

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 8 October 1986

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

School Activities: Petition

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [2.18 p.m.]: I have a petition to present which reads as follows—

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

We, the undersigned object to equal opportunity laws compelling our children to integration of school activities, including sports, without referral, consultation or regard for parents and further the current law does not have regard for individual communities.

We request that this legislated educational experiment cease.

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

The petition bears 299 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 35.)

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS

Northern Suburbs: Petition

MRS WATKINS (Joondalup) [2.19 p.m.]: I have a petition to present couched in the following terms—

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

The undersigned residents of Western Australia call upon the State Government to provide a passenger rail service to the northern suburbs as originally contained in the Stephenson Plan for the following reasons:

- (a) To alleviate the volume of traffic on the existing highways and freeways;

- (b) To give the travelling public an alternative and safe mode of transport;
- (c) To boost the tourist access to outlying attractions; and
- (d) To assist in decentralisation and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 301 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 36.)

ROAD: NATIONAL STANDARD HIGHWAY

Development: Petition

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) [2.20 p.m.]: I have a petition to present as follows—

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

We, the undersigned residents of the Eastern Corridor utterly **OPPOSE** the development of a new National Standard highway between Great Eastern Highway and Toodyay Road, because such a highway will:

Not decrease traffic density along Gt. Eastern Highway to any great extent, as most traffic originates West of Mundaring,

Cause great ecological damage to the Greenbelt by splitting the area in two, divided by a limited access road,

Cause real concern and trauma to the many residents who have chosen this environment in the secure knowledge that this area, due to its nature, will stay semi-rural forever.

We wish to convey our preferred option, which is the gradual upgrading of Gt. Eastern Highway and Toodyay Road and the link between these two roads in the Wooroloo area.

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

The petition contains 2713 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 37.)

OLD COAST ROAD

Renaming: Petition

MR P. J. SMITH (Bunbury) [2.21 p.m.]: I have a petition to present which reads as follows—

TO: The Hon. the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

WE, the undersigned humble petitioners, strongly oppose the changing of the name "Old Coast Road" to "Bunbury Highway".

The "Old Coast Road" name has rich historical, social, economic and tourist significance dating back to 1858.

We believe that to change the name would destroy part of the South West's heritage.

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

The petition bears 1 061 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 38.)

STANDING ORDERS NOS. 47 AND 48: SUSPENSION

Sessional Order: Motion

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Leader of the House) [2.24 p.m.]: I move—

That for the balance of the present Session, Standing Orders 47 and 48 are suspended and the following Sessional Order shall have effect—

- (1) A member may propose to the Speaker that a matter of public interest be submitted to the House for discussion. The member proposing the matter shall present to the Speaker at least one hour before the time fixed for the meeting of the House a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed; and if the Speaker determines that it is in order, he shall read it to the House after Notices of Mo-

tion, if any, have been given. The proposed discussion must be supported by eight members, including the proposer, rising in their places as indicating approval. The Speaker shall then call upon the member who had proposed the matter to speak.

- (2) The Speaker may permit a motion in accordance with this Sessional Order on no more than one day in any sitting week and, in the event of more than one matter being presented for the same day, priority shall be given to the matter which, in the opinion of the Speaker, is the most urgent and important, and no other proposed matter shall be read to the House on that day.
- (3) It shall be competent for a member to move a substantive motion under this Sessional Order notwithstanding no notice has been given of such a motion.
- (4) No member is permitted to address the House for more than 30 minutes on any question under this Sessional Order and, in any case, the debate on such a question may not extend for more than one hour in total.

This notice of motion arose out of tripartite discussions between the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the National Party and me when last session we looked at ways of improving the opportunities for private members to address matters of public interest. At that time members were using the old procedure whereby somebody sought leave of the House to move a motion to adjourn the House for the purposes of discussing a specific matter, the motion subsequently having to be withdrawn. It is a relatively archaic procedure, and certainly the urgency provisions were causing some discomfort to members who wished to raise items under that Standing Order when the Speaker might have felt the matter was not all that urgent.

As a result of the discussions there was an agreement that we should substitute for the urgency motion to adjourn the House a new provision modelled on that in the Federal Parliament to enable Parliament to discuss one matter of public importance each week. The Standing Orders Committee considered that proposal, and I understand came up with roughly the wording which appears on the Notice Paper. The intention is to move this motion in advance of consideration of the rest of the

Standing Orders Committee's report so that this new approach might apply for the whole of this session, and not only for that last part, or whatever time is left, after we get a chance to consider the report.

I understand the matter is to be supported by both Opposition parties, so I will not attempt any silver-tongued oratory which may get these assenting people into a dissenting mode.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.26 p.m.]: The Opposition will be supporting the motion, but I would like to raise a couple of points. The first question I would like the Minister to address is why this has not been formalised in the form of a Standing Order. It is only a Sessional Order for the balance of the session and it suspends the existing Standing Orders Nos. 47 and 48. I was under the impression—perhaps I got it mixed up—that this would be an addition to Standing Orders and not just a sessional order with the remission of those other two Standing Orders.

Mr Pearce: That is the intention when we discuss the Standing Orders Committee's report. Initially we intended to go through the whole business of putting that into effect as of yesterday so that you would have the ability to deal with matters of public importance right from the beginning of the session. Once the new Standing Order is in place the sessional order will be superseded.

Mr MacKINNON: So as soon as the Standing Orders Committee's report comes down those other amendments to the Standing Orders, if we agree to them and in whatever form, will be incorporated as a Standing Order?

Mr Pearce: Yes.

Mr MacKINNON: I thank the Minister. The only other comment I want to make—and I came across this only today—is that this motion was a little disappointing to me in that it still waters down slightly the opportunity for the Opposition or private members to debate issues of importance and/or urgency. As the Minister would be aware, this particular sessional order limits the opportunity to raise a matter of public interest to one day per week. The previous Standing Order did not have such a restriction. In fact, if we could have demonstrated to the Speaker's satisfaction that a matter was genuinely urgent, we could have had one such debate every day.

That probably is a weakness in my view, and before agreeing to install and include the sessional order, as it now is, as a Standing Or-

der, the Opposition would like to take a raincheck on that particular part of the clause, and if we find it is too limiting we may in due course request that that part of clause 2 of the sessional order be changed so that it is up to the Speaker to determine whether a matter of public interest or urgency should be proceeded with on that day.

We could well come in here on a Tuesday and debate a matter of public interest, and then some other gigantic, monumental issue might arise which the Government would not want to debate. Hence it would refuse suspension of Standing Orders; but in all fairness and reality, if we presented the argument to the Speaker, he in his wisdom could adjudicate in our favour. We are prepared to give it a try with that proviso. As we see it, it is one area of weakness, and before agreeing to encapsulate it in Standing Orders we would want to see how it works over the ensuing weeks.

Members of the Standing Orders Committee would be aware that originally, under clause 4 of the motion, no member of the House was to be permitted to address the House for more than 10 minutes, rather than 30 minutes. We believed that was a weakness from the point of view of the Government, the National Party, and the Opposition. It might be in each party's interests to have one speaker only speaking for 30 minutes. Having a 30 minute rule means that whoever raises the matter of public interest has the full 30 minutes, and it is then up to the other side of the House to split up its time. That can be arrived at by agreement; that is what has happened traditionally on these motions. Thirty minutes is better than 10 minutes, and I thank the Minister for agreeing to our suggested change in that respect.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [2.30 p.m.]: The National Party is happy to support the motion and I thank the Government for introducing it for the House's support. I have felt for years that the urgency motion was unsatisfactory. It may give members an opportunity to air their points of view; however the public's perception of it frequently is that the matters raised during that debate were not serious because the motion was withdrawn at the end of the debate and the public could not understand the reasons for that withdrawal. The mechanism contained in the motion will enable matters to be debated to their conclusion.

The point made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that we have only one opportunity a week to debate these matters was not quite

correct because we have two opportunities, the second being on private members' day.

Mr Hassell: But what happens if we do not have a private members' day? That, of course, indicates the importance of this motion. This will survive the demise of private members' day.

Mr STEPHENS: I accept that, but in the main there are two occasions. A third opportunity to raise these sorts of matters arises if we consider we have pressing business. We can move for the suspension of Standing Orders, an action which requires the support of the Government which has the numbers in this House. If the matter is of sufficient urgency and importance, the Government will feel obliged to agree to that suspension and has done so on a number of occasions over the last couple of years.

As I read the proposed sessional order, no-one need speak for 30 minutes. It also does not limit the number of speakers so an arrangement can be made in the party. The previous urgency debate was unsatisfactory because frequently the National Party, being the third party, was left out of the debate and there was no way we could get into it. This is a far better method and we support it.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [2.33 p.m.]: Will the Minister confirm the point I raised in my interjection that, notwithstanding that this is to be a sessional order and not incorporated, at least for the time being, in the Standing Orders, it will be treated by the Government as applying to the whole session, even when private members' business is suspended.

Mr Pearce: That is the case.

MR WATT (Albany) [2.34 p.m.]: As the Opposition's representative on the Standing Orders Committee I wish to add a couple of points to the debate on this motion. In a sense it is perhaps not a bad thing that it is being introduced as a sessional order and not a Standing Order because it may give us the opportunity to assess not only its value, but also the operation of it and, if there are found to be deficiencies in the drafting of the sessional order, it can be altered before it becomes a Standing Order. I think that is sensible.

This proposal is a device used by most Parliaments to allow for debates of matters of public interest or of public importance. I am interested in the fact that, while the Federal Parliament has a Standing Order which relates to matters of public importance, our sessional

order will relate to matters of public interest. The Federal Parliament also has a Standing Order relating to matters of public interest, which is rather different. In fact, it is usually used on occasions when no motion has been moved and can cover a range of things.

I thought I should also place on the *Hansard* record my understanding of the intentions of the Standing Orders Committee. The intention is that the device previously used for urgency debates should not be removed. In other words, that would remain as a discretionary matter for the Speaker to determine. It may well be that, in any one week, we will be limited to only one debate of this type under the sessional order or the Standing Order when it becomes a Standing Order.

I think it is very important that we place on record the intention which was that matters previously dealt with in this way should continue to be dealt with in this way. The member for Stirling listed some of the alternatives but did not mention the fact that we will have that option available to us.

I echo the comments made by previous speakers and add my support to the motion which was referred to the Standing Orders Committee by the Opposition. I hope it will contribute to not only more rational debate on these issues, but also to a better understanding in the minds of the public. I agree with the member for Stirling that, on occasions when matters have been raised, the question has been asked why we withdraw the motion at the end of debate and why we do not put the question to the vote. Even though matters of this type are raised, more often than not by Opposition members, and the motion is defeated, at least the public will see that they are brought to a logical conclusion.

With those comments I support the motion.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [2.36 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to indicate to the Parliament a weakness in the proposed sessional order currently before it. I support what has been introduced. However, I will be communicating with the Standing Orders Committee in due course in an attempt to ensure that individual members of Parliament have the opportunity to raise matters which they believe to be of public importance and interest in their electorates. What has happened in the past is that a member who has a matter of public interest must seek the approval of the House for it to be discussed; and in order for the matter to be discussed he should have the support of eight

members. That makes it very hard for an independent member—although I am aware that we do not have any in this House now. However, I remind the Parliament that the Parliament has not been set up for the use of the Government or the Opposition or for the whims of political parties, but that it is for the people. It is a forum in which their views can be expressed.

I realise that the sessional order as such will not cover the points I am raising. However, I will certainly be raising with the Standing Orders Committee the need for us to have an avenue so that individual members can raise matters that they see as important. Under the current Standing Orders there is very little opportunity for that to occur. I know we have opportunities in grievance debates, but they can easily be controlled by the political parties. Independent members can therefore be denied the opportunity of raising matters which they see as important to their electorates.

Having made those comments, I support the motion and ask the Minister to have regard for the proper functioning of Parliament and also for the individual members of Parliament in the carrying out of their responsibilities to their electorates.

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Leader of the House) [2.38 p.m.]: In response to the comments made by the member for Vasse, the Government has shown the same commitment to the rights of private members as he would expect in the speech he gave. Since I have been Leader of the House the Government has accepted every move to suspend Standing Orders except for the attempt made by the Leader of the Opposition on the opening day of Parliament, which attempt, in my view, was inappropriate.

Mr Hassell: I did not seek to suspend Standing Orders on the opening day of Parliament. I sought to speak for 10 minutes and to obtain leave to continue my remarks the next day.

Mr PEARCE: The Leader of the Opposition did not get leave. In that case, we have supported the Opposition on every occasion and I have seconded many of those requests.

Mr Cowan: You should not have refused him leave. We should have refused you leave a couple of times to hammer the point home.

Mr PEARCE: That is a different argument. By this action, the Government is bending over backwards to give private members ample opportunity to use the forums of the House, and

immediately Opposition members say that they can use this forum to stifle us.

Mr Cowan: Please do not take me in that context. I was reminding you of a couple of things.

Mr PEARCE: The matter of public importance was an item I raised when the Opposition was concerned about the agreement made during the last session of Parliament by the member for Morley-Swan, that it should have the right to raise one matter of urgency each week. Up until that time there had not been an agreement between the Government and the Opposition that there should be that time available. Certainly, when we were in Opposition we did not get the opportunity to raise one matter of urgency each week.

The current Speaker took the view that matters should be urgent. He read the Standing Orders and understood precisely what they meant. Under previous agreements, matters of urgency had not been considered.

Mr Blaikie: I understand the argument you are advancing and I do not disagree with you. However, what would happen in respect of an individual member of Parliament who represented an electorate, but was not under the control of or within the confines of a political organisation?

Mr PEARCE: Under the old system the matter had to be regarded as urgent—"urgent" means that it has to be dealt with on that day because if private members' business is scheduled on that day the Speaker could take the view that very few matters are so urgent that a member cannot put a notice of motion to the House on a Tuesday and have it debated on private members' day on the Wednesday. What we are proposing does give that opportunity to private members—they do not need to demonstrate urgency; all they have to do is to demonstrate public interest and get enough members to support them in that matter in order to embark on that debate.

We are organising, during the parliamentary week, more opportunities for private members to have their say than has been the case before. This Government has shown a strong commitment to giving private members every opportunity to discuss matters.

For example, when arranging the parliamentary week the Government always schedules debates such as the Address-in-Reply and the Budget debates at times which suit members of the Opposition in order that they are able to make their impact in the debates.

The Government can demonstrate a strong commitment to the needs of the Parliament as a forum of the people. In fact, this sessional order has been brought forward in order to give a greater opportunity, instead of a lesser opportunity, to private members to have their say.

Over the next few weeks we will have the opportunity to assess how this will work so that when we seek to have this motion incorporated in the Standing Orders it may be possible to take on board some of the comments which have been made during the course of the debate this afternoon.

Contrary to the position of the member for Albany and, for all I know, the Standing Orders Committee, it is the Government's intention to substitute this approach for the adjournment to discuss a matter of urgency approach. It is not the Government's intention to have both of them in the Standing Orders because it believes there are enough opportunities under the Standing Orders for private members to raise matters of importance. The matter of public importance is a better approach than the matter of urgency and it will give more opportunities than the matter of urgency. Therefore, it is an improvement to the position. Unless the House is prepared to sit four days a week or to sit longer in the evening I do not believe we can provide additional opportunities for private members on top of those which already exist.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (19): ASSENT

Messages from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Workers' Compensation and Assistance Amendment Bill.
2. Salaries and Allowances Amendment Bill.
3. Jetties Amendment Bill.
4. Port Hedland Port Authority Amendment Bill.
5. Western Australian Arts Council Repeal Bill.
6. Construction Safety Amendment Bill.
7. Perth Mint Amendment Bill.
8. Goldfields Tattersalls Club (Inc.) Bill.
9. Fremantle Port Authority Amendment Bill.
10. Strata Titles Amendment Bill.
11. America's Cup Yacht Race (Special Arrangements) Bill.
12. Futures Industry (Application of Laws) Bill.

13. Iron Ore (McCamey's Monster) Agreement Authorization Amendment Bill.
14. Transport Co-ordination Amendment Bill (No. 2).
15. Reserves and Land Revestment Bill.
16. Supply Bill.
17. Liquor Amendment Bill.
18. Acts Amendment (Actions for Damages) Bill.
19. State Government Insurance Commission Bill.

MEMBER FOR MURCHISON-EYRE

Letter: Censure Motion

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Agriculture) [2.47 p.m.]: I move—

That this House—

1. Censures and expresses its complete abhorrence at the disgraceful un-Australian behaviour of the member for Murchison-Eyre, in writing to the US Secretary of State, Mr Shultz, urging the United States Government to keep selling subsidised wheat to the Soviet Union and China to prevent economic recovery in Australia and New Zealand to further the Liberal Party's aspirations to form a Government in Western Australia and in Canberra.
2. Calls on the member for Murchison-Eyre to withdraw his letter unconditionally in writing to Mr Shultz and publicly apologise in this Parliament clearly and unequivocally for his disgraceful action to the people of Australia and Western Australia, particularly to the hard-pressed and financially troubled families involved in this State's major export agricultural industry.

It is a fairly unusual step for a member of this Parliament to move a motion against a member in his capacity as a private member as distinct from his capacity as a member of a political party. It is a step I am taking today. It is unusual and it is a step that is taken by me with reluctance, and I believe it would be taken by any member of this Parliament with reluctance. It is something I would rather not have to do.

Having made that clear I, along with my colleagues, was absolutely shocked and amazed when I read an article in *The West Australian* on 18 August that the member for Murchison-Eyre had taken the unprecedented step of writing to the Secretary of State of the United

States of America urging him, through his Government, to push ahead with subsidised wheat sales to the Soviet Union and to the People's Republic of China in an effort to undermine the economic basis of Australia, the economic basis of New Zealand and, by implication, the economic basis of the State for which we, as a whole, have responsibility; that is, Western Australia.

In the whole of my parliamentary career which began in 1977, I have never read or heard about a letter which was so un-Australian and so subversive in its tone and its contents. Any person in his right mind would agree that the letter was obviously written by a person of dangerous and extremely fanatical political purpose—a person who was prepared to treat with foreign nations in an endeavour to cripple the economy of his own country.

It is an action that all of us would greet with absolute and utter abhorrence, yet it was a step that was taken, apparently, by the member for Murchison-Eyre after some consideration. It is a step for which, as yet, he has not fully apologised. It is a step from which he has not taken the proper and appropriate steps to withdraw and one for which his own party as yet has not censured him. His leader and the rest of us here will have that opportunity today. I hope that it will be exercised in the proper way.

In view of the letter written by the member for Murchison-Eyre, one wonders what further steps he would have taken had he not been discovered. The fact is that he took this step in secrecy. He did not take it publicly, and after he returned he expressed amazement and grave concern that it had come to the light of day. He took this subversive step in secrecy. As Kim Philby found to his detriment, in the law of this land and in the law of lands governed by the Westminster system secrecy is not a defence. If the member for Murchison-Eyre believes it is a defence, his is obviously taking the first step down the road to present that argument. He has done it, unfortunately, after the Clayton's tonic apology which he presented to the people of Western Australia.

I ask again just how far the member for Murchison-Eyre might have gone had he not been discovered or how far he may have gone and not have been discovered? That question has not been canvassed before. But to take the obvious step, would he have advocated the same sort of subversive action not just in respect of wheat, but also in respect of rice, barley, sugar, and all the other critical exports of this country? The answer, on the face of it,

would seem to be in the affirmative. It reflects the depths into which that particular member, had he not been discovered, would have been prepared to plunge himself and his party in order, by some fanatical motivation, to attain the Treasury bench. I think that all of us believe it was disgraceful. Some of us have said it was disgraceful; others of us who should have said so have not as yet done so. Those members will have that opportunity today.

What makes it all the more disgraceful is the fact that at the time the member sent off this clandestine, subversive letter to the United States, an all party delegation of Australian Federal politicians were either on their way to the United States or already in the United States, embarking upon an attempt on an impartial basis on behalf of all Australians to convince the United States Government that subsidised wheat sales to the Soviet Union were not in the best interests of world trade, were not in the best interests of the farmers of America, and were certainly not in the best interests of one of the most loyal allies that the United States has ever had—Australia. It was a disgraceful act. I do not know how the letter came to light; obviously the member for Murchison-Eyre also does not know how it came to light.

Dr Gallop: The member for Oklahoma, I think, would be more appropriate.

Mr GRILL: One could believe that.

When the letter came to light in the article by Lindsay Olney in *The West Australian* titled, "WA MP backs US wheat stance" on 18 August, no explanation was given of just how the letter became public or how it fell into the hands of *The West Australian*. That question still remains unanswered. The letter written by the member for Murchison-Eyre to Mr Shultz, the United States Secretary of State reads—

May I urge you to stand fast on the proposed wheat sales to China and Russia.

Your actions will have a detrimental trade effect on the two socialist governments of my nation and New Zealand that those respective administrations would have difficulty recovering from.

Were you to capitulate now, the effect would be two-fold.

Firstly you will enhance the tarnished image of our Prime Minister Hawke and restore his previously held omnipotence, and that would not be in the interests of free peoples in this hemisphere.

Hawke would be written up in the Australian media as the man who coerced you and your president into changing your mind.

That leads into the second effect. It would further entrench the socialist system and may deny the conservative parties the right to govern in 1988-89 because of the arresting of the decline in the Australian dollar and the easing of our balance of payments.

I have never heard a conservative politician, no matter how arrogant—and many of them are fairly arrogant—put forward the view, even secretly or privately, that the conservatives have a God-given right to govern this country. Some of them in their deepest, darkest thoughts might believe that, but I have never known one of them who has actually put the view in writing. I have not known one who has stooped to the level of subversively putting those sorts of views in black and white and sending them across the seas to foreign shores in the hope of bringing down the Government of his own nation.

Mr D. L. Smith: Do we know whether it was sent on the letterhead of this Parliament?

Mr GRILL: We will get to that in a minute. It is certainly a pertinent question.

The letter was not just an attack on the economies of Australia, New Zealand, and Western Australia; it was also an attack on the very basic, fundamental democratic principles that we stand by. I suppose that in some senses it is not surprising. It is shocking, but it is not surprising that the member for Murchison-Eyre would put forward such a forlorn philosophy, something that each of us, I know, would hold to be abhorrent. The same member of Parliament quite publicly said that people like his mother—and, in fact, his mother—did not deserve a vote of the same value as someone like Robert Holmes a Court, Alan Bond, or an entrepreneur of this world. It is the same sort of twisted, evil logic that would deny his own mother and people like her—people who are not entrepreneurs, but who nonetheless make a contribution to Australia's economy and to Australia; after all, his mother brought him into the world—

Mr Bryce: I am not sure that was such a good thing.

Dr Gallop: She'd had her time, though, as far as the member for Oklahoma was concerned.

Mr GRILL: She had had her time; she was finished. She was no longer entitled to a vote of equal value to that of one of our esteemed entrepreneurs. The same sort of twisted logic sent this subversive letter across the ocean to the United States.

Mr Cowan: Your Premier wrote a letter to everybody in this Parliament calling on people not to be quite so subjective about other members in this place. You are not doing too bad a job of destroying everything that was written in that letter. How about getting to the content of the motion, and leaving the member for Murchison-Eyre alone.

Mr GRILL: I have read the motion, but I remind the member for Merredin that, firstly, I take this step with reluctance.

Secondly, there is nothing in our Constitution that states that any particular party has the God-given right to govern. That was the view expressed by the member for Murchison-Eyre. He spoke quite clearly, and it is in black and white, about his party's right to govern in 1988-89. I would have thought that the member for Merredin would hold that in abhorrence, as I do.

The facts are that the activities advocated by the member for Murchison-Eyre would or could, in fact, destroy the family life and economy of a whole range of families in our community—not the least of whom are the people who live in the wheatbelt, and whom a number of us represent—their jobs, their export potential, and the export potential of the country. All of that is threatened because of the overriding ambition of one member of Parliament. It is a matter that should be discussed in this place.

Does anyone on the other side of the House believe that this sort of activity should go unmentioned in this Parliament? I do not think so. I think it deserves the severest censure and it also provides an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition, an opportunity he has not yet exercised, to censure in no uncertain terms the activities of the member for Murchison-Eyre. It will be interesting to see to what extent the Leader of the Liberal Party is prepared to lead. He has not done so yet.

The Leader of the National Party, to give him his due, has made his position clear. He is reported as having said that it was improper for anyone to call on foreign Governments to help overthrow their own. Intervention by Mr Lightfoot and other "fellow travellers and false

friends" was the sort of help the wheat industry could do without.

He continued—

The people in the wheat and associated industries are not political footballs to be kicked around in the pursuit of some grander ideological plan.

That was a fairly clear statement on the part of the Leader of the National Party.

The Leader of the Federal Opposition made his views equally clear on behalf of every member of the Opposition at Federal level. What did the Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament do? He shillyshallied and finally issued a very wishy-washy statement indicating that he reaffirmed the State and Federal policy which opposed the subsidisation of wheat sales by the United States to China and Russia. That is about as far as he went. He did not have the ability or the courage to properly censure a member of his own party, which we all expected. We shall see what he has to say on this matter today.

I will paraphrase the very weak response from the Leader of the Opposition at the time. He endeavoured to sell the line that subsidies would seriously undermine the capacity of wheat farmers to compete in those established Australian markets. He went on to say that he believed the member had been trying to convey this message in his letter to Mr Shultz. That is blatant nonsense and it is misconstruing the facts. The member for Murchison-Eyre was not putting across any such message; the message from him was simply that he wanted to wreck the economy of this country and New Zealand for his own political ends. That was the beginning and the end of it. The Leader of the Opposition had a duty to make the position of his party clear; he has failed to do that and to properly rebuke the member for Murchison-Eyre.

The Deputy Premier, who was in Western Australia at the time the letter came to light in the Press, made his position clear when he said that Mr Lightfoot's action was that of a political delinquent who had deserted Australian farmers in favour of some bygone political ideology. That is absolutely correct.

The Prime Minister of this country was reported in *The West Australian* on 20 August as having said—

If there has ever been a more treacherous and treasonable action by a political party in the history of this country, I would like to see it.

If any member here doubts those words, I challenge him or her to point to a more treasonable or seditious action than that taken secretly by the member for Murchison-Eyre on the occasion to which we are referring. I do not think anyone can recall such an occasion. There is silence.

The response was not just from members of political parties, the Prime Minister, or the Deputy Premier; it came from ordinary people in our society. I quote from a letter which appeared in *The West Australian* on 21 August from Mrs Patricia Rutherford of Australind. It read—

YOUR report "WA MP backs U.S. wheat stance" (Aug. 18) said that the MLA for Murchison-Eyre was in Namibia.

May I suggest that the West Australian people would be better-off if Mr Lightfoot remained there.

How un-Australian to suggest ways of hurting most Australians, by his distorted theories, purely to elect a conservative government.

Removing the Hawke and Burke governments by foul means are the only ways that members of the "Far Right" contemplate. They intend to sabotage the economy and to create industrial havoc to regain government.

On the same day the following letter from John Leggoe of Ozone Parade, Cottesloe appeared—

THE LEADER of the Opposition, Mr Hassell, must often think that, with friends like the MLA for Murchison-Eyre sitting behind him in Parliament, who needs enemies?

Surely the Liberal party will never again endorse the writer of such a lunatic letter as that reported to have been sent by Mr Lightfoot to the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr Shultz.

To urge the U.S. administration to cripple Australian farmers as a means of discrediting the Hawke government must be the most bizarre and crazy idea ever conceived—even by an Australian politician.

The editorial in *The West Australian* on 21 August read as follows—

WA Liberal MP Mr Ross Lightfoot deserved every word of the censure directed at him by Mr Hawke and other Government leaders.

His letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr Shultz, urging the U.S. to keep selling subsidised wheat to the Soviet Union and China, plumbed the depths of political cynicism.

The letter, motivated purely by political self-interest, in effect urged a foreign Power to take action to destabilise the Australian and New Zealand governments. Mr Lightfoot's naive behaviour did nothing to enhance the credibility of politicians.

The Liberal Party—which took part in a delegation to oppose U.S. sales of subsidised farm products—seems to have been speechless with embarrassment.

The party's leaders should have been more forthright at the outset and publicly condemned the remarks of the inappropriately named Mr Lightfoot.

They have an opportunity today to make amends.

I quote also from comments made by Mr Winston Crane, the President of the Primary Industry Association and the Vice President of the National Farmers Federation—

It is clear that Mr Lightfoot does not care how much West Australian farmers' blood he has on his hands in pursuing his selfish, political ambitions.

His actions are irresponsible and should be condemned by all thinking Australians.

I would agree with that. It should be condemned by all thinking Australians. All these thinking Australians have the opportunity to condemn that today. So far the Leader of the Opposition has declined to do so. If I had been the member for Murchison-Eyre I would have seriously considered resigning on being found out.

Mr Hassell: Like you did over the Midland abattoir when you were found out.

Mr GRILL: Let us have a look at the actions which were taken by the member for Murchison-Eyre when he was found out. Did he immediately retract? Did he immediately write a letter to Mr Shultz and indicate that he had thought better of it? Did he in fact back down?

The answer is that he came out with a Clayton's apology.

Mr Bryce: All the way from South Africa!

Mr GRILL: It was in the form of a retraction. It was not a clear and unambiguous apology; it was a retraction. But apart from this he said—

I would never appeal to an overseas country ... to take any action ... which would cause Australia or its people harm.

He said that in hindsight, and in the cool light of day. He fully retracted the statements expressed in the letter to the Secretary of State, Mr Shultz.

Let us dwell on that cool light of day. It took the deputy leader 45 minutes on the phone. Two weeks later, after that Clayton's apology, we have the member for Murchison-Eyre making these sorts of statements publicly on the radio in the goldfields. The member for Murchison-Eyre admitted that his letter has not detracted from his consuming desire to remove the Australian Government, and that his crime was that he broke the eleventh commandment, which is, in his own words, "Thou shalt not get caught." In his own words he said he was guilty of the sin of breaking the eleventh commandment.

That really reinforces the weakness of the Clayton's apology, that he was prepared only to present it to the people of Western Australia after 45 minutes of pleading on the phone by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. His assertion was not that he had committed a crime, but that he had been found out. He was absolutely recalcitrant.

I invite members to believe, given that particular statement made on 5 September on air in the eastern goldfields, that he still holds that position; that he has not changed his view. He still believes that it is necessary to bring down the Australian Government, the Western Australian Government, and the New Zealand Government by wrecking the economy of this country.

What did we have finally when the member for Murchison-Eyre had made his Clayton's apology and the Leader of the Opposition then had the opportunity to make some further comments? What did the Leader of the Opposition say? He said he was grateful. Grateful for what? Grateful that he has within his ranks a person who would work secretly to bring down the democratically elected Governments of Australia and Western Australia; grateful to a person who did not have the courage even to stand by his convictions and who is prepared to decimate the economy and cause the ruin of every democratic principle that we hold dear?

Is that what the Leader of the Opposition is grateful for? To have those sorts of people in the Opposition?

What about the question raised by the member for Mitchell? The member for Murchison-Eyre has told the Press that the letter he sent was sent off as a private citizen. Can the member tell us—he will have the opportunity in due course—whether it went on his own private letterhead or on a parliamentary letterhead? Can he table a copy of the letter? Has he written to Mr Shultz and withdrawn the contents of the letter he originally sent? If so, is he prepared to table that letter? We will find out shortly.

What the member for Murchison-Eyre did say on his return was that he was gravely concerned. What was he gravely concerned about? What he was gravely concerned about was that the letter had become public; that the letter had seen the light of day and his subversive actions had been opened up to that light of day. He was not concerned about the effect that action would have had upon innocent people in the wheat belt. He was not concerned about the fact that he had called upon a foreign power to endeavour to bring down the Australian Government. He was not concerned about any of the other pernicious things that he had said in that letter. All he was concerned about was the fact that the letter had become public. He was completely recalcitrant, and he continues to be. I suspect he probably will be today, but I might be pleasantly surprised. I hope I am.

What else did he say? Was his apology clear and unequivocal? No. All he said was that he wanted to allow the matter to rest. Well, it cannot rest. The member needs to make a clear and unequivocal apology, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition really needs to make his position clear to the people of Western Australia.

