

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: It does not say that in new subsection (8) of proposed new section 23F. I am a little in the dark on this matter.

The Hon. N. McNeill: This can be clarified when the Minister replies to the debate.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: When I consider the amendments to be made to the Wildlife Conservation Act I cannot understand why the Act is to be administered by the Fisheries and Wildlife Department. I daresay there must be a lack of information regarding, perhaps, the exploitation of our wildflowers, the numbers of wildflowers and whether they are being used commercially or for any other purpose that one might think of. I daresay we must make a start in gathering the necessary information and no doubt we will have more amendments to the Act in later years when the information has been collated.

I am sure the officers who will be charged with the administration of the Act will be reasonable. I do not expect them to go haywire because they have the power given to them under the Act. I do not think anyone would go haywire in similar circumstances—whether it be the Minister or anyone else. I think such officers are expected to administer the Act reasonably and for the benefit of the people of the State. Even though criticism might be made of what is done from time to time, I am sure the people charged with the responsibility under the measure will act responsibly.

There is not much more I can contribute to the debate. I give the Bill my blessing and I hope it achieves what it seeks to achieve; I hope it helps preserve our wildflowers so that more people will be able to appreciate the beauty that is evident in our countryside.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. W. R. Withers.

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Joondalup Centre Bill.

2. Liquor Act Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Assembly; and, on motions by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Assembly without amendment.

House adjourned at 8.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 13th October, 1976

The SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

TOWN PLANNING

Review of Freeways Plan: Petition

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [4.32 p.m.]: I present a petition from 131 residents of Western Australia, which reads as follows—

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

We, the undersigned citizens of Australia do humbly petition the Parliament of Western Australia that a review of the Stephenson-Hepburn plan which places freeways on the river shores should take place immediately, as it no longer has public approval.

And we your petitioners in duty bound shall ever pray.

The petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly.

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

The petition was tabled (see paper No. 477).

QUESTIONS (46): ON NOTICE

1.

MINING

Regional Safety Council: Eastern Goldfields

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Who are the members and their respective affiliation comprising the regional safety council operating in the Eastern Goldfields?
- (2) How often does this council meet, and when did it last meet?
- (3) What is the scheduled date for the next meeting?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (3) The council mentioned is not known by the Mines Department.

2. NORTH KALGURLI GOLDMINE

Removal of Pumps

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is he aware of the removal of pumps from the Croesus shaft of the North Kalgurli mine?
- (2) If "Yes" when were the pumps removed?

- (3) Is he aware of pumps on the main shaft of the mine planned for removal?
- (4) Has the Government been involved in negotiations with the board of North Kalgurli to avert the necessity to remove pumps and close pumping operations?
- (5) Can he advise whether independently or in concert with the Government the North Kalgurli company is still actively pursuing the opportunity to install a new gold mill?
- (6) Is he able to estimate the cost of dewatering the entire Fimiston leases (once flooding has been completed)?
- (7) How long is it estimated from the date complete cessation of pumping from the entire Fimiston leases area until complete flooding is achieved?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) On the 8th October, 1976.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No, I have not been approached on this matter.
- (5) A suggestion for a central gold treatment plant for the Kalgoorlie region is being examined by the Government and the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Local Authorities Task Force Committee and I understand the committee intended to discuss the proposal with the North Kalgurli and Kalgoorlie Lake View companies.
- (6) and (7) No estimate is available at the Mines Department.

3.

TELEVISION

Laverton Area

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

Since I drew to his attention directly the petition raised by citizens of Laverton seeking the extension of television facilities to the Laverton area, what action has been taken by the State Government to lend its assistance by way or representations to the Federal Government in this matter, and with what result so far?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

Since replying to the member's question No. 3 of 3rd August, 1976, I have been advised that the petition was only presented to the Federal member for Kalgoorlie within the last two weeks.

I reiterate that it has been the Government's continuing policy to make representations to the Federal Government for the

extension of television, radio and telecommunications to isolated areas throughout Western Australia.

4. MT. CHARLOTTE GOLDMINE

Ore Grades

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Further to my question 9 of 5th October, 1976 relating to the recovered grade of ore from the Mt. Charlotte goldmine at Kalgoorlie, can he advise—
 - (a) whether the operators of the mine have considered the prospects of attaining a better production grade by abandoning the present working blocks; and
 - (b) if concentration was directed to forwarding the deeper development of the mine?
- (2) If the answer indicates that he is not so aware, would he please inquire from the operators and advise me?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) No.
- (2) No—this information could no doubt be sought from the company by the member himself.

5.

WANNEROO ROAD

Street Lighting

Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) (a) Is he aware that there is no street lighting on the north-bound carriageway of Wanneroo Road from Morley Drive to Wanneroo;
 - (b) could he give a firm date when the lighting will be installed?
- (2) Can he also give a date when traffic lights will be installed on the corners of—
 - (a) Wanneroo and Warwick Roads; and
 - (b) Warwick and Erindale/Cockman Roads?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Installation of street lighting on Wanneroo Road is a matter for the local authorities concerned to arrange with the State Energy Commission. Provided the lighting is to an appropriate highway standard, the Main Roads Department will consider contributing half the installation and operating costs.

(2) (a) The installation of traffic signals is dependent on the local authority completing some land acquisition and roadworks at the site. A firm date is not known but it is expected that signal installation will be carried out early in 1977.

(b) This site will be assessed for priority along with others throughout the metropolitan area when future works programmes are being formulated.

6. DEFECTIVE PLASTER

Treatment

Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

With reference to the treatment of popping and pitting of wall plaster together with the information sheet setting out the treatment as recommended by the Builders Registration Board of Western Australia dated 15th June, 1976 relevant to painted surfaces, what action, if any, is he taking to ensure that the consumer is protected and the action as recommended by the Government Chemical Laboratories is followed and carried out by the respective builders and enforced by the Builders Registration Board?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

There is continuing liaison between the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs and the Registrar of the Builders Registration Board so that the matter is under proper review.

In each case that has come before the board the recommendations have been correctly followed by the builders concerned either voluntarily or by the issue of a work order.

Additionally, several builders have contacted the board for advice on carrying out remedial treatment. The commissioner is also maintaining contact with the Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association. Both of these bodies report excellent progress.

7. STATE HOUSING COMMISSION

External Funds: Expenditure

Mr JAMIESON, to the Treasurer:

Could the Treasurer supply details of how the estimate of expenditure from internal funds by the State Housing Commission contained in the General Loan Fund Estimates

1976-77 has increased from an actual amount of \$457 797 in 1975-76 to an estimated \$21 711 000 in 1976-77?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

Of the capital funds received in 1975-76, \$457 797 was not expended in capital works, and this amount, together with internally generated funds, resulted in a run up in bank balances.

The capital works programme for 1976-77 provides for the utilisation of \$21 711 000, comprising—

Rundown of bank balances	\$15 911 000
Estimated internally generated funds	\$5 800 000
	<hr/>
	\$21 711 000

8. ABATTOIRS

Slaughtering and Meat Inspection: Charges

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) By what percentage have State Government abattoir slaughtering fees and meat inspection fees been increased in—

(a) 1974-75;

(b) 1975-76?

(2) What was the total amount of revenue received from each source for the full year of—

(a) 1973-74;

(b) 1974-75;

(c) 1975-76;

(d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) (a)—

1974-75	Slaughter Fees		Public Health Department Meat Inspection Fees	
	Local per cent	Export per cent		per cent
*Cattle/ Calves	15	15	Cattle	228.95
*Sheep/ Lambs/ Goats	30	30	Calves under 68 kg	525
			Sheep/Lambs Goats	137.5
*Pigs	15	15	Pigs	188.46
†Cattle/ Calves	10	5		
†Sheep/ Lambs/ Goats	25	20		
†Pigs	12.5	7.5		

* Effective from 22nd July, 1974.
† Effective from 27th January, 1975

(b)—

1975-76	Local per cent	Export per cent	
Cattle/ Calves	15.04	14.95	Nil
Sheep/Goats	16	10	
Lambs	18	10	
Pigs	11.57	11.1	

(2)—

Financial Year	Total Revenue Slaughtering Fees	Public Health Department Meat Inspection Fees
	\$	\$
(a) 1973-74	5 736 512	145 692
(b) 1974-75	8 587 630	296 826
(c) 1975-76	13 414 159	408 931
(d) 1976-77	14 417 000	446 000
	(Estimate)	(Estimate)

9. LAND TRANSFERS AND COMPANIES REGISTRATION

Increased Fees

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) By what percentage have charges for—
- (a) land title transfer fees;
 - (b) company registration fees;
 - (c) company transfer fees;
- been increased in—
- (i) 1974-75;
 - (ii) 1975-76?

- (2) What was the total amount of revenue received from each source for the full year of—
- (a) 1973-74;
 - (b) 1974-75;
 - (c) 1975-76;
 - (d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

In Respect of Land Titles

- (1) (a) (i) Nil.
(ii) 50% (October 1975).
- (2) (a) \$607 956.
(b) \$540 504.
(c) \$1 058 898.
(d) \$986 000.

In Respect of Corporate Affairs

- (1) (b) (i) and (ii) These fees are not separately identifiable in the fee scale.
- (c) (i) and (ii) There is no specific item of company transfer fees under the schedule.

The fees payable under the Companies Act, 1961-1975, are levied under some 50-odd different headings, and there has never been a simple increase of some stated percentage affecting all such fees to the same extent. Instead, individual fees have been altered by different amounts.

The last variation of fees was incorporated in the Second Schedule to the Companies Act (Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission) Amendment No. 22 of 1975.

- (2) (a) to (d) There is no dissection maintained of the various fees received under the Companies Act.

10. PAYROLL TAX AND STAMP DUTY

Increase

Mr JAMIESON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) By what percentage have charges for—
- (a) payroll tax; and
 - (b) stamp duty on cheques,
- been increased in—
- (i) 1974-75;
 - (ii) 1975-76?
- (2) What was the total amount of revenue received from each source for the full year of—
- (a) 1973-74;
 - (b) 1974-75;
 - (c) 1975-76;
 - (d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

- (1) (a) (i) 11.1%
(ii) 33.3%
(b) (i) and (ii) Nil.

(2)

Stamp duty on Cheques (includes promissory notes, Bills of Exchange, Orders and Procurations)

	Payroll tax	Stamp duty on Cheques (includes promissory notes, Bills of Exchange, Orders and Procurations)
1973-74	\$58 578 963	\$3 708 096
1974-75	\$90 080 688	\$4 209 401
1975-76	\$110 341 319	\$4 699 758
1976-77	\$124 760 000	\$5 076 000
(Estimate)		

11. STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE

Comprehensive Premiums: Increase

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What was the percentage increase in State Government Insurance Office comprehensive insurance premiums for—
- (a) 1974-75;
 - (b) 1975-76?
- (2) What was the total amount of revenue received from this source for the full year of—
- (a) 1973-74;
 - (b) 1974-75;
 - (c) 1975-76;
 - (d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) (a) 25%
(b) 20%.
- (2) (a) \$7 741 934
(b) \$10 050 981
(c) \$13 484 281
(d) Estimate \$17 000 000.

12. HOSPITALS

Privately Insured Patients: Revenue

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

What is the estimated gain in revenue for a full year to be received from the increase in State Government hospital charges for privately insured patients that became effective on 1st October, 1976?

Mr RIDGE replied:

\$10 million which will be shared equally between the Commonwealth and the State.

Older—

1 bedroom	28.5	13.14
2 bedroom	27.1	14.75
3 bedroom	40.7	13.64
4 bedroom	46.3	13.28

Inferior—

1 bedroom	28.5	16.38
2 bedroom	27.3	14.29
3 bedroom	40.4	16.16
4 bedroom	46.3	13.07

Percentage increases for 1974-75 are not available as standard rents were not introduced for country townships until October, 1974.

North West Area

Rentals were decreased in 1974-75.

- (2) The total amount of revenue received for the metropolitan and country (including North West) areas for the years 1973-74 to 1976-77 is as follows—

(a) 1973-74	\$12 236 668
(b) 1974-75	14 220 734
(c) 1975-76	18 125 914
(d) 1976-77 estimate ..	20 500 000

Separate figures for the metropolitan and country are not available.

13. HOUSING

Rents: Increase

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Disregarding rebates, what was the percentage increase in metropolitan and country State Housing Commission rents in—

- (a) 1974-75;
(b) 1975-76;
(c) 1976-77 (estimate)?

- (2) Disregarding rebates, what was the total amount of revenue received from metropolitan and country State Housing Commission rents in the full year for—

- (a) 1973-74;
(b) 1974-75;
(c) 1975-76;
(d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) The percentage increase for the three years 1974-75 to 1976-77 are as follows—

Metropolitan Area	Percentage Increase		
	Category	1974-75	1975-76 1976-77

New—

1 bedroom	33.33	25	15.38
2 bedroom	20.96	25	14.36
3 bedroom	18.70	25	13.53
4 bedroom	10.00	25	15.04
5 bedroom	18.18	25	14.29

Older-Relets—

1 bedroom	45	14.29
2 bedroom	45	13.77
2 bedroom + sleepout	55	14.97
3 bedroom	49	14.97
3 bedroom + sleepout	57	15.20
4 bedroom	45	15.20

Inferior—

2 bedroom	37	15.38
2 bedroom + sleepout	38	15.94
Sims cook 2 bedroom	45	15.38
Sims cook 2 bedroom + sleepout	45	15.94

Country Area

(excluding North West)

New—

1 bedroom	25.0	15.13
2 bedroom	25.0	14.50
3 bedroom	40.8	12.85
4 bedroom	21.8	12.96

14. WATER SUPPLIES, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE

Rates: Increase

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What was the percentage increase in the following rates:

- (a) metropolitan water rates;
(b) country water rates;
(c) excess water rates;
(d) sewerage rates;
(e) drainage rates,

for—

- (i) 1974-75;
(ii) 1975-76;
(iii) 1976-77?

- (2) What was the total amount of revenue received from each of the above sources in the full year for—

- (a) 1973-74;
(b) 1974-75;
(c) 1975-76;
(d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Percentage increase—

- (a) Metropolitan water rates
(i) 1974-75—11.1 per cent
(ii) 1975-76—31.2 „
(iii) 1976-77—9.9 „

(b) Country water rates (all towns under CAWS Act)

	Domestic	Commercial	Industrial	Farm-land	Vacant Land
(i) 1974-75	25% (1)	11.1% (2)	Nil (3)
(ii) 1975-76	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(iii) 1976-77	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

(1) A ceiling was placed on the maximum water rate chargeable of \$20 per annum.

(2) This classification was not previously rated. Rating introduced on the estimated net annual value basis at 10 cents in the dollar.

(3) This classification was previously not rated, but subject to an annual charge of \$4.00. Rating introduced on the annual value basis at 10 cents in the dollar.

(c) Excess water rates

Metropolitan

1974-75—25.9 per cent

1975-76—56.6

1976-77—10.0

Country

Excess water is not applicable to the CAWS schemes as all water used is charged for at the appropriate scale of charges for the various classifications.

(d) Sewerage rates

Metropolitan

1974-75—25.7 per cent

1975-76—32.5

1976-77—10.0

Country

	Northam	Bunbury	Karratha	All other towns under CTS Act
1974-75	37.5%	Decrease (6.6%)	16.6%	Nil
1975-76	9.1%	Nil	Nil	Nil
1976-77	16.6%	7.1%	7.1%	Nil

(e) Drainage rates

Metropolitan

1974-75—

1975-76—33.3%

1976-77—

Country

1974-75—Nil

1975-76—Nil

1976-77—Nil

(2) Total amount of revenue received—

Metropolitan water rates

(a) 1973-74—\$8 214 184

(b) 1974-75—\$10 980 485

(c) 1975-76—\$14 972 018

(d) 1976-77—\$17 160 000 (est.)

Country water rates

(a) 1973-74—\$1 893 966

(b) 1974-75—\$1 729 410*

(c) 1975-76—\$2 506 695

(d) 1976-77—\$2 795 000 (est.)

* A common rating year, from 1st July to 30th June was introduced. Consequently during 1974-75 some towns were rated for six months only.

(c) Excess water rates

Metropolitan

1973-74—\$2 543 097

1974-75—\$4 858 044

1975-76—\$7 549 476

1976-77—\$6 455 800 (est.)

Country

Not applicable

(d) Sewerage rates

Metropolitan

1973-74—\$6 499 505

1974-75—\$9 635 448

1975-76—\$14 612 688

1976-77—\$17 800 000 (est.)

Country

1973-74—\$1 119 048

1974-75—\$986 735*

1975-76—\$1 534 029

1976-77—\$1 778 000 (est.)

* A common rating year, from 1st July to 30th June was introduced. Consequently during 1974-75 some towns were rated for six months only.

(e) Drainage rates

Metropolitan

1973-74—\$1 479 827

1974-75—\$1 699 830

1975-76—\$2 412 657

1976-77—\$2 632 000 (est.)

Country

1973-74—\$187 091

1974-75—\$186 869

1975-76—\$186 984

1976-77—\$187 000 (est.)

15. SHIPPING, RAILWAYS, BUSES, AND MOTOR VEHICLES

Increased Charges

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) What was the percentage increase in the following rates and charges—

- State Shipping freight rates;
- Westrail freight rates;
- country train and railway bus fares;
- metropolitan rail and bus fares;
- motor vehicle registration fees;
- motor vehicle transfer fees;
- driver's licence fees;
- third party insurance premiums,

for—

(i) 1974-75;

(ii) 1975-76;

(iii) 1976-77?

(2) What was the total amount of revenue received from each of the above charges in the full year for—

- (a) 1973-74;
- (b) 1974-75;
- (c) 1975-76;
- (d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1)—

	1974/75 per cent	1975/76 per cent	1976/77 per cent
(a)	30	20 (W.A. ports) 25 (Darwin)	Nil
(b)	17½	17½	Nil
(c)	17½	Nil	Nil
(d)	22	Nil	33½ Average
(e)	65	Nil	Nil
(f)	50	Nil	Nil
(g)	66½	Nil	Nil
(h)	Nil	52	Nil

(2)—

	1973/74 \$	1974/75 \$	1975/76 \$	1976/77 \$ (estimate)
(a)	5 504 355	6 415 210	5 997 337	5 900 000
(b)	67 755 319	87 008 919	108 430 351	110 000 000
(c)	2 146 911	2 502 952	2 468 182	2 500 000
(d)	10 216 757	11 989 615	11 983 853	14 140 000
(e)	15 896 320	24 584 130*	30 760 477*	32 864 000*
(f)	508 804	609 218	772 034	832 000
(g)	1 615 282	2 414 415	4 480 306	2 660 000
(h)	14 500 822	14 944 735	19 705 477	23 250 000

* Excludes recording fees collected by local authorities.

16. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES AND GAS

Increased Charges

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) What was the percentage increase in electricity and gas rates in—

- (a) 1974-75;
- (b) 1975-76?

(2) What was the total amount of revenue received from each of the above charges in the full year for—

- (a) 1973-74;
- (b) 1974-75;
- (c) 1975-76;
- (d) 1976-77 (estimate)?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

(1) (a) Interconnected System Electricity

14% from 1st August, 1974
25% from 13th January, 1975

Gas

10% from 1st August, 1974
20% from 13th January, 1975

(b) Interconnected System electricity

12.5% from 1st July, 1975

Gas

No change

(2) The total gross revenue received from all charges for electricity and gas and that as estimated for 1976-77 are:

	Electricity \$Million	Gas \$Million	Total Revenue \$Million
(a)	69.21	4.47	73.68
(b)	94.21	5.99	100.20
(c)	128.84	7.32	136.16
(d)	140.46 (estimate)	8.26 (estimate)	148.72 (estimate)

17. SWAN RIVER DRIVE Report of Consultants

Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

Referring to question 17 of Tuesday, 5th October, 1976, and his answer, will he table the recommendations contained in a report by De Leuw Cather and Company as indicated in answer (2)?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The Report by De Leuw Cather and Company dealt comprehensively with freeway requirements of the City of Perth out to a distance of approximately 5 km from the city centre.

The report dated November, 1967, and entitled "Perth Metropolitan Region Inner Ring Freeway Study—Phase II—Geometric Design Studies" is voluminous.

The member is directed to page 17 and figure 2 of the report which is available in the Town Planning Department.

18. CHICKEN MEAT Consumption

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

(1) What was the total consumption of chicken meat in Western Australia in each of the past ten years?

(2) What was the per capita consumption of chicken meat in Western Australia in the past ten years?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) Dressed Weight of Chickens Slaughtered for Human Consumption in Western Australia ('000 Kg)

Year

1965-66—5 554
1966-67—7 552
1967-68—8 374
1968-69—10 284
1969-70—10 745
1970-71—12 924

1971-72—14 606
 1972-73—12 829
 1973-74—15 920
 1974-75—16 121

- (2) Estimated Consumption of Chicken Meat in Western Australia (Kg per capita)

Year

1965-66—6.7
 1966-67—8.9
 1967-68—9.5
 1968-69—11.2
 1969-70—10.8
 1970-71—12.5
 1971-72—13.9
 1972-73—12.0
 1973-74—14.5
 1974-75—14.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

19. KWINANA POWER STATION

Conversion of Units

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) When will the first unit being converted at the Kwinana power station from fuel oil to coal come onto load?
- (2) What is the present programming for the conversion of units at Kwinana from oil to coal?
- (3) What is the anticipated costs involved in the conversion?
- (4) When the units are converted from oil to coal will there be any loss in the efficiency of the units?
- (5) If (4) is "Yes" will he outline the position?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Unit 6 is programmed to come on load using coal as a fuel in March, 1978.
- (2) Unit 5 will be shut down for conversion to coal firing when unit 6 is proven to be reliable. It is anticipated that unit 5 will be returned to service burning coal in June, 1979.
- (3) The cost of conversion was calculated in June, 1976, to be \$34 million.
- (4) and (5) Sent out efficiency will be about 2% less when burning coal.

