.

Mr SHAVE: I am not an idiot.

Dr Gallop: We have never supported that system.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Of course you did.

Dr Gallop: Never has the Labor Party supported that system. Some of your people in the past have been accused of supporting fascism.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I understand the heat in this debate but perhaps the debate would be assisted if the member for Melville - as he has done at various times, but he has departed from that - addressed his remarks to the Chair rather than to individual members. If he does that it will not lead to the sorts of arguments which have been developing. I would ask members to tone down their responses and interjections so the member can be heard. By the same token I ask the member for Melville to direct his remarks to the Chair.

Mr SHAVE: I am pleased to see that I have pricked the consciences of the members of the other side because I did not think that they had any. It was also stated in a newspaper article in *The West Australian* on 30 August that Dr Gallop's confidence in WA Inc was also shared by the Minister for the Environment, Bob Pearce - another super salesman - who told the Legislative Assembly in October 1988 that the Government's increased role in the private sector had enabled WA to enjoy a level of prosperity unparalleled anywhere in Australia.

Mr Pearce: That certainly is true because we were putting between \$150 million and \$200 million per annum into making those things occur.

Mr SHAVE: Before motor mouth runs out of words I will remind him of what he was also reported as saying in 1988 -

Those people who find that when their children go to school that the class sizes will be smaller -

That is right because schools are closing down -

- those who find they are enjoying the highest level of health care anywhere in the Western world at a reasonable charge, those people who drive on roads which are the envy of the world . . . do so because of the Government's entrepreneurial approach.

Mr Pearce: You cannot deny the truth of all those things.

Mr SHAVE: I cannot disagree that people are receiving good health care, the only problem is that they cannot get into the hospitals. I now refer to a letter I received.

Mrs Watkins: Another letter!

Mr SHAVE: Yes, another letter.

Mrs Beggs: Every speech he makes is about his letters.

Mr SHAVE: What some members opposite should do is talk to the ordinary people.

Dr Gallop: They do.

Mr SHAVE: They do not. The Minister for Microeconomic Reform is so far removed from the ordinary people that he should get into a spaceship! People in my electorate would not understand him.

Dr Gallop: I used to represent the people in the Hilton area when I was on the Fremantle council and they loved me. You should ask them.

Mr SHAVE: That is why they voted for me and kicked out the Minister's mate. He did some good PR work for me!

Mr Pearce: We are not seeking preselection for other seats. None of us is looking for safe seats.

Mr SHAVE: Because there is none. The Minister for the Environment's three per cent margin is history. He is gone.

Mr Pearce: It is greater than your percentage. I am not looking for a safer seat than I have. I was not one of those persons enviably casting eyes at the member for South Perth.

Mr SHAVE: I refer now to a letter from Mr David Lewis of the Fremantle Hospital dated 5 September 1991.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: I have more people coming to see me from the Cockburn electorate than I do from my own electorate.

Mr Pearce: That means that your electors do not think much of you. They are all going to see Labor Party members and upper House members.

Mr SHAVE: That is debatable.

Mr Pearce: We will see how many votes you get out of the Cockburn electorate when the time comes.

Mr SHAVE: I will give the Minister for the Environment 50 per cent for that - he has had a bad hour. The letter from Mr Lewis reads -

I refer to my previous correspondence of September 2, 1991 regarding a constituent, Mr Eric Machin of 33 Loris Way, Kardinya. As I advised you my staff were to visit and review Mr Machin and this has been undertaken.

I am advised that although Mr Machin does experience considerable pain in his hip on standing and walking, his level of disability is not severe. He has been issued with one pair of elbow crutches to aid mobility but no other aids or equipment are required. As there is no evidence that his personal circumstances and clinical condition is more urgent than that of other patients on the waiting list for hip surgery -

That is probably right -

- we are therefore still unable to advance his name further on the waiting list.

If I may be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

I will read the letter I received from Mr Machin whom I have met. He is a fine gentleman and he told me he used to vote for the Labor Party. He wrote -

I am an aged pensioner. I have Osteo Arthritis in my left hip & need a hip joint replacement. I am in great pain, it keeps me awake at nights, & during the day I get a lot of pain, & get knife like stabs of pain which make me nearly drop and lose my balance. A couple of months ago one of these stabs was so severe, that I fell & cracked 2 ribs and chipped my knee cap. I live alone as my wife died 3½ years ago. I have also a heart condition & am supposed to walk every day for exercise which of course is out of the question now.