I commend the motion to the House.

MRS BUCHANAN (Pilbara) [3.19 p.m.]: I rise to second the motion by the Minister for Agriculture and to join him in condemnation of the treachery of the member for Murchison-Eyre, whose action in writing to Mr Shultz is a clear indication that he is prepared to go to any lengths to further the political aims of his own political party.

This is not the first time that the member for Murchison-Eyre has gone to such lengths. By way of explanation, I advise the House that he was some months ago the chief organiser of the anti-land rights campaign which took place

throughout the State. I remember seminars taking place in the Kimberley and Pilbara. These so-called seminars were set up by the Liberal Party, and I remember one event in particular which was conducted in the disco bar of a hotel in Port Hedland. Inevitably, of course, some of the people in attendance became charged up with alcohol, and it was more by good luck than good management that it did not grow into a great brawl towards the end of the proceedings. This is a good measure of the person we are censuring in this House today.

I might add here that the member for Murchison-Eyre was joined by the now very well-known Mr Kerekes in organising an anti-land rights campaign in my electorate. They did not gain anything whatsoever by it, and I begin to wonder why they subjected those people to their hobnailed boots treatment. Of course, it did not surprise us that at a later date the Liberal Party announced that the organiser of the campaign had been endorsed by them to contest the seat of Murchison-Eyre.

His actions on that occasion were very similar to the actions he has taken on this occasion in sinking to that low point where politics are placed before everything else. That campaign was deliberately designed to stir up fear and hysteria, and was nothing more than a political stunt. Now we have the member for Murchison-Eyre extending his political stuntsmanship onto the international scene.

I pose two questions to this House: Firstly, what sort of political party is it that tolerates that sort of perfidious act by a member of its ranks; and secondly, what sort of member is it that puts that political party before the best interests of his own country? It is a member who does not really deserve the privileges which are conferred when we are elected to this place, or, for that matter, the privilege of being able to hold an Australian passport and move freely out of Australia and travel abroad as the member for Murchison-Eyre has done in recent times. I shudder to think what sort of impression he must have given the people of the nations he visited as he tripped around the world making such statements as: "South Africa should remain firmly and solidly in a coalition of white hands."

I certainly hope that those people did not think that all Australians are like the member for Murchison-Eyre and have his ruling class mentality. I bet he didn't tell them that, as a result of his party's dishonesty in gerrymandering the northern boundaries, he in fact represents about 3 700 electors in his dis-

strict—and I do not think he looks after them very well, either. As a matter of fact, he is not even capable of looking after his sheep.

The member who wrote to Mr Shultz also believes that Aboriginal people should not receive social security benefits. He believes they should receive tea, sugar, clothing, maybe a bit of flour, and whatever shelter happens to be available at the time, but they should not receive money. That same member would take away those social security benefits. He would turn back the clock to the days when Aboriginal people were in their worst position ever, and he believes that human rights are for only the rich and powerful. This is the man who wrote the letter to Mr Shultz. He would have us devalue people, even taking away their rights to vote once they are over a certain age, or happen to be living in the desert, or are what he feels is illiterate and having no understanding of the Westminster system.

The member for Murchison-Eyre should never have been allowed to mouth off such extremist views overseas, nor to write that damaging letter. That sort of action can only damage our reputation overseas, and it is incomprehensible how he could have carried out that extreme action. We all accept when we are involved in politics that there will be some opposition to views on either side, that there will be some pretty hard-fought campaigns and some pretty heated words spoken in this House; but the member for Murchison-Eyre has not yet learnt that when we speak out of these bounds and move out onto the world scene, that side of politics has to be put behind us. We then become ambassadors for our country and it is absolutely imperative that we conduct ourselves in such a way as not to bring this country into disrepute.

For a member to take his political differences to the extremes that the member for Murchison-Eyre has done in deliberately setting out to undermine the stability, not only of our State and our nation but also that of another nation, to gain some political purpose or advantage for himself and his own party, really defies description. There are not strong enough words in the English dictionary to use against that sort of action, and in my view there should be the strongest possible reprimand issued to this member. It should not have to come from this side of the House, it should come from this member's own party, from his own leader; and that leader should ensure that this member never again errs in this way.

I do not believe there has been an adequate reprimand of this member appropriate to the seriousness of his actions. I agree with the Minister for Agriculture that it is of great concern that we have to raise these matters against a single member in this House. Nevertheless, I believe that the seriousness of the action deserves that treatment, and that the member should have the harshest and strongest possible censure passed against him.

I support this motion.

Government members: Hear, hear! Well said.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [3.27 p.m.]: The Minister commenced his remarks by expressing his regret that he had to move the motion. What incredible, amazing hypocrisy, when one considers that the Minister is a member of a party in this Parliament, a number of the members of which have for years been defending Communist trade union activists who have done more than anyone else to destroy this country and bring it to its current parlous state. The Minister for Industrial Relations has repeatedly defended the Builders Labourers Federation and its incredible tactics. The Minister for Transport had no answer when the commos on the wharves were exposed in this House for their activities—their destruction of our export trade which has contributed so materially—

Several members interjected.

The **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr HASSELL: The Minister and his understudy were heard in silence and allowed to make their outrageous comments without interruption from us. I intend my comments to be heard in this House regardless of what carry-on comes from these people.

This is a disgraceful motion. The Opposition has made a deliberate decision that it will not dignify this motion with a reply or debate beyond these few words which I will speak on behalf of the Parliamentary Liberal Party, and in particular on behalf of my friend and colleague, the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr Pearce: Does that mean you are not going to defend him?

The **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr Pearce: I want to know if the Leader of the Opposition is going to defend the member or not?

The **SPEAKER**: The Leader of the Opposition made mention just a moment ago that the two previous speakers had been heard in

comparative silence. To a certain extent that is correct. It was not entirely true but to a certain extent it was. Certainly, since the Leader of the Opposition has been on his feet, he has indicated that he does not intend to field interjections. On the first occasion I allowed them to continue, but from now on I will not.

Mr HASSELL: Clearly, the Minister has moved a motion on behalf of the Government. It follows that the Government members have been caucused to support the motion. Members of the Government party—the Labor Party—should understand precisely what they are doing. What is being done here is censuring a member of this House who has been a member for barely six months. It is not a censure of the Government or of the Opposition. It is not a censure of a parliamentary party or a policy. It is and is intended to be a censure of an individual member. Once again—and not for the first time—the Government may use its numbers and its iron-fisted Caucus discipline to achieve its end.

Several members interjected.

Mr Pearce: You are not even game to defend him because he is an economic saboteur of the rural people of this State, and you know it. You won't even defend your own member.

Mr HASSELL: Once again, the Government may use its numbers and its iron-fisted Caucus discipline to achieve its end by this censure motion against an individual member of this House; but it will not escape judgment for its conduct. That judgment will be made not only by fair-minded people in the media and others outside this Parliament but by those who are fair-minded in the Labor Party itself. The judgment will also be made on the basis of measuring the Premier's conduct against his own words. This is a motion moved by a Minister of the Government, and for this motion the Premier is totally responsible.

Point of Order

Mr CLARKO: In the last few minutes, Sir, you made a statement about interjections. I have counted 10 interjections by Government members since you made your statement. We are aware of your tolerance and your fair rulings in these matters. I wonder whether either the Government members are deaf or perhaps you should give consideration to repeating your comment.

Debate Resumed

Mr HASSELL: This motion is the responsibility of the Premier and it will be judged in relation to the Premier and his supposed standards and conduct.

It was only on 2 July this year that the Premier wrote to all members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council concerning the status, reputation, and image of members of Parliament. Among other things, the Premier said—

I am convinced that nothing will change unless members of Parliament generally stop "cheer gathering" at their own expense. An important element of the process is to raise the dignity, decorum and quality of debates in Parliament. The public perception of debates is derived from media reports of name-calling, rudeness and disruptive behaviour by members.

What is this motion, no more nor less than cheer gathering? What is it, no more nor less than name-calling of the member for Murchison-Eyre?

Mr D. L. Smith: Do you agree with what he said in the letter? Are you not going to defend that aspect because it is indefensible and you know it?

Several members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: The Premier also said—

I think it is essential that, regardless of political party, we address the problems involved in elevating the reputation and image of Parliament as an institution, and of members of Parliament specifically.

What is this motion? No more nor less than an attack by the majority of this Parliament on one of its members.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: Am I to be afforded the protection of the Chair which you have indicated is available to me, or is it that Government members are exempted from compliance with your rule?

The SPEAKER: In answer to your query, it is absolutely not my intention to ask for absolute silence while you are speaking. My concern when I raised the matter last time was that the interjections were, in my opinion, at that time rowdy and incessant and stopped you from making your speech.

My opinion now is that members are not doing that at the moment. If they rise to that sort of level again I will give you my protection. In my view, you are a very capable person and the sort of interjection that is being directed at you at the moment is capable of being fielded or ignored. It is not my intention, therefore, to ask members to cease completely at this time as I did when the two speakers on the Government side spoke. There were a number of interjections and I did not ask them to cease. It was, in my opinion, the Opposition's choice not to interject rather than a ruling from myself. It is not my intention to ask that interjections cease entirely.

Debate Resumed

Mr HASSELL: I understand your ruling, Mr Speaker. No doubt it will be capable of being used on other occasions.

This motion is nothing more nor less than an attack by the majority in this Parliament on one of its members. It is a deliberately directed personal attack. Using the words uttered by the Premier a few weeks ago, when he was pontificating about the standard of the Parliament, how will this motion enhance the reputation of Parliament or its image?

In addition to writing to members generally in July, the Premier wrote a letter to me, as Leader of the Opposition, and to the Leader of the National Party in order to seek our cooperation—this has been given—in relation to "the status, reputation and image of members of Parliament". This motion flies in the face of the standard to which the Premier said the Parliament should aspire. This motion moved by the Minister, with the Premier's authority, clearly indicates the lack of sincerity and depth in what has been laid down by the Premier himself.

The factual situation in this case is very simple. The member for Murchison-Eyre, who was elected on 8 February this year, has enthusiastically sought to represent his constituents. There were not many members of this place who spent the week following the election touring their own electorates as he did. Some months ago he wrote a letter to the US Secretary of State, Mr George Shultz. That letter was open to grave misinterpretation, and it was a letter which the member for Murchison-Eyre has since acknowledged should not have been written.

Mr D. L. Smith: Let him get to his feet and retract it.

Mr HASSELL: On 21 August the member for Murchison-Eyre dictated a letter from overseas, which was directed to me and which said, among other things—

In hindsight and in the cool light of day I fully retract the sentiments of my letter . . .

The letter also said—

I love my country and would never appeal to an overseas Government, no matter how friendly, to take any action which would cause Australia or its people harm.

Mr D. L. Smith: If you accept he didn't, you are simply naïve.

Mr Watt: You called for an apology and a withdrawal. Be consistent.

Mr HASSELL: In closing his letter the member wrote—

In closing, I apologise profoundly for embarrassment my letter has caused yourself and my parliamentary colleagues in the State and Federal Liberal and National parties.

Mr D. L. Smith interjected.

Mr HASSELL: I choose now to place on record a response to the interjection just made by the member for Mitchell to tell him unequivocally that I did not ask the member for Murchison-Eyre for that letter.

I also want to inform the House—and I had not intended to do so, but I now choose to do so in view of the hyena-like conduct of members of the Government—that the member for Murchison-Eyre was mortified by the consequences of his action to the extent, unlike Government Ministers who have been found out in grave misconduct, of offering to resign immediately. I immediately rejected his offer. He also made that offer to the President of the Liberal Party who likewise rejected it.

Those are the facts, Mr Speaker. This man made an error; he apologised and withdrew his letter, and he offered to resign—yet still members of the Government are biting and sniping away. They are doing so not because they believe in what they are saying but because they want to score some cheap political points. That is the beginning and the end of the exercise. That is why the Minister, on behalf of the Government, moved this motion, and that is why the member for Pilbara seconded it. The bunch of hyenas on the Government side think they can score cheap political points; they know they do not believe in what they have said. The sycophantic nonsense drivelled by the Minister indicates the truth of what is going

on. He stood in his place and said how he regretted having to move the motion; almost washing his hands of the matter. It is a wonder he did not put them up in prayer!

The man has made his apologies; he has made his withdrawal. So far as I and my colleagues are concerned—and indeed so far as the public are concerned—the matter is finished and done with.

Let there be no mistake about this: On 25 August I wrote to the Premier in connection with some public remarks he had made on his return from overseas. I wrote a polite letter to him in which I pointed out to him that perhaps he had not caught up with the events. Yet once again he is trying to score some cheap political points. I wrote also in response to a letter from the Premier and I enclosed a copy of the letter the member for Murchison-Eyre had written—the letter which he had dictated while overseas, wherein he both apologised and withdrew.

I repeat so that even the member for Mitchell and some of his colleagues can hear—because there are some fair-minded people among Government members, and they might need to think about this a little—that in his letter, the member for Murchison-Eyre said—

I fully retract the sentiments of my letter...

Mr D. L. Smith: He regretted the outcry!

Mr HASSELL: Let me tell the member for Mitchell again; in his letter the member for Murchison-Eyre said—

I fully retract the sentiments of my letter...

He said—

In closing, I apologise profoundly for embarrassment my letter has caused yourself and my parliamentary colleagues in the State and Federal Liberal and National parties.

That letter was deliberately made public and was publicised, and I repeat that so far as everyone is concerned—except a few baying hyenas who have been able to gather the majority of the Caucus—the matter is long since finished and forgotten. The full weight of numbers of this Government—this comfortably numbered Government, because it does have a comfortable majority—is being brought to bear against a member who has been in this Parliament for a bare six months. This member made an error, and admitted his error; he apologised and withdrew, and offered to resign. Such was his depth of feeling on this matter that he did

so, not once, but twice, and still the Government will not let it go. What contemptible curs members of the Government are! Every member of the Government who votes for this motion is contemptible, and those members of the Government who do have a decent thought in their heads—and there are some—had better think about this because it is disgraceful.

Mr Pearce: Let him stand up here and apologise.

Mr HASSELL: This Parliament knows exactly what has been said because I sent the Premier a record of it. When the Premier tried to pull his little political stunt, I wrote back to him politely and enclosed a copy of the member for Murchison-Eyre's letter.

I indicated that we would not be part of his political stunt, so the Premier has no excuse based on ignorance for this motion the Minister has moved.

The Opposition completely rejects the motion. The member for Murchison-Eyre will not respond to the Government's calls on him, even though they be adopted by the caucused majority of the House, because the member for Murchison-Eyre has apologised, has retracted, has publicised it and has finished the matter.

If this Government is genuine in its desire to debate in this House the agricultural crisis besetting Australia—the enormity of the world grain stockpiles, the unjust and unfair marketing practices of the European Economic Community and the United States' acting in competition with it, the isolation of the Australian markets, the internal cost pressures and union disruption adding to the burdens of our farmers—we will be the first to join in that debate and make a substantial and worthwhile contribution. Indeed, my colleagues have made sure those issues are debated by the motions they have put on notice in the last two days.

But when it is all boiled down this is a simple case where a new member of Parliament made an error, acknowledged that error, apologised and retracted. On separate occasions he independently offered to me and to the President of the Liberal Party his resignation because of the problems arising from his error. His offer was rejected on both occasions. In fairness and decency there is no more to be said or done.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [3.52 p.m.]: Very briefly it is necessary to point out to the Leader of the Opposition that he has been less than direct in his presentation because it was after the letter he sent to me arrived and the apology to which he referred

was made by the member for Murchison-Eyre that the same member said publicly that the problem was not that he had made the request of Secretary Shultz but that he had been found out in making the request.

Mr Cowan: That's not true.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: According to the radio transcript it is fairly clear that the apology to which the Leader of the Opposition referred and the letter to which he has referred that he sent to me preceded this transcript taken from a radio interview that featured the member for Murchison-Eyre. I quote as follows—

I would probably do it in another way, but it has not distracted from my consuming desire to see those Governments removed because of what they are doing to this country. I would certainly be more circumspect in how I go about it in future.

In retrospect, it was a silly thing to do?

Yes, it was, I broke the eleventh commandment, which is "Thou shalt not get caught".

I am not wanting to heighten the tension but I am explaining that the Leader of the Opposition was less than honest when he said that the apology had preceded this motion. We all had a clear idea that the member for Murchison-Eyre was sorry for what he had done and that he was quite sincere in that apology which had been forwarded to me together with the Leader of the Opposition's refusal to make a joint approach to Secretary Shultz. I am saying that this transcript was recorded after all those things had happened.

That entitles us to say that we have good grounds for doubting whether the member the Murchison-Eyre is dinkum. Perhaps he would have gone on to say other things that he did not say about having broken the eleventh commandment and having got caught, etc. and that he still thought he was wrong in doing what he did, but he did not say that.

Mr Cowan: He said it was a silly thing to do.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: No, that was the question. He agreed. He said, "Yes, it was, I broke the eleventh commandment." I am answering the Leader of the Opposition's point that the motion is unnecessary because in advance of the motion he had provided an apology, etc. All these things have to be taken into account in view of the attack the Leader of the Opposition has made on the veracity of the Government and the Minister who moved the motion.

The least one can say about the member for Murchison-Eyre's behaviour is that he is sorry for what he did, that he has apologised for having written the letter but that he is very sorry or is embarrassed by the fact that he was caught. In that case we have the justification for this motion because at the very least we need to clarify the situation in which the clear inference is that the member for Murchison-Eyre's major preoccupation is with having been caught.

The Leader of the Opposition tried to say that this matter was despatched and dead in every respect. He wants to mount a large-scale attack upon the Government in vitriolic terms regardless of the fact that the member for Murchison-Eyre himself has said certain things in a radio interview. If he were a member of my party I would say, "Hey, what are you doing saying publicly that the problem is that you got caught?" I would haul him over the coals. The member for Murchison-Eyre was concerned not so much that he was wrong but that he had been caught.

We had the Leader of the Opposition standing up, as he did last night, blackguarding everyone, from business people right through to the Government and the Minister. It does not matter to the Leader of the Opposition who it is, just blackguard them in the hope of getting some advantage. He says all those things while ignoring the fact today, in his repetition of his remarks, that the member for Murchison-Eyre grieves that he was caught for the silly thing he did.

We would not have moved this motion if we did not doubt the member for Murchison-Eyre's sincerity. He is not dinkum. Either he is not dinkum or he is being flippant and smart. Whatever, he should not have said what he did in that radio interview.

Mr Cowan: He is not the only person to have a handle on that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Certainly if I had a pork pie for every mistake I made I would be 30 stone and not 12 stone 7 pounds. But that does not excuse the Leader of the Opposition's getting up and saying, "Hang on, you are all baddies over there; there is nothing you would not stoop to do", and so on. At least it justifies what we are doing.

The Leader of the Opposition is wrong to take what is now his consistent attitude and simply attack, attack, attack, regardless of who it is, friend or foe—to our advantage, I might say. I have told the Leader of the Opposition

previously that the only constituency he has left is the TLC, because he is busily disaffecting the rest of the people who previously supported him, whether it be the farmers who now support the National Party, the business people who now support us, or the ordinary men and women in the community who do not perceive much sympathy in the Opposition's policies. One of the reasons the farmers are disaffected is that silly statements are made by the member for Murchison-Eyre in the first place and then publicly restated in this form in the second place. That is what it is all about.

I am not saying that the member for Murchison-Eyre is not a bit inexperienced and a bit wrong. He likes to have a bit of a go at things. If one never gets into the ring one never gets a cauliflower ear but neither does one get to be world champion. So he likes to have a go and I do not worry about that. He is not like some of the other members who somnambulate on the back bench, and I appreciate that; but he has done a silly thing and he has done it in our name in his letter to a very influential member of the Administration of another country. In doing that he has been silly and he has compounded his silliness by saying that the major problem he perceived was the fact that he got caught.

In between time the Leader of the Opposition, in trying to defend one of his members, has tried to gloss over the fact that this comment postdates the letter he sent me. The Leader of the Opposition had no right to do that and should be saying to the member for Murchison-Eyre, "You made a mistake for which you have apologised and offered to resign but now you have compounded that mistake by subsequently complaining that the major problem was that you got caught."

That is the whole start and finish of it. I do not expect the member for Murchison-Eyre to get up. What would he say if he did? Would he say that the mistake was that he got caught, or that he is sorry for the original sin? He has nothing to add to the debate. He made a blue.

MR COWAN (Merredin—Leader of the National Party) [4.01 p.m.]: I thought this matter had concluded two months ago. Immediately after the particular statement was published in *The West Australian* there was the initial outcry. Then, like the Leader of the Opposition, I received a letter from the Premier requesting that we take certain action. Like the Leader of the Opposition I refused to take any further action on the basis, as I am sure the Premier remembers, that to do so after the

member for Murchison-Eyre had apologised would be to politicise the issue.

I think the Premier remembers just prior to that incident writing to all members of this Parliament saying that we needed to look closely at the performance and conduct of members in this place if we were going to win back the respect of the public. There is only one fact within the Premier's letter with which I would disagree. He did not include a statement to the effect that perhaps parties should look closely at their collective conduct and make sure they, too, behaved in a manner which wins back the respect of the public.

This issue was well and truly dead until it was once again raised yesterday by the Minister for Agriculture when he presented this notice of motion. I would have preferred it to stay dead. Unfortunately, the issue to which the matter refers—the crisis in wheat growing in Australia and around the world—continues, and the people I represent have already been advised that they will have to face a reduced price for wheat this year. The guaranteed minimum price has been reduced by \$13 a tonne, and that is very bad news for them at a time when they are faced with serious difficulties in maintaining profitability, particularly when their international competitors, such as the Canadians, receive a subsidy of around \$37 a tonne for every tonne produced; US growers receive \$97 a tonne subsidy in addition to what they get on the international marketplace; and the greatest offender in subsidised agricultural commodities—the EEC—subsidises its grain growers to the tune of \$113 for every tonne produced, in addition to the price they receive from various merchants.

The problem with the grain industry is that the US has at last recognised it cannot maintain an artificially high price for its product, and it is now prepared to meet the market. In the past it has really only been the Canadians, Australians, and Argentinians who have been prepared to meet world market prices. The US has not been prepared to do so, and we have seen its stocks build from around 40 million tonnes to more than 46 million tonnes in a very short space of time. The problem of subsidised grain sales and falling commodity prices still rests with the producers of Australia regardless of whether this motion is passed, defeated, or whatever.

I do not believe anything is served by a motion of this kind unless it has something positive attached to it. There is nothing positive about this motion. All it contains is all

those things which the Premier, in a letter to all members of Parliament, deplored some time ago. It contains a whole lot of subjective rubbish, as did the speech presented by the Minister for Agriculture. It serves no purpose because this issue is long dead.

Mr Pearce: In all seriousness, would it not be proper for the member to apologise to the Parliament?

Mr COWAN: If the Minister waits a while he will see what the National Party has to say about that.

This motion is really rehashing and regurgitating something that his leader has said we should try to prevent. He wants to see an improvement in members' conduct, but on the first day of the Budget session of Parliament we got a motion like this. I do not think the Premier was in the least bit dinkum when that letter was sent to us.

Mr Clarko: It is hard to stomach in the light of his behaviour when he was a backbencher on this side. It is like Mary Magdalen trying to set up a home for girls when she was a youngster.

Mr COWAN: When the Premier wrote to me and invited me to participate in a letter of condemnation of the member for Murchison-Eyre to the US Secretary of State, naturally I refused to do so on the basis that the member had apologised, that the issue need not be prolonged any further, and if it was it would be purely political. I went further in my comment to the Premier and said that what was necessary, rather than spending so much time involved in the internal domestic policies of other countries, was that this Government and all parties in Western Australia should be looking closely at doing something positive to return to profitability the wheatgrowing industry in Western Australia.

When I wrote to the Premier I suggested an all-party approach to the Federal Government to seek to have alleviated those particular policies of the Federal Government which directly affected the cost of production of primary producers. That letter was written to the Premier on 26 August, and to date I have received absolutely no response from him to that suggestion.

Everyone should have been aware of the success of the all-party delegation which went to the United States and was able to clearly demonstrate to the American political world the effects of the various decisions being made in the US to subsidise grain sales, and what they would do to Australian producers. The del-

egation was able, to a certain extent, to prevent the worst from happening in relation to subsidised sales. A guarantee was given that no subsidy would be payable to any grain grower in the US unless he was prepared to agree to a reduction in his acreage sown to wheat in future years. I think that was a significant achievement.

Considering the success of that all-party delegation, I thought it would be appropriate for us in Western Australia to send an all-party delegation to Canberra to look at our internal problems and see if we could reduce our costs in the wheat industry. I made that suggestion in a letter to the Premier on 26 August, and I have received no reply to date.

Mr Crane: It goes to show how concerned he is.

Mr COWAN: It tends to give the lie to the concern quite often expressed in this place by the Premier for the rural community and also for primary industries which contribute so much to the economy of this State.

I think a question was asked last night about how well the State's economy is running. I do not question the statistical data provided by the Premier, but he would believe he has fairies at the bottom of his garden if he believed that the economic position of primary industries in Western Australia is anything but bad.

If we are going to waste the time of this Parliament with motions such as that which is before us at the moment, we are in a very sorry state indeed. We should be recognising that the member for Murchison-Eyre acted—I do not wish to be denigrating—improperly, perhaps because of his political inexperience, and perhaps his action of writing to the Secretary of State was rather impetuous. I believe there is no question of that and the National Party and our constituents believe very strongly that that was exactly the case.

The Minister for Agriculture quoted part of a statement that I made that we did not want fellow travellers and false friends in the wheat industry trying to resolve our problems. That is true; we do not. However, I think that we do not want to see an improper and perhaps impetuous action, such as the action of the member for Murchison-Eyre, being so highly politicised.

Mr Read: Oh!

Mr COWAN: The Government raised this matter purely for political purposes and that is all.

Dr Gallop: He should have the right to stand up and speak but they won't let him.

Mr COWAN: We do not agree with the contents of the member for Murchison-Eyre's letter. I remind the member for Victoria Park that the member for Murchison-Eyre, if he feels that the issue is of sufficient importance to him—only he can make that judgment—can defend himself and no-one and nothing will place any constraints on him, least of all the member's interjections.

As I said, the National Party strongly believes that, if we are to represent our constituents and the wheat industry in particular, we cannot ignore the fact that the letter was written. We appreciate that the member for Murchison-Eyre has apologised for his actions. However, we do not believe in the total politicisation of this issue. We would like to see something positive emanate from this debate.

Amendment to Motion

I therefore move the following amendment—

To delete all words after "House".

In order that members may consider those words, I hope you, Mr Deputy Speaker, will be indulgent enough to allow me to read the words I want to substitute.

Mr Pearce: Why didn't you circulate this in advance?

Mr COWAN: The Leader of the House does not always circulate in advance notice of actions that he intends taking. We appreciate that he has, to some extent, been far more co-operative than his predecessor. Nevertheless, he does not circulate notice of every action he intends taking.

This is not a terribly complicated amendment. I am sure that anyone with the intellect of the Leader of the House will be able to appreciate what we are trying to do and will be able to make a very quick decision on whether it will be supported. The words that I intend to move to substitute are as follows—

- (1) calls on the member for Murchison-Eyre to unconditionally withdraw in writing his letter to the US Secretary of State, Mr Shultz regarding subsidised US wheat sales. This House also calls on him to reiterate in the Parliament the apology he has already made to the Australian people.

- (2) places on record its support for the recent all party delegation to the United States which argued against subsidised wheat sales by that country.
- (3) requests an all-party delegation, comprising the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party, or their nominees, to make a forceful submission to the Commonwealth Government to take immediate action to reduce its contribution to the artificially high production costs of the wheat industry through its discriminatory taxation and tariff policies, and its failure to allow the wheat industry to use the most cost-effective methods of transporting its inputs and its exports.

We are calling upon the member for Murchison-Eyre, if he has not already done so, to write to the Secretary of State and withdraw the remarks he made in his earlier letter, to reiterate an apology he has already made to the Australian people by way of that letter, to give support to a successful all-party delegation that went to the United States, and finally and most importantly, to take some action which will bring home to the Federal Government the fact that, by maintaining its policies, it is reducing our profitability as wheat growers to levels which are forcing us to leave the industry at a far higher rate than is necessary or should be expected. That is, I think, the most important part of this amendment.

I do not think that our politicising or rehashing something that occurred two months ago serves any purpose, particularly in the light of the fact that the member for Murchison-Eyre has apologised. It is important, though, to note that no matter what is said about the member for Murchison-Eyre's letter, the wheat growers' crisis continues and nothing is being done to alleviate it.

If I had the opportunity to travel to Canberra and to walk through three or four departments over there and through one department in this State, I would emphasise the need to allow growers to retain a much greater proportion of the wealth they generate and I would give them back their viability. I would go to the Australian Customs Service and tell it to abolish tariffs on all products not manufactured in Australia and to follow that with a phased withdrawal of tariffs on other products. I would then go to the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce and tell it to reduce the tax on fuel used for primary production. I

would suggest that the tariffs on chemicals be abolished. I would then approach the State Department of Transport and suggest that it had better produce a realistic transport costing for agricultural products. If I did that I would restore the viability of agriculture and, in particular, of wheat growers overnight.

Mr Troy: Are you unhappy about the recent measure relating to road transport?

Mr COWAN: I will be happy when the Minister produces a per-tonne, per-kilometre price equivalent for rail. When he does that he will have done his job and will be congratulated by every wheat grower in Australia.

I have always told the Minister for Agriculture that he did a pretty good job when he was the Minister for Transport, and I stand by that, but I would like the present Minister for Transport to improve on his performance. The announced road transport rates for grain are better than the tendered price for grain by rail, particularly long distance rail, this year.

This amendment deserves to be supported and I commend it to members of the House.

MR D. L. SMITH (Mitchell) [4.22 p.m.]: I join in the debate because of the importance of the matters at issue to country people in Western Australia. To ascertain whether or not country Western Australians think the matter is of importance, one has only to refer to the following remarks made by the President of the Primary Industry Association, Mr Winston Crane, which were published in *The West Australian* on 21 August 1986—

It is clear that Mr Lightfoot does not care how much West Australian farmers' blood he has on his hands in pursuing his selfish, political ambitions.

His actions are irresponsible and should be condemned by all thinking Australians.

The article was headed, "PIA calls for censure of MP", yet the National Party, which purports to represent rural interests—why it changed its name to establish that, I do not know—comes before this House and advises that there is no need for censure. The Leader of the Opposition says there is no need for censure.

Mr Cowan: What will it achieve?

Mr D. L. SMITH: I will come to what it will achieve later.

The Leader of the Opposition said that it was an old issue; that the member concerned had said that he was sorry; that the Premier had told all members not to call each other names; that we should forget the issue and not be hy-

enas and feed on the carcase of a man who has made a mistake.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: There is an amendment before the Chair and the member for Mitchell is debating the motion. It is quite out of order at this time to be entering the general debate in this way. He will have an opportunity to do that. Apparently he is trying to fill in time to help out the Government because the Minister, who was deeply sorry to have to move the motion, was not in this House to hear the remarks made by the Leader of the National Party.

The Government is now frantically rushing around working out whether it will support the amendment. The member for Mitchell, in breach of the Standing Orders, is trying to fill in time. An amendment is before the Chair and he should be speaking to it.

Mr D. L. SMITH: On the point of order, the amendment which has been moved is similar to the motion moved by the Government. The only elements in which it differs are the question of censure and the question of a delegation to the national Government. They are the only two substantial differences. The first matter I was dealing with was the question of censure and the reason why it is necessary to involve a degree of censure.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Mitchell to contain his remarks to the amendment before the Chair. It does not mean that I will not afford him the same degree of tolerance that I afford, with complete impartiality, to every member in this House when I am in the Chair.

Debate Resumed

Mr D. L. SMITH: In essence there are only two differences between the amendment and the principal motion. One difference is the absence of any censure and the second difference is the question of a delegation to the national Parliament.