20. HOUSING

Collie: Programme

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

- (1) What is the number of State Housing Commission homes that will be erected at Collie for the year ending 30th June, 1977?

- (2) What moneys will be spent on upgrading of SHC homes at Collie for the year ending 30th June, 1977?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (i) Domestic programme—six pensioner units.
 (ii) Aboriginal programme—six single detached units.
- (2) Estimated \$105 000.

21. *This question was postponed.*

22. HEALTH

Arteriosclerosis: Treatment

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What progress has been made with the Dr Moeller treatment for arteriosclerosis?
- (2) Where is the machine being used?
- (3) When was it brought into use?
- (4) How many patients so far have been treated?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (4) The Government has requested a progress report on developments with the machine acquired from Dr Moeller, particularly with regard to the research proposal for its evaluation. The member will be advised when the report is available.

23. PROBATE DUTY

Exemption Level

Mr HARMAN, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Under existing legislation referring to death duties and estates left intact to a surviving spouse, what is the present percentage of estates free from death duties?
- (2) What are the ten highest individual amounts paid to the Treasury in the last financial year representing death duties from the ten estates finalised?

Mr O'Neill (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

- (1) Under the existing legislation, if estates assessed in 1975-76 up to \$35 000 net value had been left to the surviving spouse intact, they would have been free from any death duty.

The figures published in the State Taxation Department's 1975-76 annual report disclose that estates up to a net value of \$30 000 comprise 80.36% of all estates assessed in that year.

The percentage requested in this question would be a little higher but could only be obtained by examining all of the individual assessed estates in the \$30 001 to \$40 000 group, which would take

some time, as no statistics are recorded in the group \$30 001 to \$35 000 net value.

- (2) The highest ten amounts paid to the Commissioner of State Taxation in 1975-76 were—

\$
79 235
80 828
94 270
96 874
104 000
106 706
111 971
124 382
379 252
442 174.

24. HEALTH

Pesticides Advisory Committee

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Who are at present the members of the Pesticides Advisory Committee?
- (2) How often has the committee met over the past 12 months?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Dr J. C. McNulty (Chairman),
Mr R. C. Gorman,
Mr W. M. Griffiths,
Mr K. T. Richards.
- (2) Eight times.

25. BOYANUP SCHOOL

Tender for Works

Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Would the Minister advise when it is proposed to call tenders for works at the Boyanup Primary School?
- (2) What is the nature of the works to be undertaken and when does he expect the works to be completed?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Contract let on the 21st September, 1976, to T. D. Scott Pty. Ltd. at a cost of \$28 556.
- (2) Staff toilets, store and drainage. Completion date—18th January, 1977.

26. DAIRYING

Butter and Cheese: Price Underwriting

Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) When did he receive advice that the Commonwealth Government had agreed to increase its underwritten value for butter and cheese?

- (2) Will this increase be paid direct to producers or are the payments made to manufacturers for disbursement?
- (3) Can he advise the probable increase per kilogram to producers?
- (4) Will the increase in price be made only to producers of manufacturing dairy products or all producers including quota milk licensees with surplus milk production?
- (5) From what date does the Commonwealth increase take effect and has a termination date been indicated?
- (6) (a) Is it expected that market values for butter and cheese will rise;
(b) if so, would he give any detail on the benefit to producers?
- (7) If "Yes" to (6) what effect, if any, would be evidenced in retail prices for butter and cheese?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The 5th October, 1976.
- (2) Any increase resulting from the higher underwritten values will be paid to manufacturers through the equalisation committee for distribution to producers.
- (3) The increase represents 22 cents per kilogram for butterfat. The exact payment to producers will be affected by any alteration in manufacturing costs.
- (4) It will apply to all milk used for manufacturing purposes.
- (5) From 1st July, 1976 to 31st December, 1976 at this stage.
- (6) and (7) The level of underwriting and the retail price of butter or cheese are not related.

27.

COAL

Long-term Contracts

Mrs CRAIG, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Did the Labor Party policy speech of 1971 promise that, if elected, they would implement long-term coal contracts for the Collie coal fields?
- (2) Was this promise kept?
- (3) Is the present Government negotiating to give the Collie coal-fields long-term contracts?
- (4) If so, what stage have negotiations reached?
- (5) Over what period of time are they expected to extend?
- (6) What advantages are expected to flow from these?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes.

- (4) Discussions have begun between the SEC, the Department of Industrial Development, and the Mines Department preparatory to negotiating long-term development agreements for the Collie coal field. As a separate but concurrent action the SEC is about to begin negotiation with the coal companies to secure long-term coal supply agreements for their use.
- (5) It is expected that these negotiations will extend over a period of 2 to 3 months.
- (6) It is expected that the long-term agreements and contracts will provide significant advantages to the Collie area in stating clearly the obligations of the State and the companies to properly plan for the future exploitation of the coal reserves. The coal contracts to be negotiated by the SEC are expected to provide the advantages of long-term assurance of fuel supplies at an economic price and also allow the coal companies to plan the development of the mining operations on a sound and assured basis.

28. MUJA POWER STATION

Extensions

Mrs CRAIG, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) When are the extensions to the Muja power station due to be completed?
- (2) What is the present programming of the various stages of construction and installation?
- (3) What is the present estimate for the total cost of the extensions?
- (4) What will be the increase in tonnes of coal used when the extensions become fully operative?
- (5) What will these purchases mean in terms of the total State Energy Commission coal consumption?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The 2 x 200 MW units comprising the extension of the Muja power station are expected to be in service for the winters of 1981 and 1982.
- (2) At the present time civil construction work has begun on the site and fabrication of steel work and the manufacture of equipment in the makers works is under way. Construction work will proceed as required and reach a peak of activity in the years 1979 and 1980.
- (3) The present estimate of the total cost of the extension is \$120 million.

- (4) When the station is completed with both units on full load it will require 1.3 million tonnes of coal a year.
- (5) Allowing for the reduced consumption of coal in other stations the total SEC coal consumption is expected to rise from the present 2 million tonnes of coal a year to approximately 3 million tonnes of coal per year.

29. HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

Acquisition

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:
Will the Minister table all relevant files and documents relating to—

- (a) the Government's efforts to purchase Her Majesty's Theatre;
- (b) the assessment of all related problems, including the cost, of refurbishing the theatre?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:
No.

30. TEACHER EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Deferment

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

In the light of the Minister's undertaking to consult with staff members involved in the W.A. Colleges of Advanced Education prior to amending legislation which directly affects such institutions, will the Minister defer current legislation to amend the Teacher Education Act until representatives of the colleges have had an opportunity to meet the Minister for Education to seek clarification of several important implications contained in the Bill?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Arrangements have been made for representatives of the academic staff association of the colleges concerned to meet with the Minister for Education on Thursday, the 14th October, to discuss the proposed amendment to the Teacher Education Act and it is considered at this stage to be unnecessary to take steps towards the deferment of the Bill in question.

31. PAROLE BOARD Police Representative

Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Was he correctly reported in the *Daily News* of 8th October, 1976 that the W.A. Parole Board should include a member of the Police Force which would control more tightly the release of prisoners?
- (2) (a) If "Yes" does he imply that the present chairman and members of the board appointed by the present Government are incompetent, and that the Government has no confidence in them;
(b) if "Yes" to (a), does he intend to replace them with policemen?
- (3) Is he aware that a parolee recently convicted of murder and another parolee recently charged with murder were in fact released when Mr Lamb, a retired senior police officer, was a member of the W.A. Parole Board?
- (4) Has he any figures to prove that the proportion of parolees committing further offences in Western Australia is any greater than other Australian States (none of which have ever had any Parole Board members associated with the Police Force) whereas in Western Australia until recently there has been a retired police officer on the board?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) I realise there was a retired police officer on the board. My views were intended to indicate it would be beneficial to keep a retired member on the board—preferably one who had retired recently—who would have personal knowledge of many of the offenders.
- (4) No, but it is quite obvious that results in Western Australia are far from satisfactory.

32. PERTH ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

Acquisition: Tabling of Documents

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Will he table all of the papers and documents relevant to the recent deal made by him and his Government with the Perth Entertainment Centre?

Mr O'Neill (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

No. The file dealing with this subject includes papers and correspondence containing information on the private affairs of

companies and individuals involved in the transaction. The member would therefore appreciate that it would not be proper to table the papers.

33. WANDARRA SCHOOL *Provision in Estimates*

Mr BERTRAM, to the Treasurer:

Why is there no apparent provision in the estimates for the sum of \$200 000 or thereabouts for proposed work at the Wandarra Primary School?

Mr O'Neill (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

Proposed work at the Wandarra Primary School will be funded under the State Grants (Schools) Act 1972-1977.

34. RADIO AND TELEVISION *Licence Fees: Reintroduction*

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Will he obtain from Mr Fraser an assurance that he will not reintroduce licence fees on radio and television in the next 12 months; if not, why?

Mr O'Neill (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

This is a matter entirely for the Commonwealth Government to determine.

35. LOAN COUNCIL

Agreement on Policies

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

(1) Will he table a copy of the so-called gentleman's agreement which governs the policies of the Loan Council?

(2) If "No" why?

(3) If "Yes" when?

Mr O'Neill (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) Now.

The document was tabled (see paper No. 478).

36. GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

Invoices: Payment before Delivery of Goods

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Further to his answer to question 11 of 6th October, 1976, since he has no knowledge of goods paid for before delivery, will he ascertain positively that this practice was not indulged in at and before 30th June, 1976?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

I have no intention of engaging in a witch hunt at the request of the member for Mt. Hawthorn. It was and remains the responsibility of individual departments to process end of year accounts as advised by the Treasury. I repeat that I have no reason to assume that there was any departure from orthodox practice in this regard and if the member has any information to the contrary he should take it up with the Minister concerned.

37. STATE FINANCE

Budget: Expected Lift in Resources

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Relevant to his Budget speech will he explain the amount of the "expected lift in our resources" in the year ending 30th June, 1977 and how he has calculated this figure?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

I refer the member for Mt. Hawthorn to the printed Budget speech, page 17, under the heading "Estimated Revenue" where it is stated that after allowing for the cost of taxation concessions announced in the Budget, total revenue is expected to increase by \$181.9 million in 1976-77. Details of this expected increase in our financial resources are set out in the Estimates of Revenue for 1976-77.

38. SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Physically Handicapped Children

Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

What immediate plans (if any) does the Government have for special schools for physically handicapped children?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Plans are well in hand to establish the Willetton Special School to cater for physically handicapped children. Work recently started on the project.

39. STATE FINANCE

Budget: Nonrevenue Expenditure

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) In each of the last three years how much nonrevenue expenditure was paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, i.e. for capital purposes?
- (2) Will he list in each case the classification of that expenditure?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

- (1) and (2) It is presumed that by the term "nonrevenue expenditure" the member for Mt. Hawthorn is referring to expenditure in items of a capital nature. In any year there are many cases of items of a capital nature being financed from Consolidated Revenue particularly if there is no corresponding asset created in the Government's balance sheet. Examples are grants to bodies for items of a capital nature such as swimming pools, youth camps and hostels, and facilities used by charitable bodies. A particular example is the grant of \$1 475 000 to the Perth City Council to help finance construction of the Perth Concert Hall provided from Consolidated Revenue by our predecessors in office.

Examples of this type of expenditure are numerous and it is not proposed to have busy officers undertake the considerable amount of work involved in compiling a list which in any event would serve no apparent purpose. Specific actions taken this year by the Government to increase spending on capital works were set out in the Budget speeches dealing with the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates and the Capital Works Program.

40.

STATE FINANCE

Short-term Investments: Return

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Will he supply details in respect of each of the last three years as to the treatment of interest from short-term investments having indicated his preparedness to do so when answering my question without notice last Thursday, it having been noted that in the year ended 30th June, 1976 \$6 million was withheld from the Consolidated Revenue Fund?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

Interest earned on short-term investments also includes amounts earned on behalf of trust funds and deposits of Government instrumentalities and which are credited to their respective accounts.

The balances were used as follows in the last three years—

1973-74: Of the balance of \$8 734 039 at the 30th June, 1973, \$4 380 481 was paid to Consolidated Revenue

Fund to clear the deficits incurred in 1971-72 and 1972-73 and \$4 353 558 was paid to Consolidated Revenue Fund Revenue in 1973-74.

1974-75: The balance of 6 367 905 at the 30th June, 1974, was paid to Consolidated Revenue Fund Revenue in 1974-75.

1975-76: Of the balance of \$6 479 738 at the 30th June, 1975, \$6 million is to be paid to the General Loan Fund as indicated in the second reading speech on the Appropriation Bill (General Loan Fund).

Although this is the first occasion on which interest on these funds is to be paid to the General Loan Fund its use in previous years to clear deficits instead of funding them from General Loan Fund had the same effect of indirectly supporting capital works expenditure.

41. STATE FINANCE

Budget: Capital Expenditure

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (a) How much money does he intend to pay out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund this year for capital purposes; and
- (b) what is the classification thereof?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

- (a) and (b) I refer the member for Mt. Hawthorn to my answer to question 39 and to my recent speeches on the Consolidated Revenue Estimates and the Loan Fund Estimates in which I described the support being given to employment generating capital works from revenue funds.

42. BUDGET AND LOAN FUND

Accounting Practices

Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Will he list each of the departures from long established, consistent and conventional accounting practice, instituted by him in the accounting of Consolidated Revenue Fund and Loan Fund transactions in each of the years which he has been Treasurer and which he has instituted or proposes to introduce for the current year?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

I am not aware of any departures from consistent and conventional accounting practices instituted during the term of the present Government.

43. *This question was postponed.*

44. AIR TRANSPORT *Port Hedland-Bali Service*

Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it correct that Ansett Transport Industries has failed in its bid to commence flights from Port Hedland to Bali?
- (2) Has he any plans to pursue this matter further on behalf of people living in the north of the State?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) In view of the announcement about a Perth-Bali-Perth service by Qantas I do not think any further pursuit of the Ansett or Trans-West applications are likely to be fruitful.

I would like to add that Trans-West as well as Ansett applied for this particular service.

However we have asked the Commonwealth to look at the possibility of the Qantas Boeing 707 service calling at a convenient Pilbara port but the only one suitable for this type of aircraft is Learmonth. We also understand that such a landing may require Australia to concede additional reciprocal rights to Guruda, the Indonesian designated scheduled carrier.

I draw the member's attention to page 32 of the annual report for the year ending 30th June, 1976 of the Director-General of Transport for some explanation on the manner in which international landing rights are negotiated.

45. LOCKYER, YAKAMIA, SPENCER PARK, AND ALBANY SCHOOLS

Enrolments

Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Further to question 9 of Tuesday, 12th October, would the Minister please advise the information requested in (1) (a), (b) and (c) of that question with regard to Albany Junior Primary School?

- (2) As all four schools now stand, what is the optimum enrolment for each?
- (3) With regard to all factors mentioned in reply to question 2 of 12th October, and bearing in mind the interests and well being of the pupils, what is the optimum size of a primary school?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Albany Primary School enrolments at the 1st August, 1975 and 1976 respectively were 412 and 442. The enrolment in 1977 is expected to be 450.
- (2) Both Mount Lockyer and Spencer Park Primary Schools have accommodation for up to 700 pupils, Yakamia Primary School for 420, and Albany Primary School 455. Additional accommodation will be provided when necessary for 1977.
- (3) Primary schools are now designed to have accommodation in permanent teaching areas of 560 with a peak enrolment of up to 800 utilising temporary accommodation.

46.

EDUCATION

Drugs: Surveys in Schools

Mr GREWAR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have surveys been conducted in Government and private schools in Western Australia into the use of hallucinogenic drugs?
- (2) If "Yes"
- (a) what do these figures reveal;
- (b) what is the relative significance;
- of the various types of drug?
- (3) What measures is the Education Department adopting to acquaint students of the inherent dangers of hallucinogenic drugs?
- (4) If none, does the Minister consider a policy of education is deemed desirable?
- (5) What medical treatment centres are available to those addicted?
- (6) How successful is treatment?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) No survey into the use of hallucinogenic drugs has been undertaken in Government schools. A survey into the use of alcohol and drugs was undertaken in four private schools by the Health Education Council of Western Australia.

- (2) (a) Results from the small sample indicated:

Hallucinogens	Offered	Experimented	Using
Boys	12%	1.2%	nil.
Girls	15%	0.6%	nil.
Cannabis			
Boys	38%	15%	1%
Girls	41%	14%	4%
Alcohol	Do not Drink	Drink in Varying Degrees	Heavy Use
Boys	13.9%	77.1%	9%
Girls	9.9%	87.1%	3%

- (b) The significant fact from the survey is an indication of the maximum influence of hallucinogens and cannabis in contrast to that of alcohol.

- (3) and (4) —

- (i) The Education Department has a total health education programme.
- (ii) Individual schools invite speakers with expertise to assist in alcohol and drug education.
- (iii) The education subcommittee of the Alcohol and Drug Authority is currently considering the matter.
- (5) The Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Authority provides services for addicted persons at a number of centres.
- (6) Success of treatment can only be gauged by constant evaluation of a patient's method of treatment over a five year period.

QUESTIONS (5): WITHOUT NOTICE

I. "DAILY NEWS" REPORT *Interjection in Debate*

Mr Young (for Mr SHALDERS), to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) Has he seen a letter in the *Daily News* of Tuesday, the 12th October, 1976, over the signature of a Mr G. Martin of Doubleview, protesting about a remark heard in Parliament?
- (2) Has he examined the *Hansard* transcript to ascertain whether the allegation contained in the letter that the interjection, "Well that's got rid of the pensioners", was made by a Government member?
- (3) Would he advise the House as to which member is recorded in *Hansard* as having made that interjection?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

I thank the member for some notice of his intention to ask this question. The reply is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.

- (3) Page 2797 of the proof copy of *Hansard* No. 16, of the 5th October, 1976, attributes the remark, "Now we have got rid of the pensioners" to Mr B. T. Burke, the ALP member for Balga.

Government members: Shame!

Mr Young: I hope the Press will rectify that!

2. HOUSING

West Swan: Accommodation for Mr Bropho

Mr NANOVIČ, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Further to my question without notice of the 12th October, 1976, regarding the prototype house to be built in Saunders Street, West Swan, could the Minister give details of the prototype house being built?
- (2) What was the cost estimate made by the State Housing Commission for this particular dwelling?
- (3) What was the nature of the breach of agreement with the State Housing Commission by Mr Bropho?
- (4) Would Mr Bropho qualify for further accommodation from the State Housing Commission?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The residence is double brick facework internally and externally, with the exception of bathrooms, laundry, and WC's, which are in cement render. The floor and footings are concrete; the roof steel deck; the ceilings "plasterglas", with insulation under the decking. The roof and ceiling supports are steel bearing on the brickwork.

Windows are steel sheeted with clear sheet "Loxan". Door frames are metal. The stove is solid fuel providing also hot water. The bath is fibre glass; the sink trough and pedestal pan are of stainless steel. The floor finish is "Synethane" seamless flooring.

- (2) The cost estimate by the State Housing Commission, based on the plans and specifications as outlined above, was \$66 830.
- (3) It has been a consistent policy not to reveal personal confidential information.
- (4) Further assistance would depend on the circumstances that exist at the time it may arise.

3.

HOUSING

West Swan: Accommodation for Mr Bropho

Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Housing:

My question really is without notice, and follows upon the previous question without notice. Who actually will own the house to be constructed on this land? Will it be the Aboriginal Advancement Council or the State Housing Commission?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

No. I refer the honourable member to the answer I gave yesterday to a question without notice. The State Housing Commission is acting only as agent in both the construction and financial side of the building of this house.

4.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

Acquisition: Tabling of Documents

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

Following upon an answer to a question asked by me today concerning Her Majesty's Theatre, in the light of the Government's decision to hide the facts from the public regarding its negotiations to purchase the theatre—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. When asking questions, the honourable member must not frame them in such a manner. He should be careful as to the manner in which he asks questions; he is not permitted to proffer his own opinions when asking questions.

Mr BRYCE: Is the Minister aware that the people of Western Australia can now only completely mistrust the Government's statements on matters relating to the purchase of Her Majesty's Theatre because of the Government's refusal to make available the information to the public?

Mr GRAYDEN replied: No.

5.