Of course, no-one can walk if his legs are not working. To continue -

I have been to Fremantle Hospital & have seen the registrar at the orthopaedic clinic

who has put me down on the waiting list for a hip replacement, but told me I will have to wait between 1 and 3 years to have it.

Mrs Watkins: Have you contacted his doctor to have him reassessed?

Mr SHAVE: I have written to the registrar of the hospital.

Mrs Watkins: I am talking about his doctor, because he would have some control over the waiting list.

Mr Pearce: The member for Wanneroo is telling you how to handle your electorate work in a better way.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: If members opposite listen to the letter I am reading they may find that some of the Government's employees, via the registrar, have interviewed him. If members opposite are saying that those people are not capable of making an assessment they should get rid of them. The letter concludes -

I am disgusted with the system, it seems to me that the elderly people are treated as second class citizens these days. I am house bound now so goodness knows what I will be like in 1 to 3 years time. Can you help me in any way.

I come back to the Minister for the Environment who has been reported as saying that Western Australians enjoy the highest level of health care of the people in any other country in the western world.

Mr Pearce: That is simply the truth. We do have the highest level of health care of any other country in the western world. Even the Commonwealth Grants Commission pointed out that per capita this State spends more on health than any other State in Australia. That is why we are penalised when it comes to Commonwealth grants coming our way. It is a simple fact which you may not like. It is unfortunate that our high level of health care is incapable of providing everything that people want. In any other country or State your Mr Machin would be in a worse position. You can dispute that if you like.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: Government Ministers can twist the system any way they like, but not one of them can tell this Parliament that the health system in this State is better now than it was in 1983.

Mr Pearce: It is better now than it was in 1983. In 1983 the Liberal Government would not put a doctor into the Armadale Hospital. People would take their children with broken arms to that hospital for emergency treatment and they would be sent to Royal Perth Hospital and would have to wait for hours.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister knows that the health system is breaking down because of the Government's stupid socialist ideology. The Minister's Federal counterpart, Whitlam, said in 1975 that we would have free health; no-one would pay for health cover - it would all come out of the sky! What members opposite are doing is directly attacking the health and welfare of aged people in this State who cannot afford health cover. If Government Ministers disagree with that they are in conflict with their own Health Minister. I have sat in this place for two years and I have watched the Minister for Health grapple with his conscience and try to defend Medicare knowing that it is a failure; that it will not work; that the system must be changed; and knowing that he must do something about it, but still members opposite sit in this place and defend socialist attitudes. That is all it is. They have tried to destroy the private health system. The sooner they do what their counterparts in Eastern Europe have done and get their socialistic ideals out of their head, the better off this country will be.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Trenorden.

*House adjourned at 4.29 pm*

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## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## TAFE - MIDLAND REGIONAL COLLEGE OF TAFE

*Second Semester Art Class Closures - Forrestfield TAFE Centre Student Placings*

1032. Mr TUBBY to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many second semester art classes have been cut at the Midland College of Technical and Further Education?
- (2)
  - (a) When the Forrestfield Technical School was closed at the end of 1990, were the students guaranteed places at Midland;
  - (b) if so, what has occurred to break this commitment?
- (3) What was the total number of art course subjects and total hours offered in art courses at Midland for each semester in each of the following years -
  - (a) 1986;
  - (b) 1987;
  - (c) 1988;
  - (d) 1989;
  - (e) 1990;
  - (f) 1991?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Second semester art classes at Midland College of TAFE have been reduced by 20 teaching hours per week, or approximately seven classes.
- (2)
  - (a) Yes.
  - (b) This commitment has not been broken. Any student formerly at Forrestfield Technical School who applied for a place at Midland College of TAFE was offered one.
- (3)
 

	No of Subjects	Total student enrolled hours
(a) 1986	44	92 256
(b) 1987	38	92 016
(c) 1988		
Semester 1	12	44 460
*Semester 2	27	38 032
(d) 1989		
Semester 1	15	35 785
*Semester 2	33	32 317
(e) 1990		
Semester 1	22	36 890
*Semester 2	36	36 108
(f) 1991		
Semester 1	51	60 197
*Semester 2	53	55 000 (estimated)

Note 1: Due to course structure changes from year to semester course delivery, data on subjects offered and student enrolled hours for 1986 and 1987 are available on a yearly basis only.