On the question of censure I have indicated already that the PIA has called for this member of Parliament to be censured. If one looks at the view expressed by the National Party and the Liberal Party in the Federal Government he will see that Mr Howard on 20 August was very quick to say, "I can only say in the House that his views"—the views of the member for Murchison-Eyre—"on this issue would be repudiated by every member of the Liberal and

National Parties who sit in this Parliament." The situation is that the Federal members of the Opposition were willing to repudiate everything the member for Murchison-Eyre had said.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not know whether members incurred some hearing difficulties during the recess, but I do not intend to tolerate these interjections any further. I will give the call to the speaker on his feet regardless of what party he is from, but I do not intend to listen to the mud-slinging that has occurred today.

Mr D. L. SMITH: One may wonder why the Liberal and National Parties in this Parliament take a different view to that expressed by their respective parties in the Federal Parliament. The truth is that it has something to do with the fact that we are dealing with a very new member of this State Parliament. He is a new member who has taken a different ideological perspective from the Liberal Party of old, but which more correctly identifies the present ideological perspective of the State Parliamentary Liberal Party as against its Federal counterpart.

It is clear that the new broom in this State is a new broom of the New Right; that the New Right members are really the puppet masters who control and apparently select the qualities that members opposite should have in order to seek political endorsement.

In relation to the New Right I will quote from a book written in 1982 by Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, who is not known for her leftist Communist views. The book is titled "Dictatorships and Double Standards". One chapter explains why the New Right lost and it refers to the New Right in the United States. She was referring to the Wallaces, the Goldwaters and the like who did not succeed in what they wanted to do when they thought they were the flavour of the month. The book states—

The ideological perspective in politics thus breeds intolerance of diversity and—

Point of Order

Mr CLARKO: I fail to see the relevance of the remarks about the New Right and Jeane Fitzpatrick—who was the United States' Ambassador to the United Nations—to this amendment or to the original motion. I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to rule on whether the comments are relevant.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Mitchell, as I did earlier, to relate his comments to the amendment before the Chair.

Debate Resumed

Mr D. L. SMITH: I will be pleased to do so.

The relevance of the remarks of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, not Fitzpatrick as mentioned by the member for Karrinyup, is that one of the reasons that the conduct of the member for Murchison-Eyre needs to be censured is because it reflects the kind of political attitude that is emerging in the State Liberal Party as its dominant view. That view is so dangerous to Australians, in this instance country Western Australians and wheat growers in particular, that one needs to censure it at every opportunity.

Jeane Kirkpatrick said—

The ideological perspective in politics thus breeds intolerance of diversity—

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: One does not make remarks relevant to the motion before the House by saying they are relevant, which is what the member for Mitchell has attempted to do in completely ignoring your request, Mr Deputy Speaker. It has been drawn to your attention now three times that his remarks are totally unrelated to the amendment—not that anyone wants to stop him speaking to the motion in the broadest of terms, but this is not the motion; it is the amendment. His remarks bear no relevance or relationship to it and he should make these remarks at a later stage when the motion is once more before the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: With due respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I do not think that on this occasion you have brought to my notice a point of order. I would like the member for Mitchell to continue.

Debate Resumed

Mr D. L. SMITH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The quotation consists of only a few lines. It reads—

The ideological perspective in politics thus breeds intolerance of diversity, impatience with compromise, and the kind of intransigence characteristic of sectarian, rule-or-ruin politics.

In relation to diversity, we are already familiar in this House with the remarks of the member for Murchison-Eyre in relation to French boy scouts.

Leave granted to continue speech at a later stage of the sitting.

Debate thus adjourned.

TRANSPORT: AIRSTRIP

Margaret River: Grievance

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [4.32 p.m.]: My grievance this afternoon concerns the Department of Conservation and Land Management. I would hope that the Minister—

Mr Pearce: It is normal for the Opposition to let us know which Ministers it wants to grieve against so that we can make sure they are in the House. The member for Vasse has not done that today.

Mr BLAIKIE: Unfortunately, although I knew that grievances were coming up, I did not realise they were coming up quite so quickly.

My grievance relates to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management and the ability of the Department of Conservation and Land Management to lease land under conditions that I believe are not within the spirit of the Act. Under sections 8 and 9 of the Conservation and Land Management Act, Parliament is empowered to make a decision as to whether land can be added to or taken away from a State forest. It is required that the Minister cause papers to be laid on the Table of the House so that Parliament has the opportunity either to agree or disagree with the request of the Government of the day as to whether certain areas should be added to or taken away from State forests. That is a very important principle and it has been the principle of the Forests Act since it was brought into being in 1921. It has been embodied again in the new Conservation and Land Management Act which was brought into being some two or three years ago.

Section 97 of the Conservation and Land Management Act also gives the executive director the right to lease land subject to conditions that the Minister may lay down for periods up to 20 years. Again, that was part of a continuation of the practice that was contained in the Forests Act. Again, I indicate very clearly my support for those provisions to allow the Department of Conservation and Land Management to manage its land properly and to the benefit of all people of the State.

Among the areas of land that can be leased within forest areas are apiary sites. Apiaries play a very important role. Apiary sites are determined; the department then says that X number of areas will be apiary sites and leases

them to apiarists. Reference to grazing leases is also contained in the legislation.

In addition, there is another area. The department has leased to the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River part of the Keenan pine plantation for use as an airstrip. I believe the department has acted commendably and I support what it has done. In January of this year an announcement was made that an area of the State forest immediately south of the town of Margaret River was to be used for the establishment of an airstrip. The first notice that was given of that was by way of a Press release from the South West Development Authority. It was reported in the *Busselton-Margaret Times* of the day. The announcement was made by Dr Manea that the Commonwealth Government would be approached to fund an airport for Margaret River at a cost of \$891 000. The airstrip was to be based in an area of State forest some five kilometres south-east of the town. The shire president, Councillor Hillier, also commented at the time that the South West Development Authority said that the airport would be finished in time for the America's Cup defence provided Parliament approved the excision of land from State forest.

The article was headed, "Council 'red-faced' over airport plan", thus demonstrating the concern of councillors. The councillors did not really understand the full implications, but that was part of the pre-election scenario. It was the intention, subject to the approval of Parliament, to locate this airstrip on forest land five kilometres south of Margaret River and seek the approval of the Parliament for the excision. At the same time, there was a great deal of concern within the community and a petition went around the local community. Although the petition does not conform to the Standing Orders with respect to petitions to be laid on the Table of the House, I ask approval, Mr Deputy Speaker, that copies of the petition be allowed to lie on the Table of the House for the perusal of members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The documents referred to by the member for Vasse may be placed on the Table for the perusal of members.

Mr BLAIKIE: The petition contains some 1 200 signatures of people who were most concerned about the establishment of the airport in this area. It has been drawn to my attention that this airstrip could have been built on the land in question because section 97 of the Conservation and Land Management Act provided that a lease could have been arranged. The area

in the State forest could have been cleared at the direction of the executive director with the approval of the Minister. I do not really think that the Minister would have been fully au fait with what may have been going on, because I believe it was outside the intentions of the Parliament. As it was a lease proposition, the approval of Parliament was not necessary as no excision of the land was required. The land could have been cleared by bulldozing without the approval of the Parliament for an airstrip to be built on it, thus negating the intention of the legislation to have consideration by the Parliament.

It could have been done for the very reason that a lease would have been acquired and the Department of Conservation and Land Management would have been able to say that the airstrip was to be used for firefighting and fire management purposes, which would have been conducive to the future of the State forest.

I would be pleased to give the Minister a copy of the legal opinion, which came from the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and I ask that it be incorporated in *Hansard*.

The following material was incorporated by leave of the House—

Opinion of Leases Granted Under Section 97 of the Conservation and Land Management Act.

I refer to your request for advice dated 9th June, 1986.

Before a lease can be granted under s.97 the Executive Director and the Minister must be of the view that the purpose of the lease is "not opposed to the interests of forestry".

It is clear that the activity to be undertaken pursuant to such a lease need not have the character of actually enhancing or advancing the interests of forestry. It does not have to conduce in any way to forestry use.

What is necessary is that the purpose for which the land is leased should not be inimical to the forestry objectives to which the land is dedicated; those objectives being essentially as expressed in s.56 of the Act.

Provided the matter is approached in that way it is ultimately a matter for the judgment of the Minister as to whether a proposed lease under s.97 is for a purpose not opposed to the interests of forestry.

Each case will depend upon its particular facts. All I can say is that it is conceivable that there may be circumstances where the development of a commercial airstrip would be found acceptable within the terms of s.97. On the other hand where the development would require the permanent clearing of a substantial area of forest which would not otherwise have been likely to be so removed it may be more difficult to come to the judgment required by s.97—unless, for example, there were some corresponding advantages relevant to forestry which might ensue from the presence of a particular airstrip.

Debate Resumed

Mr BLAICKIE: That legal opinion bears out exactly what I have been saying.

It is my very firm belief that with regard to State forest areas being carved up for airports or whatever, no matter how well-intentioned the project may be, the Parliament had always intended that parliamentary approval be obtained prior to the transfer of the land. I do not believe it was ever intended by Parliament that leases could be arranged and then 18 months or two years later, when 200 or 300 acres of land had been bulldozed, the Parliament would be faced with a fait accompli for the land to be excised from the State forest. I believe there is a very subtle point involved.

The grievance I bring to the Minister's attention is that the circumstances are such that it can happen and it could cause some embarrassment to the Government of the day. I bring it to the attention of Parliament in the hope that this very grievous situation does not occur and that the Minister will be able to rectify the situation to prevent its happening in the future.

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Conservation and Land Management) [4.42 p.m.]: I was greatly interested in the point raised by the member for Vasse. Unfortunately he gave me no notice of the matter he intended to raise. As it is a very complex matter involving legal opinion, I think it would have been more productive for him to have given me some notice so that I could have been thoroughly briefed on it. Nevertheless, I will do my best to comment off the cuff on the matters raised by him.

I recognise the sincerity of the grievance raised by the member for Vasse, although I think a lot of the concern he expressed is really based on a hypothetical question of what he thinks may or may not happen.

Mr Blaikie: It was indicated to me that that is how the project would proceed.

Mr HODGE: I am the Minister who has the say on State forests and I have not given that indication to the member. I do not know who is giving the member for Vasse the indications. I have made no decision; indeed, I have not been asked to make a decision on the question raised. I thank the member for alerting me to his concerns and if I am asked to make a decision I will take into account the points he has made.

It is a question of legal opinion as to whether land for an airstrip can be leased in the way the member has suggested. The rule of thumb seems to be that if the land is to be used for the benefit of the forest, it is appropriate for it to be leased. If it is not going to be used for purposes that will advantage the forest, I think it is doubtful that it could legally be leased. Obviously, if I am asked to make that decision I will seek Crown Law advice as to what I should do and I will be guided by that advice. The member for Vasse can be assured that any decision I make will be based on Crown Law advice; there is no way that I will put myself in a position in which I may possibly be in breach of the Conservation and Land Management Act.

Mr Blaikie: I think the airstrip project is a very good project and very exciting but this is really not the way to do it.

Mr HODGE: Obviously, if I am asked to make the sort of decision the member is suggesting and my advice is that it is quite legal and proper for a lease to be granted and, if it appears to be the most suitable way, I will give consideration to that method. If my advice is that it is not legal or is of doubtful legality, I shall look at the other route which is excision of part of the land and it is a requirement for such matters to come before Parliament.

The member suggested that somehow or other I would allow hundreds of hectares of State forest to be bulldozed and I would then seek retrospective parliamentary approval for the transfer. I do not think that is fair speculation for the member to make; obviously, I will not allow hundreds of hectares of State forest to be bulldozed in such a cavalier way. I will thoroughly check the legality of the CALM Act and ascertain whether it is legal for land to be leased before giving permission for any area of State forest to be bulldozed.

I take my responsibilities as Minister for Conservation and Land Management very seriously and I consider it my responsibility to

be the protector and guardian of the State forest. I will not lightly allow any significant area of the State forest to be cleared for an airstrip unless I have done my homework and feel satisfied that all is appropriate.

I appreciate the genuineness of the concern by the member for Vasse but most of the points raised are speculation. I have not made any decision on this matter and I have not been asked to make a decision. Therefore, the member's concern is probably largely unnecessary. Nevertheless, I thank him for bringing it to my attention and to the attention of the House.

REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Cooling-off Period: Grievance

MRS HENDERSON (Gosnells) [4.48 p.m.]: I would like to raise two questions this afternoon which have been brought to my attention by a number of my constituents and which I think perhaps need some attention.

The first relates to the purchase of real estate, either a house or a block of land. In my view we have an anomalous situation in Western Australia in which a person purchasing a set of encyclopaedias, perhaps to the value of several hundred dollars, or another item from someone calling at the front door, is given a cooling-off period of seven days in which to consider that purchase. If that person later changes his mind about that purchase, he has the right to exercise the provisions of that cooling-off period.

The most important and most significant decision made in most people's lives in terms of a purchase or an investment is their home. It is anomalous that such a large investment does not carry with it any cooling-off period at all. There is no doubt that it is a decision that should be made coolly and calmly taking into consideration all the factors involved. There is also no doubt that the real estate industry is a very competitive one in which salespersons are anxious to clinch deals as quickly as possible because there is so much competition. That is quite natural but, when people start to show an interest in purchasing a home, very soon after inspecting a home—and I am sure everyone is quite familiar with this situation—the real estate agent tells them that there are several other interested buyers and if they want to get this house at the price offered, or perhaps at a price considerably below the advertised price, they need to hop in fairly quickly.

A person looking at purchasing a home, particularly a first home buyer, can find himself under a considerable amount of pressure. We

all know people take into account a wide range of factors when choosing a home. There are not only factual matters, such as the number of rooms and their sizes and the age of the house and its structural condition, but there is also a whole range of ephemeral, almost emotional factors to take into account; features which appeal or do not appeal to a buyer. Sometimes those features tend to predominate as the person moves around looking at different houses. They may be of more interest than some of the more factual things.

The onus has always been on the buyer to ask the right questions. People experienced in buying real estate soon learn what questions to ask, but the first home buyer may not even think to ask questions about future zoning of land in the vicinity, future road widening, distances to local schools, shopping centres, and public transport. Those are the dry and perhaps less interesting features, and the buyer might be more interested in the rustic appeal and not ask about council and sewerage rates, future development plans for the area, and such things. It is often not until people have actually signed on the dotted line after having visited dozens of houses that they sit down and start to think calmly about some of the less interesting things which they should have asked about at the time.

I have no doubt that some people, when they finally make a decision to buy a home, do so in a state of utter exhaustion. They traipse from display home to display home, and their final decision may be made in a fairly exhausted state, clouded by a surfeit of choice. For some of those people these dull questions only occur after they have made their decision. They have then committed themselves to a very large and specific purchase with a very large mortgage, or perhaps two mortgages, with no chance of changing their minds should they find some feature of the home, the area, or the plans for the area, which do not fit in with what they had hoped to do.

Some real estate persons use fairly high-pressure techniques. I have encountered two groups who are particularly vulnerable to this pressure. The first group consists of newly-arrived immigrants. These people often have no understanding of real estate values in Western Australia. They often have no conception of the different values in different parts of Western Australia, and indeed different parts of the metropolitan area. They may not know what sort of questions to ask because sometimes in their home countries local govern-

ments, councils, sewerage services, and so on may be quite different.

They have often arrived in Australia flush with funds from the sale of their homes in the countries they have come from, and many of them want to settle as quickly as possible. They want to purchase a home and get their children into schools. Not many of them look at renting for a short time while they work out the best place to live in the metropolitan area and what sort of home would suit them best. Many of them go straight to the real estate agent, who quickly works out that they have sufficient money to buy a home. They make a decision rapidly, and later find many things they should have asked about.

The second group which is vulnerable to pressure from real estate agents is the elderly. These are people whose families have grown up and moved out of the home. Perhaps it is a widow who owns a three or four bedroom house and a real estate agent knocks on the door and offers her a free appraisal, or an obligation-free valuation of her home. The agent suggests a smaller unit with less upkeep and no garden; perhaps a compact unit with other people of the same age group around her.

It is very easy for these people to listen to these advantages without necessarily taking the time to consider the effects of dislocation and upheaval which will result if they move away from their friends and contacts. Perhaps they have not considered the distance from public transport if they do not have a car. That group needs protection, particularly if they do not have members of their families to look at the home units to advise them on the best way to move to a smaller place.

A cooling-off period for real estate purchasers would not affect 90 per cent of real estate agents, who are quite happy for their clients to take their time and make their decisions coolly and calmly so that they are happy at the end of the day. Many real estate agents now regard purchasers in terms of long-term customers who might come back again, and they will not do that unless they are happy with the service provided.

However, some real estate agents engage in fairly high-pressure tactics. The result is that people often make snap decisions which, at the end of the day, they would like to have considered more fully, but once the contract has been signed there is no possibility of any reconsideration. In most cases this does not mean they do not want to purchase a home. Perhaps

they do, but it may not be that particular one. We have cooling-off periods for other purchases which are far less significant than the purchase of a home. We should look at the need for a cooling-off period for real estate contracts.

MR WILSON (Nollamara—Minister for Housing) [4.57 p.m.]: I would like to congratulate the member for Gosnells for raising this problem. As she has indicated, and I am sure it is the experience of many members, this is a matter of concern raised by quite a few constituents, but it is usually raised beyond the point when anything can be done about the problem.

At the same time, of course, as in all other issues of relevance to consumer protection, we can never go beyond the axiom that buyers themselves should beware of all the possible traps which face them in negotiating the purchase of a particular commodity.

As the member for Gosnells has rightly pointed out, for a great majority of people the purchase of a home for the first time is usually undertaken by people without the necessary experience to be in a position to ask all the relevant questions to protect themselves against a situation where they may make a decision which, for a whole range of reasons, they may later regret.

Interestingly, only during the past weekend I had an urgent call at home from a constituent who had just signed an offer and acceptance for a property. She was a widow with children. She had seen a duplex unit and needed to make a quick decision because the unit suited her purpose in most respects. It was close to the school—a non-Government school which her children were attending and which would be on her way to work in the morning. The school was between the unit and her place of work. In all respects it suited her requirements.

However, it was not until after she had signed the offer and acceptance that she was able to obtain the assistance of a builder to look at the property, and he found a number of defects. She noticed for the first time that there was several large trees overhanging from a neighbouring property and leaning against a brick wall which was already being affected by the trees. There were problems with the roof due to the collection of leaves over a period of time. The roof leaked, and so on.

It would be easy to say, from another person's point of view, "You should have looked at those things before you signed; you should

have got someone to look at it ahead of time", and so on. It is a situation in which many inexperienced people find themselves, often as a result of a lack of advice or a lack of knowledge about where to go for such advice. For example, they can be people without family members with experience whom they can consult. It is a matter of genuine concern.

I do know that the Law Society of Western Australia has supported the need for legislation for a cooling-off period in these situations. There is debate as to whether the cooling-off period should apply from the date on which the offer is accepted, or from the date of the purchaser's offer. I suppose to a large degree that is an academic debate in terms of the overall issue.

I can only say at this stage that it is a matter which the Government has considered, and about which we are intending to have further consultation with the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia. I have certainly taken on board the very valid points raised by the member for Gosnells in her comments, in terms of the experience she has had with certain types of constituents. I am sure it is an experience she shares with members who have had comparable incidents drawn to their attention in their own electorates. I assure the member for Gosnells and the House that we will be giving further consideration to this matter, and to the issue of introducing legislation, following further consultations with those involved in the real estate industry.

PLANNING COMMISSION: MEMBERS

Rural: Grievance

MR SCHELL (Mt Marshall) [5.04 p.m.]: My grievance is that the five-member State Planning Commission under the Minister for Planning does not have a member with rural affairs orientation.

The function of the commission is to advise the Minister on the coordination and promotion of urban, rural, and regional land use planning and land development in the State, and the administration, revision and reform of legislation relating thereto. I need not remind anyone in this House of the importance of regional land use and planning, and land development in the big State of Western Australia.

Legislation was introduced originally in April 1985, following a Government report commissioned in 1983. Clearly the planning arrangements in country areas at the time were in need of coordination.

The Government report recommended that the planning commission legislation fully recognise and incorporate country planning needs. The Government then introduced the Western Australian Planning Commission Bill. To its credit, the Government listened to objections and reservations from local Government representatives. It altered the Bill slightly and reintroduced it six months later as the State Planning Commission Bill. In the transition, in the report to the second Bill the role of country representatives on the commission altered and, regrettably, was reduced. I am not suggesting any anticountry conspiracy, merely an oversight.

In answer to my question on notice yesterday, the Minister provided a host of valuable information but did not say why there is no country representation on the commission itself. It is important that the State Planning Commission be just that—a commission that looks at planning matters from a State-wide perspective, not just a metropolitan perspective. There are metropolitan planning matters that affect country people.

I refer to the State Planning Commission's review of the proposed re-routing of the Great Eastern Highway. The people in the area who are directly affected have been given every opportunity to have a say. The commission should be commended for its efforts to involve the people in the Mundaring and local areas in the decision-making process. However, the people of the country areas who use the Great Eastern Highway as their major access to Perth have had little, and in many cases no, effective opportunity to have their say.

I use this example to demonstrate the need for a true State Planning Commission, rather than a metropolitan planning commission that co-opts country representatives only when it considers it necessary.

I remember that at one time ladies in many sporting organisations were considered associate members, and they considered themselves to be second-class citizens. Are people with a rural background in planning matters to consider themselves second-class or associate citizens?

Mr Troy: I refer you specifically to the opportunity for public input on the eastern hills road option. You know as well as I do that, apart from the public meetings they were welcome to attend, they had ample opportunity to make written submissions on it.

Mr Cowan: There is no rural representation to argue that case within the commission.

Mr SCHELL: There is a five-member commission with no rural representation on it. Surely one or two members should have a rural background, when one looks at the State as a whole—the vast agricultural areas, country towns, and the north-west. Surely rural representation of at least one should be on the commission. I urge the Minister to keep a very close eye on the planning needs of country people, although he could save himself a lot of time by appointing a country representative to the State Planning Commission.

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Minister for Planning) [5.09 p.m.]: I guess one could make what one might call the Hassell excuse for the member for Mt Marshall, in that he has been here only a short time and does not know what he is doing.

Mr Clarko: That would be unfair and wrong.

Mr PEARCE: That was the Leader of the Opposition's defence of the member for Murchison-Eyre, and it may well be the case of the member for Mt Marshall, because many of the points he raises were in fact canvassed in debate in this House when the State Planning Commission legislation went through.

I would remind members of what I consider to be the dishonesty of the Country Shire Councils Association's campaign on this matter, which the member for Mt Marshall has taken up. The circumstances were as he said. I introduced a Bill in the autumn session last year to establish the Planning Commission on a certain basis as an interim group ready to get working on the new planning legislation. There was much argument about how many members ought to be representative of local government, so I withdrew the Bill and became involved in lengthy negotiations with local government people about their level of representation on the State Planning Commission.

I was not prepared to go past their having one representative, on the basis that planning is a two-tiered operation; that is, there is a local government level and a State Planning Commission level. I did not want a position where the level which does the base planning across the State—local government—had almost 50 per cent representation at the review level. I thought it was reasonable for them to have one, but not two, representatives out of five. In the end, that position was agreed to by everybody. The agreement was that local government would have one representative, they would put

up a panel of three names jointly agreed to by the Country Shire Councils Association and the Local Government Association, and we would choose one to be a member of the commission. In addition to that, there would be the Country Planning Council and all the country associate members.

That was the deal made before I came back to the Parliament with the legislation. It went through the House on the basis of that agreement, and the Country Shire Councils Association agreed to that arrangement—that is to say, a panel of three names, jointly put up by the Country Shire Councils Association and the LGA, providing for Country Planning Council membership for country people. The CSCA agreed to that arrangement, but when we picked a name off the list, we picked the President of the LGA. The Country Shire Councils Association—because we did not pick their person—then sought to withdraw from the agreement. Now, if we had picked the CSCA nominee from the list, they would have been perfectly happy. I had to go back to the CSCA and say, "Fair go, if your position was that you would agree to that arrangement only if your person was picked, you should have said so in the beginning, instead of going through the charade of pretending that you agreed to putting up a joint list of three".

However, they came to see me and they wanted their president, Councillor Richie Maslin, put on the State Planning Commission. Then they wanted two local government representatives on the State Planning Commission—one for the city and one for the country—and two representatives out of five was a position which we had specifically rejected in advance, as we believed that this would be too many local government people on a commission as small as the SPC.

However, infinitely flexible as we are in Government, I then proposed to the LGA and the CSCA that if that was the new attitude of the CSCA, maybe the Government should have a rotating position for the local government representative. This would mean that one year the position would be held by the LGA person, while in the following year it would be held by the CSCA person. I put that proposition to the CSCA and to all the country shire councils which had been writing to me on this matter. There is no way in which I am going to agree, nor is the Government going to agree, to going back on that arrangement, to which everybody agreed in the first instance, and, as a result of pressure from the CSCA, increase the local

government representation on the Country Planning Council from one position to two.

Mr Clarko: You will agree that when we debated the Bill, I expressed great concern at the lack of proper representation for the country.

Mr PEARCE: If I recall correctly, the member for Karrinyup moved a motion to put two people on instead of one, but everybody else had agreed to accept the Government's position, including this House when the vote was held on that particular matter.

Mr Clarko: Brutality of numbers!

Mr PEARCE: Not brutality of numbers; I was particularly persuasive on that matter, as I recall.

Under the circumstances the Government went through a lengthy consultative process with everybody involved, withdrew the Bill, discussed it, and then made a decision which was put through the House and to which everybody subscribed. I say seriously to the member for Mt Marshall that I do not blame him for taking up the issue in the way he has, but I put it to him that the Government has acted in a very fair way, and it is an unfairness on behalf of the CSCA in, firstly, agreeing to that arrangement and, secondly, then packing its cricket bat and going home.

The CSCA did agree to that arrangement, and had its person been picked from the panel it would have been perfectly happy, but because it was one of the LGA nominations—the LGA put up two of the three panel members—the CSCA was dissatisfied. If there had been agreement among people representative of local government generally, they could have submitted a panel of three nominations—all people from country areas—and ensured the appointment to the commission of a country person. That would have been fair and responsible, and the Government certainly would have accepted that.

However, I believe that a backdoor method is being used to put pressure on me and the Government to increase the number of local government representatives from one to two. I believe that would be destabilising for the SPC because it would be akin to those members who support the House of Review arrangements for the Legislative Assembly insisting that 40 per cent of the Legislative Council be appointed from the Legislative Assembly to make sure that when they review legislation here they do so in the full knowledge of what had happened

in the Legislative Assembly in the first place. It is that kind of a nonsense position.

I would move now to the second point of the member for Mt Marshall, which is that because of all this carrying on, or because of these agreements, the net result is that the SPC knows nothing about planning in the country. That simply is not true. The fact of the matter is that the appointment of Dr Harman has meant that an academic, who is very experienced indeed in strategy planning on a macro basis, has come onto the commission. She is an expert in planning, not just for the metropolitan area, but also for land uses across metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Her expertise lies in the area of planning in rural areas.

Mr Clarko: Some people think she is very politically-partisan.

Mr PEARCE: People may want to say that. I have never heard anyone say that she was not extremely competent in her area. That is why she was appointed.

The member for Mt Marshall is in effect saying—and echoing the words of the Country Shire Councils Association—that one can understand planning in rural areas only if one comes from a rural council. I just do not accept that is the case, nor do I accept that one cannot have people who are experts in planning outside of statutory planning in the metropolitan area unless one takes somebody from a rural council. In fact, I gave very serious consideration to picking somebody from the SPC who did have an expertise that was wider than statutory planning in the Perth metropolitan area. On that basis I appointed Dr Harman and there was no-one offering, that I was aware of, who lived in a country area who was able to bring that level of expertise in country planning to the SPC.

So in fact I fulfilled the undertaking I gave to the CSCA that when a vacancy was filled on the Council, it would be filled by a person able to give the SPC that level of advice. However, unfortunately the CSCA has taken a narrow view of events and I have had to be fairly firm in saying to them I am not going back on the agreement made originally, only to have one local Government representative on the SPC.

Even so, I have asked the Chairman of the SPC, Mr Bill McKenzie, to discuss with the CSCA and other councils the effectiveness of the Country Planning Council and the range of mechanisms which were set in place to allow country councils to have their say on planning matters fed into SPC meetings. Those dis-

cussions are continuing but I understand that as a result of this a whole range of additional boards are being set up around the country so that country people can have a fair say in planning matters which affect them. However, I would say to the member for Mt Marshall that in looking at a State-wide State Planning Commission, the most important thing is to have a group of people who are able to make decisions jointly in respect of prepared strategy plans which this State needs, whether it be country or metropolitan. It would be unwise in fact to seek to have merely a number of representatives of relatively narrow interests, whether they be rural, metropolitan, or whatever, replacing people who represent that broader view.

The SPEAKER: Grievances noted.

[Questions taken.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 p.m.

POLICE FORCE: MORALE

Inquiry: Motion

MR CASH (Mt Lawley) [7.18 p.m.]: I move—

That this House expresses its grave concern at the Government's failure to adequately address all the issues surrounding the current low morale in the Western Australia Police Force, and calls on the Government to immediately institute an inquiry to identify areas of concern within the Police Force, and to determine such action which should be implemented to improve this current unsatisfactory situation.

You will be aware, Mr Speaker, that in recent months there has been much Press speculation about what is happening in respect of morale in the Police Force in Western Australia. Before the Government gets carried away, I would like it to consider the wording of this motion because, if it likes to break it into three parts, it will see that, firstly, it deals with the Government's failure to address adequately all the issues that are currently before the Police Force. Secondly, it calls on the Government to institute an inquiry to identify the various areas of concern. Thirdly, it makes a constructive comment in suggesting that the inquiry determine such action as is necessary to improve the situation. Briefly, it could be said that the Opposition wants this motion to be seen in its absolutely constructive sense as that is the way it is put.

First, the Opposition wants the Government to recognise the issues and identify the areas of concern that face our Police Force today. Secondly, it wants the Government to take whatever action is necessary to improve the current situation. It is important for all members of the House to recognise that the Opposition, in moving this motion, maintains its absolute confidence in all members of the Police Force in Western Australia and continues its strong support of that force. As I have said on a number of occasions, the Opposition wants a strong, effective and efficient Police Force in this State. While I am the Opposition spokesman on police matters, the Opposition will fight to the last to make sure that that is the situation that we have in this State.

When I see the Government failing in its duties in respect of its obligations to the people in this State, I will stand up in this House and raise the issues which I believe need attention. The latest annual report of the Commissioner of Police lists the objectives of the Western Australia Police Force as follows—

...to be the major contributor to the safety and security of people in Western Australia by providing an effective and efficient service aimed at:—

the maintenance of public peace and good order;

the protection of life and property; and

the detection and prosecution of certain offenders.

It goes on to say—

To meet that objective, the Force is administratively supported by the Police Department which also provides other administration and licensing functions.

You, Mr Speaker, would be aware that the Police Force in Western Australia comprises approximately 3 200 members and has an annual expenditure in the order of \$125 million. It has been put to the Opposition by the Government in recent times that the Government's recent additions or recruitments to the Police Force have, in fact, outstripped those of the previous Government. I am prepared to accept and concede that right now. There is no question that in recent times the Government has attempted to increase the numbers in the Western Australia Police Force and it has been fairly successful in doing so. But, no matter what the increases made in the last few years, there is no doubt that the manning levels of the WA Police Force at the

moment are still totally inadequate to cope with the current situation.

One of the other areas causing some concern in the force is that since the appointment of our new Commissioner of Police, Brian Bull, a person in whom the Opposition has absolute confidence, there have been a number of changes in the Police Force. The Opposition recognises the need for those changes. I guess it is a case of the traditions of the past now giving way to the modern management practices we would expect to be instituted in any dynamic and ongoing organisation.

Much reference has been made to those changes in the Police Union magazine called *Police News*. I quote from the March/April 1986 edition, in which the Secretary of the Police Union, Mr Stingemore, recognises the changes that are absolutely necessary but encourages the Government and the Police Force to consult with the union as those changes are worked through.