BOATS

Launching Ramps: Government Financial Assistance

Mr CLARKO, to the Minister for Works:

What financial assistance is currently provided by the Government for the construction of public boat launching ramps on—

- (i) river foreshores;
- (ii) ocean foreshores?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (i) Current policy in regard to financial assistance for public boat launching ramps on river foreshores is that the Public Works Department will provide technical assistance in the design and contribute by way of a grant half the cost of the launching ramp. Subject to the availability of funds and approval of the project, the Main Roads Department will contribute towards the cost of the parking area.
- (ii) There are practical difficulties involved with the construction of public boat launching ramps on the ocean foreshores but, subject to the site being considered suitable by the department, the same assistance would be available as for public boat launching ramps constructed in the river.

BOAT LAUNCHING RAMPS

Government Financial Assistance: Grievance

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [5.05 p.m.] : I wish this afternoon to express my concern at the lack of ocean boat launching facilities on the metropolitan coastline to the north of Perth. In particular, I wish to express my concern at the proposals to develop Trigg Island as such a site. I very much support the need for boat launching facilities, but I firmly believe that Trigg Island is not the appropriate place for such facilities.

The coastline is a very fragile place—particularly adjacent to Perth—because it is exposed to such a large area of water and wind. We know there have been various man made changes to our shoreline around Perth; changes have taken place at Mandurah, Busselton, Ledge Point and Cottesloe and, to varying degrees, deleterious effects have been associated with these activities of man.

Trigg Island is a unique coastal feature. I suppose it could be called a cornerstone between the sandy surfing beaches to the south and the secluded, private, safe beaches to the north. The proposal put forward by the Australian Angling Association includes provision for two breakwaters immediately contiguous with Trigg Island and the removal of the wave cut platform just adjacent to the island.

I stated a couple of days ago my belief that any such blasting would be totally unacceptable on many grounds, and I received a reply which I read in the Press stating that the work was to be done not by blasting but principally by a dragline. Let me say very deliberately to all members of the House that I do not care

whether the wave cut platform is removed with a gold spoon, piece by piece, milligram by milligram. As far as I am concerned, I would object to that just as much. I believe anybody who starts to talk about the methods by which we should remove the platform fails to understand that Trigg Island is a unique coastal feature which must be left alone.

Already, it is used in a minimal way by boatmen, and I have actually been associated with some minor improvements to enable these people to use the area more safely. I very much support such minor improvements, but any major proposal would be fraught with many difficulties.

Of course, the major difficulty would be concerned with conservation and the environment. Using this area for the construction of a major boat launching ramp would be quite hazardous, especially if boats were used in large numbers, and they were faced with a sudden change in the weather with a south-westerly blowing. It is argued by local boatmen that it is likely this would lead to a tragedy. Indeed, already we have experienced trouble in the area involving even people who are quite experienced in using this site.

In addition, Trigg Island presently is backed by a large undeveloped area which without question should be developed as a park. Whilst a councillor of the City of Stirling I was able to arrange for the purchase of some four blocks of land at a cost in excess of \$100 000, which paves the way for this site to be developed as a first-class sheltered facility for people to use, adjacent to the excellent spot that is Trigg Island.

Instead, the current proposal would have it as a park for boats and their trailers. All sorts of problems naturally would flow from such a development, because this is also a most unsuitable place from a traffic point of view. I believe it is essential that those who advance this proposal should understand that the local people—people who have been associated with Trigg Island for a generation or more—are very much opposed to the idea.

The site already is used by fishermen, and to replace one set of fishermen with another in my opinion is not desirable when one considers all the additional major problems which will be created. The reef must be left alone.

It is essential for us to realise that while Trigg Island is not a suitable spot for the construction of a boat launching ramp, it is a complete waste of a major recreational facility to have the Indian Ocean virtually untouched by boats in this region—a region which is growing faster than any other part of metropolitan Perth. At present, boat owners must travel many miles to East Street and other places around Fremantle in order to place their boats in the water. The Indian Ocean can be very tricky at Trigg Island, as elsewhere, and it is essential for people to be able to get

their boats into the water with reasonable ease and, of course, to be able to leave it fairly quickly.

It is also extremely important that the number of boats using a particular site is not such that a potential danger is created should there be a sudden change in the weather.

So, what are the alternatives? The best alternative in this district is of course at Pinnaroo Point at Whitfords which although it has some problems, has been used by local fishermen for some time; in addition, the public increasingly are using this area, and the local boating group has come to some arrangement with the owners of the adjacent land. For a sum of about \$50 000, quite a reasonable boat launching facility could be established in this area which could cater for a large number of boats.

However, it is not the long-term answer to this problem. The metropolitan north shore needs a marina, and clearly the site most likely to be successful in this regard—once the surveys and studies have been completed—is the one which was commenced by Kaiser Aetna Australia Pty. Ltd. called Ocean Reef. I commend the Shire of Wanneroo for its decision to take over the work done by the Kaiser Aetna company; I believe it has been extremely costly, to the extent of about \$75 000. In its budget presented about a month ago, the Shire of Wanneroo allocated a further \$40 000 for research and surveys at this site.

The concern which I wish to express to the House today is that the Government should carefully consider ways in which it may reduce this sum of money, which probably will be spent on an environmental impact study.

The **SPEAKER**: The honourable member has two minutes remaining.

Mr **CLARKO**: I believe Government departments in Perth have a great deal of expertise, and it is not unreasonable to expect them to carry out certain tasks of this sort without charge, or at minimal charge.

It is essential for a facility such as this to be constructed by a combination of moneys from the local authority and the State Government, and I believe that in time, the State Government will accept its responsibility in this area. I wish to urge the Government that its acceptance of this responsibility be soon. A large sum of money of something like \$1 million or \$2 million is required to develop a major boat launching facility in this area. The Government collects a great deal of money by way of taxes from boat owners, and this is an excellent opportunity to return some of this money in the way of a first-class facility, allowing the public and boat owners to use it.

I believe the time has arrived in government when steps should be taken to work closely with local authorities. I finish on the note that it should not only be for the local shire in whose district happens to be a suitable site for a boat launching facility to find the necessary finance; other local authorities also should be prepared to put their money where their mouths are and work together, with assistance from the State Government, to provide such a facility.

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Works) [5.14 p.m.]: In company with a number of members of this House, I am sympathetic to the cause of the honourable member in sponsoring the development of boat launching ramps on the coast. If the exigencies of the service permitted, I would be using my boat a little more frequently; apart from being used only once in the last 18 months, it has rested in my back yard, one of the cleanest boats in the metropolitan area.

I have had some experience in the matter of the provision of boat launching ramps. As I pointed out in answer to a question without notice from the member for Karrinyup, the Public Works Department is prepared to meet half the cost of providing boat launching facilities on the river foreshores. Where suitable and where entry is off a main road, the Main Roads Department is very sympathetic in providing the hard standing requirements, conjointly again with the local authority, for the parking of boats and trailers. Of course, other facilities such as toilet blocks and the like are necessary at such sites.

Those of us who have used boats on the river will know that some of the boat launching facilities are very good indeed. But local authorities have the problem of funding the loans which they must raise to meet half the cost of providing these facilities. I have suggested to my own council, the Melville City Council, that people who use these facilities should not be unprepared to pay for them. People who choose to travel in their own vehicles to Perth and to park in the Perth City Council carparks are prepared to pay a fee for that facility. In some cases that fee is reasonably high. I believe local authorities, whether they be on the ocean front or on the river front, should have the courage to charge a fee for the use of the boat launching facilities, the toilet facilities, and the hard standing. The fact that a city council ranger frequently inspects the site to make sure that everything—

Mr **Jamieson**: It happens at East Fremantle.

Mr **O'NEIL**: East Fremantle is one council that has adopted that scheme. I am not sure what the fee is but if it is \$1—

Mr **Jamieson**: They are pretty hard to convince, I might add.

Mr O'NEIL: That is right. If it is \$1, I for one and, I am sure, most boat owners would be prepared to pay that amount for the privilege of parking a car and a trailer and using facilities such as a ramp, a toilet block, showers, and whatever else is provided. So there is a way in which local authorities need not tax their own ratepayers in respect of the use of these facilities because, as the honourable member said, many of those who use the facilities come from other local authority areas.

The honourable member suggested that the fees obtained by the Government in respect of boat registration could be made available for this purpose. Strictly speaking, the fees now obtained from the registration of power boats are used essentially for the provision of river craft for patrolling the river and the payment of the Harbour and Light Department inspectors who endeavour to maintain certain safety standards in respect of the utilisation of power boats.

I am flying a kite by saying this, but perhaps the owners of boats might not object to a levy of an additional \$2 per licence to fund these facilities. It is a very great "perhaps". If the money were paid straight into Consolidated Revenue I think the general public would raise their eyebrows and probably object but if that money were paid into a special trust fund, out of which other direct grants or matching grants to local authorities could be paid for the provision of boat launching facilities and all that go with them, perhaps there may not be such objection. Certainly it is a reasonably heavy burden on local authorities at the moment and the Government pays half by way of a grant.

With respect to ocean launching facilities we have an entirely different problem. It is imperative that boat launching ramps on the ocean be adequately protected by means of groynes, breakwaters, and the like. I have seen launching ramps being put down in all good faith, either by private citizens with the local authority's permission or by local authorities, which are certainly inadequately protected. Even a foot-thick concrete reinforced slab projecting into the ocean does not last very long. One needs only to look at the experience of erosion of the foreshore in Ormsby Terrace in Mandurah to realise the engineering difficulty of providing a safe boat launching harbour.

To the best of my knowledge—and I could be quite wrong—the only public boat launching facility in Cockburn Sound is adjacent to the Cockburn Power Boat Association, of which I am a member. That association has an adequately protected boat ramp with a jetty alongside, but adjacent to it is a public facility which I have observed on a number of occasions. I am not sure what use it is put to but certainly with any sea at all

it appears to be a rather hazardous adventure to put a pricy power boat between those two areas.

My sympathies are with the honourable member but a considerable cost is involved in providing such facilities. An announcement was made recently in relation to the development of a marina in the Fremantle area. I noticed that the Mayor of Fremantle (Mr McKenzie) indicated that the Minister for Works had made available a choice piece of beachfront for the purpose. I wish to assure members that that choice piece of beachfront is between the northern end of the fishing boat harbour and the southern mole of Fremantle Harbour. I do not think anybody in his right mind could call it a choice beach unless he were referring to the odour which emanates from that place at certain times. However, negotiations are proceeding.

The Government has indicated its preparedness to make available an area of land plus an area of water to the Fremantle Sailing Club for the purpose of developing storage space and facilities for ocean going racing craft. This is becoming increasingly important but the cost involved, at a rough guess, is approximately \$2 million for breakwaters alone. No Government, at this time anyway, could find its way clear to providing that sort of money for that purpose.

However, we are only too happy to give whatever assistance we can to people interested in helping themselves. In the long term Governments may be able to find money for these purposes, but there are no free lunches. Whatever money the Government finds to allocate for any purpose at all ultimately comes from the taxpayers of the State. So the attitude of "give me something for nothing" must be regarded extremely carefully.

Mr Bertram: Who thinks you can get something for nothing? Lynch says this, the Premier says this, and now you say this.

Mr O'NEIL: Does the honourable member believe one can?

Mr Bertram: I certainly do not, and nobody else does.

Mr O'NEIL: I cannot see the sense of the interjection. I am simply saying that there are people who say the Government ought to do this, that, and something else, and then conveniently forget that in the long term the money comes from them.

Mr Bertram: Of course it does. Everybody knows that.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member is supporting my contention. I am not harping on it at all.

Mr Bertram: Nonsense.

Mr O'NEIL: I do not know whether the member is saying it is nonsense to believe it. Apart from that ridiculous and rather inane interjection, the honourable member has my sympathy but, as he can quite

clearly see, the possibility of making large sums of money available for this purpose at this time is extremely remote.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Observance of Traditions: Grievance

MR TAYLOR (Cockburn) [5.23 p.m.]: This Parliament and all Westminster Parliaments run on a series of traditions and understandings, as well as Standing Orders. These traditions and understandings have been part of our Parliament for many years. Sometimes they come under strain as they have certainly done during this session. There is no doubt that they will come under increasing strain as time goes on.

Nonetheless, I think members on both sides see the advantage of some traditions and conform to them because they seem to keep parliamentary debate in our system on the rails. The system of pairs is only one example whereby, without anything being written down, we are able to make certain agreements.

We are not our brother's keeper but I should like to raise as a grievance the situation concerning a political candidate of the Liberal Party who, I believe, in three ways has transgressed what one might call the traditions existing between the major political parties. I think he has been naughty. I use the word "naughty" in the sense that one would use it with regard to somebody at school. I use it not to chastise or to denigrate to any great degree, but I just take the opportunity to draw particular matters to the attention of the House. As the Premier is not present, perhaps the Deputy Premier will tell me whether he would be good enough to take up the matters because I think in small ways—at least in two instances—they tend to break a code of standards with regard to the way of doing things which has applied in the past.

I wish in no way to denigrate or to bring down and I have implied that this is one of those matters that we as professional politicians need to speak about amongst ourselves from time to time.

Mr O'Connor: Have you made any official complaints about this?

Mr TAYLOR: Oh no.

Mr Thompson: Well, get on with it.

Mr TAYLOR: The preamble is just as important as the comments I wish to make because they have to be in perspective. The first matter concerns an article which appeared in three newspapers. I quote now from *The Sound Advertiser* of Wednesday, the 6th October. Under the heading of "Unhealthy stress on education—Liberal candidate" the opening line of the article states that the Liberal candidate for a certain province—and the name of the gentleman is given—warns students not to be pressured, and so on. It goes on to say that he was talking to a group of

year 12 students of a certain high school. On this occasion the gentleman concerned, I understand, was invited to speak as a representative of the Liberal Party.

Members would know—certainly it is my own experience—that for a number of years there has been a reticence on the part of schools and other educational institutions to allow members of Parliament to take part in their activities. Slowly it has become acceptable for members of Parliament, or their nominees, to address students on current affairs, usually as part of a current affairs programme. I understand this has always been respected.

I can recall one occasion when the Minister for Local Government and I debated at the Armadale High School. I suggest that on that occasion I won the debate and he won the election. A report of that debate did not appear in the newspaper. Not so long ago I spoke at the Pinjarra High School and again a report did not appear in the newspaper. In the instance of the school in question the Secretary of the Australian Labor Party was invited, as the representative of the ALP, to address a group of students on current affairs. He did so, and that was that. The Chamber of Commerce is invited to schools, as are trade unions. But I think most members would agree that if a political candidate does so on behalf of his party and then makes a Press statement under his own name and under a title such as the candidate for a particular office, he could well destroy the privilege that we have and it would be detrimental to the high schools generally if allowed to continue; that is, if people who are invited for one purpose then issue Press statements under their own name and their capacity as a political candidate. I mention this matter because it has taken a number of years to get to a situation in which the discussion of politics is permitted in schools.

The second matter is of a similar nature but has no direct relationship to this House except that it is again possibly an attack on the privileges of members. As members would know, members of this House have the right to nominate people to be commissioners for declarations. A person goes to his local member, who writes to the appropriate authority. The member then says to his constituent, "I have been good enough to arrange it for you". It is one of those little privileges we have.

In the Commonwealth sphere one of the privileges the members have is to provide a school with an Australian flag. This has been done for many years. Federal members are able to present the flag to schools on behalf of the Federal Government. They also are able to delegate that responsibility. It is a nice and proper gesture and there is nothing wrong with it.

But one becomes a little upset when one reads in the newspaper—I refer to the same issue of Wednesday, the 6th October—that a flag was presented to a school not by the member for the area, but by the Liberal candidate for such-and-such, Mr So-and-so. Again, although this House will not be affected, this could well be the subject of debate in the Federal Parliament and if members were to feel that someone had transgressed that privilege, it could be taken away. Members will agree that it is fine for the local member to present such a flag, but when an individual presents an Australian flag and then gives a Press statement to the effect that he is the local candidate who has presented the flag, it is going a little too far.

Mr Carr: That cannot be delegated to a State member.

Mr TAYLOR: I would like to know who did the delegating—full stop. I think members have the purport of what I am saying.

The third instance concerns a Press statement in *The Sunday Times* of the 10th October in which a Liberal candidate announced details of a new school.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has three more minutes.

Mr TAYLOR: This is the first occasion on which I can recall any candidate announcing a new school. I guess we would all like to have such an opportunity. The announcement was a fully fledged announcement. It gave full details of the cost of the school, when tenders would be called, when it would be completed, how many classrooms it would have, information regarding a pre-school centre, and so on—the full box and dice.

Mr O'Neil: What date was the announcement made?

Mr TAYLOR: It appeared in *The Sunday Times* of the 10th October. There is no date on the Press release, but the date on the envelope is Friday, the 8th October, and it has the Palmyra Post Office stamp. It must have been posted there some time between 8.00 p.m. on the Thursday, the night the announcement was made, and 8.00 a.m. the next day. It did not appear in that detail in the Premier's speech and it did not appear under the heading of "New primary schools", but further down under the heading of "Additions to Primary Schools". However, this is a new school and the candidate made the statement. He had all the information and could have obtained it only from the Minister of the day. I understand that all such information should be given to the House and certainly to the local member.

It appears to me that the information was provided by the Minister to the candidate. If the candidate asked for it, I am not sure the Minister was entitled to give it. The answer should be given to the

House as to whether any Minister is to give such information to a person who asks him outside this House. This side of the House has a right to know that it can obtain such information and should expect to get it directly when asked. This information was not provided to the member for the area, but it appeared in a full Press statement. There is a strong suspicion that this was done before the Premier's speech was made in the House.

Mr O'Neil: Where did you get the Press statement?

Mr TAYLOR: From *The Sunday Times*.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Deputy Premier) [5.35 p.m.]: To a large degree I share the sentiments of the honourable member regarding the behaviour of candidates at elections, and particularly those candidates who are inexperienced.

Mr Taylor: I think I stressed that point.

Mr O'NEIL: I do feel a little disturbed that the honourable member has brought the matter to the notice of the House. My practice, when a candidate for election, is at the earliest opportunity to contact the candidate opposing me or, as was the case in 1959, the candidate whom I opposed. I indicate to him that during the course of election campaigns there are many overenthusiastic workers on both sides and often as a result of what they do they get the candidates into bother and trouble. Rather than allow the situation to develop to the stage where signs are destroyed and mud is slung, and so on, I have always requested the candidate I opposed to contact me personally.

The first person on whom I called in 1959 when campaigning was the then member for Canning (the late Mr Gaffy) and we had a mutual arrangement under which when we saw something off the rails in respect of the campaign we would together sort out the problem. I have followed that course in every campaign in which I have been engaged and, fortunately, very little difficulty has arisen.

I think I can identify the candidate to whom the honourable member refers. I agree that perhaps he should not—if he did—make a Press statement.

Mr Taylor: To three newspapers.

Mr O'NEIL: Did he or someone else make it? If he did, I will make it my business to suggest to the honourable member that he be a little more cautious in the future.

Mr Jamieson: That is the objection; he is not a member.

Mr O'NEIL: The candidate, then. It could be that in respect of the presentation of the flag and the obtaining of specific information relative to the loan

programme because of his occupation he is in a position to obtain that information from Government sources. I will leave that thought in the mind of the honourable member because he knows the occupation of the candidate to whom he refers.

Mr Taylor: I am still surprised as to how he obtained it.

Mr O'NEIL: I asked a question as to when the Press release was made and it was made after the Loan Budget was introduced.

Mr Jamieson: According to the article it was announced on Thursday by Mr Peter Shack.

Mr O'NEIL: I am not too sure of the time, but the Leader of the Opposition has identified the person.

Mr Jamieson: It is no secret.

Mr O'NEIL: It is possible that his occupation is such that he is in a position to be able to obtain from the Government details as to Government capital works expenditure.

Mr Jamieson: But this was not listed as a new school.

Mr O'NEIL: I do not know how the candidate obtained the information, but it is apparent it came from a Government source. What I am saying is that it is possible that because of his occupation he would be granted the information. I suppose if the president of the P & C rang and asked for information today, it would be supplied because it would be after the Budget has been introduced.

However, I do accept the gentle chiding of this naughty boy and I will make it my business to have a chat with him to suggest he be a little more discreet in the future.

TRAFFIC AND BEACH DEVELOPMENT

Scarborough Electorate: Grievance

MR YOUNG (Scarborough) [5.39 p.m.]: I have two matters to discuss in this grievance debate, both in respect of the City of Stirling. On the one hand I would imagine that one could construe the first item as a bouquet and the second as half a brickbat.

I was very impressed, having attended a delegation to the City of Stirling last night, to find the City of Stirling is prepared to admit it made a grave error in respect of what it called the grid system in connection with traffic in the Doubleview and Scarborough areas. The City of Stirling carried out an experiment which was an attempt to save lives, but it was a failure and I am pleased that the city intends to do something about returning to the original system, provided of course it takes care of the Moorland Street intersections which are similar to the Bournville Street situation in Wembley.

I have no doubt that if the City of Stirling returns to the original pattern, not only will the residents of Scarborough and Doubleview be able to find their way home, once again, but many of the great problems will be overcome as long as the safety of Moorland Street is maintained. The City of Stirling has shown a great deal of wisdom in indicating that it intends to reconsider the whole matter and revert to the original traffic pattern to which everyone had become accustomed.