Note 2: Yearly fluctuations:  
1987-88

In 1988 a revised version of the certificate of art and design replaced the certificate/diploma in art studies. All subjects were semesterised and geared to 'professional' rather than 'hobby' students. Although there were approximately the same number of subjects offered in 1988 compared to 1987, student enrolled hours fell owing to less 'hobby' students enrolling in subjects.

1988-89

In 1989 Midland College moved to its new site in Lloyd Street. Student enrolled hours decreased as classes were rationalised to encourage 'professional' rather than 'hobby' students.

1990-91

In 1990, the Forrestfield Technical Centre which offered many of the art and design subjects was closed. All students were offered places at Midland.

Note 3: Second semester figures for subjects are higher than first semester because when subjects are taught in both first and second semester, they appear as second semester subjects only.

## SECONDARY EDUCATION AUTHORITY - TERTIARY ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

### *Double Marker System Abolition*

1114. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Secondary Education Authority proposed the abolition of the Tertiary Entrance Examination marking system in which exams are graded and checked by two independent markers for certain subjects?
- (2) If so, what are the authority's reasons for this decision to remove the safeguard of a second marker?
- (3) Does the Minister support the authority's decision?
- (4) If yes, what assurances can the Minister give students that the removal of the second marker will not impact upon the quality and accuracy of marking, given that in previous years up to one-third of examination papers have had to be adjusted by the two markers because of scoring differences?
- (5) What procedures will be put in place to provide students with a second opinion if they request their paper to be re-marked?
- (6) Can the Minister assure students that if they request a re-mark there will be sufficient resources to expedite the procedure as quickly as possible?
- (7) What reaction has the Minister received from school teachers, parents and academics over the authority's proposal with a view to retaining the current two-marker system?
- (8) If not, why not?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Essay-type answers in all papers, including those subjects where essays comprise the whole paper, will continue to be double marked. For subjects with a short answer component these components will be single marked, but with significant proportions of second marking of selected subjects by specially appointed supervisory examiners and the use of additional recording checks.
- (2) The authority is following the example set in South Australia and New South Wales where single marking has been used successfully for several years. It is a viable organisational procedure and it is also a means of reducing operating costs.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Indicated in (1) above.
- (5) Marks checks will continue to be made available to students as in previous years.
- (6) A re-mark of an answer paper has not been available for some years. Students will continue to be able to request a marks check. This involves a check to see that the student has been given credit for each question attempted,



marking procedures have been followed and there are no computational errors in compiling the score.

(7)-(8)

Prior to schools and other interested parties receiving a written explanation from the Secondary Education Authority there was some negative reaction. The explanation clarified the single marking procedures and safeguards and since then there has been very little comment.

#### SCHOOLS - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

##### *Minor Works Program - Budget Allocation 1991-92*

1118. Mr COWAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Can the Minister give an assurance that an allocation will be made in the 1991-92 budget for the minor works program in State schools?
- (2) What was the allocation for minor works in -
  - (a) 1989-90;
  - (b) 1990-91?
- (3) Will an individual allocation for minor works be made to each school for 1991-92?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) \$5 070 000.  
(b) \$2 425 100.
- (3) Yes.

#### EDUCATION MINISTRY - OVERSEAS STUDENTS

##### *Secondary and Post Secondary Levels*

1122. Mr TUBBY to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the total number of overseas students studying at -
  - (a) secondary level;
  - (b) post secondary level in Western Australia?
- (2) What is the estimated value of these students to the economy of Western Australia?
- (3) Are any Western Australian students being denied places at educational institutions due to the number of overseas students?
- (4) What procedures are there in place at State secondary schools to ensure that all enrolled students are the children of Australian citizens or those holding appropriate visas?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) (a) There are 1 301 full fee paying secondary students as at 15 February 1991. Tuart and Canning Colleges accommodated 339 of these students, the balance being enrolled in non-Government schools and colleges and institutions run by private providers.  
(b) In semester 1, 1991, there were 4 695 full fee paying overseas post-secondary students studying in Western Australia. They were working towards internationally recognised university degrees and postgraduate qualifications; technical and further education - polytechnic - diplomas; high school tertiary entrance, certificate of secondary education and ELICOS certification. Many of these students were enrolled in short courses, others in year long courses. A comparable intake occurs in semester 2.
- (2) In June 1991 the reported monetary value was approximately \$80 million per annum - Statement on Trade Strategy, Government of WA, June 1991.