In other article on page 10 in the same magazine, the Deputy Office Manager of the Police Union, Ms Hinemoa Puriri states—

Mr Stingemore in his article has already indicated that the industry is sitting on the precipice of a series of fundamental changes—changes that will go much further than merely altering a number of functional or procedural aspects of a Police Officer's job. The kind of changes we are talking about are those which are capable of radically restructuring the whole nature of the policing industry.

Obviously, if we are to have that sort of change it will be a fairly daunting prospect for some of the longer serving members of the Police Force. It may more readily be accepted by younger people with fewer years' experience in the Police Force. The Opposition recognises the need to change and will support the Commissioner of Police in those changes. However, we make the point that in determining those changes and working them through the system there is a need to recognise that close consultation is necessary between the Police Force, the Government and the union. I would like to include the Opposition also because as far as I am concerned policing in Western Australia should technically be a bipartisan situation. It is not always the case because we sometimes differ on fundamental philosophies in respect of the need for law and order.

In recent times there have been a number of retirements from the Police Force. I have drawn this matter to the attention of the Minister and the Parliament on a number of occasions. In the last six months no fewer than 30 commissioned officers, people of very senior rank, have retired and only two of those officers have retired at the normal retiring age of 60 years. The other people have opted for the recently introduced early retirement package at 55 years. When speaking to a number of those who retired at 55 years I found that many of them found it difficult to cope with the changes taking place in the Police Force. They were prepared to admit that and to accept their lot and move on.

A common thread emerging from those conversations was that they did not believe, as long-serving officers of the Police Force, that there has been adequate consultation on the proposed changes. When it became obvious that there would not be consultation they decided to step aside and accept retirement as the other way out. As a result the State has lost the services of a number of long-serving officers with many years' experience. That experience cannot be replaced overnight.

It is an unfortunate situation for the people of Western Australia when a person of Mr Bruce Dyball's ability, with 35 years' experience in the Police Force in Western Australia, finds that he cannot accept certain practices going on in the Police Force and decides that the only way he can register his disapproval is to retire. The Police Force has lost a very hard working and dedicated person who gave a tremendous amount of service to this State and was well respected by other officers who served with him during those years.

There have also been some dramatic ministerial changes in the Police portfolio in the past 3½ years. In fact, in the last six months this Government has had four different Ministers. In February 1986 we had Hon. Jeff Carr, MLA, who had been Minister for Police and Emergency Services for three years until the election this year. We then had Hon. Arthur Tonkin, the member for Morley-Swan, as Minister for Police and Emergency Services for a short time before he recognised that he could not accept or cope with certain things going on with this Government's Cabinet and he resigned his Cabinet position.

We then had Hon. R. Pearce, MLA, who was in fact a substantive Minister for Police and Emergency Services some time.

Mr Pearce: That was a legal fiction because Hon. Gordon Hill was Minister all along.

Mr CASH: Later we had Hon. Gordon Hill, whose status was changed from honorary Minister to that of full Minister. I am interested in the interjection by the Leader of the House, because it seemed to me that he was almost trying to dispute the fact that he was a substantive Minister. What I am saying is that the record is very clear. In fact the Minister himself said to me some weeks ago in this place that he was a substantive Minister at a particular time.

Mr Pearce: That is true, but the truth is also that Hon. Gordon Hill was appointed honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and he performed the functions consistently from the time he was appointed. I signed about six legal documents in the whole time I was substantive Minister.

Mr CASH: The interjection by the Leader of the House, who was the substantive police Minister, is also an indication to me that he is not prepared to accept any of the responsibility for the problems associated with that period of time the police have just gone through. If he wants to back off and put the whole load onto his colleague, Hon. Gordon Hill, that is his business, but the record clearly shows that he was the substantive Minister and Gordon Hill at the time was the honorary Minister.

Mr Pearce: That is true, but—

Mr CASH: He cannot have it both ways. It is either one thing or the other. If the Minister is telling me that that is the truth, there is no need to dispute the situation.

Mr Pearce: The point you are making is that there has been a lack of consistency.

Mr CASH: The point which I have just made, and which has been supported by the Minister, is that there has been a lack of consistency in respect of Ministers for Police and Emergency Services in the last six months. He is not prepared to concede that.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

Mr CASH: Can the Minister tell me any other portfolio in this place which has had four Ministers in the last six months? Police and Emergency Services is the only portfolio which has changed Ministers four times in the last six months. Let us not talk about consistency.

Mr Pearce: That is misleading.

Several members interjected.

Mr CASH: We now have two former Ministers trying to put the point—

Mr Pearce: It shows how consistent we are, we Ministers for Police!

Mr CASH: They seem to think that to have four separate police Ministers in six months indicates some sort of consistency. I would argue that is not the case. Having travelled throughout this State and met a tremendous number of serving police officers, I can assure members that they do not believe the Government was very consistent in its choice of police Ministers. The fact is that there were four in such a short time.

If one goes back to the Labor Party's State platform on police affairs, I shall quote if I may the opening paragraph, which says that Labor believes the Police Force in a democratic society should be competent, effective, non-partisan, apolitical, and command the respect of the community.

It is that last point in Labor's own State platform that I want to expand on now. How can one expect the community to respect its Police Force when we have a huge number of serving police officers telling us that morale in the force is at an all-time low? Labor itself is not even prepared to stand by its own State platform when it comes to the Police Department. The Government is not prepared to put police officers in a situation where the community is able to respect them. The Government is not prepared to support the police.

Many things have happened in the last six months with regard to the Police Force. In February this year the then Minister, Hon. Jeff Carr, wrote to the Secretary of the WA Police Union, Mr Ric Stingemore. The letter is dated 3 February 1986 and I want to read it to the House.

Mr MacKinnon: What date was the election?

Mr CASH: The election was 8 February. This was just a few days before the election earlier this year. The then Minister wrote in the following terms on the letterhead of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services—

Dear Mr Stingemore

I formally notify your Union of advice received from my colleague the Minister for Employment that agreement has been reached for the implementation of a 38 hour week for Police officers on terms agreed to between the Union and the Office of Industrial Relations.

It is particularly pleasing to me that the 38 hour week has been agreed to as it compliments the Government's initiative in providing optional early retirement on favourable terms and its commitment to substantial increase in Police numbers as important measures which have the consequence of improving actual conditions of service in a stressful and demanding profession.

I can tell members that the Police Union was delighted to receive that letter because it was the culmination of many years of negotiation with the Government. In fact in the Police Union newsletter dated March 1986 there is a comment on the front page which shows the elation of the union at that time. It is headed "Report on the 38 hour week claim" and it states—

By now it would be old news to our members that the WA Police Department and Government have agreed to the union claim for a 38 hour week.

So at last the Police Union and the police officers in Western Australia believed that they had been making some progress with the Government.

The election came and went. A number of police Ministers came and went. Then, out of the blue, on 30 September of this year—only a few days ago—again on the letterhead of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Hon. Gordon Hill wrote to the Secretary of the WA Police Union, Mr Ric Stingemore, in the following terms—

Dear Mr Stingemore

I refer to the request by the W.A. Police Union of Workers for a 38-hour week for Police Officers to be taken by continuing to work a 40-hour week and having annual leave increased from 6 weeks to 8 weeks in lieu.

It is advised that Cabinet has decided not to agree at this stage to your Union's request for a 38-hour week.

Mr Watt: No wonder he is hiding his face in the paper!

Mr CASH: As the member for Albany says, no wonder he is hiding his face in the newspaper. He must be ashamed that on 3 February the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Jeff Carr, wrote to the union and promised a 38-hour week. After the election the new Minister, Gordon Hill, MLA, decided to

renege on the deal. What sort of Government do we have when that situation occurs?

Was it a set-up job? On 3 February 1986, when the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services wrote to the union, did he and the Cabinet know that soon after the election they would in fact renege on the very promises that they had made to that union?

Mr MacKinnon: Of course they did.

Mr CASH: Of course they did, suggests the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MacKinnon: Just like the promises they made about computers for schools—the list goes on.

Mr CASH: It is a litany of broken promises. All the promises in the world before the election, and after the election the real truth comes forward. The current Minister writes to the union and says, "Remember that deal that we struck before the election? The deal which you reported to your members; the 38-hour week proposition? Guess what? It is all off now; we are not interested in doing it."

Mr MacKinnon: Do you know what the Minister said about it on television? He said the officers of the Police Force thought it was a big yawn.

Mr CASH: Well, that probably indicates the ineptness, the incompetence, and the general inadequacy of this police Minister—and they are not my words, they are the words of serving police officers around Western Australia. I make the point again that the reason I raise these matters is that, as an Opposition member, I want to see a strong Police Force in this State. I do not like the idea of a Minister for Police and Emergency Services striking a deal and then reneging. It is not the sort of thing that I believe most members would stand for. In fact, I would not be surprised if a few of the Government members indicated that they thought it was a pretty rough deal, and I thank the member for Mandurah for his acknowledgment. I agree that it was a pretty rough deal.

Mr Read: No, I am talking about what you did.

Mr CASH: Now the member for Mandurah has decided to change his mind and support the contention that it was okay. He supports the idea that once one has made a deal, one can break it. The member for Mandurah thinks it is fair to break deals, I do not know what the police officers of Mandurah would think of him as their member.

Later there was another letter sent by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to Mr Stingemore. In fact, we might even call this the softening-up letter because it was sent prior to the letter of 30 September that reneged on the deal. This letter was also on the letterhead of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Hon. Gordon Hill. It was addressed to the Secretary of the Police Union, and it reads—

Dear Mr Stingemore

I have noted recent comments expressed in the media which relate to views held by your Union on the question of Police numbers. I refer in particular to the views contained in the articles "Police Fears on Violence" and "Too Few Police to do the Job—Union" in the Daily News on Friday, August 15th last.

You may be aware that granting a 38-hour week to your members will reduce effective police numbers by approximately 170 and in the context of your expressed concerns and acknowledgment of the efforts of both the Police administration and the Government in dealing with the issue, I believe that it would be an appropriate demonstration of professionalism for the Union to defer implementation of the 38-hour week.

It would be appreciated if you will let me have your response to my request at your earliest convenience.

That letter was signed by the Minister. Can you believe that, Mr Speaker? The Minister writes to employees of his own department and asks that in the interests of professionalism they forgo the implementation of a 38-hour week. Why is it that all the other Ministers do not write to their respective employees and ask them, in the interests of professionalism, to forgo the special deals that they have struck with the Government in recent times? For instance, does the Minister for Prisons write to the Prison Officers Union and ask its members to forgo the hard-fought gains they have received from this Government? Not likely, because he knows what the answer would be.

The Minister became aware of various comments that had been made by senior officers of the Police Force—people of commissioned ranks including inspectors, superintendents, chief superintendents, and higher—and then he made a statement in a newspaper in which he labelled those senior police officers in this State disloyal. That is a Minister of Police and

Emergency Services accusing his own police officers of being disloyal. If a Minister did that in South America, he would end up being shot—they would not stand for that sort of thing. Our police officers are not that type, but I can tell the House that they were not impressed by the statements of their Minister.

I will quote from the *Sunday Times* of 21 September 1986 to refresh the Minister's mind—the Minister whose own police officers have described him as inadequate, inept, inexperienced, and many other things.

Mr Gordon Hill: Where is the evidence?

Mr CASH: How does the Minister expect his police officers to feel when he calls them disloyal? I see the Premier over there, tutoring the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. He is either pleading with him to be quiet and not interject, or tutoring him to give the right sort of response in due course.

Mr Brian Burke: I am telling him to go easy on you.

Mr CASH: I will do the Premier a favour. Let the Minister be as hard as he likes on me, because I reckon I can cop it. I do not need the protection of the Premier.

I quote from the article in the *Sunday Times* of 21 September with the banner headline "Hill labels senior police 'disloyal'"—

Police Minister, Mr Gordon Hill, yesterday described one of his senior officers as "disloyal" in what has become a public mud-slinging match within the WA police force. . . .

Mr Hill's comments follow the shock announcement by Chief Superintendent Bruce Dyball that he was leaving the force, because of "unacceptable personnel practices."

Mr Hill had insinuated that Mr Dyball had come to his decision because he had been overlooked for the job of assistant commissioner, a claim rejected by Mr Dyball.

And in a remarkable statement,—

That is the journalist's comment not mine. The article continues—

—he (Mr Hill) said: "Some of these outspoken officers—who I won't name—have not distinguished themselves during their careers and are in no position to make such claims".

What sort of Minister would make statements like that about the very people whom he expects to support him, and through him the Government, and through the Government the people of Western Australia? It is just not on, and it is not acceptable to the Opposition. I do not believe it is acceptable to members on his own side, some of whom have expressed to me their concern at the way things are going in the Police Force today. I know that it certainly does not impress the Commissioner of Police, Mr Bull, because it makes his job of administering the Police Force much more difficult.

As I have said on a number of occasions, the commissioner has the Opposition's absolute support. He has my personal support and he knows I will do anything in my power—that is reasonable, of course—to see that he gets a fair go and we are able to build up the confidence of the Police Force in Western Australia.

I return now to the 38-hour week debacle. Mr Speaker, you will recall that in February the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services wrote a letter to the union and said, "I am pleased to tell you that you can have your 38-hour week"; on 30 September the present Minister reneged on that deal by saying, "The deal is off, you are not going to get it any more".

Members would be aware that this has caused tremendous consternation throughout the Police Force in Western Australia—indeed not only to members of the Police Force, but also to members of the public in general. Members of the public want to be able to look up to the people they believe are there to protect them and to maintain law and order. At one stage, one branch of the Police Union of Workers of Western Australia sent a telex down to its union office in Perth to instruct the union secretary to warn the Government and the Minister that if they were going to renege on the deal which had been struck on a fair and square basis, they could not expect the continued support of the Police Force.

I have a one-page telex from one of the branches in Western Australia which sets out very clearly how upset its members are about the deal which the Minister reneged on. It also threatens taking action which they believe may be required to try to bring this Minister to his senses. Very rarely does the Police Force talk about strike action. In fact, the last time the Western Australia Police Force talked about strike action was in 1984, when this same Government introduced the Complaints Against Police Bill. Members will recall that

the then Minister found himself in a tremendous amount of trouble trying to explain his way out of that one. There were meetings between the union, senior officers of the Police Force, and the Minister to try to establish some consensus on the Bill. Obviously that was not possible and the union, for the first time within my own memory, contemplated going on strike. That is a pretty dramatic situation for this group of workers. They are not people who just talk about striking and walk out. They are very responsible, hard-working people within our community and should be recognised as such.

However, on two occasions—once in 1984 when the then Minister introduced the Complaints Against Police Bill, and again today because the current Minister, Hon. Gordon Hill, has reneged on a deal—some members of the Police Union have talked about industrial action. I say to you, Mr Speaker, and to the House, that I hope that sort of industrial action does not come to pass. I do not think any value at all will be served if the police go out on strike, although I understand the way they feel about the matter and about the way in which they have been treated by their Minister. They are very upset and they are entitled to be upset. Their Minister has reneged on a deal.

In the *Daily News* of 7 October under the banner, "Police union hints at strike" a report is made of a letter sent from the Geraldton police to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. In respect of the Geraldton police, members will recall that a very senior police officer in the Geraldton district for many years, Riley Miller, resigned from the force earlier this year because he was not prepared to cop the treatment which this Minister has been handing out to members of the Police Force in Western Australia. I return to this Press clipping; it reads as follows—

Geraldton police have sent a bitter letter to the Minister for Police, Mr Hill, over his about-face on the 38-hour week issue.

The letter, signed only by the Geraldton branch of the Police Union, says police have become very demoralised in the short time since the Government's decision was announced.

I believe what they mean is that the Police Force has become more demoralised since the Minister reneged on the deal. The Police Force has been totally demoralised since the Minister reneged on the deal. The Police Force has been totally demoralised since this particular man

took over the Police and Emergency Services portfolio. The Press clipping continues—

It also indicates police could shortly take strike action in the current industrial unrest.

The Police Union is seeking an Industrial Commission hearing on its move to have police work a 38-hour week.

It goes on to talk about the two-page letter which the Minister wrote to every police officer in this State, advising that he was reneging on the deal, that no longer could they have a 38-hour week, and that they could forget about all the agreements which had been struck because he was going back on his word. He wrote to the union; the union wrote to the commissioner, and I might say it wrote in the following terms because it was pretty upset about being cheated. I do not have a copy of that letter at the moment, but I am sure it will come to hand in a few minutes. Obviously many letters have gone to and from the Minister and other people in that time.

However, I do have a copy of the letter which the Minister for Police and Emergency Services sent to all members of the Police Force in WA in order to try to soft-soap them about the fact that he had gone back on his word. It did not work and I will explain why in a moment. I was very interested to find that country members from the Opposition have come to me and explained the fury they have found in the Police Force in respect of policemen who were serving in other areas within the State. It certainly was not confined to the metropolitan area; it was right throughout the State. The letter that the Minister sent to all members of the force reads as follows—

Dear Member

I have taken this opportunity to write to you and your colleagues to put the Government's position on the request by the W.A. Police Union of Workers for a 38-hour week for Police Officers to be taken by continuing to work a 40-hour week and having annual leave increased from 6 weeks to 8 weeks in lieu.

A consequence of agreeing that each of you have an additional 2 weeks holiday would be to effectively reduce the strength of the Police Force by 172 personnel which would simply add to the difficulties of discharging your duties which is never easy and which has been made more difficult by the pressures on you as a result of the

option of early retirement as well as increased community expectations of you.

It is clear that all members of the community must face up to the difficult economic circumstances which are upon us and for this reason and in view of recent media publicity by the Union on Police members the Cabinet has decided that it would be inappropriate for the Government to agree to your Union's request at this time.

I will just break my reading of this letter because I want to emphasise the point again: The deal had already been done on 3 February this year. The then Minister for Police and Emergency Services wrote to the union saying, "I am pleased to advise you that you will now have a 38-hour week"; on 30 September this year, the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services wrote to all members of the force saying that the deal was off and that the Government was going back on its word. The letter which the Minister sent to members of the force continues as follows—

For your information, I have enclosed a copy of my plea to the Union to defer its plans and it was with regret that it was not agreed to.

I do not know whether one can be regretful when one has cheated on someone.

Mr Bridge: Are you reading that right through?

Mr CASH: Yes, I am. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs may have a copy later. There is no reason for me not to read all the words the Minister has written, for they condemn him all the way. To take anything out would be to release him from the hook upon which he has placed himself, and I am not likely to do that.

I will continue reading from his letter—

I understand that the union intends to pursue the application in the Industrial Commission in the near future.

In addition to improvements in working conditions generally, the State Government has provided the following direct benefits to Police Officers:

The Minister then had the audacity to list a number of points which he implied were benefits received only by police officers in this State. I quote as follows—

1. Voluntary retirement at age 55 with full State share of superannuation;

That was a pre-election promise by the Government. The Minister should not try to tell me that by including it there he has satisfied every-

thing he was going to do. Not to put it there would have caused him to go back on his word again! It was a pre-election promise and has already been agreed to.

Mr Gordon Hill: We introduced optional retirement at 55 years of age two years ago.

Mr CASH: My point, and it is clearly stated in my notes that are appended to the Minister's letter, is that the Government had made it a pre-election issue some years ago. The Minister knows that.

Mr Gordon Hill: And we did it.

Mr CASH: Why is the Minister telling them three years later, now he has cheated on them in respect of their 38-hour week? The Minister was getting desperate in looking for reasons to get out of the deal he had reneged on.

Mr Laurance: Like the Minister for Agriculture he is desperately looking around for someone else to castigate.

Mr CASH: Just like the Minister for Minerals and Energy desperately looking around for support from the Premier last night, only to find it was not there and he was left holding the baby.

The second point in the list of benefits the Minister claims he has given police officers in this State is listed as follows—

Improved ratio of commissioned to non-commissioned officers to provide improved promotional opportunities;

I agree with the Minister there; that was a benefit he conferred on the police.

Mr Gordon Hill: Are you saying you don't believe the early retirement at 55-years-of-age arrangement is a benefit?

Mr CASH: I did not say that at all, you clown. I said it was a pre-election promise.

Mr Gordon Hill: Is it not a benefit?

Mr CASH: I would have thought that the increase in the basic wage in 1945 from whatever it was to whatever it became was a benefit to the police too, but I would hardly put that in a letter to try to justify why I had reneged on a deal! Fair go. Next the Minister will be telling us that the latest model cars he bought for the police are the pay-off for the fact he reneged on the 38-hour-week deal.

Why does he think the morale in the Police Force is as low as it is? It is because he is taking police officers in our Police Force to be fools, and they do not like it. They are the very people who come to my office and to the offices of other Opposition members, and I think if the

Minister's own members were honest they would tell him that police officers are coming to their offices as well.

Mr Gordon Hill: Not true.

Mr CASH: Not one Government member has said to the Minister that a police officer has complained of low morale in the last six to eight months?

Mr Gordon Hill: That's right.

Mr CASH: That is amazing. It proves either that they do not trust Government members to relay the message to the Minister or that they have absolute confidence in members of the Opposition.

Mr Tom Jones: Don't play politics with the Police Force.

Mr CASH: I did not want to play politics with the Police Force; it is the last thing I wanted to do, but the Government has reneged on its deal. When this Minister for Police and Emergency Services reneges on a deal that has been struck seven months before, surely I am entitled to advise the House. Why does the member for Collie think morale in the Police Force is as low as it is? The police have no confidence in their Minister.

Mr Laurance: The member for Collie should have been the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Mr CASH: On a number of occasions when I have been in the south-west visiting police stations and police officers, that proposition has been put to me. The member would have had the respect of the police and they would have got a better deal. I am talking about a member who I believe has some commonsense, which is more than I can say about the present Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The third point the Minister tried to sell to the police officers for having reneged on the deal dealt with providing nightshift supper allowances. Is that something new? Is that related just to those officers who are serving the shift or does it involve some other proposition? How can the Minister claim that to be an additional benefit?

Mr Gordon Hill: You are making the speech. You reckon you are such an expert on police matters.

Mr CASH: Again we see the inexperience of the Minister coming forward. He claims I am an expert in police matters. I do not claim to be an expert in police matters. What I do claim is that I am in touch with the community of Western Australia and in particular the police

community. I do not know how many police stations this Minister has visited in his time as Minister for Police and Emergency Services, but I have made a few trips to the north-west, around the metropolitan area, down through the south-west and out to Wiluna to talk to the police officers who are serving this State, so I have a fair idea of the way they feel generally. I have even more of an idea of how they feel specifically about their Minister.

It should not be overlooked that my criticism is not of the Police Force. My criticism is of the Minister for the way he has destroyed the Police Force in the last six months. It is an absolute disgrace and it is not acceptable to the community at large.

As an example, I attended with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, a Motorcycle Riders' Association rally last Sunday down at the Supreme Court Gardens. It started at the University of Western Australia and we were escorted up by police officers. I was the only one who turned up at the university with all the motorcycle riders to proceed to Supreme Court Gardens. People asked me where the Minister was. I can only make as many excuses as I can. It was raining at the time and I said that perhaps he did not want to get wet. The point I make is that he was not even down there at the university at the start of the rally. Rather he was at the Supreme Court Gardens keeping himself out of the rain hiding under the shell.

I had the pleasure of riding up with one of the motorcyclists and during the rally an opportunity was given to both the Minister and me to make some comments to members of the association. It was very obvious by the comments the Minister made that he did not understand what the rally was all about. In fact it was an awareness rally, a rally to try to get the message across to other road users—motor vehicle drivers, etc.—that they had an obligation to motorcycle riders.

The comments made by the Minister clearly indicated he did not understand and that he was not in touch with a very important area in his portfolio.

Let me go back to his two-page letter which he distributed to members of the Police Force throughout Western Australia. Item 4 which he tried to sell them was an increase in ration allowance tied to the CPI. It seems the commissioner was required by law to pay that increase. How can he tack that on as being part-payment for the deal on which he reneged? It is

not on. It is foolish, and he probably now realises why police officers throughout the State were absolutely appalled when they got this letter.

Item 5 talks about provision of an increase of 45.8 per cent in the funds available for payment of allowances to police officers from 1 July 1985, but the Minister forgot to tell them why there is still insufficient money to pay for the overtime they are required to work if we are to have law and order in this State and bring the crime rate down. What sort of soft-soap, soft-sell proposition is that? What does it mean? Why did the Minister not put it in dollar terms so the officers could compare one year with the next? He did not do that because there was not much value in it and he knew there were plenty of other holes which had to be filled.

Item 6 refers to an increase in salaries at the end of the wage freeze. I got so many calls in respect of that particular item that I have written to the Minister to ask him to interpret it for me so I can send his interpretation back to various members of the Police Force who have sought an explanation from me. Again it is interesting that members of the Police Force and their families and other people who have been helped and assisted by the Police Force over the years tend now to come to the Opposition if they want assistance or a response. They do not appear to go to the Minister, and I suggest that is further evidence of a lack of confidence in him.

Item 7 talks about the removal of commission previously paid to the Government for the collection of union dues. Surely the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is not telling members of his own department that they were the only people who were paying commission on the union dues that were collected? Again the Minister is misleading his own people. Again it is clear evidence why members of the Police Force in Western Australia are fed up with and want a better deal from this Minister.

The final paragraph of the letter says—

Government support for the work done by you and your fellow officers is undiminished and I hope you can accept the reasons why we could not at this time agree to the increased leave.

Members of the Police Force believe that receiving this letter was like receiving a wet sock in the mail. It said nothing. It did not explain why the Minister went back on his word and let

down the various people who serve under him in his department. At one stage, because I raised the matter in the media and said that by the number of complaints and letters that had come to me it was very obvious something had to be done and there was an obligation on the Minister to do something about the current state of affairs, the Minister got hysterical and started blaming me for the drop in morale in the Police Force. That is an indication of a defeated person. When the Minister turned around and started blaming me it was all over for him. The Police Force realised he had lost control of the situation.

Mr Gordon Hill: I did not say there was a drop in morale in the Police Force at all. Tell the truth if it is possible. You have a slippery grip on the truth.

Mr CASH: I am trying to refer to articles written by the Minister. I do not know whether he is implying that what he has written is not the truth, but I can only quote his own Press statements. Last week the Minister got so hysterical after receiving one of my Press releases that he said I was advocating that people should take up arms to protect themselves. That was a pretty extreme statement. Let me quote exactly what I said. This is a Press release I put out on 21 September 1986 in respect of violent crime, and it was at a time when there had been a number of armed robberies and bashings and other acts of physical violence. In my concluding paragraph I said—

We are concerned that if people do not feel safe they will begin to arm themselves. The results could be fatal for the individual and turn our society into one in which the carrying of guns or other weapons is standard practice.

The next line is the very line which the Minister failed to read or recognise, or perhaps purposely ignored. It said, "None of us wants that situation to develop." I have made the point on a number of occasions that I will do my level best to make sure that people in this State do not end up bearing arms or carrying knives to defend themselves.

Mr Peter Dowding interjected.

Mr CASH: The Minister for Industrial Relations is becoming hysterical.

Mr Peter Dowding: I thought it was the Minister for Police and Emergency Services!

Mr CASH: He has had his chance. He is being calmed by the member for Mandurah.

I did not advocate the carrying of arms by people in this State.

Mr Peter Dowding: Why do you seek to incite it?

Mr CASH: I did not seek to incite it, fool. The Minister did not read the Press release. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services misconstrued the words that were used.

Mr Court: What do they think of the Minister for Industrial Relations?

Mr CASH: I do not think it would be proper for me to tell the House the sort of comments that serving members of the Police Force make about him; it is not parliamentary.

I made a statement saying I would not support the idea of people bearing arms, and that I wanted them to live in a safe city where they can feel safe and walk the streets of Perth at night without fear of violence. I made the point that I was totally opposed to the bearing of arms, but again because the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was losing further ground he decided to catch hold of that and quote only some of the Press release. He made a foolish comment in respect of it. Members of the Police Force are aware of it, because I make a point of circulating my Press releases to as many police officers as I can so they understand the Opposition's viewpoint on this matter.

Mr Bryce: That would warm the cockles of their hearts.

Mr CASH: I am glad the Deputy Premier said that because I know he is right from the comments that come back to us.

Mr Bryce: They would believe you, too.

Mr CASH: I thank the Deputy Premier for saying they would believe me because I believe that I am supporting the Police Force and that that is what the public expects from the Opposition. The Deputy Premier can try to break down the fabric of law and order and the police network in this State. However, I will continue to defend our Police Force in this place as I believe I am entitled to do. I believe we should have a strong, effective and efficient Police Force.

If members look at the motion they will see that it is couched in very constructive terms. I hope that not one of my comments has been critical of the Police Force or of any member of it. I have not confined any of my criticisms to the Government or to the Minister. The motion requests the Government to recognise that there are problems in the Police Force. It also

calls for an inquiry to identify those problems and for recommendations to be made so that positive action can be taken to improve the current unsatisfactory situation. There is no cop for me in my knocking the Police Force and I have no intention of doing so. I call on the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to give support to the people who come under his responsibility. They want support from their Minister. They do not like being told that they are disloyal and they do not like being told that there is sufficient manpower in the force when it is patently obvious that there is not. I concede that the Minister has increased the manpower in recent years.

Mr Parker: Much more than you did.

Mr CASH: Given the performance yesterday by the Minister for Minerals and Energy on the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd, I would be inclined to think that he should do some homework so that he does not slip up the next time questions are asked on that issue.

I ask the Minister to support his officers and to support their actions in the community. They are a hard-working and dedicated group of people, entitled to the support of the Government and the Opposition. I believe that, if the Minister is seen to be supporting his officers, that will begin to restore some of the confidence that is so sorely needed.

MR WATT (Albany) [8.23 p.m.]: I have pleasure in seconding the motion so ably moved by my colleague, the member for Mt Lawley.

I commence my remarks by reiterating the comments made by the member for Mt Lawley at the commencement of his speech that the motion was meant to be constructive. It was not intended as a bash-the-Police Force motion. It strives to do something constructive about a problem which appears to exist in the community and a problem about which every thinking person must be concerned. A long-standing, often-quoted convention held by both major political parties is that the Government of the day should not direct the Police Force. That should not be misunderstood, however, to include policy matters. Clearly the statement was always intended to relate to such matters as the upholding of the law and the bringing about of prosecutions and is generally related to the administration of the various Acts of Parliament under which the Police Force operates. We should make that clear difference. We are not calling on the Government to direct the Police Force in matters which ought to be

the sole prerogative and responsibility of the Police Force. We are talking about the general overview and administration of the police and the policies under which it operates.

As a matter of interest, I always had an ambition to be a policeman and I have therefore tended, for a long time, to feel some empathy or at least some common feeling with the members of the Police Force. I have always taken more than a passing interest in its activities. I have many friends in the force and some very good friends who have recently retired.

The other point about this debate is that it is absolutely vital for the good of the community and for the good order of society for there to be an efficient, happy and dedicated Police Force. At the moment we have not got that and that is the nub of the problem. On the one hand, the Minister says that morale is good.

Mr Peter Dowding: The Opposition is seeking to bring it down as quickly as it can. That is the truth.

Mr WATT: It would need a long stretch of anybody's imagination to give any substance or credence to the comments made by the Minister for Industrial Relations. He should allow me to develop my arguments and if he were honest he would concede that I am not doing the thing he is accusing me of doing.

Mr Peter Dowding: I said "the Opposition" and especially the spokesman, who is notorious for fear campaigns.

Mr WATT: He finished making his speech and I am now making mine. I would appreciate it if I could make my speech without interjections.

I was interested to read an item in the Press the other day which included comments from a former police traffic chief superintendent, John Smith. I have known John Smith for some years and claim his friendship. I am aware of the circumstances reported in the article and I felt very sorry for him at the time. I think we should understand that the Police Force is as highly disciplined as the armed services and while I felt extremely sorry for him, I understood his dilemma. He was trying to be constructive in the comments he made to his superior officers. However, those comments and suggestions were rejected and he was seen to be insubordinate. I did not see, and know nothing of, what he wrote in that report. He did tell me, after he retired, that all he was trying to do was to be constructive in bringing to the attention of his superior officers some of the concerns he felt while carrying out his duties. He was con-

cerned about traffic matters because he was head of the traffic branch. I shared with him opposition to the disbandment of the Road Traffic Authority. There is no doubt that there is a certain loss of morale among traffic patrolmen. They feel a responsibility every time they see the road toll increasing at a rate which does not bring them any joy. I was one of a relatively small number of people on both sides of the House who opposed the disbandment of the Road Traffic Authority.