The other item about which I wish to speak concerns the Scarborough beachfront. Although I am the member for the area and am therefore in a better position perhaps than anyone else to raise the subject in this place, I am speaking more as a Western Australian who is disgusted and dismayed that a beach like Scarborough, which would rank among the world's greatest, has been neglected for so long and has an unsightly stretch of undeveloped commercial property between West Coast Highway and the Esplanade. This area is a haven for larrikins at night and, unfortunately, the daylight only brings more despair because of the dilapidated and rather bedraggled buildings which are not allowed to be touched and have not been touched for over a decade.

Mr Jamieson: Disaster area for Australia.

Mr YOUNG: It is a tragedy when a beach like that can remain virtually undeveloped in this day and age. I understand that the City of Stirling has at least made some sort of contribution to its eventual development by indicating that it hoped the area would be included in an overall plan for the total development of the beachfront. Unfortunately, in this day and age in the light of the present financial situation, it is rather doubtful that any entrepreneur would be likely to carry out a large-scale development of the total beachfront area.

I know that the City of Stirling has made a concession to some extent in respect of an area south of Scarborough Beach Road where a shopping centre has been established and, strangely enough, it has also made a small concession to the TAB by allowing it to establish a shop over the road from the Scarborough Hotel, which is in the area to which I refer. In the main the area can "boast"—if I may use that word—some of the worst aspects of Australian architecture, if we can insult the word "architecture" by thus describing the buildings located there.

Unless we can interest the Government through the Minister for Tourism or the Minister for Local Government, in spurring the City of Stirling to do something about making the beach a magnificent spectacle which would be visited by people of the State and other places, we will be failing in our duty.

I am not saying that the City of Stirling is entirely to blame, but it should take the lead and attempt in some way to encourage development of the area. It should approach the individuals who own the land and encourage them to develop their properties. Whether this be done as part of a large plan or by a series of small plans does not matter. However, unless something is done to improve the situation the area will remain an eyesore which will be to the shame of the City of Stirling and this State.

It seems to me the demand and supply situation is the most obvious way to handle the matter. There is a demand, inasmuch as people want to go to the Scarborough beachfront. They want to enjoy it not only in the daytime but also at night-time. They want facilities available to enable them to enjoy a reasonable day at the beach.

Mr Harman: How many people own the land there?

Mr YOUNG: About 20 or 30.

Mr Harman: What kind of price are they asking?

Mr YOUNG: I do not think they are asking for prices. I think they are asking for the opportunity to develop and improve the land, and it seems to me they have been denied that right for at least a decade.

I will be as brief as possible but I want to stress again to the Government that perhaps the Minister for Tourism or the Minister for Local Government, or both, should take a hand in convincing the City of Stirling—not forcing it but convincing it—that it has a role to play as the leader in overcoming this particular problem. Perhaps one scheme will not work but another will work, and I think the people of this State and visitors should be able to look forward to a better spectacle than that to which they are now treated when they arrive at this particular beach.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Local Government) [5.47 p.m.]: I had some part to play at the beginning of the traffic control cul-de-sac trial, in asking that it be monitored and that full regard be had for the people living in that area. It is interesting to hear the remarks of the member for Scarborough and the comments arising from the meeting of the City of Stirling. The senior officers of the City of Stirling and the member for Scarborough accompanied me when the undertaking was given that the monitoring would be made at regular and frequent intervals and would be reviewed at any time it indicated extreme difficulty for the local people. Obviously, what the member for Scarborough has said is a reflection of that undertaking.

I look forward to the City of Stirling conveying to me the findings and its comments on the future of the trial. It will affect other areas and will also be of interest to the Minister for Traffic. It is of interest to me as the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning. We have had the comments of the member for Scarborough, who has taken a keen interest in the trial. I commend him on his interest and his concern for the local people.

Mr Bertram: This has been developing for 10 years.

Mr RUSHTON: It is a trial which was initiated by the City of Stirling. The suggestion for development of the Scarborough beach is something in which the City of Stirling would obviously take the initiative. I expect before very long I will be visiting the City of Stirling to discuss other matters, and I will raise this issue to find out whether any advance can be made.

If the honourable member or the people in the area have a proposal which they would care to submit to me in writing, I will be pleased to take it up with the City of Stirling to see what can be achieved. It is generally held that Scarborough beach can be regarded with great pride in comparison with other Australian beaches, and if the honourable member has any direct proposals from the people I will take them up with the City of Stirling. If there are no direct proposals I will take up the matter in a general way, remembering that zoning is the prerogative of the City of Stirling, and I will offer my assistance for the benefit of the people who visit the beach.

MEDIBANK

Financial Loss to State: Grievance

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [5.50 p.m.]: My grievance relates to the fact that during the year ended the 30th June, 1976, the State of Western Australia forfeited in cold blood the sum of \$3.9 million as a consequence of certain circumstances relating to the introduction of Medibank. This is a matter which touches very much upon the question of credibility, and we will see why this is so as I proceed. I suppose the credibility rating of the Premier and Fraser would be about equal.

Mr Bryce: Zero.

MR BERTRAM: In the first six months, or thereabouts, after the 13th December last, Fraser showed himself to be unmistakably a person whose word could not be trusted.

Mr Grayden: In your opinion.

Mr O'Connor: Do you think Whitlam's was good?

Mr BERTRAM: We are discussing credibility and no-one has ever challenged Whitlam's credibility, no matter what else they may have challenged.

Several Government members interjected.

Mr BERTRAM: Let us take one item; that is, Fraser's intimation that he would not tamper with or dismantle Medibank, which he has completely wrecked and ruined, and in the process has caused great inconvenience and worry literally to millions of Australians, including members of Parliament. People have expressed to me their concern at Fraser's lack of credibility, and have said, "How can we possibly expect the Indonesians to have much to do with us or take much notice of a Prime Minister when they and millions of others know what millions of Australians believe regarding the lack of credibility of Fraser?"

The SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable member resume his seat? I have tended to overlook recent references but I would be pleased if members would refer to members of Parliament in the Australian set-up as "Mr Fraser" and "Mr Whitlam" and not use just their surnames.

Mr BERTRAM: I think that is a very good ruling, Mr Speaker. I was simply following a precedent set by the Premier on a previous occasion, which I thought you would regard as a good precedent.

The SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable member resume his seat? I think the member for Mt. Hawthorn is reflecting on me in the Chair. I have no recollection of the occasion but I do not like the practice. The member for Mt. Hawthorn will apologise to the Chair.

Mr BERTRAM: Are you requesting me to apologise, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: I ask you to apologise.

Mr BERTRAM: I apologise, Mr Speaker. I certainly was not reflecting on the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr BERTRAM: I was seeking to place on record a matter of fact based on my vivid recollection of the situation which at the time I did not accept or like very much at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member resume his seat? I want the honourable member to apologise, not to qualify his apology. I may have been at fault—I cannot recollect the situation—but I am saying now that this is the form we will use in the future.

Mr BERTRAM: I am afraid, Sir, you have misunderstood me.

The SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Hawthorn may proceed with his speech.

Mr BERTRAM: I believe the Premier's credibility is relevant to this question, as

I have intimated. I believe by this time his credibility would have been made very clear and would have been well established publicly had it not been for the infamous *sub judice* rule which obtains in this place. Credibility in the matter of \$3.9 million is highly relevant and my grievance concerns the \$3.9 million which the people of Western Australia have forfeited in respect of the Medibank agreement during the year ended the 30th June, 1976.

Should one not grieve that that sum represents near enough to eight times the figure which the Premier tells us is the surplus for the State for the year ended the 30th June, 1976? Eight times the alleged surplus is \$3.9 million. The Premier tells us it was not his fault. Of course, that does not take us by surprise. So I recently gave him an opportunity to establish positively to the satisfaction of the Parliament and the people of this State the fact that he was in no way blameworthy.

I invited the Minister representing the Minister for Health, in a question without notice, to table all the communications, papers, and documents relative to the period leading up to and the consummation of the Medibank agreement. The Minister representing the Minister for Health said, fairly enough, "This is a question without notice. I cannot answer it now. Put it on the notice paper", which I did. It having been put on the notice paper, it came up some days later and the answer to the question was postponed. Ultimately the Minister representing the Minister for Health gave the answer, part of which was—

As correspondence and communications between the Commonwealth and State Governments leading up to signing of the Hospitals Agreement were on a confidential basis, I am not prepared to table documents and other information.

That was contained in the answer to question 13 on notice on Tuesday, the 12th October, 1976.

As intimated earlier, I have information that it is the State Government's fault that the \$3.9 million was forfeited. My information is that the Prime Minister and/or the Australian Minister handling Medibank at the relative time gave the Government of this State ample opportunity and notice and pointed out in correspondence, some or all of which was left unanswered by the State, that there would need to be a lot of negotiation and organisation to enable the implementation of the Medibank scheme to proceed smoothly.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has three minutes more.

Mr BERTRAM: Furthermore, my information is that the States with Liberal-Country Party Governments ganged together for the purpose of ensuring the Medibank scheme did not come to pass.

Time is short and I am therefore at a disadvantage in trying to cover all the ground. However, I received today a telegram from Bill Hayden, MP, which states—

Following our discussion by telephone last night I confirm that if present Western Australian Government had been cooperative it could have drawn on Medibank Hospital cost sharing arrangements from 1 July 1975 stop Regrettably your present State Government was more interested in trying to obstruct progress on Medibank agreements and more concerned to score trivial political points as part of general organised Liberal Country Party opposition to Medibank than really settle down to serious effort to bring your State into Hospital cost sharing arrangements from 1 July stop Result of this silly behaviour cost State Several million dollars in lost revenue stop

I say it is \$3.9 million.

Mr O'Neil: That is the most objective statement I have ever heard!

Mr BERTRAM: The telegram continues—

State Government has no one but itself to blame for such a severe and unnecessary penalty being imposed on its hospitals stop I had desperately sought to have all States in by 1 July 1975 but only Labor States prepared to cooperate to achieve this end while all non Labor States by their behaviour showed they were determined to delay and obstruct my efforts stop . . . Bill Hayden MP

Mr Clarko: Who wrote that?

Mr BERTRAM: I should have thought that if it was the Australian Government which had defaulted and had put one over the State Government, the Premier would long since have approached Mr Fraser and his Government and asked him to make good the \$3.9 million which the State has forfeited. There is no evidence that any such approach has been made to date. If one looks at newspapers from around Australia for the relevant period one will see there was an obvious jacking-up of Liberal-Country Party Governments against the Australian Government's implementation of Medibank, and there was not a bona fide attempt to negotiate; as a consequence Western Australian taxpayers had to forfeit \$3.9 million during the last financial year.

MR RIDGE (Kimberley—Minister for Lands) [6.01 p.m.]: It has already been said this afternoon by a member on this side of the House that an interjection made by the member for Mt. Hawthorn did not make much sense. Frankly, the speech that he has just made did not make much sense, either.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr RIDGE: The member for Mt. Hawthorn asked a question in this place yesterday and, with your permission, Sir, I would like to read it out. He asked—

- (1) Since the Premier says it was the fault of the Australian Government that this State lost \$3.9 million under Medibank and I have information to the contrary, . . .

I gather his information is the telegram which he reputedly received from the former Federal Minister for Health today.

Mr Bertram: Why do you gather that?

Mr RIDGE: The member said he received the telegram from Mr Hayden today.

Mr Bertram: I certainly did.

Mr RIDGE: Okay; yesterday when the member asked his question I said if he would be good enough to provide the Minister for Health with the information he already had the Government would be prepared to investigate the situation.

Mr Davies: The Government should know it.

Mr RIDGE: I reiterated on behalf of the Minister for Health that he was not prepared to table the documents relating to Medibank, for a very good reason.

I am at complete variance with the member for Mt. Hawthorn on this particular question; and as I said yesterday the information given by the Premier in answer to question 32 of the 4th August was correct. That information was as follows—

Verbal agreement was reached between the Western Australian Minister for Health (Hon. N. E. Baxter) and Mr Hayden on 25th June, 1975. Again Western Australia indicated its ability to implement the Hospitals Agreement from 1st July, 1975, but Mr Hayden stated the Commonwealth Government could not be ready until 1st August, 1975.

On the basis of that information, it was the former Minister for Health (Mr Hayden) who was responsible for this State losing the amount of \$3.9 million to which the member for Mt. Hawthorn referred; it was not the fault of the present State Government. Therefore I reject his grievance as having no foundation whatsoever.

Mr Davies: A poor old reply.

The SPEAKER: Grievances noted.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Rushton (Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning), and read a first time.

LIQUOR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Neill (Minister for Works), and transmitted to the Council.

ORDERS OF THE DAY NOS. 2 AND 3

Postponement

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Leader of the Opposition) [6.04 p.m.]: I move—

That Orders of the Day Nos. 2 and 3 be postponed.

Question put and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading: Defeated

Debate resumed from the 8th September.

MR TAYLOR (Cockburn) [6.05 p.m.]: This is a measure which was brought before the House way back in May.

Mr O'Neill: The 19th May.

MR TAYLOR: I thank the Deputy Premier; it was on the 19th May, and the Minister replied to it on the 26th May and indicated in general terms that he opposed it.

As I pointed out to the House at the time, the Bill is a short one which seeks to do only one thing; that is, to provide for portability of long service leave for the officers and staff employed by local authorities. Under the Local Government Act there is provision for long service leave, and this leave is enjoyed by local government employees who remain with a local authority for a set period of time which varies between local authorities. The purpose of this Bill which I introduced in May is to allow the transference from one local authority to another of any long service leave to which an employee may be entitled. Without repeating my second reading speech, because I do not want to take up too much time, as I have had a fair innings this week—

Mr Laurance: You must have had a pep pill!

MR TAYLOR: Do not encourage me! Those officers who choose the occupation of local government are entitled at some time during their careers to long service leave. Because of the very nature of their occupation and the fact that there are over 130 local authorities within the State which from time to time advertise for staff as a result of resignations and for other reasons, these officers often transfer from one local authority to another. Local

authorities advertise for staff, knowing very well that staff in the main will come from some other local authority. Local government personnel, not unlike school teachers—although school teachers have only one employer—need to move from one area to another to obtain promotion, to get experience, and to seek other grades. Therefore, it was felt there was a valid case for portability of long service leave.

The Bill is not in the complete form I would have liked it to be in, and certainly it is not in the form I would have arranged had I been the Minister. However, I made it plain to the Minister—and he accepted the point in his second reading speech—that all the Opposition is looking for at this stage is the acceptance of the principle that officers and wages employees of local authorities should have the right to transfer their long service leave entitlements from one employer to another.

We must bear in mind that when an employee leaves a local authority it is at the request or at least the acceptance of another local authority; so that it is not a matter of persons moving willy-nilly; there must be a desire on the part of an alternative employer to employ the person concerned. Hence, although local government is fragmented in terms of individual control, nonetheless through corporate association under either the Local Government Association or the Country Shire Councils' Association there is a close co-operation between authorities, and those employed in local government are employed under the general terms and conditions applicable to all local authorities, and those terms and conditions are generally laid down in the Local Government Act.

Mr P. V. Jones: Does that mean in your view a shire clerk does not work for a particular shire but in fact works for local government *per se*?

Mr Jamieson: That is what occurs in practice, isn't it?

MR TAYLOR: The Minister's question raises a fine point, and I am unable to give him a direct answer.

Mr P. V. Jones: Isn't that the crux of what you are saying?

MR TAYLOR: No. I will give the Minister an answer, but in such a manner that it cannot be misconstrued. I will answer his question by putting a question to him: Does a headmaster who moves to the Narrogin High School work for that high school or the Education Department? If the Minister determines the answer to that he will determine the answer to his own question.

Mr Laurance: You have sidestepped the issue of local government autonomy.

MR TAYLOR: There is autonomy except that it is laid down in the Statute. Local authorities are corporate bodies under an Act of Parliament, and I said previously

that it is only this Parliament which can vary the conditions of local authorities. Those employed by local authorities may work for individual employers, but they work in the main under the conditions laid down in the Local Government Act, which is the responsibility of this Parliament.

Mr Laurance: Do they have long service leave entitlement?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr Laurance: Exactly.

Mr TAYLOR: Incidentally, they also have provision for some form of portability under the Act already.

Mr Laurance: All right.

Mr TAYLOR: The member says "all right", but I am not sure whether he already knew that. What we are talking about in respect of this Bill is not so much the extension of the principle—because it is a slightly different principle—but the overall principle of portability.

Mr Laurance: Why then doesn't the MOA pursue the matter of portability for shire clerks?

Mr TAYLOR: My understanding is that the MOA does just that. In fact, on the information I have been able to gather from the MOA that is the very thing it is looking for. However, I am gratified by the response from members opposite.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Across the Chamber conversation is highly disorderly.

Mr Laurance interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Gascoyne persists with that kind of behaviour I will have to take the matter further. The member for Cockburn.

Mr TAYLOR: Thank you, Sir. I feel the member for Gascoyne sits too close to the member for Scarborough who last night attempted something similar. The only disappointment I have in respect of the interjections is that on four occasions now there has been opportunity for speeches to be made, but regrettably none has been made. Opportunities were available on the night the Bill was introduced, on the night the Minister replied, and again when the member for Maylands spoke; and there was another opportunity tonight when I hesitated before rising to my feet, but no-one rose to speak. Now we have a number of speeches made by interjection.

Mr P. V. Jones: The comparison between a local shire and a local school is completely ridiculous, isn't it?

Mr TAYLOR: I will make my points and then let the matter go to the vote so that those opposite can have recorded their names and how they react to a proposition which has been put forward by the MOA and which is supported, I understand, by the members of that association.

This portability of long service leave is available in full in South Australia without a qualifying period. It is available in Victoria, where it is tied to portability in respect of civil servants, but there is a qualifying period of three years. It is also available in varying degrees in Queensland and New South Wales.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr TAYLOR: Before the tea suspension I was recapitulating a little of the material I put forward with respect to the Bill I submitted to Parliament last May, seeking Parliament's agreement to the portability of long service leave for municipal employees. I guess members have by now already made up their minds one way or another as to how they will treat this legislation.

Mr Rushton: You know the Government is giving it attention and getting responses. It will be attended to in the next session of Parliament.

Mr TAYLOR: Would the Minister repeat that?

Mr Rushton: You have seen from my reply that it appears we are getting returns from all local authorities in the State, and the vote is very close. At the moment there are still a few authorities who have not replied and we will respond when that material is in. We will have negotiations with the association to work out in detail any proposals, and the Government will consider those proposals.

Mr TAYLOR: I thought the Minister said he was going to introduce a Bill in the next session of Parliament.

Mr Rushton: After considering all the proposals.

Mr TAYLOR: The Government has not made up its mind?

Mr Rushton: It has not got all the material in.

Mr TAYLOR: I understood the Minister to say the Government would introduce a Bill, but apparently this is not necessarily the case.

I would sum up by saying that the other States have portability of long service leave as it relates to local government employees, though I know this is not always an acceptable argument to put forward. The latest Acts are in South Australia—which has a comprehensive Act and is a State with a Labor Government—and Victoria. The most recent State which passed such legislation was Victoria—the Victorian Government's Act is numbered 8645 and was assented on the 17th December, 1974. It is a most comprehensive document which on page 594 sets out in detail in section 11 that municipal employees are eligible for portability of long service leave and it does this in a most commendable way. We must bear in mind this is a Liberal Government under no real threat of being defeated, because of the way in which the State is organised and it has in fact allowed portability as between

Government departments, Government instrumentalities, and local government, even to the extent of including Commonwealth departments.

To me this seems to be a far-reaching and very worth-while piece of legislation. It means a person who is an engineer or who has some other special qualification and who may for some reason or another move between the three tiers of government is able to take with him entitlement to long service leave. This principle has been approved by a Liberal Government in Victoria and the Act and the relevant section are available to anyone who would like to peruse them.

Mr Thompson: When I transferred from local government I was only within days of being entitled to long service leave.

Mr TAYLOR: The honourable member should have got hold of his new union, and we may well have declared this place black for an extra couple of days! This raises another interesting point as to whether the previous member for Avon—who transferred from his employer in this place to becoming a member in another place and whose employer is now the Legislative Council—carried with him any entitlements from one employer to the other!

I do not think I will be able to convince members of the necessity for this legislation, but I do say that if a Liberal Government in Victoria can bring down legislation which is similar to this—and if it can be accepted elsewhere—then members on the other side must be very hard to convince if they are not prepared to accept the legislation.

I suggest the major reasons for such legislation having been approved by the other States are not the reasons given by some members on the Government side; that is, that long service leave is an entitlement for long service with one employer. I suggest it is for long service in industry.

I put another point forward, which was the subject of an interjection by the member for Swan, when he pointed out that in many instances where tribunals examined this question it was considered to be a matter of recreational leave which was given very high priority. Surely recreational leave is just as important.

I pointed out in my second reading speech that there were many members in local government who had transferred from one section to another and who after 20 or 30 years' service had never had any long service recreational leave. But that argument apparently means nothing to the Minister in this State.

How many members on the Government side have discussed this issue with representatives employed by local authorities in their electorates? The Minister has made the point over and over again that

he is concerned. I ask other members who will vote on this issue shortly as to how many of them have done this? I see one member raises his hand, I see a second, and a third who apparently has spoken to officers; and I would be happy to know whether or not the people to whom they spoke were in favour of the legislation.