- (3) No. In some instances the presence of overseas students makes possible the offering of classes to local students which would not have been viable without the overseas students.
- (4) Current Ministry of Education policy is not to enrol full fee overseas students in Government schools. Schools are issued with guidelines for enrolling dependants of temporary residents and advice to schools is available from the education section of the operations branch, Central Office of the Ministry of Education.

#### TAFE - RESTRUCTURE PLANS

1140. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister prepared to table the total plan for the restructuring of the Technical and Further Education system?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If yes, when will the Minister do so?
- (4) Is the TAFE restructuring process being implemented according to a time-plan?
- (5) If yes, will the Minister table the time-plan for the restructuring process?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) Have staff of TAFE not yet received the three per cent increase in salaries which has already been given to the Education Ministry's primary and secondary teachers?
- (8) If so, can the Minister indicate to the House when TAFE staff will be awarded a three per cent increase in their salaries?
- (9) Has the Chief Executive Officer of TAFE spent time overseas in recent months?
- (10) If yes, what proportion of the past year has the Chief Executive Officer spent overseas?
- (11) Has this time overseas been for private or work purposes?
- (12) Does TAFE conduct comprehensive internal reviews?
- (13) If yes, when was the last one carried out and when is the next one due?
- (14) If not, why not?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Yes. The planned restructure of the Department of TAFE has been disseminated to TAFE staff on several occasions.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Immediately.
- (4) The restructure is ongoing in consultation with the State School Teachers Union. Progress is contingent upon agreements being reached with the union which are sustainable under the structural efficiency principles before the Industrial Relations Commission.
- (5)-(6) As stated, the progress of the restructure is contingent upon agreements being reached with the union. This precludes the setting of a fixed step by step time line.
- (7) TAFE lecturers have already received both of the three per cent pay increases available through the 1990 memorandum of agreement associated with the structural efficiency principle and negotiations are continuing under the provisions of Accord Mark VI.
- (8) Not applicable.

- (9) Yes.
  - (10) The Chief Executive Officer has spent a total of 19 working days overseas in the past 12 months.
  - (11) For work purposes.
  - (12) Yes.
  - (13) These are ongoing.
  - (14) Not applicable.
- [See paper No 574.]

**TAFE - LEEDERVILLE TAFE CAMPUS**

*Architecture Drafting Studies Department - Part Time Evening Classes*

1160. Mr TUBBY to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Department of Architecture Drafting Studies at Leederville Technical and Further Education campus refusing to run two evening classes for part time students trying to complete their Associate Diploma in Architecture?
- (2) Were these students previously advised by the department head to complete their final year's study on a part time basis over two years so that they could gain industry experience?
- (3) Are these students being further penalised by their exclusion from day classes because full time students have priority?
- (4) What action does the Minister intend taking to ensure these students are able to complete their courses within the two year time frame negotiated with the college?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.
- (4) All students who enrol in part time classes in accordance with the recommended schedule of subjects and who pass each subject at first attempt, will complete their course within the negotiated course time frame.

**STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE - MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE**

*Existing and New Policy Holders*

1193. Mr KIERATH to the Minister assisting the Treasurer:

- (1) Is it the policy of the State Government Insurance Office to quote lower car insurance premiums for potential new policy holders than for existing policy holders?
- (2) What insurance premium would an existing policy holder, on a 60 per cent no claim bonus and no claim bonus protection, pay for insuring a vehicle for \$18 000?
- (3) Would a new policy holder, under the same conditions, pay any less for insuring a vehicle for the same amount?
- (4) If so, what would that amount be, and how can it be justified?
- (5) What benefits are there for existing clients to remain insured with the SGIO?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) No, the SGIO does not have such a policy. From time to time the SGIO, as a marketing strategy, offers incentives to attract new business.
- (2)-(4) From the information supplied it is not possible to provide the requested quote.

- (5) SGIO provides all policy holders generous terms and conditions in comparison with competitors; a Statewide claims service; choice of recommended repairers; no claim bonus protection; 24 hour claims service and many other benefits associated with being a WA based insurer.

#### SPORT AND RECREATION - CAPITAL WORKS FUNDING

##### *Local Sporting Group Applications*

1207. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Is any money available this financial year for local sporting groups to apply for capital works funding?
- (2) Is so, how much and when can these clubs and associations apply?
- (3) From the allocation this year how much is already committed to projects?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Yes, through the community sporting and recreation facilities fund.
- (2)-(3) The Minister for Sport and Recreation will be making an announcement on the CSRFF in the near future.