I will quote the concluding paragraph of the speech I made on 24 October 1981 and which appears on page 6084 of *Hansard*. It reads—

This Bill is not the answer to traffic control problems. The member for Geraldton reflected accurately the progress made in the last decade or so in reducing the number of road deaths per 10 000 vehicles and, as he rightly said, the number has decreased dramatically. One of my comments to the Press was that I hope the day will never come when I will have to turn around and say, "I told you so".

Mr Carr: Who was the Minister who introduced the Bill?

Mr WATT: It does not matter who introduced the Bill. The Minister for Local Government knows as well as I do who introduced it.

Mr Carr: I agreed with him.

Mr WATT: I know the Minister did. The Bill had the support of the overwhelming majority of members on both sides of the House. I opposed it and I believe the stand I took at that time has now been justified.

It may have been possible to maintain the high standard of road safety we were enjoying about that time if the Road Traffic Authority had been transferred to the Police Department and had been operated in the same manner. At that time we all know that there was a great sensitivity about traffic patrolmen not being perceived by the community as policemen. However, if that was the main problem, it could have been overcome easily by transferring the operations of the RTA to the Police Force and running it in the same way.

There has been a substantial deployment of men away from traffic areas and a diminution of funds that have gone directly into traffic control. The police budget can be carved up in the way superior officers feel so inclined and, as a result, traffic control has suffered. There has been a great disillusionment and the morale in the traffic section of the Police Force has

suffered. I would be surprised if the Minister for Police and Emergency Services said that that is not the case.

Mr Peter Dowding: It is a reflection on the commissioner.

Mr WATT: I do not think so.

Mr Peter Dowding: It is, and how do you get out of that?

Mr WATT: I am listening to my colleague.

Mr Peter Dowding: I would not take his help.

Mr WATT: I would hate to tell the Minister for Employment and Training that I value my colleague's advice more than his. The point is that the question of the deployment of men—

Mr Carr: The deployment of men is decided by the commissioner.

Several members interjected.

Mr WATT: I suspect that the Minister for Local Government agrees with me, even though he does not want to admit it, that when a lump sum is given to the Commissioner of Police he carves it up as he thinks fit. One of the areas within the Police Force will suffer if there is insufficient money for everything. I am claiming that under the old system; that is, when the RTA had its own resources, money could not be used in a manner that was at the discretion of any particular officer. It is not a criticism of the commissioner, it is a criticism of the system and I stand by it.

My colleague made a fairly extensive reference to a letter written by the Minister about optional retirement at 55 years of age being offered to members of the Police Force. While I do not necessarily take exception to that policy, it has produced, because of the loss of morale in the Police Force, a flood of applications from police officers who are no longer able to put up with the situation under which they have been working.

The member for Mt Lawley indicated that 30 or more senior commissioned officers have retired in the last six months. I do not know how many have retired since optional retirement was made available, but there has been a steady stream of publicity given to senior officers of the Police Force who have decided that they cannot take it any longer and have decided to pull the pin and retire. A number of examples have been given. One article which appeared in the Press quoted Chief Superintendent John Smith as saying that he retired at 56 years of age because he was tired of, "banging his head against a brick wall".

Another good example which has already been referred to concerned the Chief Superintendent of Personnel, Bruce Dyball, who retired recently. The article which appeared in *The West Australian* on Saturday, 20 September was enlightening and I am sure it was disappointing not only for Bruce Dyball, but also for the Police Force generally, that at 55 years of age such a highly-respected police officer saw fit not only to retire prematurely and deny the force of the vast experience he had, but also to go public and expose all the discontent that had built up in the Police Force which had caused him to take such action. These are the sorts of things that are contributing to the lowering of morale in the Police Force.

All this motion seeks to do is to identify those things causing the loss of morale in an endeavour to formulate a plan to do something about it. Blind Freddy can see there is a problem. Several articles have appeared in the media about the low morale in the Police Force and in the *Sunday Times* on 21 September the editorial read as follows—

There is something obviously disturbing about the internal operation of our police force.

The question is—how justified is the growing list of complaints and what to do about it?

There is little doubt police morale is low.

It goes on to mention the spate of early retirements. Other articles have appeared in the Press which indicate that there has been a definite lowering of the morale in the force.

I have spoken with another recently retired senior police commissioned officer and he referred to a number of areas in which there is absolutely no question that police morale is low.

I have trouble in coming to grips with how the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is able to sit in this Parliament and say that he has not received one complaint about low morale in the Police Force. Either he has his head buried in the sand and is doing the ostrich trick or he is not telling the truth.

Most Ministers have three or four advisers and I am sure that this Minister has an adviser who advises him on police matters. If that adviser is not able to identify the concerns that are being felt in the community about the low morale within the Police Force, the Minister should look at how well that person is doing his

or her job. It is clear that the Minister is not getting the correct message.

Mr Peter Dowding: How do you get around the fact that the Commissioner of Police is the person responsible for running the Police Force. You must be criticising the commissioner for whom I have a lot of respect.

Mr WATT: I am not criticising him. I said earlier that there were two clearly defined areas in the Police Force. One was the administering of the various traffic Acts and the Traffic Code which comes under the general operation of the Police Force and the other is where the Commissioner of Police works in cooperation with the Government. It must be a joint effort.

That is why we moved this motion. We believe that not only the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Commissioner of Police but also the whole community ought to be involved in identifying the morale problems and how they can be overcome. For goodness sake, I am certainly not trying to play politics.

Mr Peter Dowding: You might not be, but somebody else is.

Mr WATT: The Minister can think what he likes about whom he likes, but I am very grateful that the member for Mt Lawley has raised this matter to give us an opportunity to debate it. The sorts of matters that were raised by Mr Bruce Dyball provide us with a fairly good starting point. Some policemen who recently retired at the age of 55 or a bit older perhaps ought to be brought in on a confidential basis—not by the commissioner, but by the Minister, his adviser or the like—for an off-the-record talk over a cup of coffee.

Mr Carr: Most of them are very pleased with the opportunity to retire.

Mr WATT: Quite a few are happy to go; I concede that point quite willingly. I am talking about those like the John Smiths, the Bruce Dyballs and the Riley Millers. The latter person was in the electorate of the member for Geraldton. These fellows were not planning on early retirements. Each of them had just had a gutful and said, "Look, I'm off; I'm out".

Mr Gordon Hill: You said you would like to start with the comments that Mr Bruce Dyball made. Name one thing that Mr Dyball said he was unhappy with. Name it!

Mr WATT: That is the very point. I will explain why. I am quite happy to make a copy of this Press cutting available to the Minister. To his great credit, Mr Dyball did not reveal the areas of his dissatisfaction. I have not

spoken to him since this article was published, although I had spoken to him previously, but not about this matter. It is a measure of his integrity that he was prepared to say that he was dissatisfied and that that was the reason for his resignation or retirement without revealing the causes of his dissatisfaction.

Mr Gordon Hill: He did not say why he was dissatisfied, but that was to his great credit?

Mr WATT: I think it was to his credit that he did not go public on his reasons. While the Minister sits over there smiling smugly he should consider that his record in these matters is not too good.

The member for Mt Lawley raised the question of the 38-hour week. If ever there was a sellout, that had to be the all-time low. Quite clearly, the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the member for Geraldton, made an unequivocal commitment five days before the election. People can be excused for taking a fairly cynical view of members of Parliament when those sorts of things occur. I have no doubt that the member for Geraldton was genuine in his approach when he wrote that letter, albeit five days before an election. The letter was clearly designed to win a few votes from policemen. Notwithstanding that, it is absolutely unforgivable—no matter what the circumstance—that the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services should then turn around a few months later and say, "Look, we have had second thoughts; we are not going to give it to you".

When the Labor Government gives concessions or conditions to people, it cannot turn around and take those concessions away. That right, entitlement, condition or work practice has been earned and should not be taken away. I argue that irrespective of whether a 38-hour week is right or wrong, once having been granted by the previous Minister there can be no justification for the new Minister's taking away that condition.

The police diving squad was unhappy. The Police Union issued a Press release on the underwater recovery squad which indicated that 15 of its members formally withdrew their voluntary services because they were unhappy with a certain action that had been taken in relation to the filling of a vacant position. People in a number of areas are unhappy. Recently-produced figures show that the percentage of crimes that have been solved has been reduced. That is also of concern to members of the Police Force. I am sure that they are doing

their best, but they feel they should not have to wear any overall reflection on that percentage. It is a great shame that their efforts reflect their attitude to their work.

Another area of concern to members of the Police Force is stress. These days, everybody probably works under increased stress levels. Likewise, the level of stress of members of the force has increased. At one time policemen were fairly casual sorts of fellows who did their job in a fairly relaxed and casual manner. That is certainly not the case today. They work under a lot of pressure. Certainly those doing traffic work ride high-powered motorcycles in much higher traffic densities than previously. The cars they drive are also high-speed ones.

Mr Gordon Hill: We just bought 88 brand new motorcycles.

Mr WATT: They are also probably very fast. That is good. Driving turbo-powered motorcars and the like adds to the stress levels of policemen. That also has an effect on their wives and families who worry about all these things.

Another area of concern that has been put to me over the years by members of the Police Force is that of promotions seeming to come from within the CIB ranks. I do not know the reason for that, but I suspect that within the CIB there is greater opportunity for policemen to demonstrate their greater degree of skills in crime detection or whatever. A traffic offence is more or less a social crime. At some time or other we would all commit some sort of traffic offence, such as rolling through a stop sign instead of stopping or driving a bit faster on the freeway. If we did not drive faster on the freeway or some of the major arterial roads we would get run over. Working in the traffic area is not likely to provide policemen with the same opportunity to demonstrate any degree of academic skill. The same applies to those working in the general duties area. They tend to perform fairly mundane duties within the police stations. They respond to community requests, for example, but do not get the same opportunity to demonstrate how good they are. The CIB people, on the other hand, often get that opportunity. I do not know whether that is the reason, but I do know that there is a considerable level of dissatisfaction within police ranks that a disproportionate number of promotions come from within the CIB. Perhaps the Minister could investigate the matter and see whether anything can be done as it is a matter of concern within the Police Force and is affecting morale.

Mr Burkett: It was.

Mr WATT: It still is.

Mr Burkett: No.

Mr WATT: The member can talk to whomever he likes, but I am telling him that the people to whom I have spoken quite recently have said that it is still a matter of concern. The article relating to the retirement of chief superintendent Bruce Dyball stated—

He hinted that promotion changes were in the air which favoured the CIB and said that one man recently promoted to a senior position had not submitted his application until six weeks after the closing date.

The Police Union said that it knew about the appointment and was concerned that decisions were being made on senior appointments before applications were called.

There is a reference to the fact that there is still concern about CIB appointments to senior positions. It is on the record from a recently retired chief superintendent. I can only quote the people who make these statements.

Of all the things the Minister has done to contribute personally to low morale in the Police Force, his comment quoted in an article in the *Sunday Times* of 21 September 1986 is a prime example—

And in a remarkable statement, he said: "Some of these outspoken officers—who I won't name—have not distinguished themselves during their careers and are in no position to make such claims."

That demonstrates that the Minister is still wet behind the ears. Many of those senior men have been in the Police Force since before he was born and that is a highly inflammatory statement to make. That is certainly a threat to the morale of the Police Force. It is all very well to say that some of those policemen, whom he will not name, have not distinguished themselves. I think that is an absolute insult. If the Minister is dinkum he should name a few of those officers or withdraw the remark.

This Minister has not distinguished himself; even when he tried to ride a patrol bike to get some publicity, he nearly fell off. He has certainly not distinguished himself at all and I think he ought to take this motion seriously. It is intended as a bipartisan approach to a serious community problem.

I go back to my earlier comment that it is absolutely vital for the Police Force to have confidence in the Government and its operations. It is also absolutely vital that the community should have a Police Force in which it has confidence. While it reads newspaper reports of low morale and people retiring before the normal retirement age, I seriously doubt whether that confidence in the Police Force, which should exist, will be present.

I support the motion.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [8.52 p.m.]: The main point I wish to make in my brief contribution is to support the role of the Police Force. I am a little concerned as a new member of Parliament, having had my eyes opened to the current situation and having watched the actions of the police in the country areas. There is some concern about morale in country areas. I take this opportunity to put my concern on the record. I hope that the Minister will listen to what I have to say, because I shall not be throwing rocks in his direction but making honest and candid comments on my observations since I have been in this place.

Without any question the Police Force in my electorate are doing a great job. The crime rate is definitely going up. Recently in Northam up to 40 motor vehicles had their windows smashed and received other damage. As a result of a special effort by the policemen in Northam the culprit was caught. He was a 12-year-old boy who admitted to damaging in excess of 30 vehicles. Even though the boy was caught, the police predict that he will be back on the streets in a few months repeating the same crime. The job of the Police Force is not easy.

We have had a rash of business break-ins in Northam and also in other parts of my electorate. The local policemen, to their credit, in an effort to solve these crimes, did not drive around in vehicles, they rode on bicycles in the middle of winter in order to make a quiet and swift approach if they suspected a break-in was occurring. They actually caught two people in the process of breaking and entering a business. That sort of performance is above and beyond the call of duty of a policeman. It is not part of their normal duties to get on bicycles in the dead of night, without lights, to go around the business houses trying to catch people in the act of breaking and entering.

There has been a tremendous number of house break-ins in country areas and the police have had a reasonably high arrest rate. How-

ever, they have a problem with the public's perception of their role. All members in this place would concede that. If I had to pick a job in the public arena, a policeman's job would be my last choice. They have a tremendously difficult job trying to achieve their objectives while being called such names as "fuzz" and "pigs" by many people.

In their role they need all the support they can get from the community. In one case I know of in the Town of Northam an officer spent five hours of his day off unsuccessfully trying to catch a prowler at night. That is above and beyond the call of duty.

Mr Gordon Hill: When was that?

Mr TRENORDEN: Only a few weeks ago.

Mr Gordon Hill: It does not sound like low morale.

Mr TRENORDEN: I will deal with the low morale question in a moment.

We have an excellent Police Force. To my knowledge there is no whiff of corruption or the noises one hears in this direction from other States. We have something good in this State that needs to be preserved.

There are two points with regard to morale which concern me. I did not know that this debate would take place and I asked the Minister a question on notice which he may have already looked at. This concerns a tremendous problem we have with housing for the police in country areas. It is a serious problem and I hope the Minister takes my comments on board. I know of one police officer in Northam having difficulty with housing. I make the point that he has not spoken to me about this problem, but I am aware of it through two real estate agents in the town who asked if I could help him to get a GEHA house. His wife is in tears because of this problem and he has four children. He is in the hot seat with regard to his job and his marriage; it is not a good position to be in. I do not know this officer personally and I could not pick him out if he were sitting in the gallery now.

I am more than happy with the actions of the Northam police and the other police operating in the communities in my electorate. They need more support. In a town like Northam private rental accommodation has been very hard to get for decades. It is very difficult for an officer transferred to Northam to find reasonable accommodation. Obviously, the Minister will be aware that there has been a request for an increase in the number of police at Northam. The Northam Town Council has

requested an increase and the whole town is hopeful that we shall have more police in the area. However, it will be very difficult to place additional officers unless GEHA houses become available to provide the officers and their families with reasonable accommodation.

My second point is that the Police Force is definitely upset by the Government's reneging on the 38-hour week. No matter how the Minister turns up his nose and has a big yawn, as was reported in the Press, the police are not asleep and they are not yawning. They are concerned about the decision; one deal has been reneged on already, what comes next? Policemen are coming into my office and talking to me about their conditions, their morale and their concern for their jobs.

I said at the beginning of my short address that I will not throw rocks at the Minister and I earnestly hope that the Government will take note that there are problems in the Police Force and some people are disgruntled. I would agree that at this stage they are not major problems but they need to be addressed because if any section of the community needs our whole-hearted support it is the police, those who put their life and limb on the line to protect property, without being given any real respect from the community.

MR GORDON HILL (Helena—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [9.00 p.m.]: We have heard tonight the rantings and ravings of a man who has a loose grip on the truth and a very loose grip on reality as well. We have heard comments made by the member for Albany in relation to his perception of the low morale within the Police Force. These comments were in fact criticisms of the Commissioner of Police and criticisms of the senior levels of administration within the Police Force. We have heard comments made by the member for Avon, some of which I agree with. Of course the question of low morale to which he refers was not substantiated by anything he has had to say.

The member for Mt Lawley returned recently from a study into police techniques in Soweto with a view to using those techniques in a future Liberal Government, I understand. Ever since his return from South Africa he has been making the assertion that morale in the Police Force is low.

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: The member for Mt Lawley cannot help himself in trying to resort to personal attacks in this Chamber. It does

him no credit whatsoever to resort to those sorts of techniques. Those are the sorts of techniques he displayed a short time ago in his comments to my colleague, the Minister for Industrial Relations, when he called him a clown or something to that effect. The performance of the member calls into question his suitability for being spokesman on police matters.

The comments made by the member for Mt Lawley over recent weeks and the solid assertions he has been making constitute a bigger threat to police morale in this State than anything that has ever happened in the history of our Police Force. The comments made by the member for Mt Lawley are in no way supportive of the Police Force in this State, and are not supportive of the senior administration of the Police Force in this State. His comments were critical of the senior police officers. They were critical of the Commissioner of Police and the people who lead the Police Force in this State.

The question of morale is very much a nebulous one. None of the members who have spoken on this issue has been able to grasp the real issues. None of them has referred to any reason why he believes morale is low within the Police Force.

There are 3 200 police officers in this State.

Mr Cash: They are hard-working policemen too.

Mr GORDON HILL: Hard-working police officers they are, yet the member for Mt Lawley tries to say that police morale is low. How would he know what morale is like in the Kimberley?

Mr Court: Because we go there; we travel through those places.

Mr GORDON HILL: I say to the member for Nedlands that he is telling me the Commissioner of Police is a liar. Is that his view? The Commissioner of Police told me today that he has been travelling throughout the southwest and the goldfields. He reported to me today that morale was extremely high in those areas.

The member for Albany claims that morale is low. He has obviously not been speaking to police officers in his town. The Commissioner of Police met them last week. He told me that he attended a function with police officers and their wives, and that not one of them raised the question of morale, the 38-hour week, or anything like that.

There were other matters they raised. It is not as if they were afraid to raise matters with the Commissioner of Police. None of them raised the question of morale. None of them raised the question of the 38-hour week.

Mr Lewis: They would not.

Mr GORDON HILL: But they raised other issues.

Mr Lewis: Why would they raise it?

Mr GORDON HILL: The Commissioner of Police reported to me that nobody was concerned about the 38-hour week question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr GORDON HILL: Let me come back to the arguments put by Opposition members. They were a little difficult to grasp because they wandered all over the place, but they were the rantings and ravings of people who had a tenuous grip on reality. Opposition members display their level of intellect by the depth of their arguments.

The question of morale really depends on the person to whom one is speaking. Obviously in a Police Force with 3 200 officers there are bound to be some who, on occasions, feel a little low.

Cash: You admit there is a problem.

Several members interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said, there are bound to be occasions from time to time on which police officers in this State, as with personnel in any other Government department, may feel a little low.

Mr Cash: Are you prepared to admit that?

Mr GORDON HILL: The member just does not understand.

Mr Cash: I understand.

Mr GORDON HILL: Can the member not see that he has a slippery grip on the truth? The rest of this House realises it. In a moment I will canvass one by one the arguments put forward by the member for Mt Lawley, but let me make a few general points in relation to the issues he has raised.

Representatives of the Police Union in this State have said in recent days that morale is low within the Police Force because of alleged unsuitable personnel management practices. Is that a view which is shared by the member for Mt Lawley? Is that view shared by members of the Opposition?

Silence! No comment! It sounded to me as though the member for Albany admitted that was his view earlier. The Opposition is not prepared to make any reference to or any comment on that matter, because if it attacks personnel management it is in fact attacking the leadership of the Police Force in this State, the Commissioner of Police.

The Commissioner of Police tells me that he has travelled far and wide throughout this State—and he has travelled the length and breadth of this State, as I have in the four months I have been Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The Commissioner of Police also adds that he holds regional officers' meetings on a quarterly basis. He held three over four days, and a fourth, which was a live-in seminar lasting an entire week. There are also quarterly assistant commissioner and chief commissioner meetings. There are consultations over a whole range of different areas. The member for Mt Lawley referred to the lack of consultation but there is a whole range of areas in which there is consultation within the Police Force.

Mr Cash: Do you consider there is sufficient consultation?

Mr GORDON HILL: There is consultation at all levels—regional superintendent, chief superintendent, right down through the ranks. The seminars to which I have referred are held at regional level for superintendents. This is the level of consultation which goes on within the Police Force, and the member for Mt Lawley and others who have spoken tonight have shown by the presentation of their arguments they have no knowledge of that.

Mr Cash: The police said to me the other day that they would be prepared to cop Arthur Tonkin back, if you were prepared to leave.

Mr Hassell: They must be desperate.

Mr Read interjected.

Mr GORDON HILL: It is more difficult to put up with members on my own side, Mr Speaker.

Mr Cash: They are not giving you a lot of support, are they, Gordon?

Mr GORDON HILL: They are giving me a lot of support. The whole question of morale boils down to whether the Opposition spokesman on police matters—the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services, as he calls himself—is really in touch with the officers in the Police Force, whether he understands the needs of the Police Force and the issues that

confront it, and whether members are going to believe him or the Commissioner of Police. I tell members that I would put my money on the Commissioner of Police any day, rather than on the grub across the Chamber.

The member for Mt Lawley provides absolutely no reason in his arguments—his rantings and ravings—for any alleged low morale, except for his perceived, gut feeling that this morale question exists.

Mr Cash: Here is the headline—you called your own senior officers disloyal.

Mr GORDON HILL: Opposition members are quoting items that have appeared in the newspapers from time to time. I wonder if they dare bring out the quotation by Cyril Ayris of *The West Australian*, a considered and balanced opinion from that newspaper's journalist on police matters—a man more in touch with police matters in this State than any member on the other side of the Chamber. Members opposite cannot deny that—or do they? Do they try? They do not dare. Mr Speaker, there is no comment from the member for Mt Lawley. He does not drag out the comments of Cyril Ayris on the question of police morale to the effect that Mr Ayris does not believe there is a problem with morale in the Police Force. The member for Mt Lawley buries his head in shame—in his Police Union article—because he knows that is a fact.

The member for Mt Lawley is embarking upon another publicity-seeking exercise. We hear rantings and ravings from the member for Mt Lawley all too frequently. We have heard today, in answer to a question asked by the member for Canning, that he stole an idea from the National Safety Council and claimed it as his own in an effort to gain publicity. He has gone to the Press backing a minority point of view within the Police Force, and outside it, on the question of morale, and is quite clearly out of touch with the majority feeling within the Police Force and within the community at large. He is out of touch with reality on this issue.

Mr Watt: Can I raise the matter of the National Safety Council?

Mr GORDON HILL: That is not the subject of the debate. I will debate that with the member another time.

The member for Mt Lawley quoted the retirement levels in the last six months as the basis for his argument that there is low morale in the Police Force. He claims as the strength of his argument the fact that there were 30-odd

retirements in the last six months. I will take that a step further. Since this Government introduced, in July 1984, optional retirement for police officers at 55 years of age with generous benefits—full Government contribution to superannuation, a benefit that public servants of this State do not enjoy—137 police officers have retired and two have spoken out. Only two have been disgruntled.

Mr Watt: Only two have spoken publicly.

Mr GORDON HILL: Two have spoken about their perceived difficulties within the Police Force. The member for Mt Lawley referred to one—former Chief Superintendent Bruce Dyball. I did not want to bring names into this debate, but I am advised by the Commissioner of Police—and the member for Mt Lawley can call him a liar if he wishes—that Mr Dyball handed in his resignation the day after the decision was made to appoint somebody else as Assistant Commissioner of Police. Mr Dyball was an applicant for the position; but if morale was so low within the Police Force, why would he apply for the position, and is it just coincidental that he handed in his resignation the day after the announcement was made and he did not get the job?

Mr Watt: You tell us. Is that the reason?

Mr Court: Are you making an allegation? Tell us what the case is.

Mr GORDON HILL: The member for Mt Lawley should become better acquainted with the facts. We know very well that he has a slippery grasp of the facts. Members might recall that on a previous occasion I had to correct him on another issue. He stood up in this place and waved a map—a diagram which he said showed how the water police facility at Fremantle would be developed, and the jetty configuration of that establishment. I had to correct him and table the plans of the buildings and the jetty configuration. The member for Mt Lawley tried to score cheap political points and be sensational by saying that the design of the jetty would cause the water police boats to reverse out onto a beach where families swim. In fact, the reverse was the case, and I had to table the plans of the new water police facility. That was the first occasion on which the member showed he was prepared to resort to any tactic at all for sensationalism and news, and had no regard for the truth or the facts. We have seen it on many occasions since.

The Government gave the Police Force in this State the benefit of optional retirement at the age of 55 with full superannuation, and

many police officers—137 so far—have taken advantage of the very generous provisions introduced by the Government on 1 July 1984. I believe it would be more sensible for us to examine the resignation statistics over the last few years. That would be a better indication of whether morale is high or low within the Police Force. We have given members of the force the option of early retirement and many have exercised that option because they believe it is worthwhile. They have worked for many years—some for 30 or 35 years—within the Police Force and have decided to opt for early retirement. They deserve that, and the Government has given them that benefit.

Let us look at the resignation statistics. The member for Mt Lawley should listen very carefully to this because it will be very enlightening. In the last two years of the Liberal Government in this State there were 186 resignations from the Police Force.

In the four years of this Labor Government there has been a total of 147 resignations, compared with the last two years of the Liberal Government, in which there were 186 resignations. That speaks for itself.

Mr Burkett: When there was no early retirement!

Mr Pearce: And there are now more police.

Mr GORDON HILL: The Opposition remains silent on this issue. As my colleague, the Minister for Education, just pointed out, in terms of resignations from the Police Force today these now come from a higher base, as the member for Mt Lawley will concede.

The Police Force in this State has been increased in size to a remarkable level by this Government and the administration of the force is very grateful for that because the former Government left a vacuum after its last three years in office. The real strength of the Police Force increased by 144 in the last three years of the Liberal Government. In three years of Labor Government the numbers—that is, real strength, over and above retirements—increased by 300. The real strength of the Police Force increased by another 150 for this year and the Government has given a commitment to increase the force by another 300 during this term.

The Opposition remains silent on that point because it knows that this is a fact. When I referred to resignations a moment ago, I should have added that those figures are from a very high base. I am advised by the Commissioner for Police that 1986 will provide the lowest

resignations since 1980. Is that a sign of bad morale? Is that a sign that the Police Force in this State is disgruntled in any way at all? It is absolute nonsense for the Opposition to come up with such claims without foundation. It is a publicity seeking exercise.

This Government has done more for the Police Force than any previous Government, and senior police officers recognise that fact. The Liberal Party purports to support the Police Force, but we know very well that it was not the Liberal Party that gave optional early retirement at 55; it was not the Liberal Party that gave an increase in the numbers of police in this State; it was not the Liberal Party that gave a dramatic rise in the allowances paid to police officers, and it was not the Liberal Party that gave the Police Force access to additional computer fingerprinting services. The Liberal Party did not give the Police Force additional aircraft, nor did it add to the water police numbers, and the Liberal Party did not give the Police Force the most-up-to-date equipment in the forensic science branch. All of these things were provided by the Labor Government—and the Liberal Opposition claims to support the Police Force! We on this side of the House know this claim to be patently untrue. It is an absolute nonsense.

The member for Mt Lawley referred to the fact that the Government should show more support by increasing the community policing concept—something which the member for Mt Lawley again obviously does not have a grasp of. I announced the other day that the Government will make provision in the Budget for a 300 per cent increase to the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. The Commissioner of Police recently has increased the number of personnel involved in that scheme, which is an important part of the community policing concept.

The member for Mt Lawley has given notice of a motion which he intends to move in respect of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This is an indication that he is trying to be sensational and to score cheap political points. He is in fact failing miserably in so doing because he does not know the facts. He does not have a grasp of the issue. He may read the newspapers, but he does so selectively. He does not refer to articles in relation to police morale, like those, for example, written by Cyril Ayris of *The West Australian*—a journalist who is regarded by the police as having an understanding of most police issues; he has his finger on the pulse and he knows the issues which affect policemen.

The member for Mt Lawley made reference in one of his Press articles to a need for additional police officers in the drug squad. The member claims to know how the Police Force in this State operates, and he claims to know something about the administration of the force. In one of his articles he said that the Government should increase the size of the drug squad. For the information of the member for Mt Lawley, I tell the House that the Government has made more resources available to the Commissioner of Police than the previous Liberal Government did. I have already demonstrated that. The Government has made those resources available and the Commissioner of Police has deployed them as he sees fit. This year, in fact, four police officers were added to the drug squad.

Further, I believe it should be remembered that every police officer in this State has a responsibility, in terms of policing criminal activity, to engage in the fight against the evil of drug trafficking. There are no exceptions to that; police officers around the State are involved in that fight. In that sense, all police officers in this state are members of the drug squad. This indicates to me that the member for Mt Lawley does not have an understanding of the administration of the Police Force, of its role, and of the deployment of staff, as well as of the role of the commissioner himself.

By making comments to the Press about the demand for an increase in the size of the drug squad, the member for Mt Lawley is criticising the Commissioner of Police, as he has done consistently tonight. The deployment of staff is the responsibility of the commissioner and the fight against the evil of drugs in our society is not solely the province of the drug squad. It is the responsibility of all police officers, and the member for Mt Lawley does not even understand that.

The member also made comments about alleged low morale within the CIB. I am sure members would be interested to know the actual strength of the CIB. As I indicated before, the size of the Police Force has been increased dramatically during the term in office of this Government. In fact, during the last three years the size of the CIB has been increased, in real terms, by 38 members. The member for Mt Lawley might also be interested to know—and it may prove enlightening to him—that there is a formula which has traditionally been adopted within the Police Force for determining the size of the CIB. The CIB is maintained by the Commissioner of Police at

11.5 per cent of the entire force. There has been no deviation from that, despite the fact that the State Labor Government has dramatically increased the size of the force. When this happened, the Commissioner of Police proportionately increased the size of the CIB.

This is a policy which the Commissioner of Police has adhered to and I support him very strongly in that and other aspects of police administration. I reject strongly the criticisms made of the commissioner, the senior personnel in the Police Force, and the force generally by the member for Mt Lawley tonight.

Earlier in the night reference was made to what was considered the low morale in the CIB. On this subject I do not believe the commissioner has told any lies. The member for Mt Lawley asserts that morale is low, but I have every confidence in the commissioner when he tells me, as he did as recently as a couple of weeks ago, that he addressed approximately 150 CIB officers. He asked them during a question time whether they had any concerns about the administration of the Police Force and about personnel management. He assured me that the meeting was conducted in a very relaxed atmosphere and that there was obviously no lack of morale within the CIB or within any other section of the force. I wonder how many times I have to spell that out.

Sure, from time to time some individual officers will be feeling low about certain issues. I, too, am human and feel a bit low about some things from time to time. I am sure my ministerial colleagues feel the same way and if members opposite were prepared to be honest, they would admit to the same thing.

There is no low morale in the Police Force in Western Australia. The only threat to morale is the member for Mt Lawley because of his rantings and ravings and because of the way he indulges in cheap political exercises in attempting to get publicity.

On the subject of a 38-hour week for the police I make it clear that it was with reluctance that the Government made the decision to defer consideration of the shorter week for the Police Force in this State. It has not been something the Government has liked doing. It is not something I feel comfortable about, because I would love to be in a position to say to the Police Force that the 38-hour week could be made available to its members now.

The simple fact of the matter is that since that commitment was made earlier this year by my predecessor, the present Minister for Local

Government, the financial circumstances facing this State have changed considerably.