Mr Rushton: Those members from the Government side have made representations.

Mr TAYLOR: Members who have taken the opportunity to do so will have found that the members in their electorates associated with local government have a desire for the portability of long service leave.

Mr Rushton: We are examining the matter.

Mr TAYLOR: In summing up I would like to run through some sections of the Minister's second reading speech. It is something I enjoy doing. A moment or so ago by interjection the Minister said he was examining this matter and that when all the responses were in he would make a decision. In his second reading speech he pointed out just how thorough he was and said on page 1380 of *Hansard* No. 8 for the 25th, 26th and 27th May—

Just a few days after I took office I received letters from the MOA and the Association of Professional Engineers . . .

This was asking whether he would do certain things. A little further on the Minister said—

In the first year I was in office I sampled all the local authorities in the State and the opinions of all the local authorities in the State and brought the subject up whenever practical to do so. There were conflicting views.

That is reasonable enough. At the head of the next column, on page 1380 the Minister said—

In May, 1974, I created a working party to see if agreement could be reached.

That seems reasonable enough. A little further down in the same column the Minister continued, after an interjection—

One month after I took office—on the 7th May, 1974. In September a scheme was prepared and circulated to the Country Shire Councils' Association and the Local Government Association for comment. It went to both associations and was considered and rejected. I then took the issue to the liaison committee we have created with local government to have full consultation with local authorities, and after negotiation with the liaison committee it was agreed the department would prepare a modified scheme and put it up for consideration.

A little further on the Minister said the modified scheme was also rejected. One could say he has certainly done his homework. The Minister also said—

I asked the local government associations to circularise the 138 local authorities and get a consensus of opinion.

So he has had it rejected. He has asked for a modified scheme and had that rejected, and now he goes to 138 local authorities.

Mr Rushton: To the representatives from the local government associations.

Mr TAYLOR: I am quoting from *Hansard* where the Minister said he asked the local government associations to circularise the 138 local authorities and get a consensus of opinion. He added that this was readily agreed to. The Minister further said—

The undertaking I give the member who introduced the Bill—

That is myself—

—is that I will consider the results of that referendum of opinions when they come forward and make a recommendation to Cabinet in due course.

This, despite the fact that the matter had been rejected and rejected in a modified form. That again seems reasonable.

The Minister further said—

At this moment we are sampling the opinions of local authorities on this very question, and that is why I suggest to the honourable member that we do not proceed with his Bill.

That also seems proper, but that is six months ago. To date the Minister appears not to have had any response to the circular in question.

Mr Rushton: There are only a few to come in.

Mr TAYLOR: The Minister is quite right. As I understand the position, at the moment there are approximately 120 returns that have come in from the 138 councils that have been circularised. There are only about 20 to come in. The Minister may indicate the contrary by interjection, but my understanding is that the majority of those who have replied are in favour.

Mr Rushton: My understanding is there is a majority.

Mr TAYLOR: So we have a situation where the Minister in the former Government had written a letter—despite what the Minister sitting opposite has said; and this was shown by the member for Maylands who read it out—indicating that a Labor Government if re-elected would introduce a Bill. The Minister opposite has continued for three years to seek opinions one way or another.

Mr Rushton: Your Minister did it for three years.

Mr TAYLOR: And I am telling the Minister now—which he did not tell the House—that a majority of the 120 of the 138 councils which have replied, have agreed to the proposal.

Mr Rushton: I have given the figures before in this House.

Mr TAYLOR: I cannot locate them. So we have a situation where a Bill appears with a majority of the councils in favour of its provisions and yet, I presume, members will reject it.

Mr Rushton: It has not been completed yet.

Mr TAYLOR: There are still 20 replies to come in. The Minister said it is not complete and therefore he is not ready to introduce a Bill.

I think it is time for the House to make its decision. I would like to conclude by saying that the former Labor Government decided it would introduce this legislation along with the other States, which appeared at that time to be worth while. The Minister opposite has indicated fully in *Hansard* that he has spent three years checking the matter and he has indicated by interjection that the decision is close, but he has not made up his mind.

I indicate the Opposition has made up its mind and when there is a change of Government it will introduce such legislation as one of its priorities.

I again commend the Bill to the House and ask members to support it.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—18

Mr Barnett	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bertram	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bryce	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr May
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Taylor
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr A. B. Tonkin
Mr Fletcher	Mr J. T. Tonkin
Mr Harman	Mr Davies

(Teller)

Noes—22

Mr Blaikie	Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne	Mr Old
Mrs Craig	Mr O'Neill
Mr Crane	Mr Ridge
Mr Grayden	Mr Rushton
Mr Grewar	Mr Sibson
Mr F. V. Jones	Mr Stephens
Mr Laurance	Mr Thompson
Mr McPharlin	Mr Tubby
Mr Mensaros	Mr Watt
Mr Nanovich	Mr Sodeman

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Moller	Sir Charles Court
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Cowan
Mr Bateman	Mr Clarko
Mr McIver	Dr Dadour

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 8th September.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

As to Third Reading

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [7.49 p.m.]: I move—

That leave be granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr T. H. Jones, and passed.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE

Royal Commission Recommendations: Motion

Debate resumed, from the 22nd September, on the following motion by Mr Harman—

That this House accepts the recommendations of the Report of the Royal Commission on the State Government Insurance Office and condemns the failure of the Government to act upon the recommendations.

MR A. R. TONKIN (Morley) [7.50 p.m.]: In this motion we come down to a basic question as to whether the people should have the right to choose the type of insurance they wish to take up with a particular company. You, Mr Speaker, would be aware that some of us in this House are concerned with the whole question of the financial interests of members of Parliament, and over many years we have seen the State Government Insurance Office used in a way that prevents the citizens of this State from having a freedom of choice.

We believe that if, in fact, the interests of members of Parliament were open to scrutiny and if, in fact, the people knew the kinds of interests which members have, the reasons for certain decisions made at various times would be much clearer.

The SGIO is a Western Australian company. We have had expensive and often fruitless campaigns to get the people to buy Western Australian goods; yet when we have the opportunity in this Parliament to allow the people to insure with the SGIO many of us show that we are not sincere, and will not allow Western Australians to trade in the local product.

Mr Coyne: You do not buy Western Australian motorcars, either.

Mr Sibson: Fair comment!

MR A. R. TONKIN: I am not concerned about the interjection of the member for Murchison-Eyre, or the brilliant interjection of the member for Bunbury who said it was fair comment! What seems to have escaped their notice is the freedom of choice which the people should be able to exercise. I would object if this Parliament decided to take away the right of Western Australians to buy Western Australian products if they so choose.

That is what the conservatives have done in this case. They have, in fact, decided to take away the freedom of choice from Western Australians. By his inane interjection that the people here cannot buy Western Australian motorcars either, the member for Murchison-Eyre shows an abysmal ignorance of economics. In this instance we do certainly have the freedom to buy Western Australian cars, if any were produced. Only in that way can there be an analogy between motorcars and insurance.

If someone in this State said, "We believe we can produce a motorcar" and this Parliament prevented Western Australians from buying that motorcar it would be analogous to this Parliament preventing the people from having the freedom of choice to insure with SGIO. Western Australians are forbidden by law to insure with the SGIO in respect of some classes of insurance; yet this is a company which is owned by Western Australians.

Of the life assurance companies, less than half are Australian owned in totality. It is claimed that life assurance offices are mutual companies. We know that this word "mutual" hides a multitude of sins. We know that some people have had life assurance policies for well over 20 years. On deciding to surrender their policies they find they receive far less than they have paid in. In spite of the ravages of inflation and the fact that the companies concerned had the use of the funds of those people for all those years, that is the position. It is quite clear that a rot has been manipulated in this State.

Mr Coyne: You do not know what you are talking about.

MR A. R. TONKIN: Why does not the honourable member get up and make a speech?

Mr Bertram: He is not permitted to.

MR A. R. TONKIN: If the honourable member says I do not know what I am talking about, meaning that I have not had much experience in selling insurance to fellow Western Australians, then he is quite right; but that means I have not been a fast talker telling half truths.

Mr Coyne: You have been a fast talker to the school children all your life.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I would point out to the honourable member that before I became a school teacher I had 26 jobs. Would you, Mr Speaker, permit me to go through the catalogue of those jobs which I held before I became a school teacher, so that I can answer the interjection?

The SPEAKER: It would be preferable for you to do that at some other time.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have not been a school teacher for all of my life. Does the interjection of the member for Murchison-Eyre not underline his pathetic lack of ability to discern a principle? What he is indulging in is an attack on a personality. I have risen to make my contribution to the debate, but instead of dealing with my arguments members opposite attack me personally. I am quite prepared to stand up and debate a principle, but as soon as we start to do that some members opposite become very thin-skinned and resort to personality attacks, because they realise their own principles are not being upheld.

The principle which the Liberal Party professes to espouse is the principle of freedom of choice. In fact, the word "liberal" comes from the word "liberty", which suggests that the people should be allowed to have the opportunity to have freedom of choice. A great lie is being perpetrated by the Liberal Party as it does not believe in the freedom of the individual, because if it did it would not interfere with the freedom of the people to insure with the company of their choice.

Some people have come to me and said, "I want to insure my house with the SGIO, because I have insured my motor-car with it. I have received a quote for the insurance I desire. Because of the special franchise allowed the premium would be much lower if I insured with the SGIO. Why cannot I insure with that company?" The reason is that this Parliament has taken away that freedom of choice from the people of Western Australia.

Under the motion we are not seeking to force a single person to insure with the SGIO; all we want to introduce is freedom for the people to insure with the company of their choice.

Of the life assurance companies that are totally Australian-owned—and I have indicated many are not—over half are administered from New South Wales; approximately one-third are administered from Victoria; but not one is administered from Western Australia. So, we see a Western Australian company, the SGIO, being victimised.

The Minister who is in charge of the SGIO is actually plotting the company's downfall, because he says, "We will not agree to the SGIO making a move into

the more profitable areas of insurance." In other words, the people, the taxpayers, and what some people regard as the mugs, are permitted to insure with the SGIO in areas where it makes a loss, such as in motor vehicle insurance, but they are not permitted to insure in areas where the company could make a profit, such as in the fields of fire and general insurance.

If on any occasion a profit is made by the SGIO, despite the enormous handicaps under which it labours, that becomes a direct grant to the Treasury. A few years ago there was a direct grant of \$500 000 to the Treasury, and that represented \$500 000 more for the provision of schools, roads, and hospitals.

It is this Liberal Government which is refusing to bring about a reduction of taxes, and refusing the SGIO the right to trade in the profitable areas of insurance. All that money was not paid to the Commonwealth; it was paid direct into the State Treasury; yet the same Government will talk about the State rights. It is turning its back on a very important area of State revenue over which the Commonwealth has no control.

In a period of 10 years in New South Wales, under both Labor and conservative Governments, a far more liberal and enlightened franchise was adopted; and in 10 years over \$10 million was paid by the insurance office of that State into the Treasury.

Queensland is another State where the State office has a wider franchise than has the SGIO in this State. In a period of six years almost \$4 million was paid by that office into the State Treasury. I repeat that such funds are available for the provision of schools, roads, and hospitals.

Most shareholders of insurance companies trading in Western Australia are not even Australians. Most of them have no loyalty to this country; and most of them know only one flag—the flag of money. The only thing for which they have respect is profit. So, they have no concern for the welfare of Australia, because they are merely investing their money where it will make the maximum profit.

So, by forcing business into the hands of foreign-owned insurance companies it is quite clear where the Liberal Party stands with regard to the ownership of Australian assets. The Liberal Party wants the ownership of Australian assets—and, therefore, Australia—to be in the hands of foreign interests. The Liberal Party has no loyalty whatsoever to the Australian way of life. We are told we should have a genuinely competitive system, but we do not have a competitive system amongst the insurance companies. We have tariff companies and step by step they keep together. They do not compete in the true sense. Their premiums move together,

I have no doubt that one reason motor vehicle insurance is so reasonable is the SGIO is in that field. If the SGIO were eliminated from that field there would be an enormously quick escalation of premiums and motor vehicle insurance would become lucrative in the same way as fire and general insurance is lucrative.

Some ludicrous arguments have been put forward over the years with respect to the SGIO. It was claimed some years ago that if the SGIO were allowed to insure generally in this State the State would be ruined. It was claimed that if Fremantle was wiped out by an earthquake the State would be ruined. What the member for Nedlands had to say on that occasion indicated that he knows nothing about the simple fact of reinsurance. Fremantle could be wiped out by an earthquake, by an atomic bomb, or razed by fire, but it does not seem to be understood that 40 to 50 per cent of reinsurance is held overseas. A maximum amount of \$60 000 or 5 per cent is held on any one risk. That is the kind of safeguard adopted by all insurance companies. So to say it would be dangerous to allow the SGIO to insure generally, because Fremantle might be wiped out by an earthquake or a tidal wave, shows great ignorance, or a deliberate distortion of the facts.

It has been said very often that if the SGIO went into insurance in other areas it would kill the private companies. That has not been shown to be the case in New South Wales or Queensland where the State Government Insurance Offices are permitted to insure generally. It did not happen in the case of banking when King O'Malley had to battle against the argument that the formation of the Commonwealth Bank would destroy the private banks.

Under the proposal put forward from this side of the House, the State Government Insurance Office would charge normal rates and pay fire brigade levies, stamp duty, and commission. Of course, it would pay tax which would not go to the Commonwealth but to the State and, therefore, it would prove to be a very big anti-centralist measure.

It has been argued by people employed in the insurance industry that fewer jobs would be available. That has not occurred in the other States. In fact, if the SGIO were able to reinsure there would be an increase in job opportunities, and an increase in the earning of overseas funds.

The insurance industry in Australia is pathetically backward with regard to reinsurance. Reinsurance is a very lucrative source of earning overseas funds, which this State has not even tried to tackle.

As I said previously, the SGIO is allowed to trade in areas where it makes a loss, whereas it is not permitted to trade in areas where it can make a profit.

I would like to quote some figures to illustrate the situation which exists with respect to motor vehicle insurance—the area in which the SGIO is permitted to trade. It is allowed to trade in that area because there are no profits to be made. In the case of motor vehicle insurance the ratio of claims over premiums has never been below 70 per cent and sometimes it has been over 100 per cent. That is the ratio between claims and premiums with regard to motor vehicle insurance. Some years ago I saw some figures and the ratio of claims over premiums was 104.44 per cent. The major reason for those figures is that there is genuine competition between the two major reputable companies—the SGIO, and the RAC.

In the case of fire insurance, the ratio of claims over premiums amounts to something over 28 to 33 per cent. That is an enormously profitable area which the SGIO is not permitted to enter for that very reason. With respect to householders' comprehensive insurance, the ratio between claims and premiums is 25 per cent.

Mr Skidmore: A great rip-off.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: As the member for Swan so rightly states, a great rip-off. The reason is that there is not adequate competition from reputable companies such as the SGIO.

We believe there is grave doubt indeed with regard to the motives of the Government in voting the way it has so consistently done in relation to the SGIO. We are here to govern this State for the benefit of all citizens. Surely if the SGIO were permitted to insure in a profitable field, its profits would go to the revenue of this State and would contribute to essential needs such as schools, hospitals, and roads. The profit from the SGIO would lead to a reduction in charges and taxes at the State level. Surely that is a compelling argument for extending the franchise of the SGIO. Those people who have risked their capital in unprofitable areas such as the railways—where it is quite clear they will face a loss—would receive some reward as a result of the SGIO entering the profitable area of insurance. That would be of great benefit to education, just to mention one aspect.

However, this Government obdurately sets itself against such competition, and against an opportunity for people to make a profit. As a consequence, charges and taxes have increased greatly. That has been as a result of the direct policy of this Government.

What is worse, even when the present Government loses favour it is still able to prevent the policies chosen by the people from being put into effect because of the control it retains in the Legislative Council.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [8.10 p.m.]: I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Maylands, and I do so because to extend the franchise of the SGIO would be diametrically to oppose the philosophy espoused from this side of the House. It is a black and white situation, as far as I see it; there can be no half measures in this debate.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Why do you not abolish the Rural and Industries Bank?

Mr LAURANCE: As far as I can judge the situation, members opposite either want private enterprise to do the job or they want the industry nationalised.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Taylor: Your situation is neither black nor white; it is grey.

Mr LAURANCE: Not with regard to this matter.

Mr Taylor: Yes it is.

Mr LAURANCE: The report of the Royal Commission refers to the book *Nationalized Industry and Public Ownership*. The commissioner stated quite frankly he favoured a system of nationalisation and public ownership.

Mr Bertram: What of?

Mr LAURANCE: Of major enterprises—of public utilities.

Mr Bertram: So does your Government.

Mr LAURANCE: The Royal Commission stated—

... it provides facilities which are reasonably adequate to meet the public needs at prices which are also reasonable and which will enable the undertaking to pay its way.

If that test is appropriate, and I think respectfully that it is—

I think respectfully that it is not. To continue—

—the Office would be obliged to avoid making a loss but would not be obliged to make a substantial profit.

Even though the Royal Commission supports public ownership of public utilities I consider it has never been an efficient way for the community to do business. I believe that in a service-oriented industry such as insurance, public ownership will never be efficient. The taxpayers of this State cannot possibly win from a situation such as that proposed by the Opposition; there is no possible way for them to win.

It is possible for two events to result. First of all, the move to allow the SGIO to enter into general insurance might be successful. If the franchise were extended, and the move was successful, the private sector would be starved for business. Funds would be redirected from the private sector to the Government sector.

Mr Jamieson: Has that happened in New South Wales?

Mr LAURANCE: Yes. In a situation I have outlined the Government would become "Big Brother". My philosophy tells me that would be bad for the taxpayers of this State. It has been indicated in this country that the people do not want that system.

The alternative result is that the change could be unsuccessful, and what would happen then? The taxpayers would be called upon to foot the bill with regard to the deficit. Who will fund that deficit?

Mr Harman: The taxpayers.

Mr LAURANCE: That is right.

Mr Bertram: Who funds the railways deficit?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: If the proposal is successful, the taxpayers will lose because they will have lost control.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

Mr LAURANCE: In my opinion, if the member for Maylands had his way the initial stages of his proposal would require the Government to give sufficient backing for financial stability. Where would those funds come from?

Mr Taylor: Those funds were not required in New South Wales.

Mr LAURANCE: Those funds would come from the taxpayers of Western Australia. So, in the initial stages, the taxpayer would have to foot the bill.

Mr Skidmore: They are not required to.

Mr LAURANCE: Let us see what happens in the long term. Initially the taxpayer supports the funding of the office. No doubt in the long term the office would be successful; it would build up its own reserves and so it would not then call on the taxpayer to foot any deficit.

Mr Skidmore: Then they can return the funds.

Mr LAURANCE: No, if the honourable member understood the operation of an insurance company he would know that the funds would be invested.

Mr Skidmore: Don't tell me you do!

Mr LAURANCE: I thought the honourable member shared the abysmal ignorance displayed by the Opposition member who has just resumed his seat.

Mr Bryce: Give us a lesson about Queensland.

Mr LAURANCE: I am coming to that. If the office builds up considerable reserves, and if it is a prudent insurance office, it will invest those reserves. I would like members to consider the political implications on the economy of the direction of those funds.

Mr Skidmore: You believe Governments do not invest money?

Mr LAURANCE: Thus we would have a giant Government octopus, buying up everything, and starving the private sector of investment capital. That is exactly what has happened in Brisbane. The Government insurance office completely overshadows the insurance industry in that State.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: When are you coming to the SGIO?

Mr Young: You must be making a good speech because nobody will let you get on with it.

Mr LAURANCE: As I had a particular request from a member opposite, I will discuss the example of the insurance office in Queensland.

Mr Bryce: And New South Wales.

Mr LAURANCE: Queensland is a better example from my point of view. I would like to quote from some material I have in my possession. First of all I will refer to *The Courier-Mail* of June, 1976.

Mr Bryce: What a great source!

Mr LAURANCE: *The Courier-Mail* carried this headline, "Call for inquiry on SGIO".

Mr Bryce: Straight from the editor of *The Courier-Mail*!

Mr LAURANCE: The article talks about the National Party's concern about the SGIO in Queensland. It reads—

The party is concerned particularly about some of the investment activities of the S.G.I.O.

Mr Skidmore: What are they doing—earning too much money?

Mr LAURANCE: To continue—

It was felt the S.G.I.O. should not be speculating in real estate, and that it should not be acquiring an irrigation farm on the Darling Downs.

Mr Skidmore: Don't you believe in private enterprise?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is a running fire of interjections and I want it stopped.

Mr LAURANCE: Governments do not make a profit. The article continues—

It had departed a long way from its original role of dealing basically in insurance and workers' compensation and using surplus funds to provide loans at a concessional rate to other Government and semi-Government institutions.

So it has departed a long way from the role it was given.

Mr Jamieson: What is wrong with that?

Mr LAURANCE: I think everything is wrong with it. I would like to go on to another quote which appears in *The Australian Financial Review* of the 9th June, 1976. This article refers to the investments of the SGIO of Queensland.

Mr Bryce: John Forrest would have been proud of you.