#### TRADING HOURS - FRIDAY NIGHT TRADING

1242. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) When is it proposed that the Government will respond to industry requests and allow Friday night trading as an alternative to Thursday nights in the central city area?
- (2) If the Government is not going to approve such a change, why not?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1)-(2) This matter is currently being examined by the Retail Shops Advisory Committee which is consulting with interested parties before making a recommendation to Government. It is expected this will occur before 31 October 1991.

#### PRODUCTIVITY AND LABOUR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - MORNING WORKSHOP

##### *Cost*

1256. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) In regard to a morning workshop being held on 19 September 1991 and being organised by the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations, will the Minister advise the total cost of the workshop?
- (2) What is the total cost for the Don Edgar breakfast immediately prior to the morning workshop?
- (3) Is the speaker, Don Edgar, being paid for his services?
- (4) What are the arrangements and costs of his travel?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) The total cost of the workshop being held from 9.00 am to 10.30 am on 19 September 1991 is \$372.
- (2) The total expenditure on the Don Edgar breakfast is \$5 117. The revenue generated from registrations is \$4 625. The net cost is therefore \$492.
- (3) No.
- (4) Dr Edgar is flying on an Apex economy return fare from Melbourne at a cost of \$660, which is being shared between the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations and Murdoch University, where Dr Edgar is presenting the Walter Murdoch Lecture. The Department of Productivity and Labour

Relations' share of the cost of the return air fare is \$165. The cost of his accommodation for one night is \$97, and this is also being met by the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations.

# FISHING - FISHERIES REVIEW

## *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Report*

1266. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Fisheries :

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the recent release of a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reviewing fisheries in member countries?
- (2) What response does the Western Australian Fisheries Department intend to make to this report?
- (3) What does the Minister intend to do to improve the marketing of Western Australian fish exports?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

(1)-(2)

I am aware of a London article in *The West Australian* of 4 September 1991 commenting upon an OECD report reviewing fisheries in member countries. However, D.A. Books (Aust) Pty Ltd of Victoria, which is the officially designated bookshop for the distribution of OECD publications, is unaware of the report. The bookshop is making inquiries to ascertain when it will receive copies. The Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy has not yet received a copy.

- (3) Western Australia exports most of its highly valued seafoods, such as rock lobster and prawns. The processing sector maintains a very efficient system of market intelligence and is quick to respond to changing situations. Whilst Japan and the USA are the major markets for Western Australian seafoods, the industry continues to seek and develop markets in other countries.

# CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTRY - PRIVATE HOME SEARCHES

## *Shelly Home Search*

1273. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Further to question on notice 1020 of 1991, did the officer from the ministry have any warrant or authority to search the premises?
- (2) If the warrant was executed by the police, did that warrant empower the officer from the ministry to participate in the search?
- (3) As the Minister's reply stated that an officer of the ministry was present at the request of the fraud squad to identify property, does it therefore follow that this request empowered the officer from the ministry to conduct her own search in a room that was unattended by the police?
- (4) What authority would enable the officer from the ministry to conduct a search on her own, in premises, without the presence of the police?
- (5) As under section 19 of the Consumer Affairs Act, an officer of the ministry is required to show written authorisation prior to entry, was such written authorisation shown by the officer to the occupier of the premises concerned?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) Has the officer concerned conducted a search in different rooms from that of the police?
- (8) Is it policy to allow a single officer to conduct a search?
- (9) As there have been further claims that some money disappeared during the search, what action will the Minister take to ensure that a similar situation will not arise in the future?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) The officer was present at the request of the police and as such did not require a warrant.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes, if requested by police.
- (4) A search warrant obtained by the officer under the provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act. In this case not applicable as the police had a warrant.
- (5) No.
- (6) Not applicable in this case as the warrant was not taken out under the Consumer Affairs Act. The officer was present at the request of police officers who had obtained their own search warrant under the provisions of the Criminal Code.
- (7) Yes, at the direction of the police and in company with the occupant.
- (8) In the case of a warrant under the Consumer Affairs Act it is policy for at least two officers to be present.
- (9) There has never been any allegation to the ministry that the officer was concerned in any way with the disappearance of any money as she was at all times in company with the occupant who was subsequently convicted of the offence to which the search warrant related. Accordingly there is no need for the ministry to consider any action or change to its existing procedures.