We have had calls from the Police Union leadership in this State, the member for Mt Lawley, and other Opposition members, for increased manpower within our Police Force. We have had comments from them that manpower levels are inadequate in the force. We now have the member for Mt Lawley saying that we should go ahead with a 38-hour week now for the Police Force and put the extra workload on the existing members of the force, and that is what we would be doing. This would be achieved through an additional 12 days' holiday in lieu of the 38-hour week, by adding 2½ weeks to the six weeks they currently receive.

Effectively this would reduce the strength of the Police Force by 172 officers. There is not one person in this State who wants to see that happen or who believes that the real strength of the Police Force ought to be reduced in this way.

Mr Court: It is just like your promise to install all those computers in our schools.

Mr GORDON HILL: I am surprised that the member should mention the subject of schools. I had not intended to refer to schools because I thought it would embarrass members opposite, but the member for Mt Lawley recently said on television that the size of the Police Force ought to be doubled and that the police ought to have their salaries doubled. Where is he going to get the money from? How many schools is he going to close? How many teachers is he going to sack? How many hospitals is he going to close?

Mr Brian Burke: Doubling the Police Force doesn't seem a bad idea.

Mr Cash: Do you support that? What about giving your Minister some money to do it?

Mr Brian Burke: But how would you pay for it?

Mr GORDON HILL: Is the member for Mt Lawley indicating that he would close schools and hospitals? What other Government services would he close? Let me give members an idea of what the member for Mt Lawley had to say in response to a comment by Mr Richard Utting, the President of the Criminal Law Association. Mr Utting said, "I would like to see the number of policemen doubled and their salaries doubled because it is essential." The journalist interviewing the two asked the member for Mt Lawley, "Is that something you two would agree on?" The member for Mt Lawley said, "Yes, indeed it is." Where is the money to

come from? How many schools and how many hospitals will the member close?

Mr Brian Burke: He just said that he didn't say that.

Mr GORDON HILL: The member for Mt Lawley has a slippery grasp of the truth. He will deny it until the cows come home, but his remarks are here in black and white. Every Western Australian who watched that "7.30 Report" will acknowledge that. I have had people come up to me and ask, "Where's the Opposition going to get the money from to pay for that insanity the member for Mt Lawley referred to? How are they going to meet the bill? Are they going to close hospitals and schools?" Quite clearly something dramatic would have to happen to meet that sort of commitment made by the member for Mt Lawley. As I have said, he has a slippery grasp of the truth and of facts.

As I have already said with respect to the 38-hour week, we originally asked the Police Union, by way of correspondence several weeks ago, to give consideration to deferring implementation of the 38-hour week for the Police Force, but the union did not even show me the courtesy of giving me a response. Nor did it take the issue to its membership at large. There has been no such consultation by the leadership of the Police Union. Where is the member for Mt Lawley getting his arguments? Is it from people who are as out of touch with police issues in this State as he is?

The member for Mt Lawley referred to consultation with the Police Union, saying that there had been many changes in recent times that had caused a great deal of difficulty for members of the Police Force. No doubt some changes have caused difficulties for some members of the force. Some changes have occurred after a process of consultation, and not before, as the member has argued. A whole range of different procedures are gone through before decisions are made which affect members of the Police Force. Decisions are not made by one person at the top, the commissioner; a whole consultative process takes place first. The union has many different levels of consultation with senior management personnel within the force. If the union does not take advantage of that consultative process, it is not the fault of the senior police personnel nor of the Minister, as the member for Mt Lawley has quite laughably tried to indicate.

I will move on now to comment on one or two other matters raised.

The member for Albany referred to the so-called lack of success in cleaning up crime in this State and indicated that it was a pointer to low morale. That is just so laughable. Police Forces in other States must be doing very badly because we have the second highest crime clean-up rate in Australia. Our rate is almost double that of a State like South Australia comparable in size with us. That gives the lie to the comments made by the members for Albany and Mt Lawley that the Police Force is inefficient in the performance of its duties and to the comment that there is low morale in the force. It shows that those two members lack an understanding of the real issues confronting the Police Force and the Government.

The Government has every confidence in the ability of the Police Force of this State to perform its duties capably. We believe we have an outstanding Commissioner of Police and senior officers, contrary to what the member for Mt Lawley has said, and an outstanding force. I am very proud to be Minister for Police and Emergency Services with such a dedicated and hard-working force.

Amendments to Motion

It is appropriate to take this opportunity to move an amendment to the motion moved by the member for Mt Lawley. I move—

To delete all words after "House".

If my amendment is successful, I intend to move to insert the following words—

condemns the Member for Mount Lawley for wrongly creating a belief that morale in the Police Force is at a low level and congratulates the Burke Government, the Police Administration and Police Officers generally for their fine performance in the policing field.

I have great pleasure in moving this amendment and rejecting the criticism levelled by the member for Mt Lawley at the Police Force of this State.

MR BURKETT (Scarborough) [9.43 p.m.]: I second the amendment with great pleasure. There is no doubt in my mind why the member for Mt Lawley continues to pursue his headline-seeking publicity campaign as shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Clearly he would like more than anything else to be the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in this State. That cannot take place before February 1989, if at all. I do not blame him for his ambition, but he should not make comments about the Police Force which are

blatantly untrue. I challenge the member to produce documentary evidence to support his claim that there is widespread low morale in the force throughout this State.

Naturally there are members of the Police Force, both past and present, who are further to the right than those people who frequent the Colin Street headquarters of the New Right in this State; and those few past and present officers are providing the member for Mt Lawley with this continuous flow of quite untrue garbage. I refer to one article in *The West Australian* of 22 September which begins, "Perth is in danger of becoming a New York-style crime centre". Yet the visiting sponsors, executives, and crews of the America's Cup challenge yachts from all over the world have already repeatedly commended the Western Australian Police Force, saying that its efforts in policing every facility are 200 per cent better than those at Newport—not a little bit better, but 200 per cent better. I would like the member for Nedlands to check that out, given his interest in yachting. That is not a bad effort for a country which is going to have all this crime!

For the past two months I have purposely documented conversations with 57 serving police officers in metropolitan Perth and 19 officers from country centres. Four of those officers have complained to me. Not one police officer in this State has made a telephone call or written or seen me in person in my office. Out of the 57 metropolitan and 19 country police officers I contacted, four gave me complaints, and I invited them knowing that this sort of thing was rearing its head every time the Minister for Police and Emergency Services made a comment in the paper; five minutes later the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services comes out with an outlandish comment.

One officer said he was concerned that he was overweight and that this might preclude him from a future promotion. He was not demonstrating a low morale—he laughed about it, but he was concerned. That was one out of 76. One officer in a country centre expressed concern, as did the member for Avon, about housing in country centres. He was not concerned about the housing he was enjoying—a three-bedroomed GEHA house. He has two little boys of school age and one daughter less than six months old, and he is very happy with his house. However, he was concerned about some housing in far locations of the State.

The other two officers were not demonstrating low morale. One wanted to be accepted as a member of the water police, and he thought his age, not his fitness, might preclude him. However, when this officer went for a thorough examination by his country doctor it was pointed out to him that his blood pressure was slightly on the rise. The doctor said to him, "In my opinion it would be extremely unwise for you to enter the water police at this stage of your life." This officer gladly withdrew his application. He is still a country police officer, and as happy as the birds in May. He did not demonstrate a problem of low morale.

The fourth officer asked me at a social function if it was possible to get an inflatable rescue craft for the police at Rottnest Island. The police at Rottnest did not make an approach to the Burke Labor Government in its first three years of office, but they made two approaches to the previous Liberal Party Government and were refused on both occasions. I immediately saw the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and said, "Please can we look at making an inflatable craft of the sort used by lifesaving clubs available for Rottnest?" The lifesaving clubs call them "rubber duckies", and they use them to patrol the beaches.

That was four out of 76 police officers—hardly low morale!

A prominent former police officer in this State, for whom I have the highest regard, was recently engaged by the Liberal Party to investigate branch stacking in the party and the reason for the punch-ups at annual general meetings of branches in the northern suburbs. Naturally the Liberal Party has friends in the Western Australian Police Force. A great number of police officers in this State thought Ray O'Connor was one of the best Police Ministers they had ever known because he communicated well with his troops.

Already, in the shortest time, Gordon Hill is being compared in style with Mr O'Connor because of the way he travels the length and breadth of this State visiting the police unannounced and talking with them. I might say that the same police officers who have the highest regard for Ray O'Connor absolutely loathed a later Liberal Police Minister, the now Leader of the State Opposition. They said he did not talk to them, he talked at them. I was pleasantly surprised with the number of police who had a high regard for the member for Kalamunda, and a handful even liked the member for Kalamunda. Highest points were for Mr O'Connor, second highest points for the

member for Clontarf, and no points for the Leader of the Opposition.

The member for Mt Lawley talks about the low morale of the Police Force. I wonder whether he has ever visited the police stables. I ask that because I visited them twice this year.

Mr MacKinnon: How did they let you out?

Mr BURKETT: Very smart, bucket mouth. I have seen mounted police, in their own time, and with their own money, paying a leading equestrian tutor, receiving extra instruction so they can improve their riding skills to do their jobs as mounted police officers. Is this the action of police officers with low morale? They are paying their own money and using their own time to improve their horse-riding skills.

Again I ask the member for Mt Lawley to submit to this House one ounce of evidence to support his wild claims of widespread low morale in the Police Force of this State. Naturally the extreme right-wing clique which feeds the member for Mt Lawley with his news releases which the member for Mt Lawley bends, twists and changes in his continual attempts to grab headlines in whatever newspaper, will give any credibility to this man's Press releases. A far greater majority of police officers in this State enjoy tremendous job satisfaction. They are not down in the dumps and I doubt that they would swap their jobs or their work conditions for any other jobs available to them today.

I refer members of this House to a recent programme on "State Affair" in which a police sergeant, Peter Mews at Roebourne, was shown giving little Aboriginal kids rides on his police horse. That is hardly the action of a policeman displaying low morale. This very same police officer regularly gets his wife to cook meals for Aborigines in Roebourne who are experiencing hard times. That is hardly the action of a policeman with low morale. I suggest that the member for Mt Lawley talk with 100 per cent of officers of the Police Force rather than to just three or four per cent as at present and that he begin including a degree of truth in his police Press releases. If the member for Mt Lawley does not start telling the truth there will obviously be some very disappointed Liberals in this State.

If the member for Mt Lawley wants to know what I am referring to, I will conclude my speech by commenting on something a prominent financial member of the Geraldton Liberal Party said to me just last Friday, 3 October 1986. He said, "Mr Burkett, enjoy your term in Government because in 1989 the Liberal Party

of Western Australia will have a secret weapon." I said, "A secret weapon; what is your secret weapon?" He said, "I will tell you, even though it is a bit early. Put Cash up front with no hassles."

I conclude by telling the member for Mt Lawley that if he is truly the Liberal Party's secret weapon, I suggest that he commence to flavour his Press releases with a new content—the truth.

MR CASH (Mt Lawley) [9.54 p.m.]: The Opposition opposes the amendment. The Government has taken what was a very constructive motion which attempted to offer some support to the Western Australia Police Force and has turned it into a political farce.

I am disappointed, as I believe most members of the Opposition would be disappointed, with the performance of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services tonight. There is no question that, in response to the very important matters raised tonight by me and by the members for Albany and Avon, he did not answer any of the matters that were introduced in support of the Police Force. Members will be aware that, at times in desperation, the Minister attempted to suggest that I believed the Commissioner of Police to be a liar. I objected each time by way of interjection and I again place on the public record the fact that Commissioner Brian Bull has my personal and absolute support and will continue to have that support while he is the Commissioner of Police in Western Australia. Senior officers know that they have my support because I have advised them of it. I have also assured the rank and file of my support each time I have had the opportunity to speak to them. They all enjoy the confidence of the Opposition.

In rejecting the amendment before the House I suggest that the Government has a good look at what it is doing to the Police Force. I suggest also that it consider my motion. I pointed out earlier that it is a constructive motion aimed at giving the Government the opportunity to have a look at areas of concern in the force in order that it can make recommendations to improve the situation that exists today. Obviously the Minister is not interested in supporting the force.

I said earlier that it was my view—a view shared by many serving officers of the Police Force—that the current Minister was inept, inexperienced, and unable to cope with the pressures of his portfolio. I repeat that for the benefit of the House.

The Opposition totally rejects the amendment to the motion as a political farce.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [9.58 p.m.]: I think if anyone has demonstrated his inexperience, it is the member for Mt Lawley; if anyone has demonstrated his ineptness, it is the member for Mt Lawley; and, if anyone has demonstrated his incompetence, it is the member for Mt Lawley. No matter how the member for Mt Lawley tries to twist the truth about his position in relation to the Police Force, and specifically in relation to the Commissioner of Police, it is broadly accepted in the community, and certainly in the force, that the member for Mt Lawley does not support the commissioner and has attempted to identify and use dissatisfaction with the commissioner and the higher echelon of the Police Force for his own political purposes. I think that is fairly broadly accepted amongst those people in the community who take an interest in police matters.

I think the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has demonstrated that, under his stewardship, the stewardship of the present Government, and the stewardship of the Ministers who have preceded him, we have made available, as a Government, more resources to the Police Force than were ever made available by our predecessors.

In fact, our predecessors followed the general rule that they should speak loudly in support of the Police Force at the same time as they robbed the force of the capacity and the ability to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and appropriately.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has very capably demonstrated that across the whole range of resources made available by Governments to Police Forces, the present Government has done more to provide additional resources than did our predecessors ever look like providing, although it is true to say that from time to time they sounded as though they were doing a lot more than they were actually doing.

It is to the credit of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services that he has so rapidly established his bona fides with the force; he has so rapidly been accepted by it; he is respected by it; and he has so capably argued within the ranks of Government the interests of the force which is his responsibility.

As far as the member for Mt Lawley is concerned, I think it would be wise for him to learn lessons from the experiences in which his col-

league the member for Gascoyne, for example, has been involved. The quick, cheap political shot does not work. In the long run the general approach that appears to be adopted by the member for Mt Lawley is one which, in my limited experience, although somewhat more lengthy than is his, I have not found to be effective.

People do not rush to judgment quickly on the basis of some fast retort, some quick fixed solution, or some headline-grabbing proposition that appears to be the forte of the member for Mt Lawley. The shallow superficiality of his approach pales when compared with the real substance; that is the responsibility and the result of the policies pursued and devised by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

I do not know that it appears to be anything more than my simply lecturing the member for Mt Lawley when I say that it has been my experience that the approach that he appears to want to adopt does not work. Two things happen. Firstly, members who follow that approach do not earn the respect of their colleagues on either side of the House. Secondly, in this case in the Police Force, for example, the same approach fails to earn the respect of serving officers. I think that is clear in the present controversy about the 38-hour week where the Police Union now says that it does not believe that industrial action is appropriate.

Despite the efforts of the member for Mt Lawley, even as late as this evening, to talk about the likelihood or at least the possibility of industrial action, the Police Force, having tested the waters, does not believe that industrial action is appropriate or that it is even likely.

Mr Cash: You would be aware of the comments from the Geraldton branch.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am yet to be convinced that the Geraldton branch is the Police Union. I am simply reporting on public statements by the Police Union Secretary who said publicly that he did not believe that industrial action is appropriate or that it would be followed in pursuing a 38-hour week. He may be right; I do not know. However, I do know that at the time he was saying that, the member for Mt Lawley was saying the opposite.

I am trying to point out to the member for Mt Lawley that the tactic he appears to be so comfortable in using does not wash. It does not earn the respect of his colleagues for his intel-

lect; and certainly among serving members of the force there seems to be tremendous apathy about the views of the member for Mt Lawley.

Mr MacKinnon: Which members have you spoken to?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: From time to time I have spoken to a number of them.

Mr MacKinnon: How recently?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I cannot recall. In the past few weeks I have spoken to some members of the force.

Mr MacKinnon: How many?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am never sure what the member for Mt Lawley is advocating because he appears to advocate and then deny his advocacy whenever it suits him.

It is an amazing thing that tonight I sat in this House and heard the member for Mt Lawley say that he never claimed that the number of officers in the Police Force should be doubled or that their wages should be doubled. Everyone else who was in this Chamber at the time would have heard him say the same thing. I did not make that claim—he said that.

A little while later—two or three sentences later—he asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to produce the television item, and believing that the Minister did not have the transcript, the member for Mt Lawley pushed the point and said that he never made the claim, yet the Minister was able to read the transcript in which the claim was made by the member for Mt Lawley. That is simply an easy-to-grasp, quick-to-learn-from example of how the strategy adopted by the member for Mt Lawley did not work.

Mr MacKinnon: Don't you agree with him?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I certainly do. It would be good to double the Police Force. I do not have a problem with that and I never denied I said that. He denied the things he said.

Mr MacKinnon: It was the implication of the Minister.

Mr Peter Dowding: That is not very strange. I would not press that claim.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In that one incident the member for Mt Lawley destroyed the case he thought he had made out. It was one incident which was among many others littered through-

out his speech that, in the same way as that incident, did destroy the integrity of what he was trying to make out.

As I said earlier it does not appear to me, from my limited experience, to be the way to earn the respect of the immediate group to whom a member is addressing his remarks, let alone those who, in the colder light of objective judgment outside this place, can decide whether they believe the statements that are made from time to time.

That brings me to the main reason for participating in this debate tonight—to state in the clearest possible terms that this Government is immensely proud of the Western Australia Police Force. It has tried at every reasonable opportunity, in every reasonable way, to advance the fortunes and improve the prospects of our serving police officers. The Government appreciates the dangerous and inevitably demanding work on which they are engaged and it appreciates the aspect of their work that stretches beyond the normal employment that most of us seek or involve ourselves in. It stretches into the realm of service beyond the call of duty in the interests of the public.

The Government can point to a number of changes it has made that have advanced the interest of the Police Force and have started to convince the force of the fact that the Government is very firm in its support.

It was always a matter of great personal disappointment to me for so many years, for a number of reasons I will touch on briefly, that the Australian Labor Party was not seen to be the natural party to represent the interests of the Police Force. If we return to the time when the force was, through its union, affiliated with the ALP, we can see about that time that the natural party of the Police Force, in political terms was the ALP.

At the time, when my uncle was a young officer in the force, it was clearly recognised that the ALP was the party which had a special respect for and an interest in the force, and it was the party which was best able to reflect the force's view. What happened then was that during the mid 1950s and 1960s the ALP became politically unsuccessful and as a result lost its relevance in community terms, and certainly in police terms; and we saw then the emergence within the force of a fairly fierce political view that tended to the right and tended to confront

what it conceived to be an emerging left influence in the Labor Party as it was in Opposition at that time.

I am very pleased to say that one of the outstanding achievements that I rank amongst those to be accorded to the present Government is that we have reversed that trend. We now have amongst the ranks of police officers a fairly hefty body of opinion that the present Government—not in political terms it is true, but in administrative or policy terms—is a Government with which they can peacefully exist. It was—to identify the major material advantage rendered the force—the present Government which accorded to the force full retirement benefits at age 55; that flowed on through the promotional system to advantage so many younger police officers and so many police officers who took the opportunity to retire on full benefits prior to the period when they thought they reasonably could expect to retire. Thus, that is a matter of great satisfaction to me, as is the performance of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Everybody knows that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was elected to the Cabinet upon the resignation from the Cabinet of the former Minister. In difficult circumstances the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has acquitted himself admirably. As I have indicated, he has earned the respect of the Police Force, its senior officers, and the community generally, for his attitudes. In the face of some quite fierce criticism from the member for Mt Lawley—in highly coloured and highly political terms; not in substantial and worthwhile ways—the Minister has held his own to overcome what was a quite severe challenge from the member for Mt Lawley. It is to the credit of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services that the member for Mt Lawley is a somewhat shrinking violet at this stage. He has certainly started to retreat from many of the positions that were so politically palatable when first he floridly embarked upon them.

I support the amendment which seeks to remove certain words from the motion. I support it because I believe the words should be removed. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, the House has been informed of the words that will be substituted in the stead of those which are to be removed. I certainly support the insertion of those new words. On that basis, I support the amendment. I feel very proud of the contribution made by the Minister for Police and Emergency Service.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 24

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mrs Beggs | Mr Marlborough |
| Mr Bertram | Mr Parker |
| Mr Bryce | Mr Pearce |
| Mr Brian Burke | Mr Read |
| Mr Terry Burke | Mr D. L. Smith |
| Mr Burkett | Mr P. J. Smith |
| Mr Carr | Mr Thomas |
| Dr Gallop | Mr Troy |
| Mr Grill | Mrs Watkins |
| Mrs Henderson | Dr Watson |
| Mr Gordon Hill | Mr Wilson |
| Mr Tom Jones | Mrs Buchanan |

Noes 18

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Mr Blaikie | Mr Lewis |
| Mr Cash | Mr MacKinnon |
| Mr Clarko | Mr Rushion |
| Mr Court | Mr Spriggs |
| Mr Cowan | Mr Stephens |
| Mr Grayden | Mr Thompson |
| Mr Hassell | Mr Trenorden |
| Mr House | Mr Watt |
| Mr Laurance | Mr Williams |

(Teller)

Pairs

Noes

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Ayes | |
| Mr Evans | Mr Tubby |
| Dr Lawrence | Mr Nalder |
| Mr Taylor | Mr Bradshaw |
| Mr Hodge | Mr Crane |
| Mr Tonkin | Mr Mensaros |
| Mr Bridge | Mr Lightfoot |
| Mr Peter Dowding | Mr Schell |

(Teller)

Amendment thus passed.

MR GORDON HILL (Helena—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [10.17 p.m.]: I move an amendment—

Insert the following words—

condemns the Member for Mount Lawley for wrongly creating a belief that morale in the Police Force is at a low level and congratulates the Burke Government, the Police Administration and Police Officers generally for their fine performance in the policing field.

MR CASH (Mt Lawley) [10.18 p.m.]: The Opposition opposes the words that the Minister has moved to insert. There is no question that it is a self-serving amendment which is designed to do no more than prevent the Opposition's attempt to allow constructive comment to be raised in respect of the Western Australia Police Force. It is an amazing state of affairs when the Premier of this State has to defend his Minister for Police and Emergency Services for 15 minutes. That, in itself, is a very clear indication that the Minister has lost the confidence of the police officers of this State. It is ironical inasmuch as the other day we did not see the Premier jump to his feet to defend the Minister for Minerals and Energy on a motion that was before the House. I reject the amendment.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [10.19 p.m.]: This is yet another stunt on the part of the Government which has found itself in a lot of trouble as the Parliament resumes this session. It constantly tries to deflect attention from itself by attacking individual members on this side of the House.

Tonight the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services has presented a motion on the issue of the Western Australia Police Force, the support given to the Police Force by the Government of Western Australia, the problems in the Police Force and the needs of the Police Force—a substantive motion dealing with substantive and important issues and one which ought to be debated at a reasonable and sensible level.

The Government's response to that substantive motion, that motion dealing with issues relating to the Police Force, is an amendment personally directed to the member for Mt Lawley in an attempt to condemn him for wrongly creating a belief. What nonsense this amendment is and it illustrates once again the level to which this Government is seeking to drag down the debate in this House. Given the opportunity to debate the issues and the substance, the best it could come up with is a personal attack embodied in a motion. This amendment, this personal attack, is, of course opposed by the Opposition.

Let us look for a moment at the facts of the situation. The member for Mt Lawley has not invented the issues raised with him repeatedly by people in or on behalf of the Police Force. The member for Mt Lawley has been pursuing issues in the public domain for a number of weeks because those issues are being brought to him on a daily, and sometimes on an hourly, basis by people who are concerned about the Western Australia Police Force; the changes that are being made in a situation that has brought down the Police Force in Western Australia from the high level at which it operated with community support; a Government which has consistently failed to support the Police Force; a Minister, currently the Minister for Employment and Training, who a few years ago was involved in the public abuse of the Police Force in Roebourne; and many other incidents which have occurred along the way to signal very clearly to the Western Australia Police Force that they do not have the full support of this Government in their work.

It is all very well to mouth words, as we have heard the Premier do on occasions. It is all very well for the Premier to get an article in the

newspaper, as he did a few months ago, saying that everything is all right and that all policemen will vote for his Government again. The fact is that the police are not satisfied with the support they are getting; they are not satisfied that a clearly-given, written promise is blatantly broken without any excuse whatever. That is the reason the member for Mt Lawley, on behalf of the Opposition, has brought these issues to the House tonight.

It is a condemnation of the Government that its answer to those issues and that debate is once again to try to score cheap political points with a stunt and turn the motion back in a personal way on the member for Mt Lawley. Let the Government understand very clearly that as far as we are concerned the issues the member for Mt Lawley has brought forward are brought forward on our behalf because he is successfully and effectively pursuing the representation of the Police Force it needs and ought to get.

We totally reject this foolish, stupid, childish and ineffective amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 24

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mrs Beggs | Mr Marlborough |
| Mr Bertram | Mr Parker |
| Mr Bryce | Mr Pearce |
| Mr Brian Burke | Mr Read |
| Mr Terry Burke | Mr D. L. Smith |
| Mr Burkett | Mr P. J. Smith |
| Mr Carr | Mr Thomas |
| Dr Gallop | Mr Troy |
| Mr Grill | Mrs Watkins |
| Mrs Henderson | Mr Watson |
| Mr Gordon Hill | Mr Wilson |
| Mr Tom Jones | Mrs Buchanan |

(Teller)

Noes 18

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Mr Blaikie | Mr Lewis |
| Mr Cash | Mr MacKinnon |
| Mr Clarko | Mr Rushton |
| Mr Court | Mr Spriggs |
| Mr Cowan | Mr Stephens |
| Mr Grayden | Mr Thompson |
| Mr Hassell | Mr Trenorden |
| Mr House | Mr Watt |
| Mr Laurance | Mr Williams |

(Teller)

Pairs

Noes

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Mr Evans | Mr Tubby |
| Dr Lawrence | Mr Nalder |
| Mr Taylor | Mr Bradshaw |
| Mr Hodge | Mr Crane |
| Mr Tonkin | Mr Mensaros |
| Mr Bridge | Mr Lightfoot |
| Mr Peter Dowding | Mr Schell |

Amendment thus passed.

Question (motion, as amended) put and passed.

TAXES AND CHARGES: WINE TAX

Delegation: Motion

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [10.29 p.m.]: I move—

That by resolution of this House a delegation comprising the Premier, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the National Party meet with the Prime Minister and Treasurer to explain the consequences and effect on wine producers in Western Australia of the recently imposed doubling of the Federal wine tax and further—

- (1) cites the recommendations of the 1985 report of the Select Committee into the Grape Growing Industry of Western Australia;
- (2) gives reason for deep concern and the effect on this State's tourism and hospitality industries;
- (3) explains the financial consequences for the wine producing areas of Swan Valley, Mt Barker and Margaret River regions, and requests that the increased tax be repealed in this State.

The purpose of the motion is for a delegation comprising the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the National Party to meet with the Federal Prime Minister to try to explain the consequences and effect on wine producers in Western Australia of the decision by the Federal Government to increase the wine sales tax by 100 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! I am having extreme difficulty hearing the member.

MR BLAIKIE: There are a number of very valid reasons why this should take place. The wine industry of Western Australia is important to the State, to the people involved in that industry, and to the regions in which it is located. It is crucial to the regions' future that this doubling of the tax be waived.

An announcement has already been made that the Federal Government is not to proceed with its proposed gold tax. That will be of great significance to the gold producing regions of Australia. The lifting of this imposition of a double wine tax would have the same beneficial effect in this State as the decision not to proceed with the gold tax.

Western Australia can be treated in isolation from the rest of the Commonwealth. It can be treated in a different way. There are many

reasons why the wine industry in this State is vastly different from that of other wine producing States in Australia.

Mr D. L. Smith interjected.

Mr BLAIE: The wines certainly are better. Whether they will be able to keep producing under the impost they currently face is another question.

There is a precedent. The Premier has already made approaches to the Federal Government, and the Federal Government has responded. This was during the February election, when the Premier made specific representations in relation to nitrogenous fertiliser. The Commonwealth Government agreed that Western Australia would not be taxed in the same way. So there is ample precedent for Western Australia to be treated differently as far as taxing measures are concerned.

It is my judgment that unless some benefit is forthcoming, the wine industry in this State will be looking down the barrel of very difficult times and difficult circumstances. There is a need to understand that the different circumstances of this State demand different considerations of the needs and problems of our producers.

Only some 12 months ago the current Minister for Transport was the Chairman of a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the grape growing industry. I was part of that committee. A number of members canvassed all areas of this State, and in due course went to the wine growing areas of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria to look at the impact of the various decisions and considerations by Government and their effect on the wine growing industry. I intend to refer to that document in due course.

Suffice to say that the recommendations of that committee were unanimous regarding the imposition of taxes. That committee made some very important judgments in the compilation of its report. The case for Western Australia has been well documented, and it is available for the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party to use as part of their arguments in going to the Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer to support a case for Western Australia.

On page 32 the Select Committee, in its summary, found this—

The Western Australian wine industry is characteristically small and family based. It concentrates on the production of dis-

tinctive regional and varietal premium wines, using specialist wine grape varieties rather than multi-purpose grapes. Little bulk wine is produced in Western Australia.

Western Australia has 72 commercial wineries of which 70 are small family businesses. Two medium sized wineries are supported in the Swan Valley. Evidence indicated that the Western Australian wine industry also characteristically had high levels of capitalisation and often low returns on capital invested.

I raise the point here again that we have an industry of 72 wineries in the State. There are two bigger companies—Sandalford and Houghtons. I presume one could put the Leeuwin Estate—not a big winery—up in that non-privately owned category. The balance are small, family businesses. They are very important to the regions in which they operate, particularly to the region I represent, and also the area represented by the Minister for Transport, the Swan Valley.

Mr D. L. Smith interjected.

Mr BLAIE: It would be far more important, because what it shows is a unilateral agreement on a non-political basis. It shows an understanding by all political parties of concern for the wine growing industry of Western Australia. This is not a political stunt. There is concern.

An inquiry was conducted in Western Australia last year. These are the findings of the inquiry. Not only do we not disagree with them, but also we find circumstances have deteriorated since that inquiry. In addition to the cost circumstances deteriorating, there has been an increase in the sales tax level by a further 100 per cent.

The parliamentary inquiry indicated levels of great concern. Add to that a further impost, and there are dire consequences for the wine producing industry of Western Australia. The motion seeks a joint approach, with the leaders of the respective parties going to the Prime Minister and to the Treasurer. On that basis I see advantage. It is not a political stunt; it happens to be a matter of survival for the wine industry.

Mr MacKinnon: And the tax, because of the nature of the industry in Western Australia, will hit the Western Australian wine industry the hardest.

Mr BLAIKIE: It will hit the Western Australian industry hardest of all because there are some very important matters which need to be understood by all the members of this House. First, the impact is certainly going to be devastating to the State's wine industry. I use the McKay report of 1985, which gives the 1983 Australian grape and wine production figures, which show that Western Australia produced one per cent of the national grape production. The total was some 843 000 tonnes. Western Australia's share of that was 12 000 tonnes—a mere bagatelle. It will not be a button off the Commonwealth Government's shirt, but it will mean devastation to the people in the wine industry.

If one looks at the amount related to wine grapes only, it is less than two per cent of the total produced in Australia. The Mt Barker and Margaret River areas produce 66 per cent of the total wine and grape production. I appeal to members to understand that these are new producing areas; these are the areas which are just getting under way.

It comes back to the point made by the Select Committee of this Parliament: There are very high levels of capitalisation in Western Australia and low levels of return on capital invested. That is traditional in this industry.

There is ample written evidence to support the case from Western Australia and I believe there are very logical reasons for it to be done on a joint party, non-political basis.

I refer now to the McKay report which was commissioned by the Commonwealth Government to inquire into the Australian grape and wine industries. I will read only some of the recommendations in that report because a number of recommendations were made by the committee. I refer to those which relate specifically to the sales tax imposed in 1984. On page 7 the report states—

... there should be no increase in the sales tax until sufficient time has gone by to measure the impact of the present tax (at least two to three years).

Yet within 12 months of this Federal report being released the Government imposed a further increase in sales tax, the impact of which will be felt across Australia but most of all in Western Australia. This Government has chosen to ignore a report commissioned by the Federal Government.