Mr LAURANCE: The article talks about the initial investments in the early days of the State insurance office, and I quote—

Compare that initial 7-storey block of offices with its latest planned development, a satellite city of 35 000 people at Caboolture.

When the scheme was announced in December, 1974, the design was planned for 10 000 houses at a total cost of \$400 million.

That is the investment of the SGIO in Queensland. To continue—

It is this spectacular growth, specifically in the field of public investment, over the last decade that has caused concern over the SGIO's growing wealth and, possibly, its growing power.

In *The Australian Financial Review* of Wednesday, the 2nd June, we see the headline, "Queensland's financial octopus".

Mr Bryce: Sounds very emotive.

Mr LAURANCE: The article reads—

After years of quiet wheeling and dealing, Queensland's biggest investment machine—the State Government Insurance Office—is suddenly under pressure to reveal just what it owns and where its millions go.

The National Party State president, Mr Bob Sparkes, has called the SGIO "a financial octopus with its many fingers in many pies".

That is what the Opposition wants to set up.

Mr Skidmore: No, it is already set up.

Mr LAURANCE: I would like to quote from the 1974 annual report of the SGIO of Queensland. I cannot have this illustration recorded in *Hansard*, but for the interest of members, the annual report has a full page insert showing the central business district of Brisbane, and the overlay on this insert shows the buildings owned by the SGIO. Members can see that the SGIO owns the city of Brisbane, and members opposite tell me that that is not nationalising industry!

Mr Bryce: Socialist utopia!

Mr LAURANCE: This is nationalising industry, and the Labor Government set it up.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member must not throw things in the Chamber.

Mr LAURANCE: I am sorry, Sir, I was just complying with the request of the member opposite.

The SPEAKER: I understand.

Mr Skidmore: Sent by the "Gascoyne Male".

Mr LAURANCE: That insert should point out to the mover of the motion just how much of the city of Brisbane has been

swallowed up by the SGIO. I am sure the people of Perth do not want that to happen here.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Who swallowed up the city of Perth?

Mr LAURANCE: If the honourable member keeps on going the way he is going, there is every danger that he will.

I would like to refer to some of the general comments in the report of the Royal Commission. The mover of the motion mentioned three aspects of this report, one of which was profitability. It is ludicrous to talk about the profitability of a Government enterprise, because a Government enterprise can be manipulated one way or another. There is no such thing as profitability of a Government enterprise.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: It is purely a manipulation of the figures. One can make the balance go whichever way one wants it to.

Mr Bertram: Oh, don't give us that. Are you attacking the State Auditor-General now?

Mr LAURANCE: We have nothing to compare it with.

Mr Bertram: Nonsense.

Mr LAURANCE: There is no such thing as profitability of a Government enterprise, so it is ludicrous for the Royal Commission to refer to profitability. If one wishes to have a Government enterprise show a profit, one can do that, and if one wishes it to show a loss, one can do that.

Mr Bertram: Can't many businesses do that?

Mr LAURANCE: No, obviously not.

Mr Bertram: Nonsense.

Mr LAURANCE: As the honourable member knows, the Government sets the ground rules. If the Government is the umpire in the game, how can it be an effective player? It cannot.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: It is not an umpire.

Mr LAURANCE: The Government is the umpire.

Mr Skidmore: You are allowed to make any interjections you wish.

Mr LAURANCE: I wish to go to the second point in the report raised by the mover of the motion. The honourable member referred to service, and he talked about the fact that the SGIO would go into new areas. On page 22 of the report we see that in a submission from the private insurers they say their service is efficient, comprehensive, and State-wide. I agree with that statement; the private insurance companies are efficient, comprehensive, and State-wide. However, the report continues—

The case for the Office, however, is not so much that it is, or will be, more efficient than the private insurers but

rather that the Office is concerned with the 'needs and desires' of the public whereas the private insurers 'are very conservative and concerned with their own financial standing'—

That is just so much rubbish. Of course in an industry which has to be as competitive as our insurance industry, the companies must be oriented to the desires of the public, otherwise they do not continue to exist—they go out the door backwards.

Mr Skidmore: Leaving the unprofitable insurance to the SGIO.

Mr LAURANCE: If the private insurers will not go into these areas, I ask: Are they profitable areas?

Mr Skidmore: Of course they are not.

Mr LAURANCE: I submit to members that if they are profitable the private insurers will be there. If they are not profitable and they are new areas, the public has a right to service in these areas, as the Royal Commission points out.

Mr Skidmore: New areas, but what about the old areas?

Mr LAURANCE: If they are not profitable, who is to foot the bill for that? Again I submit to the House that the taxpayers will foot the bill for insurance in new areas that the present industry is not servicing.

Mr Skidmore: What about the old areas such as motorcar insurance?

Mr LAURANCE: Those statements in the report of the Royal Commission denigrate the excellent service provided already by private companies. Let us look at the situation with private insurance companies today. Insurance agents are available all over the countryside at all hours of the day. In fact, such agents are only a phone call away. What about the SGIO? I am not trying to downgrade the office—

Mr Skidmore: You could fool me!

Mr LAURANCE: At best the SGIO could provide a Government service. The best we could hope for is a very pleasant counter service. I am saying that the industry already provides a very competent service, in fact a public-oriented, State-wide, 24-hour-a-day service.

Mr Bertram: Did the Liberal Party give evidence before the Royal Commission on this?

Mr LAURANCE: I ask members of the House: Are there any complaints about the service being offered by the private insurers?

Mr Bertram: Thousands.

Mr LAURANCE: The answer is, "No".

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: Do not take my word for it.

Mr Bertram: I am not going to.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: I wish the member for Morley would repeat the statement he made.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: I will give you instances of complaints.

Mr LAURANCE: I want to have his statement recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Do you want me to list these cases?

Mr LAURANCE: I will repeat the statement for the honourable member. He said, "They are the biggest crooks there are".

Mr A. R. Tonkin: That is right.

Mr LAURANCE: I thought that was what the honourable member said, and I am very pleased to see it is now on the record.

Mr Skidmore: Gee, that is good stuff!

Mr LAURANCE: Do not take my word for it. Members opposite may like to look at the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner—the Ombudsman—as it bears out my statement.

Mr Hartrey: What statement?

Mr LAURANCE: If members refer to the annual report of the Bureau of Consumer Affairs they will see that it also bears out my statement. Complaints about insurance matters are a long way down the list. Most complaints to the Bureau of Consumer Affairs are about motor vehicle repair claims.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Like John Green motors!

Mr LAURANCE: And the number of other complaints is negligible. From this report we see that the public generally are very satisfied with the service provided.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Oh, come on, I have dozens of cases in my office!

Mr LAURANCE: Obviously the member for Morley has not read the report. Because the member is showing no signs of endeavouring to obtain the report, and he seems to disbelieve me, I will give him a summary of the complaints in the report for 1974-75. No-one speaks to his constituents more than I do, I can assure him. In the summary of complaints we find the following figures—

Building and Real Estate	1 182
Miscellaneous	900
Motor Vehicles	855

Mr A. R. Tonkin: What is included in "Miscellaneous"?

Mr LAURANCE: No insurance complaints! It continues—

Household Appliances	416
Furniture and Floor Coverings	293

Mr Bertram: What page are you quoting from?

Mr LAURANCE: It continues—

Other Services	326
Insurance	143

The item "Insurance" includes 76 for motor vehicle insurance, most of which would have been with the SGIO.

Mr Taylor: Which report is this?

Mr A. R. Tonkin: I have dozens of cases listed at my office, and I will detail them and name the insurance brokers.

Mr LAURANCE: Once again it is laughable for members opposite to talk about the service that will be provided by a Government office as against the marvellous service already being offered to the public.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Marvellous!

Mr LAURANCE: I want to go now into the question of service. The Royal Commission talked about a supermarket situation, and the previous speaker mentioned this also. As I say, I do not think he had a good grasp of the subject, but the mover of the motion also talked about the supermarket situation. Apart from the fact that there are some 80-odd companies, private insurers, providing very competitive service, the mover of the motion said that we should have the situation, particularly in the life assurance field, where consumers can walk up to the counter to buy their life assurance.

This statement illustrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the whole insurance industry, and as I have no reason to believe that members opposite would subscribe to that view, I will have to explain it.

Mr Bertram: What is a fundamental misunderstanding?

Mr LAURANCE: The Royal Commission does not understand the difference between the general insurance industry and the life assurance industry. The general insurance industry can be carried on in a supermarket fashion. Virtually, policies can be put on the shelf and people can come in to buy them, although not because they want to buy the policies but because of the financial institutions demand that people must insure an asset which they are backing financially. The great majority of the community do not make up their own minds. Because they have borrowed money to buy a house or a car, the financial institution with an interest in that asset makes up its mind about insurance.

Mr Skidmore: And nominates the insurance company they will insure with.

Mr LAURANCE: The member is entering into an argument—

Mr Skidmore: You do not want to enter into an argument.

Mr T. H. Jones: Do not sidetrack him.

Mr LAURANCE: The member for Swan is trying to do that. We are reaching the situation where the whole economic climate demands that people have general

insurance. Life assurance has never been bought off a shelf, and it never could be.

Mr Watt: It never could be.

Mr LAURANCE: It has been tried. Many companies in various countries of the world, and particularly in the United States, have tried to market life assurance off the shelf in a supermarket-type fashion, without any agents. All the attempts have failed.

Mr Hartrey: Why does that matter?

Mr LAURANCE: The member for Boulder-Dundas asked: why does that matter? It matters because it is fundamental to the support of our whole economy.

Mr Hartrey: Why does it matter? Why could we not have a State Government life assurance office doing exactly the same as all these other companies?

Mr LAURANCE: For one reason: I believe the insurance industry is very important to our economy and every person in it. Members opposite cannot tell me the day I am going to die, or the day they are going to die; no-one knows.

Mr Skidmore: Why do you want to worry about insuring for that?

Mr LAURANCE: That is a beautiful interjection!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections. Members will restrain themselves.

Mr LAURANCE: Any person who does not believe in life assurance deserves to die just once without any.

Mr Bryce: What a vicious man!

Mr LAURANCE: No, I am not.

Mr Harman: What about superannuation?

Mr LAURANCE: That is a form of insurance; it does not matter by which means one insures one's life.

Mr Harman: I am glad you agree.

Mr LAURANCE: This is very applicable to this issue; it is a fundamental issue when dealing with people and it is because I care about people that I make that statement.

Mr Bryce: You have just been advancing a case for profit versus the people, and you now have the temerity to say that you care about people. That is the greatest humbug ever heard in this House.

Mr LAURANCE: I will answer that interjection in a few moments. If the member for Morley who was the previous speaker to this motion really felt that way about the insurance industry, I feel sorry for him.

Mr Bertram: I would not feel sorry for him.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: I should like to move on to another point covered by the mover of the motion; namely, that of Western Australian ownership. He made great play about this form of control, and made particular reference to foreign companies, using that as an argument to establish a Government, public enterprise—

Mr Hartrey: No, a publicly-owned enterprise.

Mr LAURANCE: —which would be far more acceptable—he said—to the people of this State than a company with foreign interests.

Mr Bertram: It is just like the R & I Bank.

Mr LAURANCE: However, the member for Maylands did not give the true picture. Quite frankly, I took exception to the way he made his point. I listened to him very carefully, and heard him accuse members on this side, particularly those who were interjecting at the time, of supporting foreign ownership. I will endeavour to give the true picture.

Mr Skidmore interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swan will come to order.

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The insurance industry largely is represented by companies known as mutual companies; this point has been made by previous speakers in the debate. That means the companies are owned by the policyholders, and they make the decisions, not the Treasury. Members opposite appear to be saying that people do not have much choice in the decisions of life assurance companies, but they certainly have far more choice than they would have in the decisions taken by the Treasury of a Government.

Also, in regard to Western Australian ownership, the way these companies spend their money is very carefully controlled under the Commonwealth 30:20 legislation. We direct where those companies are to spend their money throughout Australia.

Mr Jamieson: Not where it is going to be spent but in certain spheres.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, in particular areas.

Mr Jamieson: That is greatly different.

Mr LAURANCE: For instance, the Government controls how much it will spend in Western Australia, and the policyholders may decide that a certain amount of money—

Mr Jamieson: That will be the day when there is a meeting of policyholders!

Mr LAURANCE: That will be the day when the public has a say in the operations of the Treasury; it is a similar analogy.

I should like to refer to a fundamental issue which the member for Maylands chose not to mention. He stated that foreign companies were in competition with

Australian-owned companies. He conveniently forgot to mention that in other countries Australian insurance companies are in competition with their local companies.

Mr Taylor: Rubbish!

Mr LAURANCE: The member for Cockburn says, "Rubbish!" I should like to give one example from my own experience.

Mr Bertram: Do not give one example; give us hundreds.

Mr LAURANCE: I was very fortunate to have the experience for three years of being an executive of an insurance company in this State; it was a company with world-wide affiliations.

Mr Harman: I am not at all surprised to hear that.

Mr Bertram: Could you give us a definition of the word "executive"?

Mr LAURANCE: It gave me a great appreciation of the industry. The member for Ascot is interjecting. He spent his life in the grip of the chalk, and now is a member of this place; unlike him, I chose to broaden my experience before coming here. It was a wonderful experience with a highly ethical, marvellous company.

I do not intend to name the company but the interesting situation was that while I worked as an executive for the company it occupied the position of being the sixth largest insurance office in Australia; and that was a British-based company. The point I should like to make is that the largest insurance office in Australia—one which overshadows the rest of the private insurance industry—happened at the time to be the sixth largest insurance office in the United Kingdom. So, here we have two situations which are directly opposite; is the honourable member going to say that this British-based company should pull out of Australia because it is not owned by Australians? Is he then going to say that Australia's largest privately-owned mutual company should pull out of Britain?

Mr Bertram: That is one example; give us another 100.

Mr LAURANCE: I think that is a brilliant example, and the situation to which I referred has a lot to recommend it.

Mr Harman: I just want a Western Australian-owned life assurance company.

Mr Sibson: It would have Moscow overtones.

Mr LAURANCE: I said to the honourable member that if he cared to launch a prospectus for a private company in this State, perhaps I would support it. The report continues at page 22 as follows—

... the Office is concerned with the 'needs and desires' of the public whereas the private insurers 'are very conservative and concerned with their own financial standing' ...

The insurance offices must invest to their best advantage for all their clients who, in most cases, are their very owners by virtue of the fact they are policyholders in mutual companies.

But there is here another important and fundamental fact of economics. I understand the member who moved the motion is a student of economics. He should know there is a great difference between the economics of the insurance industry and the economics applying to other financial industries because it is of paramount importance that the insurance industry meets its commitments. It cannot maximise the return on its investable funds because it must balance that investment with stability.

The commitments of the insurance industry are long-term. Any person can draw on his policy tomorrow, or he may not require to draw on that policy for 30 years, and the company must be able to meet such demands. In fact, the policyholder is given a guaranteed assurance that the company will pay out at any time. There is an old cliché in the insurance industry that it is not the return on the money which counts; it is the return of the money. To prove the validity of that point, ask any widow. She is not going to complain about the rate of interest she receives; it is important that the money is there.

Mr Bryce: Do you happen to have any policies in your pocket at the moment? You will have us all signing them.

Mr LAURANCE: This is a very important point for the whole fabric of our society. Members must appreciate the investing attitude of insurance companies.

Mr Hartrey: How does all this condemn a State Government life assurance office?

Mr LAURANCE: I now turn to the next point made by the mover of the motion; namely, competitiveness in the industry. The member for Morley who last spoke on the motion talked about the necessity for free choice. Goodness me, there are 70 member companies of the Australian Insurance Council operating in Western Australia and 75 companies in total now operating, and it could not possibly be said that is not a competitive situation; in fact, it would be difficult to get a more competitive situation. There are 28 life assurance companies operating in this State.

Mr Bryce: With one gentlemen's agreement.

Mr LAURANCE: It is ludicrous for members opposite to say we should inject competitiveness into the industry.

Mr Harman: It is not ludicrous; it is true.

Mr LAURANCE: The mover of the motion said he wanted the Government insurance office to compete with mutual companies. I submit to the House that

mutual companies are the most successful co-operative venture in man's history. Now members opposite want the public, in the form of the Government, to take over that industry.

Mr Bertram: No, we do not; we do not say that at all.

Mr LAURANCE: It has happened anyway in Queensland; the colleagues of members opposite started it and could not stop it. The private insurance industry is a co-operative venture which must be self-supporting, and cannot be compared to a Government insurance office which has taxpayers' funds as a backstop.

Mr Harman: But that is not the case.

Mr LAURANCE: To support my point, I refer again to the report, which states that a Government office should trade fairly, meeting all taxes and imposts, and should pretend to be just another private insurer. But these are never disclosed, so how does the public know?

Mr Bertram: Is "pretend" the actual word used by the commissioner?

Mr LAURANCE: I put it to members opposite that the State Government Insurance Office operating in the field of life assurance would not be subject to the same requirements as mutual companies, and the public would have no knowledge of just what amounts were being charged the Government insurance office for various services, or how much of the taxpayers' funds was being used to support the company.

I ask members to consider these points very carefully: In the past, the SGIO has had material printed by the Government Printing Office. Has it been charged at the commercial rates? It has obtained legal advice from the Crown Law Department.

Mr Hartrey: Not very good advice, either.

Mr LAURANCE: That may be the case. Has it ever been charged at the commercial rate?

Mr Taylor: Yes, three years ago; it was charged \$46 000. I am reading from *Hansard* now, which is what you should have done before you rose to speak.

Mr LAURANCE: Be that as it may, does the honourable member know what a private insurance office would have to pay for the same advice?

Mr Taylor: It was paid at Public Service rates. I was the Minister of the day. An officer was on loan from the Crown Law Department, and the service was paid for at Government rates.

Mr LAURANCE: At local government rates?

Mr Taylor: No, they paid at Public Service rates for a lawyer of that qualification and grade.

Mr LAURANCE: So, in some cases it may work. The member for Cockburn gave an instance, but I am saying the public could never really be aware—

Mr Jamieson: Do your homework!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I should like to continue. The public has no way of ensuring such an enterprise is acting in the way it should, and is a going concern. Members opposite want it to act like the other private insurance companies; they want it to be the 81st private insurer in this State. However, they would not know whether that is the case once such a Government insurance office is operating.

I should like to refer to some other points which I believe would amount to unfair trading on the part of the Government office. For a start, the Government office would have immediate entrée to all Government departments and semi-Government instrumentalities. That must be the situation, and would amount to unfair trading.

Mr Taylor: Why does the member say that? Can he name one that is directed in such a way?

Mr LAURANCE: We would have the situation where every public servant could become an agent for the State Government life assurance office.

Mr Taylor: Can you name one instance where such a direction is made?

Mr LAURANCE: I should like to press on with my speech.

Mr Taylor: You cannot answer the interjection.

Mr LAURANCE: It stands to reason this would be the case.

Mr Taylor: I was Minister for Local Government, and I know what you are saying is nonsense.

Mr LAURANCE: I will give the member for Cockburn some examples to support my case. This is exactly what has happened in Brisbane, where at one stage every policeman received a commission for introducing a new client to the Government insurance office. Is this what members opposite want? Do they want a situation where a policeman could knock on a householder's door and say, "Here is a summons but if you take out an insurance policy, perhaps we could forget about it"? That is exactly what has happened in Queensland. Members opposite want every public servant to be an agent for a State Government life assurance office.

Mr Skidmore: No, you are saying it. I should like to place on record very firmly that I am not saying it.

Mr LAURANCE: Members opposite want to create this situation.

Mr Skidmore: I wish to make it quite clear that I do not wish to create such a situation.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: I should like to give the member for Cockburn another example from the Queensland experience. At every place where a person can pay his driver's licence in Queensland there are on adjoining desks signs advertising the State Government Insurance Office motor vehicle insurance, and there are forms available for that purpose.

Mr Taylor: Does he know that that also happens in this State, which will help his case?

Mr LAURANCE: It certainly happened in Queensland.

Mr Taylor: I am telling you something you did not know.

Mr LAURANCE: When the member was the responsible Minister he said we should prevent that.

Mr Taylor: This is from a member who knows a little more than you do to help your case, because you do not know your case.

Mr LAURANCE: I have instanced the case in Queensland.

Mr Taylor: We will have a look at it in a moment.

Mr LAURANCE: The franchise in Queensland was extended and I am telling the House about the things which are undesirable.

Mr Taylor: We will not make the same mistakes as the banana benders.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the member for Gascoyne that he speaks more through the Chair.

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In Queensland the situation is that the Government office is poked under the noses of people who go to pay their driving licence fees when it promotes its motor vehicle insurance.

I shall conclude on the point of unfair trading. The member for Cockburn has already mentioned that there is unfair trading. He has told me this is a situation of which I am unaware. But I am aware of another situation, about which members can make up their own minds, whereby people insuring their houses with the SGIO, which they are allowed to do if they obtain private finance through the R & I Bank and a number of other avenues, do not pay any fire brigade levy in the premium. I have asked questions about this matter in the House previously. An amount of \$2 million went to that fund last year and not a single cent of fire brigade levy was paid out of it.

Mr Taylor: We will check it out within a day or two.

Mr LAURANCE: It is on record in *Hansard* if the member would like to check. No fire brigade levy was paid out of that \$2 million.