#### TREES - JARRAH LOG, SHANNON AREA

##### *Bunnings Ltd Sale*

1307. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for the Environment:

In relation to the 350 year-old jarrah tree with bird's eye markings that was found by a Bunnings tree feller in the Shannon area, and reported in *The West Australian* of 10 September 1991, as having been sold by Bunnings to a Yallingup craftsman for \$8 000 -

- (a) why was the jarrah log not preserved for the future heritage of Western Australia;
- (b) who made the decision to sell the log;
- (c) on what basis was the decision made;
- (d) was the decision to sell the log correct;
- (e) what royalty per cubic metre did Bunnings pay for the jarrah log?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (a) The jarrah log was produced from a tree harvested as part of normal operations in Sutton block. The distinctive feature of the wood would not have been apparent until the tree was felled and the log processed.
- (b) The log was not sold. I understand the sawn timber cut out of the log by Bunnings was sold to the craftsman.
- (c) Not known.
- (d) Presumably.
- (e) \$20.38 per tonne - equivalent to \$25.27 per cubic metre.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

##### SWIMMING POOLS - ISOLATION FENCING

339. Mr CLARKO to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Have surveys in Western Australia indicated that, where there are homes with

swimming pools that have or are exposed to preschool age children, 97 per cent have isolation fencing?

- (2) If the Minister does not know what this percentage is will he undertake to ascertain this figure and make it public?
- (3) Why has the Minister announced that the Government proposes shortly to introduce a regulation that will provide that future home pools will be required to have isolation fencing, but not existing pools, rather than referring that issue to the working party which he has simultaneously set up to resolve problems relating to home swimming pool safety and which is to report by 1 January 1992?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

(1)-(2)

I have seen figures from that survey both in the media and on my desk. I am having some further work done on those figures and would be happy to advise the member of the outcome later on.

- (3) The decision to introduce isolation fences for new pools from 1 January 1992 was taken in response to a fairly massive previous study done under the auspices of the Minister for Health. That study clearly demonstrates the role that isolation fencing has in preventing children from drowning. The member for Marmion has asked why we are doing it only for new pools and not existing pools as was part of the recommendations in this report. That is being done purely on a question of cost. While I appreciate some of the political clamour that has now been generated, not about isolation fencing but about the method of inspection that is being undertaken, the Government is concerned about saving the lives of young children who are drowning in backyard pools.

Some people may find that protection with isolation fencing is inconvenient or an extra financial burden. However, in the interest of preventing children from drowning the Government believes people must have it. If the member for Marmion spoke to the parents of some of the children who have drowned - especially when they recognise that perhaps their lack of care may have contributed to the fact that those children drowned - his perspective and some of the media perspective on this issue might be different.

#### EMPLOYMENT - AUSTRALIAN LABOUR FORCE FIGURES

340. Mr KOBELKE to the Deputy Premier:

What do the Australian Bureau of Statistics' August labour force figures, which were released today, mean for Western Australia?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

The Australian labour force figures are encouraging for Western Australia. They show that employment in Western Australia grew by 1.9 per cent or 13 800 new jobs in August. That was the strongest employment growth of any State. New South Wales had the next strongest growth of 1.8 per cent. A large increase of 14 000 new entrants entered the labour force in August. As a result, the unemployment rate in Western Australia dropped by two percentage points to 11 per cent. Western Australia also has the highest percentage of any State of its working age population in the work force. Nonetheless, an unemployment rate of 11 per cent is a serious concern for the Government. In an effort to do something about it our State Budget was framed with that unemployment rate in mind. Included in the Budget is an increased allocation for capital works of 9.2 per cent to \$1.3 billion. Members should consider the Opposition's stand over the past couple of weeks and, indeed, yesterday and today in this Parliament, on the amount of Government borrowings. The Opposition should make up its mind whether it is prepared to support a 9.2 per cent increase in spending on capital works and the borrowings associated with that which are very much aimed at increasing

employment levels in Western Australia. On the one hand the Opposition suggests something is wrong with borrowing for capital works, but on the other hand it is prepared to say the Government should be borrowing more to create more employment in Western Australia. Also, State taxes have been frozen to help boost private sector job creation. Those initiatives are being undertaken at a time when inflation is at an historic low. That is a quite different circumstance, the member for Cottesloe would be aware, from the 1982-83 recession when we were faced not only with high unemployment, but also high levels of inflation, which economists would call stagflation.