It seems that 1985 was a year for reports, because the Victorian Parliament prepared a further report. It was a report by the Economic

Budget and Review Committee, which investigated a number of matters, including the effect of sales tax on the Victorian industry. Recommendation No. 12.1, on page 234 of the report, states—

That, given the estimated elastic demand for wine and having concern for the existing level of taxation on the industry, the State Government should seek the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government to not increase the overall taxation on wine.

So there is evidence not only from Western Australia, the Commonwealth's own sources, and from Victoria, but evidence from the field that the new measures will be an impost on the industry. I am concerned it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

I place on the record of the House that precedents have been set whereby taxes have been applied and subsequently removed. In 1930 the Scullin Government imposed a 2.5 per cent tax on domestic wine, but in 1931 it was removed. The reason given for the removal was the disastrous effect it was having on the sale of wine in Australia. In 1970, under a Liberal Government, a 50c per gallon tax was imposed on wine, and members of the House will well recall the indignation felt by people at that time. The tax was halved, and then totally withdrawn in 1972. So the Governments of those days saw the errors of their ways.

In 1983 a further tax was imposed on spirits. It was an excise on alcohol used for grape fortification and cost \$2.61 per litre. That tax caused a 50 per cent reduction in the spirituous liquors that we made, and the Government repealed the tax.

Mr Brian Burke: Are you aware of the public position adopted by your national leader on this tax?

Mr BLAIKIE: Notwithstanding the position that may have been adopted, and irrespective of whether it may be—

Mr Brian Burke: Are you aware of it?

Mr BLAIKIE: I am opposed to the imposition of the tax.

Mr Brian Burke: I understand that.

Mr BLAIKIE: And I am concerned about the consequences it will have, not only for the people I represent, but for all other wine producers in Western Australia.

Mr Brian Burke: I was not trying to make a point. Do you know what your Federal party position is?

Mr BLAIKIE: I have not bothered to contact John Howard to find out what his position is, but I want to make this House well and truly aware of our position. I fail to see what John Howard has to do with it.

The matter is documented and is there for all to see. The Select Committee of inquiry in this State made a number of recommendations in relation to taxing measures. I will have these incorporated into *Hansard*. The method of collection was unfair to small wineries; the period of 21 days allowed for payment was too short; and there was a need for economic stability to allow proper planning for developing areas in the industry, which is not assisted by rapid tax changes.

In view of the concern in the industry and the implications for the industry, it was recommended that the State Government approach the Commonwealth Government with a number of proposals, including—

(b) that the basis of the tax on wine be altered from “ad valorem” to “volumetric”;

(c) that no *additional* revenue be collected as a result of that change;

(d) that the tax be applied in a two-tiered method differentiating between containers of more than . . . one litre . . .

(f) that no further changes to taxation provisions for the wine industry be implemented without prior consultation at all levels of the industry and without at least five years notice prior to implementation.

That is what the State inquiry came out with. The committee comprised members of all political parties and presented a consensus view. It bent over backwards to ensure it was a reasoned view and not a radical view to accommodate the respective interests of members of that inquiry.

The tax will have an effect on the tourism and hospitality industries. I have not been able to substantiate it absolutely, but it has often been said that the wine industry is worth some \$7 million to the Margaret River region. If 20 per cent is siphoned off the top, \$1.4 million will leave that region. That will mean the growers there will cut down on the input they have into their respective wineries, and they are already doing so. They will have to cut down on all the extraneous purchases they make but, more importantly, they will have to reduce the labour in the wineries. That has a disastrous multiplying effect throughout the

community. Not only does it extend through the wineries but also to the tourism and hospitality industries. It simply does not stop at the door of the wineries—it goes far further than that. The tax will be a burden on the whole community.

Almost daily I am challenged by people talking about Western Australian wines and the south-west wines. They say they are good, but they are too dear. That comment is made time and time again. Have any other members of this House been spoken to by people who question the price of south-west wines? Has the Minister for Tourism been questioned in this way? The reason wines are so expensive is that people are on a financial shoestring trying to make ends meet.

These additional charges do not help them out at all. There are many small wineries in the south-west which have very small throughputs and high costs, and an increase in their burden will only break their backs. This will have a far greater impact on Western Australia than on any other State, with the exception of the Northern Territory and Queensland. Queensland has a quite insignificant wine growing region, in my view. Queenslanders will probably question that but when one sees the grape-growing areas of the major States—South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales—one realises the huge tonnages which come from the winegrowing areas in those States.

Those States will have problems of a different magnitude but these problems will certainly relate back to Western Australia in terms of the marketplace. The scenario is simply that there will be increased marketplace pressure because of the increase in the sales tax. It will cause the big producers to reduce their margins to maintain their cost cash flows. That, by its very nature, will create many difficulties for the smaller producers. As I said earlier, they have real difficulty in maintaining their viability.

The South West Development Authority has already made representations expressing its concern for what it sees will be the scenario for the industries of the south-west, should the enthusiasm which has previously existed be blunted. The consequences are well documented by a series of reports. This is a time for concerted action. There is a need for a proper and full understanding of the Western Australian industry and what it gives to this State. It differs from the wine industry in the rest of Australia and it needs to be treated differently.

I commend my motion to the House as one which pleads with the Commonwealth and the Western Australian Government for decent and more understanding treatment of the Western Australian wine industry. I hope it will ensure that at least some degree of sympathy will be offered, because if it is not, there will be many casualties in the wine industry.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.53 p.m.]: I have pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the member for Vasse. I express my concern about the attack which the Federal Labor Government is making on what is a very vibrant and healthy industry, not only in Western Australia, but also throughout Australia as a whole.

It is an industry of growing importance to Western Australia, and the increase in the sales tax will only add greatly to the burdens being faced by an industry which is endeavouring to find its feet. This tax is a sad indication of the attitude taken by the Federal Government; its approach towards the wine industry is indicative of its approach to issues in general. Here we have an industry which is expanding across Australia and providing export opportunities as the quality of the wine improves. If ever there was a time when incentives should be provided to an industry to really give it a shot in the arm, that time is now.

However, instead of incentives being provided, the Federal Government is hellbent on raising revenue to fund its spending excesses. Consequently an industry which is in need of help is instead being taxed. As the member for Vasse has indicated, the Opposition vehemently opposed the imposition of the tax when it was first introduced; the Opposition has consistently called for its abolition, and now that the tax has been doubled, the Opposition condemns the Federal Government. The Opposition is now mounting what it sees as an effective course of action to try to draw our concern to the attention of the Federal Government.

Is the industry able to afford such a tax? I think any reasonable person, whether in Government or in Opposition, should ask that question when we look at the imposition of a new tax, or a significant increase in an existing tax. I think the member for Vasse rightly indicated that all the studies which have been undertaken into the wine industry—the Federal study, the Western Australian study and the study undertaken in Victoria—indicate that further taxes on wine would result in further

losses in sales. It is quite clear that the only outcome of the tax, as far as the industry is concerned, will be to damage it. No logical argument can be mounted by the Federal Government, or anybody else for that matter, to the effect that the tax could do anything but harm.

Of course the impact of the increase in the sales tax will be harshest on the premium wine producers. I think that is quite clear. A 10 per cent tax on a \$10 bottle of wine will increase the cost of that wine to \$11 a bottle while on a \$5 bottle of wine the increase will be only 50c.

Mr Blaikie: Imagine what a 20 per cent tax will do.

Mr MacKINNON: A 20 per cent tax will compound the issue. That was the point I was about to make.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has shown that since the 10 per cent tax was imposed on wine, the sales of all wines have been affected, but the sales of premium wines have been most affected. This is as the industry had predicted. The industry predicted that this would happen before the imposition of the 10 per cent tax. The 20 per cent tax will hit the premium wines the most and in fact over the last 12 months there has been a negative growth in premium wine sales, whereas previously those wine sales were rapidly expanding.

The other important point, and the reason this State Parliament should be taking constructive action in relation to this wine tax, is that the industry has special importance to Western Australia. Firstly Western Australia, as the member for Vasse indicated, is primarily a premium wine producer. We have not been involved in the production of casks; we have primarily been involved with the production of premium wines. If this tax is an attack on premium wine producers, it is an attack on the Western Australian industry—just as the gold tax was an attack on Western Australia, the producer of 80 per cent of Australian gold. The wine tax as proposed is an attack which will affect every Western Australian producer, and much more so than producers in other States.

Mr Brian Burke: That is not quite true. That wine industry in the New South Wales Hunter Valley is much more significant than our wine industry, as is the Barossa Valley in South Australia. It is a proportion of the Western Australian economy.

Mr Blaikie: We represent two per cent of the national total.

Mr MacKINNON: In relative terms, it will affect WA more. Our State produces 100 per cent premium wines while South Australia and New South Wales produce the bulk of the lower end of the market in the wine industry. The impact in percentage terms will, therefore be far greater in WA than in any other State.

The second point which the member for Vasse indicated is that of all the producers in Western Australia, probably 95 per cent would be small businesses. The member for Stirling, for example, would represent, as does the member for Vasse, many of those people. They are small businesses and as we all know small business is under attack from more than one quarter. This tax is just another and further imposition thereon.

Thirdly, from Western Australia's point of view exclusively, the wine industry has made a big difference by adding another big attraction to our tourism industry in this State. The Swan Valley, as a tourist destination, is an area which has been improving significantly in recent years because of the development of the wine industry, as has the area around Margaret River and Mt Barker.

Mr Troy: Through the implementation of the Swan Valley policy.

Mr MacKINNON: I can assure the Minister for Transport that the Swan Valley had established its reputation long before the Government dreamed up its Swan Valley policy.

The other point which is important when we look at the wine industry in Western Australia—in areas other than the Swan Valley—is that it is an industry which is assisting the process of decentralisation. Governments often talk about decentralisation. This Government has spent millions of dollars in support of it, yet here we have an industry which has been going along by itself and without Government interference would flourish and develop even more quickly; but of course now we have this imposition which will seriously damage that case.

Leave granted to continue speech at a later stage of the sitting.

Debate thus adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.00 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TRANSPORT

Road Trailers: Shipping

1022. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of the anxiety being expressed amongst road transport owner-drivers at the proposal to ship road trailers to the north-west of the State?
- (2) What efforts is the Government making to ensure that there is no widespread dislocation and hardship amongst the road transport industry?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) Yes. I have met with spokespersons from the owner-drivers and am sympathetic to their position.
- (2) The proposal is currently under investigation and once all the information has been collected the Government will make an appropriate decision.

It must be borne in mind that the proposal from Ocean Freeway offers significant advantages in the form of reduced freight costs to the people and businesses in the north-west. The interests of these people and the overall cost of freight are paramount in the Government's considerations.

HOTHAM VALLEY TOURIST RAILWAY

Avon-York Steam Express: Cancellation

1023. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware that the special Avon-York steam express which was to be operated by the Hotham Valley Tourist Railway on Saturday, 16 August, had to be cancelled due to industrial trouble amongst Westrail employees?
- (2) Is he also aware that many of the disappointed passengers were tourists from both interstate and overseas?
- (3) Is he also aware that this service was the second operated by the Hotham Valley Tourist Railway that has had to be cancelled this year due to industrial trouble?
- (4) Will he consider allowing the Hotham Valley Tourist Railway to operate its own trains as many people involved in the organisation are actually Westrail

employees and would have the knowledge and experience to operate the trains safely?

- (5) What initiatives has he taken to ensure that this tourist railway does not have to disappoint its patrons in the future because of industrial trouble?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) I am not aware of specific details of the passengers booked on the cancelled service.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No. Westrail must have absolute line management control over all Government-owned railways on which services have not been discontinued, in order to maintain and accept responsibility for the high standard of operational safety necessary. Off-duty Westrail employees on the business of HVTR would not be subject to this control.
- (5) I have initiated discussions between HVTR and the Australian Railways Union to enable HVTR to acquaint the union with the difficulties that disruption of its services causes its patrons and HVTR viability. I understand that these discussions are ongoing.

MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCE

Transperth Driver

1024. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of a case where a Transperth driver had his licence removed by the Police Traffic Board earlier this year after being convicted of aggravated assault against a 17-year-old female passenger and for cannabis offences and then had his licence returned by order of a magistrate in the Midland Magistrates Court?
- (2) Has this driver been reinstated by Transperth?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) Yes. While accepting that whether the employee continued as a bus driver was a matter for his employers, the magistrate in his decision stated the opinion that the conviction was

"minor" and that "in this case he (the employee) should be allowed to continue to operate as a bus driver".

- (2) At no stage has the employee been terminated by Transperth. The employee will not be permitted to resume driving until six months have elapsed and the Chairman of Transperth has been satisfied that progress has been made towards ensuring that no further offence occurs.

ROAD BRIDGE

Mandurah: Opening

1025. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When will the new Mandurah Bridge be opened to the public?
- (2) What will be the final cost of this bridge?
- (3) What was the original estimate of the time it would take to complete the bridge?
- (4) What are the reasons for the lengthy delays in completing the bridge?
- (5) What was the cost of these delays in terms of both time and money?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) Saturday, 18 October 1986.
- (2) The final cost of the contract, which includes construction of the bridge and approaches, is expected to be \$6 million.
- (3) The original contract period specified was 86 weeks.
- (4) The additional time taken to construct the bridge resulted partly from normal extensions of time granted during the contract, as well as from the difficulties associated with the contractor's implementation of new technology utilised in the construction process.
- (5) There has been no additional cost to the Government.

BUSINESSES: SMALL BUSINESS

Rural: Inquiry

1033. Mr HOUSE, to the Minister for Small Business:

- (1) Further to questions without notice 31, 68, 153, and 213, when will he table the report of the committee of inquiry into rural small business?

- (2) What action, if any, is proposed as a consequence of that report?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) The rural non-farm business working party was formed to collect and collate information from a variety of sources and provide me with advice on the basis of the information collected; and I would like to say that I am extremely happy with the efforts of the working party and the breadth of information collected in the time available. However, the working party's advice forms only part of the total picture and a number of other factors need to be considered by Cabinet, including the current economic environment. Cabinet investigations are continuing and when all necessary information has been received a decision will be made. It should be stressed that the report is a preliminary working document commissioned by me, and as such it is not necessarily a report needing to be tabled.
- (2) All interested groups will be duly informed once Cabinet is in a position to make a final decision.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Orbital Engine Co Pty Ltd: Investment Establishment Incentives

1036. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Industry and Technology:

Would he detail the investment establishment initiative granted by the Government to retain the Orbital Engine Company Pty Ltd in Western Australia, as reported in the 26 August issue of the *Western Australian Government Notes* No. 58?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The Government's investment incentives package under offer to the Orbital Engine Company for the establishment of an advanced engine testing facility is linked directly to company performance criteria, details of which are subject to current negotiations.

TECHNOLOGY SEMINAR

Organisation

1062. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Industry and Technology:

- (1) Which department organised the luncheon seminar on 25 August 1986, under the title "Developments in Industry and Technology Policy—Budget Implications"?
- (2) What was the total cost associated with this luncheon and its organisations?
- (3) What proportion of the cost at (2) was met by registration or other fees charged to those who attended?
- (4) How many people paid to attend the luncheon?
- (5) What was the purpose of this forum?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (5) The luncheon to which the member refers was part of the normal programme of science, industry and technology forums conducted jointly by the West Australian Technology Directorate and the Department of Industrial Development. The programme was initiated in August 1983 to promote awareness of opportunities and general issues related to technological development in Western Australia. Speakers normally address an audience of about 200 representatives of industry, commerce, and Academia.

On 25 August 1986, 210 people attended the forum. The cost of the luncheon was \$5 245 of which \$2 100 was met by the standard \$10 registration fee.

STATE FINANCE

Capital Works Projects: Deferral

1070. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

- (1) Referring to page 8 of his Economic Statement released on 24 June 1986, which states that capital works projects valued at about \$140 million were to be deferred, will he list individually each project so deferred, its location, and the respective saving to the capital works budget in 1986-87?
- (2) When is it anticipated that each of these projects will be recommenced?

- (3) What is the total reduction in debt servicing costs to be realised in 1986-87 directly as a result of the deferral of these projects?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1)

| Project | Location | Estimated Expenditure 1986-87 \$m | Estimated Total Cost \$m |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Land building | Perth | 3.6 | 51.5 |
| Parliament House additions | West Perth | 5.4 | 57.8 |
| Conservation and Land Management offices | Como | 0.2 | 3.8 |
| Museum entrance building | Cultural Centre | 0.2 | 12.0 |
| Agricultural offices | Esperance | 0.2 | 2.5 |
| Kununurra Hospital redevelopment stage 2 | Kununurra | 0.1 | 4.8 |
| Broome Hospital redevelopment stage 3 | Broome | 0.1 | 4.0 |

- (2) All projects will be considered by the Government during the normal Budget process having regard to other priorities and budgetary constraints.
- (3) It is difficult to estimate the debt servicing costs which will be saved in 1986-87 on these projects as they would have depended on the cash flow of the projects and the prevailing interest rates when the funds were borrowed.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Orbital Engine Co Pty Ltd: Investment Development Incentives

1081. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Industry and Technology:

What is the estimated cost to the State of the investment incentives package it has offered to the Orbital Engine Co Pty Ltd?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The total cost to the State of the Government's current offer to Orbital Engine Co will be dependent on certain company performance criteria which are still subject to negotiation.

DEFENCE

United States Bases: Removal

1091. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Defence Liaison:

Will the State Government support the Australian Labor Party's policy of removing United States of America bases from Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE replied:

It is not the policy of the Australian Labor Party to remove the United States bases, which are correctly termed the joint defence facilities, from Western Australia.

COMMUNICATIONS: AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION

Programmes: Western Australian Production

1094. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Communications:

- (1) Has he made representations to the Australian Broadcasting Commission to ensure that production of radio and television programmes in Western Australia is not decreased?
- (2) If "Yes", what commitments have been given by the Australian Broadcasting Commission?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) As announced by the Chairman of the ABC, the State-based "Country Hour" and the regional country breakfast sessions would remain largely unchanged. Despite the significant cut in its budget, the ABC will adhere to the principal of locally-based programmes.

HOMESWEST

South Fremantle: Contracts

1096. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) When were the contracts signed for the construction of Homeswest's Marine Terrace, South Fremantle housing project?
- (2) What was the original contract price?
- (3) What additional cost did union activity create?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) As a result of the limited time frame available the project commenced on a fast-track basis that involved commencement of construction at labour and materials prices as approved by Homeswest, pending completion of final drawings and detail.

Based on the above, the estimate of cost in December 1985 was \$2.8 million, and work commenced on site in February 1986.

- (3) The member will appreciate that any project undertaken on the basis of (1) and (2) above is subject to cost variations. This situation, combined with an abnormal amount of time lost through wet weather, the general increase in costs overtime, and the fact that there has been industrial dispute, has resulted in some escalation of original estimates.

However, while it is reasonably evident that additional costs have been incurred because of industrial activity, the complex interlinking of all the factors involved in total cost increases does not allow for an accurate apportionment to any particular one.

TECHNOLOGY

Fibre Optics Industry: Establishment

1098. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Industry and Technology:

- (1) Has the Government attracted any companies working in the fibre optics industry to establish in Western Australia?
- (2) If "Yes", what are the companies involved?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government has been actively encouraging major electronics systems suppliers, which have a fibre optic capability, to establish a presence in Western Australia, particularly in relation to the new submarine project. The commercial confidentiality of these negotiations precludes me from divulging the names of the companies involved.

In addition, the UWA has been the leading research institution in Australia in fibre optic communications and has attracted substantial industry involvement through a large number of R and D contracts with industry and Telecom.

ROTTNEST ISLAND YACHT CLUB

Establishment

1102. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Does the Rottnest Island Board intend to establish a yacht club?
- (2) Has any approach been made to the Rottnest Island Board to establish a yacht club on Rottnest Island?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), how many applications and by whom?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

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

HOMESWEST

Northern: Shortages

1104. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) In how many towns north of the 26th parallel are there shortages of Homeswest houses?
- (2) What are those towns?
- (3) What is the extent of the shortage in each town?
- (4) What are the average waiting periods involved?
- (5) To what extent is Homeswest aware of social problems caused by extended occupancy of caravan parks in the absence of Homeswest accommodation?

Mr WILSON replied:

The information requested by the member will take time to collect and collate, and I will reply in writing as soon as practicable.

HOUSING LAND

Northern: Shortages

1105. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) In how many towns north of the 26th parallel are there shortages of land available for residential development?
- (2) What are those towns?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) The demand for land in towns north of the 26th parallel is serviced by existing land available for sale or by

land which is the subject of current development and release programmes.

(2) Answered by (1).

MOTOR CYCLE TRAILERS

Licences

1106. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is it possible to register trailers specifically designed to be towed by motorcycles and, if not, why?
- (2) If it is not possible, will he undertake to make suitable provisions for the licensing of such trailers, having regard for their legal status in other States?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) No. Road Traffic Code 1612(7) specifically prohibits the driving of a motorcycle that is towing a trailer.
- (2) The matter is already receiving consideration by the Government, which expects to receive advice from the Traffic Board following completion of its evaluation of the issues raised.

WASTE DISPOSAL: EFFLUENT

On-Site: Dianella

1107. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will he detail the criteria which his department used in assessing an application for on-site disposal of effluent for a proposed development at lot 67 Delphine Avenue, Dianella?
- (2) Will he detail the criteria used by his department in assessing the matter of "exceptional circumstances" as referred to in a letter dated 30 June 1986 from his department, to the City of Stirling under reference number 140/83?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) Assessed with regard to the Government sewerage policy and the City of Stirling town planning scheme No. 2. These documents can be made available to the member.
- (2) "Exceptional circumstances" relate to development rights and town planning considerations.

CRIME

Rapes: Statistics

1108. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) How many rapes expressed per 100 000 of population were—
 - (a) reported;
 - (b) prosecuted;
 - (c) convicted;
 during the years ended
 - (i) 30 June 1984;
 - (ii) 30 June 1985;
 - (iii) 30 June 1986?
- (2) Can he compare this State's statistics with other Australian States?
- (3) How do the Western Australian statistics compare with international statistics?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) (a) (i) 7.4 reported per 100 000 of population;
- (ii) 14.14 reported per 100 000 of population;
- (iii) 13.85 reported per 100 000 of population;
- (b) (i) 2.83 prosecuted per 100 000 of population;
- (ii) 5.46 prosecuted per 100 000 of population;
- (iii) 6.19 prosecuted per 100 000 of population;
- (c) (i) 3.19 convicted per 100 000 of population;
- (ii) 6.46 convicted per 100 000 of population;
- (iii) 5.49 convicted per 100 000 of population.
- (2) No, not available.
- (3) Not available.

PRISON OFFICERS

Working Hours

1109. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) How many hours a week are prison officers required to work under their present award?
- (2) How many weeks annual leave are prison officers entitled to under their award?

- (3) What special or other leave are prison officers entitled to?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) The hours of duty prescribed in the gaol officers award are 38 per week. However, the ordinary hours actually worked are 40 per week with 2 hours accruing towards rostered days off.
- (2) Five weeks annual leave plus—
 - one additional week after 12 months continuous service north of the 26th parallel;
 - one additional week for officers rostered to work regularly on Sundays and public holidays.
- (3) Long service leave—3 months every 7 years;
 - Sick leave—not exceeding a total of 3 months at ordinary wage rates and 3 months at half rates in each period of 3 years.

FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS

Working Hours

1110. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) What is the current number of hours worked on a weekly and/or fortnightly basis by firemen in Western Australia?
- (2) How many weeks annual leave are granted to firemen in Western Australia?
- (3) Do firemen in Western Australia enjoy a working system whereby they work a 42-hour week on an 8-day cycle and accumulate special leave to reflect an agreed 38-hour working week?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), will he provide details of any special or accumulated leave which accrues from this arrangement?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Firefighters in Western Australia work 48 hours in each 8-day cycle. This is the equivalent of 42 hours in a normal 7 day week.
- (2) 6 weeks.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.

ABATTOIRS

Carcases: Antibiotic Residues

1111. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are samples of beef, sheep, and pig carcasses tested from time to time for antibiotic or any other chemical residue?
- (2) If so, how many samples per week or month are tested?
- (3) Where are these samples tested?
- (4) Which chemical residues are tested for in the samples?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

There are two major surveys which examine chemical residues in food: the National Health and Medical Research Council market basket survey and the national residue survey. The national residue survey is coordinated by Commonwealth and State Departments of Agriculture and it would be appropriate for the Minister for Agriculture to respond to these questions in relation to that particular survey.

The following response applies to the market basket survey—

- (1) Carcasses as such are not tested but samples of beef, sheep, and pork are tested.
- (2) Samples of specified meats are taken from three different suburban areas in State capital cities on a four-monthly basis.
- (3) Samples are analysed at the Australian Government Analytical Laboratories.
- (4) Samples are tested for organochlorines, organophosphorous pesticides, heavy metals, trace elements, nitrites, and nitrates.

HEALTH: REHABILITATION CENTRE

Melville: Closure

1113. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware the Commonwealth Government is to close the Melville Rehabilitation Centre in O'Connor?
- (2) If so, does he intend to take over this operation?

- (3) If not, where will these people being treated obtain these services when the Melville Rehabilitation Centre is closed?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) Yes. The Commonwealth Community Services Department announced its intention to close the facility at Melville earlier this year. It has announced similar closures in other States.
- (2) The Health Department is investigating the feasibility of utilising the Melville site for future development of health services.
- (3) I understand the Commonwealth Government plans to continue to provide social and vocational rehabilitation through regional rehabilitation units.

HEALTH: NURSES

Physical Assaults: Car Parks

1114. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he received complaints from nurses either at the King Edward Memorial Hospital or Royal Perth Hospital alluding to the possibility of physical assaults on nurses at night in the nurses' car parks?
- (2) Are security officers on duty at either the King Edward Memorial Hospital or Royal Perth Hospital car parks?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), which particular nurses' car parks and at what hours?
- (4) Is the present security of nurses returning to their motor vehicles at night satisfactory at both the King Edward Memorial Hospital and the Royal Perth Hospital?
- (5) If not, what action does he propose to take?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) Complaints regarding security are received from time to time.
- (2) and (3) Yes. However, it is considered not appropriate to reveal arrangements as such disclosure would compromise security.
- (4) and (5) Security arrangements are under constant review to ensure that they are satisfactory. However, should the member be aware of any prob-

lems, I would be pleased if he could bring them to my attention.

MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCES

Departmental Responsibility

1115. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is it intended that the licensing function currently carried out by the Police Department be transferred to another Government agency or instrumentality?
- (2) If "No", have any preliminary discussions been held with any other Government agency or instrumentality on this possibility?
- (3) If "Yes", will he provide the details of the proposed transfer?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) to (3) All Government functions are constantly under review to assess the most efficient and best manner in which they can be administered in the public interest.

ROAD

Tom Price-Wittenoom: Sealing

1116. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Transport:

When is it intended to seal the Wittenoom to Tom Price road and the Paraburdoo spur road?

Mr TROY replied:

No decision on the date for the sealing of these roads has been made. The Main Roads Department has prepared a draft planning report on roads in this part of the Pilbara which will be available shortly for discussion with local government. Meantime, construction is continuing north of the Paraburdoo turnoff on the Nanutarra-Wittenoom Road to bring this section of road to an improved standard.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Prevention of Excessive Prices Act: Implementation

1118. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

How many times and in which cases—other than for petroleum products—have the provisions of the

Prevention of Excessive Prices Act 1983 been implemented during the period in which the full Act has been in force?

Mr WILSON replied:

The full Act was only in force from 1 April 1983 to 31 December 1983. The only provisions which were implemented were those dealing with petrol prices and service station leases.

HEALTH

Pregnancies: Amniocentesis Test

1119. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Government any policy about submitting pregnant women to the amniocentesis test if they express their wish to undergo the test, or is the decision entirely left with the medical practitioner involved in the individual case?
- (2) If a private practitioner recommends the test, does King Edward Memorial Hospital perform it automatically, or is it even then subject to the hospital doctor's decision?
- (3) If there is any policy or general rule, does the age of the pregnant woman and the fact whether any of her close relatives had a malformed or Down's syndrome child come into consideration when making the decision and to what extent?
- (4) Would he please give any additional information which might be relevant to the general question of submitting to the test?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) The decision regarding amniocentesis is made by agreement between the pregnant woman and her medical practitioner.
- (2) Most requests by private practitioners are automatically performed by King Edward Memorial Hospital staff. Where there is, however, doubt as to the desirability of the test, the patient will be referred for specialist genetic counselling prior to the amniocentesis being performed.
- (3) Yes.

- (4) Pregnant women over the age of 35 years or with a family history or genetic disease are automatically eligible for amniocentesis.

Amniocentesis does carry a small but appreciable risk of miscarriage, and hence this risk must be weighed against other possible risks.

SEWERAGE MAINS

Stormwater

1120. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is discharge of drainage and stormwater into the sewer of the respective water authorities or departments allowed or at least practically tolerated in other States?
- (2) If so, does this allow for lower capital cost and maintenance in sewerage treatment plants as the waste water is weaker, less septic, and less odorous?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) I am not aware of the details of the practices adopted in other jurisdictions. However, the Water Authority of Western Australia prohibits the discharge of drainage and stormwater into the sewer.
- (2) No.

WATER CONSUMPTION

Annual

1121. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

What was the yearly average water consumption per connection in the metropolitan area during the financial years of—

- (a) 1980-81;
- (b) 1981-82;
- (c) 1982-83;
- (d) 1983-84;
- (e) 1984-85; and
- (f) 1985-86?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (a) 502 kilolitres per service;
- (b) 503 kilolitres per service;
- (c) 536 kilolitres per service;
- (d) 513 kilolitres per service;
- (e) 547 kilolitres per service;
- (f) 534 kilolitres per service.

For the benefit of the member, information regarding (a) to (e) is detailed in the Water Authority annual reports, which are available in the Parliamentary Library.

WATER RESOURCES

Country Costs: Subsidy Reduction

1122. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is it the Government's policy to reduce the percentage subsidy of the aggregate country water, sewerage, drainage, and irrigation costs which existed during the time these services were administered by the Public Works Department?
- (2) If so, how will the amount not subsidised be covered—
 - (a) by lifting country charges to the extent to cover aggregate expenses;
 - (b) by lifting metropolitan charges to cross-subsidise country expenses; or
 - (c) combination of (a) and (b) above; and if so in what proportion?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

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

ANIMALS

Dog Act: Amendment

1123. Mr MACKINNON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Will the Government be amending the Dog Act in the current session of Parliament?
- (2) If so, when will details of these amendments be made public?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) The Dog Act amending legislation is currently with Parliamentary Counsel for drafting purposes.

I am hopeful that the Bill may be ready in time for it to be introduced into the House later in this session.

- (2) There has already been full public participation in the recommendations of the Dog Act review committee and consultation with interested bodies is on-going.

On 16 May 1986 I sent all parliamentarians a copy of the outline of the proposed Bill for their information and for use in their dealings with the public.

It is possible than on-going discussion will result in some modifications to the original proposal.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Unimog Vehicle Purchases

1124. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has the State Energy Commission purchased any Unimog vehicles?
- (2) If so, what was the cost of those vehicles?
- (3) When were they purchased?
- (4) For what purpose were they purchased?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The price paid is commercially confidential.
- (3) Delivery dates—
11 April 85
8 May 85
8 May 85
- (4) Essential gas pipeline maintenance and emergency repairs.

MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT

Accounting Procedures

1125. Mr MacKINNON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Is there a change being considered to the manner in which the Main Roads Department funds be accounted?
- (2) If so, when will the change be effected?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Second-hand Dealers Act: Review

1126. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Has the review of the Second-hand Dealers Act yet been completed?

(2) If not, when is it expected to be completed?

(3) If it has been completed, when is it likely that any changes to the Act, or regulations, will be made?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) to (3) I would refer the member to my response in this matter of Wednesday, 18 June 1986.

SPORT AND RECREATION: FOOTBALL

National Competition: Government Commitment

1128. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

What financial commitment, if any, has the Government given to the Western Australian Football League to assist its attempts to join a national competition?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I table a copy of my recent Press release dealing with this matter once again for the information of the member.