Mr Hartrey: Is that unfair to the community?

Mr LAURANCE: Absolutely. I wish to move on to the timing of this motion by the member for Maylands. The Royal Commission examined the industry three years ago at which time companies were viable. Since then throughout Australia not only the insurance industry but also private industry generally has been under seige. In the last financial year company profits overall in Australia fell by 36 per cent. Three life assurance companies have ceased underwriting new business, although they are continuing business. Since the report came out three life offices have gone out of business in this State. I submit that there are no profitable areas for the SGIO to enter. The commissioner said that the SGIO would not need to call on the taxpayer to provide reserves. He said that the existing reserves of \$8 million would be able to finance the situation. That is wonderful except that those reserves are nonexistent today. Where would the reserves come from?

Mr Hartrey: They would come from the profit we would make if we had a free go.

Mr LAURANCE: Because most Government insurance offices are in a situation in which they can be made to succeed, there is a very good chance that they will succeed. But must they succeed initially? I say the answer is "No". The Queensland experience in recent times bears this out.

Previous speakers have talked about the wonderful profit in the area of workers' compensation. In 1974 the Queensland office had a workers' compensation fund deficit of \$16.8 million. It recorded a further loss in 1975.

There is an interesting situation in the United States. The Government Employees Insurance Company—GEICO—has appealed to the United States Federal Government to save it from bankruptcy. In 1975 GEICO lost \$125 million. I am quoting from an extract from *Time* magazine which is headed, "GEICO on the brink". It says the reasons for the loss of \$125 million are threefold. The first is cutting rates below economic levels. This supports my claim that it is a Government office and there is no question of profitability. The second reason is inflation. The third reason is inadequate reserves for claims.

Mr Hartrey: Embezzlement, I would say.

Mr LAURANCE: The article does not mention that. Three years ago the SGIO had reserves of \$8 million which it does not have today.

I ask this question of the mover of the motion: Is the Opposition hoping to win support from the public by this move?

Once the public recognises that this is a move to nationalise the insurance industry, they will reject it out of hand.

Recently a survey was taken in Britain when the British Labour Party decided it was going to nationalise the insurance industry and the banks. An article in *The Economist* gave a summary of what voters in Britain thought about such nationalisation. It was summed up by the headline "Voters think it's codswallop". It goes on to show how much support from the electorate the British Labour Government would lose if it attempted to nationalise the insurance industry.

I hope the Opposition does not think it is on a winner with the public, because it is on a loser. This motion seeks to place in jeopardy the jobs of 3 000 people employed in the private insurance industry in this State. It would create a hydra-headed monster and a financial octopus owned by the State which would starve the private sector of investment funds and would disrupt an efficient, competitive and service-oriented industry. Mr Speaker, I oppose the motion.

MR WATT (Albany) [8.52 p.m.]: The member for Gascoyne has covered quite well many of the points which I wanted to canvass in this debate, and so my contribution will be relatively brief. However I would be failing in my duty if I did not express my opposition to this motion.

Mr Bertram: Have you an interest in this matter?

Mr WATT: I am glad the member for Mt. Hawthorn has asked me that question because I thought it had been well covered in an earlier part of the debate. I speak entirely from conviction and not from any self-interest. Now that that is clearly on the record perhaps the member can get it out of his system.

Mr Harman: Do you not still get a commission?

Mr WATT: I get absolutely nothing. What more would members like to know? Are they happy?

Mr Bertram: Certainly.

Mr Harman: I think you are unhappy.

Mr Jamieson: You mean you have not even a nominal interest in insurance?

Mr WATT: It was rather interesting to read the Royal Commission's report and it is not unreasonable to discover that I cannot go along with the recommendations it made. There are plenty of instances of Governments of both colours finding themselves unable to be in agreement with the recommendations of Royal Commissions on a wide variety of subjects.

The basis of the matter seems to be competition and profit. It seems to me that so far as the Opposition is concerned, the word "profit" has some dreadful connotation which I have never quite been able to understand. I recall reading the words

of the president of a leading trade union in America. He said that companies without profits mean workers without jobs, and I believe there is a lot of truth in that statement.

Mr Taylor: Yes, Parliament does not make a profit.

Mr WATT: Of course there has to be an administration.

Mr Taylor: So a few here are not doing their jobs properly.

Mr WATT: If the cap fits wear it.

Mr Taylor: I am looking right at it.

Mr WATT: I am not quite sure what the member is getting at. It was interesting to read the reasons for the formation of the State Government Insurance Office. According to the report it was formed to fulfil a social need. I believe it can still fulfil that function. The member for Gascoyne has canvassed foreign ownership of companies, the services provided by the existing insurance industry in this State and in the nation, and the complaints that are received about the industry. I believe all members would agree with me that if there is anything to complain about a member of Parliament is usually one of the first to cop the complaint. The only complaints I have received in the 2½ years I have been in this place have been to do with motor vehicle insurance and workers' compensation insurance; and about half of them have been to do with State Government Insurance Office.

It is interesting that the member for Boulder-Dundas and the member for Swan, who seem to be two of the leading protagonists in this SGIO drama, have both taken me up at different times in the debate. Perhaps it would be fairer for me to say that I have taken them up in debate and challenged statements they have made. They stated at the time they believed what they said to be correct. In discussion later they have admitted that there have been occasions when I have been right.

Mr Hartrey: I am often wrong, and so are you.

Mr WATT: I am only too happy to admit that; that is the very point I was about to make.

Mr Skidmore: Are you saying I am a reasonable sort of person but I also make errors? I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

Mr WATT: The member can make whatever admissions he wishes to make.

Mr Skidmore: I will go back to the *Daily News*; it's more interesting.

Mr WATT: The member for Gascoyne dealt with the situation in Queensland. I shall use the example of Queensland to demonstrate that the Government in that State has not been able to provide a service which is competitive with private insurers in that State.

Mr Bryce: So much for your friend who said it was an octopus.

Mr WATT: The Government insurance office in Queensland has not been able to maintain the same value for money in terms of premium payments and bonuses paid on policies.

During his speech the mover of this motion avoided a question which I and the member for Gascoyne asked him on a couple of occasions. We asked him whether he would like to see the industry in this State nationalised. He avoided that question quite deliberately. I now ask him whether he will tell us precisely how he feels about nationalisation.

Mr Harman: I never avoided it at all.

Mr WATT: If the member looks at *Hansard* he will find the question was asked of him two or three times and he made no reference to it.

Mr Harman: All I want to see is the SGIO act fairly in competition with private insurance companies. We believe in competition; you do not.

Mr WATT: The Royal Commission's report suggests that the Government should extend the franchise of the SGIO so that it would be able to trade in the insurance industry on the same basis as private insurers. I suggest to the House that this is just not possible. The member for Gascoyne has explained at some length the sort of situations which occur. We know that at present the SGIO enjoys a privileged position in the insurance market. It enjoys that privileged position because of the use of Government facilities and instrumentalities. It enjoys that position because it does not pay income tax or fire brigade charges. This creates an inequitable situation so that some sections of the community are having to pay a disproportionate share of the cost of running fire brigades. All these things place the SGIO in a favourable position.

The latest figures available from the Australian Insurance Commission for the year 1973-74 showed that premiums paid amounted to \$323 146 000 and that losses amounted to \$370 901 000, which meant a net deficit of \$47 755 000. The member for Swan, by interjection on the member for Gascoyne, referred to a 25 per cent to 30 per cent rake-off.

Mr Skidmore: Rip-off!

Mr WATT: Call it what we will.

Mr Skidmore: I called it a rip-off.

Mr WATT: At no time has he been able to come up with any statistics or facts to support his claim of a 25 to 30 per cent rip-off. It is irresponsible of him to make such statements which can go unchallenged. I have quoted statistics to indicate that there was a loss of almost \$50 million in one year, and he talks about a 25 to 30 per cent rip-off.

Mr Hartrey: Figures do not lie, but liars can figure.

Mr WATT: How can the office possibly trade more profitably than the private industry can with an open franchise?

During the mover's speech there was some discussion about workers' compensation and I am going to express a personal view here and I can anticipate and predict the reaction which will follow when I say I support a national compensation scheme. I believe it would be the salvation of the insurance industry, both State-owned operations and the private companies, certainly with the situation as we have it in this State where injured workers are in receipt of 100 per cent of the normal weekly wage.

Mr Hartrey: We do not have that at all.

Mr WATT: To all intents and purposes we do.

I would like to refer to a question asked by the member for Kalamunda on the 11th September, 1974. With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I will quote the question and answer as follows:—

Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) At the railway workshops, Midland, what were the number of working hours lost per 100 workers due to accidents involving workers for the last full year prior to workers' compensation payments being increased to 100%.
- (2) What was the figure per 100 workers at Midland for the year ended 30th June, 1974 with respect to workers' compensation?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Year ended 30/6/72—1323 hours per 100 workers.
- (2) Year ended 30/6/74—2207 hours per 100 workers.

That is not far short of double. That demonstrates quite clearly that the SGIO or any other insurance company for that matter is not able to absorb the sort of things which have occurred since the increase in payments. It is certainly significantly higher than it was before.

It was certainly my experience in the time I was working in the general insurance industry that a large number of injured workers were given absolutely no encouragement by some doctors to go back to work. I do not want to include all doctors. However, a number of injured workers came to me when they were filling in their claim forms and told me that their doctors had asked them how long they wanted to remain off work.

Mr Bertram: Is that the workers' fault?

Mr WATT: No, but I am pointing out that it creates a problem of profitability in the industry. I am not condoning it at all; I am simply demonstrating that it is a problem in the industry for both the

SGIO and the private insurers and it is something which I do not think they should be expected to carry.

I do not think there is much more I would like to say on the motion. I simply pose three questions which I hope the member for Maylands will answer.

Mr Harman: I will do my best.

Mr WATT: The first is: With a full franchise as recommended by the Royal Commission would the SGIO be hiding costs by occupying the services of other Government departments and instrumentalities? I believe it would.

The second question is: How can the Royal Commission say that competition would be fair when the SGIO is vested with the right to underwrite insurance risks which are not commercially viable at public expense?

Mr Harman: What do you mean by that?

Mr WATT: I mean that if there are any losses in regard to any State-run insurance office, the taxpayers pick up the tab. How can that be classed as being fair competition?

The third question is: If the losses were almost \$50 million, which were the last available figures from the Commonwealth, how can the extension of the franchise to full franchise benefit the State and the taxpayers of Western Australia?

I oppose the motion.

MR HARTREY (Boulder-Dundas) [9.05 p.m.]: I am not altogether surprised, but I am quite disappointed that the Government parties should be so opposed to the motion because I always thought they stood for private enterprise.

Government members: That is right.

Mr HARTREY: If there is any enterprise which needs some extra competition it is this enterprise of insurance. Members have been told quite rightly by Government supporters that the SGIO was created to fulfil a need. It was not a "so-called need", but a real need. In those days we had a Workers' Compensation Act and we could not get miners insured with those selfish private insurance companies which wanted all the cream and refused any of the skimmed milk.

The Government of the day did not have a majority in both Houses or it would have dealt with that situation. Had I had the power I would have indicated that the insurance companies would get no licence at all unless they took the skimmed milk with the cream. If the time comes when the party I represent has a majority in both Houses, that will happen I am sure. In the meantime let us deal with what is happening, and not with what might happen.

Someone has suggested we are trying to nationalise the industry. We are not nationalising anything or confiscating anything. All we are proposing is that the shareholders of the whole State, who are shareholders in the SGIO, should have the same fair go as the shareholders of all the private companies. Way back in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I there was a good principle of law as to how a Statute should be interpreted and the words used in those days contained Latin and read, "*Non pro lucro privato, sed pro bono publico*", meaning, "Not for private gain, but for the public benefit".

Now here is a case where we have an insurance office which is introduced and is operated in the public interest in competition with those who operate for private gain and the Government itself is actually supporting the private gain against the public interest, and the supporters of the Government who have been yelling and shouting all evening, have the nerve to say that they believe in "fair trading".

Where is the fair trading which victimises all the people of Western Australia who are all shareholders in the SGIO for the benefit of individual people who are shareholders, subscribers, owners, or what-have-you in the private insurance offices?

I think this is a point which will appeal to the average man in the street when he is told he is a shareholder of a particular insurance company which is strangled every time anyone proposes in this House to extend its franchise. Up get the members who are all for free enterprise and crush and strangle the SGIO which belongs to all of us; even people who own private insurance companies, as well as other citizens, are shareholders in the SGIO.

A Government member: You are trying to nationalise the industry.

Mr HARTREY: Nationalise the industry be damned! We are talking about competing with monopolies. Do not tell me that insurance is not a monopoly. No-one can tell me that it adopts fair trading as its principle.

There is a principle in insurance law which was instituted by judges in the days when the judges in England were quite corrupt, and that was in the time of James II and William III. That principle laid down that an insurance company had an absolute right to expect any person insured with it to exercise *uberrima fides* towards it, which in English means, "the highest degree of good faith". If a person seeks insurance from any office or company he must do so with the highest degree of good faith. If he is asked a particular question and answers it truthfully but without disclosing a fact not actually asked for, but relevant to the inquiry, he may pay premiums for 15 years and then, when a loss eventuates, find he has forfeited all

rights under his policy. However, there is no obligation whatsoever on the part of the insurance company to show any good faith to the insured; but the insured is bound to extend the highest degree of good faith to the insurance company. What sort of principle is that?

If members have read the report of the Royal Commission they will see that it advocated not that there should not be any duty on the insured to exercise good faith or to extend the highest degree of good faith, but that this principle should be reciprocal.

It is a principle of law that every partner in a partnership must treat his fellow partners with the highest degree of good faith. A partnership is a very delicate and a very intimate connection; therefore it is quite right that every partner is bound to show the other partners the highest degree of good faith. When it comes to the insurance companies all the good faith shown is by the insured, and all the bad faith is on the side of the insurance companies.

The member for Morley has said that he knows of hundreds of cases where insurance companies have robbed their insured. I can say that over the past 40 years since I became associated with the insurance business—not as an insurance canvasser or broker, but as a lawyer to whom people came because they had been robbed by insurance companies—I have seen thousands of such cases. I know how many people have been swindled, and how they have been swindled by the insurance companies.

I shall not give illustrations, but I should mention one case which arose at Esperance and another in the heart of Kalgoorlie which would make members writhe. The Kalgoorlie case concerned a lad of 18 years of age—at that time he was not regarded as an adult under the law—who bought a motorcar for £500, which was probably worth £250.

Mr Laurance: With whom was he insured? Was it the Government Insurance Office?

Mr HARTREY: No. It was insured with one of the most unscrupulous companies, and if the honourable member challenges me further I will supply him with the name. This lad insured the motorcar for £500 and paid the premium rate based upon that value. Within five days he sustained an accident, and the motorcar became a complete writeoff.

The company told this lad what was the value of the motorcar, according to the valuation placed upon it in the yellow or red book; it was £190. The premium he paid came to a certain amount; the salvage to the insurance company was worth a certain amount; and the case finished up with the company showing a profit of £10 on a loss!

Mr Bryce: Is that not called a rip-off?

Mr HARTREY: I got stuck into that company and took it to court. The statement of account the company presented to the lad showed that by the time it had taken off the premium and the salvage, his insurance was diminished to such a level that it was £10 less than he had paid into the company. That is sufficient to illustrate what is fair trading on the part of the insurance companies. Of all the private insurance companies that was the most unscrupulous one.

We have been told by members opposite that the insurance companies constitute the basis of industry, and that the whole economic fabric of Australia would collapse without them. Members should look out of the windows of this Parliament House down St. George's Terrace. They will see neon signs in all directions advertising such-and-such an insurance company; they can see all the scintillating citadels of capitalism and monopoly lined up. Members opposite have claimed that they would all die of financial starvation if the SGIO were given the right to engage in life assurance or fire insurance business. How many of those scintillating castles are mortgaged? How many of them do not publish annual reports showing new policies worth \$75 million, \$105 million, and \$240 million?

Dealing with the question of fair trading, we are told it is wrong in principle and it is unfair trading if public servants become agents of the SGIO. Whose agents ought the public servants to be, if not agents of an instrumentality of the State? All of them have a right to look after the interests of the State, and not the interests of the private monopolies. Who else would act as agents of the SGIO?

I have had a few dealings with the Government Insurance Office of Queensland, and quite a number of dealings with the Government Insurance Office of New South Wales. I have found both quite easy to deal with. We are told that the SGIO in Western Australia is losing money. Of course, in some respects it must, because it can get only the skimmed milk, whereas the private insurance companies get the cream. The SGIO does not get enough of the cream to enable it to level off the skimmed milk.

Members opposite seem to rejoice in the fact that the SGIO does not make a profit now. They said that four years ago it had reserves of \$8 million, but now it does not have any reserves. They will see to it that the SGIO does not make any more profit. Is that *pro bono publico*? I suggest it is not; it is for the aggrandisement of the monopolistic gangsters. All gangsters do not carry guns!

The member for Albany is not in the Chamber at the moment. I respect and admire him, so I will not be uncompimentary to him. However, I will say this: I am glad he drew attention to the fact

that the number of hours lost as the result of accidents has increased substantially since the passing of an Act of Parliament which I am happy to say I helped considerably to get through; that was the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill of 1973. There was one thing we did which reduced the number of hours lost. I am not sorry for taking that step and I do not apologise for it. I know what it is like working in mines and factories. I do not think people generally like to be on workers' compensation, but there are the odd ones who do not like work at any time and a few more who when they sustain accidents do not want to return to work.

As one who has handled workers' compensation cases over a period of 40 years, as one who has had immense experience of workers' compensation cases which were not heard in court because they were settled out of court, and as one who has had considerable experience of successfully handling cases in court, I can say truthfully that the malingerer in industry is an almost nonexistent individual.

I do not strike two cases in a year, and I suppose I handle hundreds of cases of workers' compensation, involving quite a number of people. Why, then, have the number of lost hours increased? Because previously the insurance companies had the power to starve the men back to work when they were still unfit to work. That occurred until we added to the Act section 12B which sets out that an employer could not discontinue weekly payments to a worker without giving the man three weeks' notice of intending to do so, and producing a medical certificate to say that the man had wholly recovered and was fit for work, or that he had partially recovered and was fit for some light work. Before the introduction of that amendment the employer could starve a man back to work when he was still unfit.

I ask members not to forget that I do not have any special brief for the SGIO as an institution, especially with respect to workers' compensation. I was constantly locking horns with that office because of cases concerning miners. I am not speaking in any way from a biased point of view, but it was a fact that every insurance company, including the SGIO, was able to starve a worker back to work when he was not fit to work. In many cases a worker went to his doctor and asked for a certificate to say that he was fit. If he was denied that certificate he would then want to know how he was going to keep his wife and children. Usually the worker was not able to afford to wait for the Workers' Compensation Act to come to the rescue. Even now there is a six months' waiting list with regard to workers' compensation cases. I know the Minister for Labour and Industry is doing his best to remedy the situation, but he has not been able to succeed. The Minister may be concerned,

but I am sure that nobody else in the Government is worried. I am worried, and some of the insurers are beginning to worry.

I do not apologise to the member for Albany—and I am sorry that he is not here—I do not apologise to anybody. The fact is that men are now able to stay away from work until they are fit to work instead of being forced back by starvation. That is all they got from the insurance companies.

Now we have had a look at this fair and unfair trading; the interests of the community as against the interests of private enterprise and perhaps we have a fairer idea of the difference between the two.

I listened with great respect to the member for Gascoyne when he quoted from *The Economist*. He said the people of England thought the system we propose was "codswallop". The last Government elected in England was a Labor Government, and it is ridiculous to say that people who are prepared to give the majority to a socialist Government are also prepared to say they will make a last ditch stand in support of private enterprise. That is rubbish; that is "codswallop" if one likes.

I do not think it is necessary for me to dilate on the matter much longer. I will conclude by saying the Labor Party postulates that the insurance company we are sticking up for is public property. If it is losing money, that is our loss. If we can allow the company to make a profit, by enlarging its franchise, that is our business. The Government has not been put into office for the benefit of the private insurance companies, but for the benefit of the taxpayers—all of us.

I do not intend to attack the Government to the extent of saying that it has no interest at all in the public. We have never had a Government which has not had some interest in the people. However, the present Government, which I respect in many ways—and its leader for whom I have some admiration—definitely is ignoring its duty. The Government is doing worse than that; it is turning its back on its duty, and fighting against its duty. That duty is not to impoverish the SGIO—of which we are all shareholders—for the benefit of other insurance companies of which we are not shareholders.

I have had an insurance policy, but I was not a shareholder. I did not receive any dividends at all. Since inflation began 25 years ago—when I first became insured—I have been robbed the same as everybody else. We paid in £100 in the first year, and in the next year that was worth only £70. We reached the stage where Menzies decided we would have dollars instead of pounds so that the people would not realise that their money was losing value. It seems we will soon reach the situation which exists in South America where a pound is worth about 4 000 milreis.

As we know, money is diminishing in value all the time and while that has been happening the insurance companies have been buying up properties and investing their funds. I received the money from my insurance policy—a sum of \$7 500—but that was not worth one-third of what I had paid into the insurance company over the years I was insured. The same applies to everybody else. So, do not try to tell me it is of great benefit to the community to have that sort of thing going on.