The Western Australian key economic indicators suggest that we are exiting the recession earlier than other States, as we would have expected. Job vacancies in Western Australia have grown strongly over the last four months - well ahead of those in other States; vehicle registrations in July are 12 per cent over the previous month's; retail sales have grown steadily in the past five months; and building approvals increased by 15 per cent in July. One of the most significant statistics for Western Australia is the 36 per cent increase in exports for the July quarter this year compared with the same period last year. Western Australia's export performance continues to be quite strong in the overall economy. Once again, it continues to lead Australia. I do not pretend that 11 per cent unemployment is in any way acceptable, but I say again to the Opposition that it should make up its mind. The Government borrows to help create jobs in Western Australia; it does not borrow only to add to a Government deficit.

#### GRAVEL - MT LESUEUR NATIONAL PARK

##### *Gravel Reserve Access - Dandaragan Shire Council Agreement*

341. Mr COWAN to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Has the question of access to gravel from the gravel reserve which the Government wants to incorporate in the Mt Lesueur National Park been satisfactorily resolved with the Dandaragan Shire Council?
- (2) If it has, when can we expect the relevant motion to proceed through the Legislative Council?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I had a meeting with the Dandaragan Shire Council towards the end of the last parliamentary session. As a result, I set up a working group from the Department of Mines and the Environmental Protection Authority to indicate to the Shire of Dandaragan the gravel reserves existing in its district. That occurred because they told me that there were no gravel reserves which could be used to replace the gravel that is to go to the Mt Lesueur National Park. I chuckled when it was indirectly reported to me by one of the members of the Opposition that the Dandaragan Council was annoyed that it had not been consulted by the working group in the preparation of its report because the Dandaragan Council could have pointed out where the gravel was actually located. If that is the case one would have thought that the Department of Mines and the Environmental Protection Authority would not have been required to find that out. In fact, the Department of Mines and the EPA have identified very significant gravel reserves in the Dandaragan Council area and they are in the process of preparing a report which I expect to have in the next few days. When I receive that report I will forward it to the Shire of Dandaragan, the Leader of the National Party, and his colleagues in the upper House so that my colleagues in the upper House can bring on that motion.

#### BLOOD ALCOHOL - 0.05 BLOOD LEVEL

##### *Legislation Changes*

342. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Minister for Transport support the introduction of a 0.05 blood alcohol level in Western Australia?



(2) If so, what action needs to be taken to implement such a level?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The introduction of a blood alcohol level of 0.05 will require changes to the legislation currently before the other place. I have followed with much interest the discussions that have taken place in the Legislative Council on this issue and have examined the report of the Standing Committee on Legislation. The Council's Standing Committee examined the proposal in an attempt to reach a compromise which would be satisfactory to the Opposition parties in the upper House because they have opposed such legislation. The compromise which has been offered by the Liberal Party is that the 0.05 blood alcohol level should apply only to drivers under the age of 20 years. In fact, the National Party wants that level restricted further to people aged 18 to 19 years. The chairman of that committee, Hon Garry Kelly, has promoted the concept of restricting the 0.05 blood alcohol level to drivers up to 25 years of age.

Until now, the Government has been prepared to accept the provision of fines of \$200 and the loss of six demerit points for people who have blood alcohol levels between 0.05 and 0.08. This afternoon the Minister for Police, Hon Graham Edwards, announced that he is prepared to relax that level of fines to \$125 and the loss of three demerit points. He has communicated the Government's intention to the Leader of the Opposition. I appreciate the efforts of the Standing Committee to find a compromise because the Opposition parties in the upper House will not agree to this legislation. However, I am not convinced that we should tie the limit to certain age groups. As a matter of fact, from all the research I have seen - particularly the new research released in the ACT where the 0.05 level has been introduced - it is not young drivers but those in the 25 to 39 age bracket who drive with blood alcohol levels between 0.05 and 0.08. Not only has the number of people who drive with high blood alcohol levels fallen dramatically in the ACT, but also the number of people who drive with blood alcohol levels between 0.05 and 0.08 has fallen. In fact, the number of drivers randomly breath tested above 0.05 fell 39 per cent while those above 0.2 fell 61 per cent.