(See paper No. 412.)

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Forrestdale: Capital Works

1129. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have any capital works been completed at the Forrestdale Primary School during the past 12 months?
- (2) If so, what works were completed and at what cost?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Covered assembly area and canteen, \$93 642.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oakford: Capital Works

1130. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have any capital works been completed at the Oakford Primary School during the past 12 months?
- (2) If so, what works were completed and at what cost?

Mr PEARCE replied:

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

LANDBANK

Holdings: Cockburn City

1131. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does Landbank own any land in the City of Cockburn and/or in the Jandakot area?
- (2) If so, how much land does it own?
- (3) When was the land acquired?
- (4) For what purpose was the land acquired?

Mr WILSON replied:

This question has wrongly been addressed to the Minister for Housing. It has been referred to the Minister for Planning and he will answer the question in writing.

BREAD ACT

Amendments

1132. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) Has the Government yet made any decision concerning possible amendments and changes to the Bread Act?
- (2) If so, what were those decisions?
- (3) With respect to those decisions, will any of them necessitate changes to the Bread Act?
- (4) If so, when will those amendments be presented to the Parliament?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) to (4) Not applicable.

MOPEDS

Regulations: Amendment

1133. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is the Government considering amending the regulations applicable to mopeds?
- (2) If so, what changes are being considered?
- (3) When is it likely those amended regulations will be presented to the Parliament for consideration?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) and (3) As the member knows, changes to the Road Traffic Act, as with all amendments to Acts of Parliament, fit into the legislative programme after approval by Cabinet and drafting of legislation has occurred.

HOUSING

Tenancy Law Reform: Legislation

1134. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Housing:

When will the Government be introducing its tenancy law legislation into the Parliament?

Mr WILSON replied:

This matter is currently under consideration by Cabinet.

EDUCATION

Pre-primary: Election Commitment

1135. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How does the Government intend to implement its election commitment to provide education for all four and five-year-old children?
- (2) When does the Government intend to implement that commitment?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) This is a Budget matter.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Canning Vale: Land Owner

1136. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

Who currently owns the land upon which the Canning Vale Primary School is located?

Mr PEARCE replied:

The Industrial Lands Development Authority.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

Murdoch Electorate: Location

1137. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Where is it anticipated that the next high school will be located within the Murdoch electorate?
- (2) What sites within the Murdoch electorate does the Government currently retain for high schools?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) Only one high school site has been designated in the Murdoch electorate. It is located in South Lake and it is zoned for public purposes in the metropolitan region scheme.

CRIME: PROSTITUTION

Fremantle: Newspaper Article

1138. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is he aware of the report in the *Fremantle Focus* newspaper of August 1986 stating "Kim Flatman, Director of Rochester Nominees Pty. Ltd. which owns the registered brothel Fremantle Fitness Studio at 205 South Terrace, said 500 prostitutes had already arrived from the Eastern States"?
- (2) In whose name are the premises at 205 South Terrace, Fremantle, registered?
- (3) Is he aware of the concerns expressed in that newspaper article and, if so, what action, if any, has the Government taken as a consequence?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is not known whether this part of the question refers to the registered proprietor of the land at 205 South Terrace, Fremantle, under the Transfer of Land Act, or the registered owner of the business being conducted from those premises. In either case, the question is wrongly directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.
- (3) The article has been referred to the Commissioner of Police for such action, if any, which he considers appropriate.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Station: South Fremantle

1139. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Is the South Fremantle power station still operative?
- (2) If not, when did operations cease at the power station?
- (3) What zoning is in place on the land upon which the power station is currently located?
- (4) What are the Government's plans for the future use of this site?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Not for generation purposes. However, the transmission and subtransmission facilities there are operative and must remain so for many years.
- (2) Generation officially ceased at the end of September 1985.
- (3) The present site zonings are—

1. Public utility—SEC—by City of Cockburn.
2. Public purposes—by State Planning Commission.

There is a foreshore lease for the purpose of "electric light to power station" for a term of 99 years from 1 January 1956.

- (4) The Government has no immediate plans for the site, but would consider all options.

ABATTOIR: ROBB JETTY

Operations: Cessation

1140. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Government planning to cease operations at Robb Jetty in the near future?
- (2) If so, when is it likely these operations will cease?
- (3) Where will these operations be relocated?
- (4) What is the zoning of the land upon which the abattoir is now located?
- (5) If the operations of an abattoir are to cease at Robb Jetty, what are the Government's plans for the future use of that site?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The land is zoned "special industry A" by the Cockburn City Council.
- (5) Not applicable.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

Murdoch Electorate: Enrolments

1141. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the current enrolment at—
 - (a) Lynwood Senior High School;
 - (b) Leeming High School;
 - (c) Willetton Senior High School;
 - (d) Rossmoyne Senior High School?
- (2) What is the anticipated enrolment at each of these schools for the academic years—
 - (i) 1987;
 - (ii) 1988;
 - (iii) 1989;
 - (iv) 1990?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Student numbers as at 18 July 1986—
 - (a) Lynwood Senior High School—1 118
 - (b) Leeming High School—255
 - (c) Willetton Senior High School—1 369
 - (d) Rossmoyne Senior High School—1 328
- (2) Projected student numbers, February 1987-1990—

| High School | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Lynwood Senior | 1 110 | 1 065 | 1 070 | 1 075 |
| Leeming | 420 | 635 | 835 | 975 |
| Willetton Senior | 1 280 | 1 175 | 1 100 | 1 095 |
| Rossmoyne Senior | 1 330 | 1 295 | 1 255 | 1 230 |

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET

Office: Relocation

1142. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

What was the total cost of establishing the Premier's office at its current location, including expenses involved in

the transportation of furniture and equipment from the previous office location?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The question is unclear. However, if the member is referring to the cost of relocating the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to its current location, I refer him to questions 2575 dated 22 March 1984, 2653 dated 3 April 1984, and 624 dated 23 August 1984 and subsequent letters to Mr W. R. B. Hassell dated 26 September 1984 from me, and Hon. A. Mensaros dated 17 October 1984 from the Minister for Works.

POLICE STATIONS

Bunbury District

1143. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) What police stations currently service the City of Bunbury and surrounding districts?
- (2) How many police officers are stationed at each of these stations?
- (3) How many police officers were located at each of these stations on—
 - (a) 1 July 1983;
 - (b) 1 July 1984;
 - (c) 1 July 1985;
 - (d) 1 July 1986?
- (4) What was the number of offences reported at each of those stations during the years ending—
 - (a) 30 June 1983;
 - (b) 30 June 1984;
 - (c) 30 June 1985;
 - (d) 30 June 1986?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Districts surrounding City of Bunbury are Capel, Boyanup, Dardanup, Eaton, and Australind. All, including the City of Bunbury, are serviced from Bunbury Police Station.

The Harvey Shire also adjoins the City of Bunbury. Harvey and Brunswick townsites within this Shire area have police stations located within their townsites.

- (2) Bunbury 58
- Harvey 8
- Brunswick 2

| | | |
|---------|-----------|-------|
| (3) (a) | Bunbury | 55 |
| | Harvey | 8 |
| | Brunswick | 2 |
| (b) | As above | |
| (c) | As above | |
| (d) | Bunbury | 58 |
| | Harvey | 8 |
| | Brunswick | 2 |
| (4) (a) | Bunbury | 1 796 |
| | Harvey | 135 |
| | Brunswick | 58 |
| (b) | Bunbury | 2 795 |
| | Harvey | 111 |
| | Brunswick | 58 |
| (c) | Bunbury | 2 242 |
| | Harvey | 128 |
| | Brunswick | 40 |
| (d) | Bunbury | 2 781 |
| | Harvey | 172 |
| | Brunswick | 75 |

FUNCTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

1144. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Functional Review Committee yet reviewed the office of Premier and Cabinet?
- (2) If so, when was that review carried out?
- (3) What recommendations did the Review Committee make in relation to the office?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) A preliminary functional review of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet was commenced in 1984-85. It has not been finalised due to a subsequent reorganisation of the department, together with the need for the Government to direct resources to other more pressing functional reviews.
- (3) Not applicable.

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

Competitive Sport: Children

1145. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Government support the Human Rights Commission directive forbidding sex discrimination in competitive sport for children under 12?
- (2) If "Yes", does this mean that separate boys and girls sporting events will not be permitted to be conducted in future?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Section 35 of the Equal Opportunity Act indicates the Government's stance in regard to this matter.
- (2) No. It means however that a student under the age of 12 years cannot be excluded from participation in an event solely on the grounds of that student's sex.

STATE FINANCE

Efficiency Auditing: Commencement

1146. Mr MacKINNON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) When will the efficiency audits into Government departments, as previously proposed by him, commence?
- (2) Who will carry out the audits?
- (3) Who will determine which departments will be so audited?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Under sections 62 and 66 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, departments and statutory authorities are required to report annually to Parliament, and those reports are required to contain performance indicators. Under the Act the Auditor General is required to give an opinion on whether the performance indicators are "relevant and appropriate".

In addition to these legal obligations, the Government has already established the Functional Review Committee which reviews the activities of departments with the aim of improving their efficiency and effectiveness.

- (2) and (3) Answered by (1).

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY*Pilbara Supplies: Robe River Iron Associates*

1148. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has the State Energy Commission instituted proceedings against Robe River Iron Associates over the company's decision to stop supplying power to the Pilbara grid?
- (2) If so, at what stage are the proceedings?

Mr PARKER replied:

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

MINERALS RESOURCE STUDY*Publication*

1149. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has the Government yet received the minerals resource study?
- (2) If so, when?
- (3) When was the study first announced?
- (4) Will the report be made public?
- (5) If so, when?
- (6) If not, why not?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) to (6) The import of the member's questions is not clearly understood. If the member can clarify the questions, I will consider making further investigations.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**HOUSING: RURAL***Assistance: Eligibility*

235. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Housing:

The Minister introduced legislation amending the Rural Housing Assistance Act yesterday. I wonder whether he would care to advise the House as to the extension of eligibility to people with special leases as being confined strictly to the Kununurra region, or whether it will be extended to people who hold special leases in those areas where there is considerable mining activity. These people are precluded from the possibility of ever gaining more secure title over their land.

Some of them desire to build houses on special leases but are denied the opportunity to do so.

Will the Minister advise the House whether or not special leases in this category will also be considered in his Bill?

Mr WILSON replied:

First of all, I should say that it is my understanding that the amending Bill, as it is framed, refers to special leases in the Kununurra area. However, in respect of the broader issue which the member for Merredin has raised, as to the possible applicability to those leases in mining areas, I should say that I do not consider that it would be possible to extend the provisions of this Bill to those leases because, of course, the Rural Housing Assistance Act is confined in its assistance to people who are farmers and horticulturists. So as it stands the Bill could not apply to mining leases.

Mr Cowan: The special leases I refer to are leases for agricultural purposes. The leaseholders are farmers but they cannot use the property as security to build.

Mr WILSON: The member did not say that in his question, and it would make a difference if the people were farmers. If they were farmers they would be covered by the Act if they complied with the other conditions of the Act. I cannot give a precise answer but my understanding is that it applies to special leases as they exist in the Kununurra region. However I will make inquiries about the likely applicability of the Bill to these other leases and will get the information to the member as quickly as possible.

EDUCATION*Driver Education Scheme: Introduction*

236. Dr WATSON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Is he aware of the call by the Opposition to introduce a driver education scheme into the school system?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

Yes, I am aware of the Opposition's call. Members may recall that in 1982 the present Opposition, when in

Government, abolished the driver education scheme for senior high school students, so its call today obviously has a hollow ring.

This Government was recently presented with a proposal formulated by the National Safety Council for re-establishing a driver education scheme for senior students as an integral part of the school curriculum.

It may be interesting for members to be also made aware that the proposal contains some interesting elements, including a lowering of the age at which participating students could obtain a driver's licence, albeit a restricted one. Naturally the Government, mindful of the complexities of the road safety question, is proceeding in a responsible fashion and is having the proposal examined by the police. That is an appropriate thing to do before making any decision on these matters. The Government has the facilities available and consults the experts—the police—on such matters.

Regrettably the Government's responsible action in seeking authoritative advice was not followed by the Opposition. Upon learning of the proposal which the National Safety Council presented to the Government, and after the Government had actioned the matter, no less than three members of the Opposition sought media publicity by each promoting the National Safety Council's proposal as if it were his own idea. The principal imposter is the member for Mt Lawley, whose false pretence has been repeated in the media on several occasions.

The Government is having the National Safety Council's proposal evaluated, and abhors the trivialisation of the question of road safety as practised by certain members of the Opposition in their quest for publicity.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Contracts: Discretionary Powers

237. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

Given that the Minister for Minerals and Energy was able to proceed with a \$39.75 million purchase on behalf of

the Government without the formal approval of the Premier or Cabinet, would the Premier explain—

- (1) Which other Ministers are allowed similar discretion with regard to multi-million dollar sales or purchases involving the public purse?
- (2) Is there any limit in dollar terms on the amount to which a Minister may commit the Government without the approval of the Premier or Cabinet?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) I am not sure that I can provide a list of instances in which significant expenditures have been made as a result of an individual Minister's decision. That is simply because I have not had notice of the question and cannot provide a list out of my head.

What I can point to for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's information is the activity of, for example, the State Energy Commission in its money market operations where on a daily basis many millions of dollars are invested, reinvested, changed, and other things done so that cash balances held by the commission at the discretion of the commission earn the maximum rate of interest.

I know for example that the Western Australian Water Authority has a great deal of autonomy in deciding to build, at the cost of many millions of dollars, certain sewerage and other works in the same way as the Main Roads Department involves itself in multi-million dollar purchases of property.

Mr MacKinnon: That is all part of the capital works programme.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition really thinks that the capital works programme of the Main Roads Department is submitted to Cabinet, he is living in cloud cuckoo land.

Mr Rushton: But it is approved.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In the same way as any general ambit approval is given to the SEC or to Westrail to operate in a commercial fashion, the same sort of

approval is given to the Main Roads Department. But the MRD may spend many millions of dollars on the purchase of properties of which we have no knowledge.

But I will get down to the real nub of the question, because I have explained that, depending on the nature of the business, the autonomy varies. The real nub of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's problem is that he cannot in all good conscience see his traditional supporters somehow or other involved in business dealings that relate to the Government.

Mr MacKinnon: What has that to do with it?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It has to do with the chagrin the member consistently shows and with the way his leader last night went to great lengths to display his feelings when he started to thrash around attacking everyone. I have said previously to him that one of the reasons this Government has been reasonably well received is that we have not been prejudiced or blinkered in dealing with only those people we perceive to be part of our traditional constituency.

In dealing with those who approach us on a fair basis it seems that the Opposition is unwilling to accommodate the fact that some of its traditional supporters are prepared to deal—not to support—with the Government of the day on a fair basis. When members opposite come to grips with that challenge to what they think is their divine-right-to-rule preserve, they will have some prospect of relief. However, while members opposite blackguard and condemn everyone who deals with this State Government, they will lose their traditional supporters in droves. Regardless of the fringe benefits tax and its effect on our political fortunes as one example, we do not have to worry about those sorts of things so long as members opposite continue to attack their own natural constituency with the thoroughness with which they have been attacking it in the very recent past.

Mr Hassell: The only blackguarding being done last night was your calling the directors of Fremantle Gas dopey.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: There is a qualitative difference about my attacking the Leader of the Opposition's constituency in any case. If the Leader of the Opposition cannot understand that, let me simply direct his attention to this morning's paper.

Mr Hassell: I am not responsible for the paper.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Leader of the Opposition is hardly responsible for himself these days.

In the instances to which I have referred there is a great deal of autonomy involved in the exercise of decisions by authorities with, and sometimes without, ministerial direction, agreement, or approval—certainly without Cabinet's knowledge, direction, or approval. The decisions to which I am now referring relate to the nature of the institution, department, or statutory authority involved, which in many cases transcends absolutely anything to which the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy have referred in their discussions on Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd.

TAXES AND CHARGES

Gold Tax: Introduction

238. Mr THOMAS, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware of reports that the Commonwealth Government will soon make a decision on whether to introduce a gold tax?
- (2) Is the State Government proposing any last-minute measures to further its long-running campaign against a gold tax?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Obviously I am aware of the repeated media reports that a decision is imminent. I am also aware of the reports that significant sections of the Federal Caucus have strong reservations about a gold tax and that there are significant sections of opinion within the bureaucracy committed to the imposition of such a tax.

- (2) The State Government has already campaigned long and hard against such a tax, beginning at the tax summit in July last year. Despite receiving no support at the summit from other State Governments with goldmining interests, most notably the Queensland Government which now seeks to make its opposition to the tax an issue in its State election, and the major mining organisations based in the Eastern States, the now Minister for Agriculture (Mr Grill) and I succeeded in averting the immediate imposition of a tax, having the matter referred to an inquiry.

Subsequently we formed a campaign committee in conjunction with all those involved in the industry in Western Australia to ensure that the powerful arguments against such a tax were canvassed properly and comprehensively before the Gutman inquiry. We believe that under the able chairmanship of the Minister for Agriculture the committee presented an unanswerable case against the tax.

Mr Taylor: Did the Opposition contribute to that at all?

Mr MacKinnon: We were not invited.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In its usual positive way it refused to take part at all and simply accepted its role as being one of shying at the Federal Government from the bleachers.

Mr MacKinnon: We have totally supported your moves. We think you have done a reasonably good job in opposing the gold tax. We oppose it, and have done so consistently.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Guess who is developing his political skills?

Mr Laurance interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Is the member for Gascoyne back? I noticed some additional people in the Chamber. I noticed the members for Kalamunda and Gascoyne sneak in. The member for Kalamunda accosted me and said, "What has happened to you; you have lost a lot of weight?" I refrained from talking to him until I observed from your demeanour, Mr Speaker, that he was able to come into the Chamber. In any case I notice he is back here, as is the member for Gascoyne.

To return to the question: Since the presentation of that submission we have taken every opportunity, both publicly and in discussions with representatives of the Commonwealth, to pursue the matter forcefully. With a decision now reportedly imminent, we believe the pressure must be sustained. Indeed, I will be flying to Canberra by charter aircraft early tomorrow morning for a meeting with the Prime Minister tomorrow afternoon at which I will again press the arguments against the tax. Obviously I do not expect that the Prime Minister will tell me tomorrow afternoon what the outcome will be, but I believe it is important that the arguments against the tax continue to be heard at the highest level of the Commonwealth Government until the decision is made.

This opportunity to pursue the matter with the Prime Minister has arisen at short notice, and the visit will cause considerable disruption to my programme. I have had to cancel or reschedule a number of commitments, and obviously I will be missing from the Parliament tomorrow. To minimise the disruption to my programme on Friday, I have to leave Canberra at 6.00 a.m. on the charter aircraft to get back to Perth to meet other commitments, but we believe that the issue involved is so important that these measures are necessary.

That serves to do two things: The first is to try to gently massage the Opposition into a position from which it will not accuse me of being flagrant in using taxpayers' money to charter an aircraft. It may do that.

Mr Taylor: The people of Kalgoorlie will not.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We hope to win and to exercise some influence on national policies to the advantage of our State. We see this as an opportunity to do that.

Mr Hassell: Have you already been told there will not be a tax?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: No, I have not been told there will not be a tax. Has the Leader of the Opposition been told that?

Mr Hassell: No.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Has the Leader of the Opposition been told what is his Federal Leader's position on the fringe benefits tax?

That is an interesting diversion. I hope the Opposition will be as thoroughly committed in its opposition to the gold tax as we are.

Mr Rushton: We are more dedicated.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Dale always was more dedicated. He should have been a Trappist monk, because a Trappist monk has a vow of silence.

Mr Laurance: It is the "farewell Bob tax". It could be the "farewell Brian tax", too.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It might be the "farewell Brian tax". It is important for the Opposition to maintain pressure on its Federal colleagues because they have not always been consistent in the matter of a gold tax.

FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE CO LTD

Contract Documents: Signing

239. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Is he aware that the contractual documents for the acquisition of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd operation have not yet been signed?

Mr PARKER replied:

The precise contractual documents have been backwards and forwards between lawyers and others for some weeks now, and my understanding is the documents are to be signed very shortly. It is of no consequence; there are no matters of disagreement. It is a matter of finalising some legalese. There are no issues involved.

MIDLAND SALEYARD

Select Committee Report: Bias

240. Mr BURKETT, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he concerned that reports of the Legislative Council's inquiry into the sale of the Midland saleyard have demonstrated a level of bias which is unprecedented in this Parliament?

(2) Is he concerned that the reports of this bias may lead to the degradation of Parliament within the community?

(3) Has he taken steps to ensure that this possible damage to Parliament is overcome?

Points of Order

Mr MENSAROS: Would you be kind enough to examine the second part of the question to see whether it requests an opinion?

Mr LEWIS: I believe that as the matter is before a Select Committee of this House it is out of order, and I ask you to rule accordingly.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: I will rule on the member for East Melville's point of order immediately. It is not correct.

In respect of the point of order raised by the member for Floreat, I will look at the question.

Mr BLAIKIE: On a further point of order, I draw your attention to Standing Order No. 129 and ask you to rule accordingly.

Questions without Notice Resumed

FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE CO LTD

Contract: Signing

241. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

(1) As the Minister has acknowledged that the documents for the purchase of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd have not been signed, is it not therefore correct that the State Energy Commission has no written warranties for the state of the pipelines or the general condition of the operations contrary to what the Minister said in the House last night?

(2) Again, as he acknowledged that the contract documents have not been signed, how much money has been paid in respect of the business for which the contract has not been signed?

Mr PARKER replied:

(1) That is not the case. The documents have been agreed and, I understand, signed by the board of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd. Warranties

have been made by that company to the State Energy Commission.

- (2) Apart from the fact that the SEC has taken over the operations of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd as of last week and therefore income and so on which is associated with that—although I guess there would not have been any direct income in that time—is obviously flowing into the SEC, I understand that no payment has been made in respect of the arrangements.

DEFENCE: SUBMARINES

Contracts: Decision

242. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Minister for Defence Liaison:

- (1) When does the State Government expect a decision regarding the contract to build the new generation of Australian submarines?
- (2) What are the prospects of this project being undertaken in Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The case for constructing the submarines in Western Australia has now been presented by the Western Australian Government to the two PDS contracting companies. Those companies are expected to have completed their submissions and recommendations to the Federal Government by 11 November. Although July was the anticipated date for the decision to be announced, I now anticipate that the decision will be announced by the Federal Government in the first quarter of next year.

After nearly three years of work on this matter I now believe that Western Australia is in an excellent position. I believe that New South Wales and Victoria have been virtually disqualified from winning the contracts because of their industrial relations record. The people in this Parliament who, from time to time, are a little tempted to play political football with industrial relations should be grateful for the fact that at this stage of the bargaining, the industrial relations record in metropolitan Perth and in metropolitan Adelaide gives those two cities a certain degree of attractive-

ness compared with Sydney and Melbourne as places for constructing the new generation submarines.

At present it seems that the Federal Government and the companies are preoccupied with four essential elements. The first is the question of the site; and we have an excellent site in Cockburn Sound. The second element is the industrial relations record; and our record stands up superbly when compared with the two larger States that were formerly contenders. The third element is our ability to provide infrastructural backup and support, and the fourth element is the question of strategic importance. On all four issues, Western Australia has a very sound case indeed.

At this stage I suggest to all members that we are probably in a lineball situation with Adelaide, and it is my firm belief that basically, because those project definition study contracting companies do not relish the thought of going broke, they will not be particularly interested in the contracts going to New South Wales or Victoria.

WATER RESOURCES: DOMESTIC

Avon Electorate: Costs

243. Mr TRENORDEN, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that, in my electorate of Avon, people are being asked to pay up to \$23 000 to obtain water for domestic purposes?
- (2) Has the Government plans to make that water more affordable for country people?
- (3) If so, what are those plans?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) to (3) I am not aware of the specific point raised by the member. However, we are considering the other matter. I would have thought that by now the member would understand my personal commitment to improving the access of rural people to water supplies. I think all members would recognise that, in the short space of time that I have been a Minister, I have worked very hard at trying to provide country people with an ad-

equate water supply. I cannot answer the point raised about the cost structure.

EDUCATION: TERTIARY

Student Guilds: Pressure

244. Dr GALLOP, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the comments made by WAIT's Liberal Club president in the *South Perth-Melville Weekly* on 2 September to the effect that because the student guild is funded by an Act of Parliament there could be some "outside pressure" brought against it?
- (2) Can student guilds be subject to outside pressure because of the legislation which established them?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) One does not get many laughs in this job, but I admit I had quite a chuckle when an article from that paper dated 2 September and headed "Hassell steps into guild row" popped into my office. It carried the gem of information that Mr Hassell, the State Opposition Leader, was considering calling on the Government to intervene and make the guild more accountable. He has obviously given weighty and lengthy consideration to that because that occurred on 2 September and I have not yet heard from him. When he makes up his mind about whether he wants me to intervene in the student guild at WAIT, perhaps he could let me know. However, I will tell him in advance that I am not going to.

The comments were made by the WAIT Liberal Club president, David Parker. I guess he must have pinched that name from somewhere. When I saw these comments made by "David Parker", I thought, "Good God, the man has had some sort of a nervous breakdown."

The point is that the WAIT Liberal Club has gone to the Human Rights Commission over this matter. I thought that was hypocritical because I understand the Liberal position to be to abolish the Human Rights Commission. However, it claimed that the

student guild should be intervened in because it is funded under an Act of Parliament and should be made more accountable.

The position is that student guilds are established under the statutes of their respective tertiary institutions acting in accordance with their Act of Parliament. That means they are not subject to interference from outside pressures because they are established by those statutes and do not come under any kind of Government purview. That is precisely how it should be and that is how we legislated for it to be. Members will recall that, under the previous Liberal Government, legislation did give some rights of interference in student bodies in terms of the establishment of a statutory fee. Ministers in Liberal Governments were well accustomed to putting the squeeze on guilds of tertiary institutions acting on the basis that they would otherwise intervene or cut out their finances. We have taken the student guilds back to an autonomous position, and that is where they will stay.

I understand that the Leader of the Opposition has not stepped into this guild row and that he knows nothing about it. That seems to indicate that the WAIT Liberal Club president, in making comments to the newspaper, was not exactly telling the truth when he told it that the Leader of the Opposition was intending to move in that way.

Mr Clarko: Parliament is the father of all legislation. Parliament can therefore decide whether or not there are compulsory fees.

Mr PEARCE: Yes, but that does not mean that they are subject to outside pressure because of the terms of the legislation which currently governs them. We established, for example, the tertiary institutions and they are autonomous. The member knows perfectly well, as I too have discovered, that they do not very often take suggestions kindly, let alone directions.

The last point is that this particular action of seeking Government intervention in student guilds, because of action which the Liberal Party said,

on campus, was unsatisfactory, is something that all student organisations should abhor.

Unfortunately, it has been the habit of Liberal groups on campus generally that if they disagree with decisions that are made by student bodies to go running to the Government, particularly a Liberal Government, asking it to intervene and sort the matter out so that the Liberal Party's position is taken as the position which must apply. That is a very unfortunate attitude for any student to take because the autonomy of student organisations should be paramount to all students.

MIDLAND SALEYARD SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

Bias: Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: I thank members for the opportunity of ruling on the points of order raised earlier. I asked that a copy of the question by the member for Scarborough be brought to me, and I have read it and consulted Standing Order No. 129 and other Standing Orders.

I find that the question does not contravene Standing Order No. 129, and I cannot find any other Standing Order under which I might rule the question out of order. In that case, it will be appropriate for the Minister to reply to it.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr GRILL replied:

I apologise for not hearing the original question. The member has such a soft voice that it was hard to hear him. I must answer the question in the affirmative and I advise the House that I am particularly concerned about the bias shown by Hon. Neil Oliver.

Points of Order

Mr HASSELL: The question may not offend Standing Order No. 129, but surely it is offensive under that Standing Order for the Minister to open his remarks by referring to a member from another House as being biased in the conduct of a Select Committee. After all, Standing Order No. 129 states that no member shall use offen-

sive words against either House of Parliament. Therefore, it is very clear that to deal with—

Mr Pearce: Being the chairman of a Select Committee does not make a person a House of Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is addressing a point of order to the Speaker.

Mr HASSELL: To open his response, which indicates more of what is to come, by saying that a member from another House is biased in the conduct of a Select Committee is clearly offensive to Standing Order No. 129.

Mr MacKINNON: If it is not offensive to Standing Order No. 129 it is to Standing Order No. 131 which states that no member shall use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to any member of the House.

Mr Brian Burke: Mr Speaker, can you tell the Opposition that it is its question time and not the Government's.

Mr Hassell: I wish you knew.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: Order! In respect of the points of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition and, indeed, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I rule in favour of their points. They are indeed correct and I refer the Standing Orders to the Minister and ask him to refrain from using those sorts of terms about members of the upper House.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr GRILL: I am concerned about the situation which has arisen in relation to this report. It would appear from reports in the Press, which have not been denied but in fact have virtually been confirmed by the chairman of the committee, that the chairman has contributed the sum of \$500 towards a campaign against the sale of the Midland abattoir and that over a number of years he has had a very close and intimate relationship with the person involved in this matter, namely the proprietor of Midland Brick. What is more the chairman was, and probably still is, technically indebted to that

person for the sum of \$22 000 or thereabouts.

Mr Pearce: It is more than a technical indebtedness. The Midland Brick representatives at various creditors' meetings prevented Hon. Neil Oliver from being made bankrupt, which would have resulted in him losing his seat in this Parliament because of the proportionate debt that they held. Other creditors wanted to make Hon. Neil Oliver bankrupt, and that is the truth.

Mr Court: You had the Minister's advisers defaming him by ringing the media.

Several members interjected.

Mr GRILL: I am also concerned that there are confirmed reports from third parties that the chairman of that committee actually engaged actively in the distribution of pamphlets in the Midland district opposing the sale of the abattoir. Further, I am concerned that once again reports have been received from members of the Press and other third parties that copies of the upper House report were actually given to individuals of the public at least 24 hours before it was tabled in Parliament yesterday.

Several members interjected.

Mr Hassell: Your own colleagues in the upper House would not descend to this level. You have to drag it up here where the member is not present because your own colleagues in the upper House would not descend to the same caper as you.

Mr GRILL: Opposition members are very touchy on this point.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to ask members of the Opposition to cease interjecting altogether. It would not be fair of me and it is my fond hope that I will not be forced into that position. If, when I call order, the Opposition absolutely ignores me, then that is the next course of action I will take.

Mr GRILL: I am concerned and everyone in this House should be concerned, as should members of the upper House, that copies of that report were made available to the public at least 24

hours before the report was tabled in the upper House.

Mr Pearce: It is a breach of parliamentary privilege.

Mr GRILL: It is a breach of the Standing Orders and a breach of parliamentary privilege; and what is more it denies to the witnesses who gave evidence to that committee the right to claim privilege for remarks they made during that hearing.

Mr MacKinnon: How did you find out about the \$500 donation?

Mr GRILL: Let us not worry about that. Let us be concerned about the facts; that is, the person in question is not prepared to deny that he made that donation.

I am also concerned that in respect of the vital question of substantiation of the price for the sale of the abattoirs, the report compiled by Hon. Neil Oliver did not in any way criticise the valuation made by Baillieu Justin Seward, a valuation on which the Government has relied for the sale of the property. At the same time, the chairman, on his own behalf and without authority from the owners of the abattoir, authorised a particular firm of valuers to attend the site of the abattoir in an endeavour to justify a valuation of some \$3 million-plus that that person placed on the abattoir, well knowing that when that valuation was made the valuer had not visited the site or made an inspection of it.

I am concerned also that the chairman of the committee is now endeavouring, possibly with the help of his colleagues in the upper House, to turn that place into some form of Star Chamber in which he will endeavour to subject one of the witnesses at that inquiry to the third degree on the basis that that witness was not prepared to release highly confidential commercial information about his own commercial operations.

On the basis of that array of anomalies, I have written to the President of the Legislative Council conveying my concern and requesting that he take action to ensure that the report be withdrawn.