In the interests of road safety the Opposition parties do not have any legitimate excuse to oppose the Government's proposal for 0.05 and it is incumbent on them to look at the statistics that are available. I hope they will not seek to impose their own mismatch of blood alcohol levels based on age because it discriminates against young people. I believe that young people are more responsible about drinking and driving because they make sure they appoint a skipper before going out for the night.

Mr Cowan: Once upon a time you advocated that we should stick to 0.08.

Mrs BEGGS: No, I did not.

Mr Lewis: Yes, you did.

Mrs BEGGS: I have said that I disagree with the Federal Government's forcing us to impose 0.05 on the basis of funds coming to this State. I have always been very supportive of the introduction of the 0.05 BAC. The evidence indicates that it is the way we should go in this State.

Mr Clarko: Isn't Canberra's road fatality rate higher than Western Australia's?

Mrs BEGGS: It might be on a per capita basis.

The report clearly indicates that the introduction of this legislation has had an impact on the number of people driving with a blood alcohol level above 0.05. All of the statistics that have been presented indicate that the legislation deserves the support of all parties in Western Australia. I know there was a lot of resistance in the beginning to 0.05 BAC from the people in the Northern

Territory. I was in the Northern Territory recently and the people there are trying very seriously to address the whole problem of drink driving because of the high number of people who are filling their hospitals as a result of drink related road accidents. We cannot ignore those facts and the legislation should be supported.

### ABORIGINES - FOSTER CHILDREN, NEWMAN

#### *Relocation Decision*

343. Mr SHAVE to the Minister for Community Services:

In view of mounting public concern about his department's decision to relocate two Aboriginal children living in foster homes in Newman, will the Minister -

- (1) assure this House that he will personally interview the distressed families involved to make a personal and compassionate assessment of the position;
- (2) ensure that the biological mother has regular and direct access to the children; and,
- (3) agree to resign if, as a result of the transfer, either child is abused or physically harmed, as feared by his Federal colleague, the member for Kalgoorlie?

Mr RIPPER replied:

(1)-(3)

That is an extraordinary question from the Opposition - an attempt to drag into a debate in this place the details of the welfare of individual children. This does not contribute to the welfare of those children in whose interests the decision has been made.

The decision was made by a case conference of the Department for Community Services. That decision was subject to the appeal process within the Department for Community Services, which has an independent case review board chaired by a lawyer in private practice with the majority of the people on that board being non-departmental employees. That board went to Newman and heard the arguments that the member has put forward.

Mr Clarko: Did it hear the arguments of the mother?

Mr RIPPER: It heard the arguments of the mother and of other people with an interest in this case. The review board has examined the circumstances and confirmed the decision of the departmental case conference. The member is suggesting that I should overturn a decision of the independent case review board. I have taken my personal responsibility in this case seriously. I have called for the files and I have examined those files from cover to cover. I have spoken to the foster carer and to other people. I see no reason that the decision made by the departmental case conference and confirmed by the independent case review board should be overturned.

The biological mother's access rights to the children are not affected by the decision. I have instructed the Department for Community Services to ensure that the mother's access rights are preserved, not only in theory, but also in practice. If necessary, the department will assist the children or the mother to arrange for those access rights to be exercised.

Of course this is a sensitive case and of course there are compelling arguments on both sides. However, in considering it, members should have regard to the terrible history of welfare practices in relation to the Aboriginal community in this State over many years. There is a legacy of bitterness between the Aboriginal community and welfare authorities as a result of those practices. We have practical experience of what happens when Aboriginal children are placed with non-Aboriginal caregivers. It has been a bitter experience for many Aboriginal children and it has had a devastating effect on

them and on the non-Aboriginal caregivers. The decision is in line with the Aboriginal child placement principles which have been endorsed, not only by this Government but also by every Government in this country, including Liberal Governments. There must be a reason why every Government in this country has endorsed those child placement principles. That reason is the experience this community and other communities have had with Aboriginal children being placed with non-Aboriginal caregivers. It is not an ideological matter; it is a practical matter of learning from the bitter experience of the past. The decision has been made in the interests of the children and it has been confirmed by the independent case review board.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will draw his answer to a close.

Mr RIPPER: Opposition members have raised the question of the mothers' rights and of course they have been considered. However, as with all cases involving the protection and care of children, the position of a mother whose care of the children has resulted in a court determination that they are in need of care and protection cannot be the absolute determinate of their final placement.

The SPEAKER: Order! Question time has come to a conclusion and that decision has been made by the majority of members.

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