It was said by a Government member that the member for Maylands had not answered the question whether he was seeking to nationalise the industry. We have no thought of nationalising the insurance industry, but we certainly have every desire and every wish to set up against that monopoly a Government enterprise in which we are all shareholders, and from which we can all draw profits. It will also lead to a reduction in the rates which the private monopolists are charging *ad lib*.

Any person who wishes to insure a motorcar knows he will get the best deal from the SGIO. I wish the unfortunate workers could get an equal deal, but they cannot.

I leave it at that. I am happy indeed to support the motion. I have supported it with sincerity. The Government has ignored the public interest and is supporting private gain. I know this motion will be defeated but when a man speaks from his heart and says what is in his mind, and demonstrates beyond doubt the justice of his cause, that is all he can do!

MR TAYLOR (Cockburn) [9.28 p.m.]: The member for Boulder-Dundas has spoken in the manner I would have liked to address the House. He spoke with sincerity, and his argument was well worth listening to.

I would like to say to the member for Gascoyne, and to the member for Albany, that they should learn certain things. They should never put forward thoughts which they may have with respect to the profession or occupation in which they were engaged before they came to this House as though they were experts in those professions or occupations. For example, you may have noticed, Mr Deputy Speaker, that as a married man I never speak on women's affairs!

At this stage I will content myself by complimenting the member for Boulder-Dundas on his remarks, and I will attempt to answer some of the points made, particularly by the member for Gascoyne.

He referred to the SGIO as an octopus, and he used the words "black and white". Those words are not relevant here. When it became necessary, or desirable, to take over the Midland Railway Company and integrate the rail service into the Government system, and incorporate certain bus

services into the metropolitan transport system, we heard words such as "nationalisation".

When those words are used by a conservative Government they become "rationalisation" or "co-ordination". So the Midland Railway Company under the Brand Government was "co-ordinated" into the WAGR and certain bus companies were "rationalised" into the Metropolitan Transport Trust. It is in that form of grey that debates such as this should be approached.

Mr Laurance: But there were not 80-odd companies operating in railways as there are in private insurance.

Mr TAYLOR: There were four or five bus companies, all of which were integrated, purchased, or acquired in one way or another, depending on which side of the House one sits.

Let us bear in mind that this so-called monster has flourished under all Governments. All Governments have praised it, including the Government of the Minister who is rejecting this motion. The SGIO recently had its 50th anniversary. One could quote the Minister's speech praising the SGIO on that occasion. A former premier was the Minister in charge of the SGIO but he did nothing at all to diminish its powers. All Governments have utilised its services and all Governments have directed its resources.

Mr Laurance: I deny that.

Mr TAYLOR: It certainly runs counter to the octopus theory which has been mentioned, or this gross body which will compete with private enterprise.

Then we come to the major argument used in support of the SGIO in juxtaposition to private groups; that is, it is the only insurance company operating in this State whose activities the members of this House—the representatives of the people of the State—are able to question. Of the 50 or 60 companies which have been mentioned, it is the only insurance company whose activities can be questioned. The member for Boulder-Dundas from time to time has criticised the SGIO under the administration of Governments of both political colours, and he was able to do so in respect of only one insurance company—the SGIO. Only one insurance company lays its annual report on the Table of the House. We are able to question the trading practices of only one insurance company. Only one insurance company's documentation, records, and correspondence can be laid before the House. Most members at one time or another have taken up matters on behalf of constituents, and there is only one insurance company with whom they can get to the core of the matter; that is, the SGIO.

Where is this octopus? Where is this activity which is likely to take over in the State? It is the only insurance company over which the people of Western

Australia have any control. They can expand it or wipe it out. They can pass a Bill today and next year they can repeal it. It is the only insurance company which is under continual scrutiny. In all the comments made by members opposite who were employed by other insurance groups, that point did not come out. The annual reports of other insurance groups are tabled elsewhere; their major documentation is presented elsewhere; and if they want to, they can retreat to other States or countries. The only insurance company which cannot do so is the SGIO, and that is a point which should never be forgotten.

Other points are worthy of comment. The question of profit came up. Profits may or may not be made and if made they may not be as good as other companies' profits. The question was asked: Who will have to subsidise the SGIO if profits are not made?

In a Parliament which represents people the word "profit" should not come into the argument. The SEC moves around the State acquiring, buying, or nationalising—depending on which word one wants to use—certain power generation instrumentalities. Does one look to profit or to service to the State? When we talk about a loss of \$11 million on the railways, is it really a loss? Of course it is not. If it were privately owned it would run at a profit because its charges would be higher and the community would pay.

Mr O'Connor: The community pays in taxes.

Mr TAYLOR: The term which the member for Gascoyne used over and over again, and which seemed to be a prime point in his case, does not apply. In our situation we have a mixed economy or a mixed society, and if there is a move in any direction it is a move towards greater Government responsibility throughout the State, certainly in the member for Gascoyne's area. It is not a matter of profit at all; it is a matter of things being equitable. For example, in the Budget the Premier has put forward, something like \$40 million is to be raised by the SEC, and no-one on either side of the House quibbles because we appreciate the service which is being given. That is all this House looks for—service in transport, service in power, service in water, and so on.

Mr Laurance: There is no private power industry.

Mr TAYLOR: There is in other centres. But we are not looking for profit.

Let me go a little further in regard to the place of the SGIO and the necessity to have competition with the other companies. I give the member for Gascoyne some credit but he misled the House in certain assumptions he made with respect to Queensland. He quoted a statement of the Premier of Queensland in relation to the SGIO in that State. I have read the

statements he quoted. What the honourable member did not quote was the rebuttal which came from a member of his own party who happened to be the Minister in charge of the SGIO in Queensland. Does the honourable member recall the rebuttal which came from a Minister who was a member of the Liberal Party in Queensland? The cuttings may still be in front of him. As I recall it, that Minister took his own Premier to task. Let us have a look at the dramatic picture.

Point of Order

Mr LAURANCE: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member has said on a number of occasions in his speech that I misled this House. I ask him to retract.

Mr TAYLOR: I withdraw it, completely and utterly, if the honourable member requests it.

Debate Resumed

Mr TAYLOR: The honourable member showed a diagram or pictorial representation of Brisbane indicating a number of buildings which are the property of or are controlled by the SGIO of Queensland. There was a substantial number of them—at a quick glance I could see five or six. The picture comes from the annual report of the Queensland SGIO, a copy of which we were sent as a matter of courtesy. The people of Queensland are quite proud of the fact that those buildings are owned by the SGIO. The funds the SGIO has accumulated from its activities have been invested in exactly the same way as the funds of private insurance companies are invested. That point was made by the member for Boulder-Dundas. In that State the SGIO is able to construct large buildings, among other things, in central Brisbane, and some friends of Mr Bjelke-Petersen, the Premier of Queensland, became offended about it.

Let us look at the situation in this State had we been able to restructure the SGIO in that form a couple of years ago when our Government put up a proposition to expand its franchise, and if we had five, six, or seven large buildings around Perth which were owned by the Government through the SGIO. Vapech House is privately owned, yet it was built for the Government. It was built by arrangement with facilities in its basement for the Department of Labour. The Government did not have the money to build it. Claver House and a third building opposite the markets, the name of which I cannot recall, are also privately owned, and the Government is continually paying rent on those buildings to that private company.

Mr Laurance: No responsible Government gives a guarantee before something is even built.

Mr TAYLOR: There are Government departments in the Bank of New South Wales building. If we can have a little quiet now, I will make a statement that will surely bring a roar from the Government side. Members will recall, of course, that the Public Health Department happens to be paying rent for a private building in Beaufort Street, Perth. The Public Health Department is paying rent and it is under contract for another 20 years.

Mr Laurance: A despicable Government gave them a guarantee.

Mr TAYLOR: Does he claim that it is despicable when a department pays rent to an organisation for a private building like that one in Beaufort Street?

Mr Laurance: It gave them a guarantee before it was built.

Mr TAYLOR: Is it so bad that in Queensland the Government departments are able to operate in buildings owned by the local SGIO and controlled by the Parliament and the people through the responsible Minister? So much for the diagram shown to us by the member for Gascoyne. So much for the great octopus in Queensland. All he is saying is that the difference in Queensland is that Government departments operate in Government-owned buildings and the rents paid for these buildings go to the electors of Queensland, through their insurance policies. These rents are not paid to the Bank of New South Wales, to the AMP, or to some other private organisation where the funds may go anywhere at all.

Mr Laurance: To be invested in Australia.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, or overseas. I still make the point that in Queensland the rents are paid for buildings which are controlled by the Parliament, and those rents go to the residents of Queensland who are members of the SGIO.

There are two buildings in Perth where a similar thing happens. One is the Superannuation Building where the Premier and certain Ministers work. This building is called the Superannuation Building because it was built with the accumulated contributions of State civil servants into a superannuation fund. Moneys from this fund have been invested in the building and the Government of the day now leases it back from the fund. The rents that are paid go back into the fund and that appears to me to be a worth-while operation.

The other building is the SGIO Building. I take back the word "misleading" or whatever other word I used about the member for Gascoyne, but certainly the analogy he used in respect of the octopus in Queensland does not fit.

Mr Laurance: Can I ask a question?

Mr TAYLOR: No, the honourable member had a long time.

Mr Laurance: I have not interjected as much as your side interjected on me.

Mr Jamieson: Oh dear, dear!

Mr TAYLOR: I suggest to members opposite that we can all learn sometimes if we go back through *Hansard*. Two excellent speeches were made in this Parliament—one in April 1972, and one in April, 1971—by a very forthright, learned member of the Government of the day. This member undertook a great amount of research which I think proved well worth while. At that time the speaker referred to the situation in Queensland, as did the member for Gascoyne today. This appears on page 1050 of *Hansard* of Thursday, the 27th April, 1972.

Mr Stephens: Could that member be the member for Cockburn?

Mr TAYLOR: I mentioned the member's qualifications, but not his name. He said—

In Queensland the story is much the same. The General Manager, in a letter dated the 27th August, 1971, advised that his office is currently a large lender to semi-Government authorities, which includes hospital boards, and that \$5 500 000 was allocated to them last year. His office provides funds for Government accommodation, including the new Main Roads Department building—

That is a novelty! It continues—

—and the new Executive building. It has provided funds to establish or expand the fertiliser industry in Queensland and the sugar industry, as well as a motor truck plant in Brisbane for Volvo.

No more need be said—that is the key. That is where the money from the SGIO is invested as well. That is where the money of the SGIO of New South Wales is invested. This is another very major point upon which I take umbrage at the comment of the member for Gascoyne. I think I wrote down somewhere the comment he made—this octopus will starve the private sector of funds.

Let us have another look at this excellent speech—which I recommend to the honourable member—where the speaker goes on to refer to the private sector. On page 1052 he says—

Finally, let me quote some figures from *The West Australian* of the 5th May, 1971, regarding the 1970 operations of probably the biggest mutual life office; that is, the A.M.P. For the first time, its surplus exceeded \$100 000 000. Its premium income was \$301 000 000, and its investment income a further \$144 000 000. Its total income rose by \$52 000 000 in 1970 and its assets grew to \$2 477 000 000.

Mr Bertram: Is that all?

Mr TAYLOR: That is all in 1970 for one company. Do members think that if we pass this motion the SGIO will become an octopus which will bring down not just

the one edifice but all the others within the Australian framework? This is the exact opposite to the point made by the member for Gascoyne. Money is siphoned from the public purse into these non-Government controlled financial institutions and it is not necessarily being spent in the interests of the Government or of the people. That is the point I make about the SGIO in Queensland which erects buildings for Governments, establishes sugar plants, and a motor plant for Volvo. The SGIO in Queensland did this because private enterprise would not take on that sort of risk.

Let us look at the investment in this State of money from the SGIO. I ask the member for Gascoyne: Does he know where this money is invested?

Mr Laurance: In BHP?

Mr TAYLOR: No, it is not invested with BHP. The SGIO invests money in the Shire of Kimberley, the Shire of Pilbara, and it lends money to local authorities.

Mr Laurance: And so does private enterprise.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr Laurance: Under legislation.

Mr TAYLOR: Most certainly private enterprise does this, but the areas in which Government instrumentalities lend are the very areas which find the most difficulty in borrowing. That is the key point, and that is why I made my original statement that all Governments of every persuasion—and nobody has denied this and at least three Ministers in this Chamber have held the portfolio which is responsible for the SGIO—have from time to time directed funds from the SGIO into areas for the public interest, and not necessarily for profit. This is a point we spoke about earlier.

Mr Sodeman: Profit is not a nasty thing of course.

Mr TAYLOR: It certainly is not.

Mr Sodeman: Used in the right way.

Mr TAYLOR: In a mixed society, profit has its place. While we are talking about a mixed society, certainly there is a place for the SGIO in competition with other insurers.

Mr Hartrey: Hear, hear!

Mr TAYLOR: That is a complete summation of the issue. We do not say that the SGIO should monopolise insurance, because, as mentioned by the member for Boulder-Dundas, there is no way in the world that this State Parliament could nationalise insurance. All it can hope to do is to permit a Government-owned insurance company to compete.

Let us look at the supposed monster we would create by adding to the franchise of the SGIO. It was suggested, for example, that in this State the SGIO has special concessions. I, as Minister, made the

point on two occasions, as did the member for Maylands when Minister, to ask this Parliament to put forward any matters that it wished to incorporate in the legislation in respect of rates, rents, fire brigade charges, or anything else. No suggestions came forth from the other side except objections.

There is still a State Government Insurance Office, and if the member for Gascoyne is sincere, let him introduce a private member's Bill in the next session of Parliament to remove the advantages which he believes the SGIO has. I would like to point out that they are not advantages but disadvantages. I know of no Government instrumentality which is directed to insure with the SGIO—not one. I know one is not supposed to talk about what happens in Cabinet, but I must say that when we were in Government, our Cabinet agreed that we would not direct Government instrumentalities to insure with SGIO. I want to ask the member for Gascoyne now: At the present time is any Government instrumentality directed to insure with the SGIO? I do not know what goes on in the Cabinet today, but I doubt that any Government instrumentality is so directed. I will tell members the reason: it is that they are not good risks. Are schools and hospitals good risks? Not necessarily, and the SGIO carries these risks. That is why Governments of both political persuasions have persevered with the SGIO. Members opposite put their tongues well and truly in their cheeks and say they do not want any nationalised or Government instrumentality, but they hang on to it as tightly as they can.

Mr Jamieson: What about pool insurance with local authorities?

Mr TAYLOR: The Leader of the Opposition reminds me of a very good example. Most local authorities carry their insurance with the SGIO on a pool arrangement.

I suggest they do it for one reason only, and that reason runs completely counter to the argument used by the member for Gascoyne.

I make a further point in respect of this competition, and I made this point in that excellent speech which I again commend to the House. At that particular time certain well-educated and experienced insurance men—and we all know what they are like because we have had some experience of them—realised that certain Government instrumentalities were perhaps not the insurance risks they might otherwise be seen to be. There was a move on the Senate of the University of Western Australia, which, of course, is not Government controlled, to suggest that it should tender out for its insurance. The SGIO at that time held the insurance, but there was a move to tender out and get the best price—good free enterprise stuff!

Of course, as a result of the numbers on the senate this was attempted. Certainly the price quoted was lower than that of the SGIO. On investigation it was found to be so low that it was not competitive; it was a give-away. The assumption made at the time—and it is on record; the Minister can look up his own departmental records—was that the particular British group involved, which was new to the State, and was looking for business to build up its portfolio, was quite happy to under-tender, if that is the expression, in order to obtain certain Government business in areas which were likely to be of limited risk. The SGIO had no answer to that because of a direction given by a Labor Government at that time. There is good competition!

Let us take the reverse to that; again, it is in the speech to which I am referring. The SGIO loses insurance because it cannot compete. Apart from the comments made that it should compete and that competition would be destroyed, it cannot compete. There are companies which carry workers' compensation and other forms of insurance with the SGIO, but when they come to the SGIO and say, "We would like to put all our insurance with you, including our personal accident and all other forms of insurance in bulk", the SGIO has to say, "Sorry, we cannot do it. We can take your motor vehicle and workers' compensation insurance, but we cannot take the rest of it." This does lose customers, because the companies say, "We appreciate the service you offer, but it does not suit us to split our insurance business."

Therefore, the SGIO, rather than being in competition, loses because it cannot compete; and the thing that is stopping it from competing is the attitude of the Government, an attitude so ably expressed by the member for Gascoyne. If anything can be said as a result of his remarks, it is that very thing—that his very comments are preventing the SGIO from competing. It just cannot compete in the limited field it is in. In respect of motor vehicle insurance, along with the RAC the SGIO dominates the market because no-one else can come in with competitive rates. It dominates in the field of children's insurance for the same reason. In respect of workers' compensation certainly the SGIO runs at a loss; if it made a profit other companies would enter the field. At least in this respect the SGIO can compete in every area in which it is able to operate. In those areas it operates in competition and not by direction of Government. To my knowledge no Government directs any Government instrumentality to insure with the State office.

Mr O'Connor: Will you explain the taxation issue you said you would explain?

Mr TAYLOR: I can do so only by repeating the point I made earlier, as I did when I was the Minister two or three years ago; I invite members to suggest any provision

which may be inserted in the State Government Insurance Office Act to cover any point they are not happy about. Any advantage the SGIO may have can be covered at a moment's notice by introducing a Bill.

Mr O'Connor: You said you would explain the details of taxation in respect of the railways.

Mr TAYLOR: I do not recall that.

Mr O'Connor: I don't blame you.

Mr Bryce: Nobody else recalls it, either.

Mr TAYLOR: I would like to cover a further point. This is another of those classics produced by the member for Gascoyne who, with his knowledge of the insurance industry, made reference to how difficult it would be to establish a life assurance office within this State, and the money that would be necessary to guarantee it. I quote to him a brief extract in respect of New South Wales.

Mr Laurance: From that speech again?

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, that excellent speech. I quote as follows—

... let us look at the experience of the Government office in New South Wales when it first entered the life field in 1942. To establish its life assurance fund, which we know must be kept entirely separate from the transactions in general business, the Government made a grant of \$100 000.

That is a good argument for the member—\$100 000 from the Treasury. The quote continues—

That was the sum total of the Government's contribution; and, in fact, this money has been repaid tenfold since in contributions to the State Treasury by way of tax.

In its first year, the Government Insurance Office, New South Wales, wrote only 337 life policies for sums assured totalling \$312 000. In its second year, it wrote 1 702 life policies for sums assured of \$1 900 000. Within five years, it was writing 3 000 new policies per annum, and the life assurance fund stood at just under \$1 000 000. This growth took place smoothly and without disruption to the established life market or to their staff.

I suggest the same thing would happen in this State. The key point to remember as far as members opposite are concerned is that all of the people who took out policies with that office did so by free choice and as citizens and electors in New South Wales; and they did so in a free enterprise system. They chose to do so, and there was no compulsion. There lies the answer to whether life assurance could be handled by the SGIO in this State. I would like to know, after giving figures in respect of the AMP which has \$2 477 million invested, just how much trouble that would cause.

There is a wealth of figures for New South Wales and Queensland which indicates the tremendous value of this enterprise to those States, and they have not in any way that can be determined disrupted the life assurance business of the private companies. Those offices have done three things. Firstly they have offered a choice, and that is something members opposite cannot dispute. Secondly, they have offered a competitive choice, because in each instance the offices have grown and they would not grow if they were not competitive. Thirdly, they have not called upon public funds. They have been under public scrutiny and each of them has tabled reports before the Parliament. Certainly in Queensland, and for most of the time in New South Wales and Western Australia—if not in South Australia—that has occurred under Liberal-Country Party Governments; and every action of the insurance offices has been under scrutiny. Every day that Parliament sits a member may ask questions in respect of the matter.

Where is this octopus; and where are the reasons that should be offered by a Government which suggests it is a free enterprise Government which is showing the people the way in this State? I suggest it has no argument, and I support the member for Maylands and his excellent motion.

MR CRANE (Moore) [9.59 p.m.]: I would like to take up only a short time in making this speech. Firstly, I do not intend to support the motion; I make that clear at the start. However, I believe one or two points have not been raised tonight and I would like to draw the attention of the House to them. It is my personal opinion, with all due respect to the member for Maylands, that the motion is intended to be mischievous. I believe the motion is based on party political motives.

Mr Harman: You shock me!

Mr CRANE: For this reason, I cannot support it. In any case, I could not support the condemnation of my own side of the House by other people. I might condemn it myself; that is my privilege. However, I would not support the condemnation of my side by someone else; I make myself very clear on that point.

Discussion on this motion tonight has been along two lines. There has been the black line and there has been the white line, and nothing at all in between. I believe there are one or two points which are worthy of mention in this debate. Firstly, the philosophy of free enterprise and competition is one which we must all clearly understand. I certainly support it and I hope I understand it. Therefore, for that reason alone, there certainly is a strong argument that we should not

oppose competition from another insurance office in the insurance industry. I believe one must be sincere, and to claim such a philosophy and then stand and argue against it borders very closely on hypocrisy. However, I make those points only in passing.

I for one would concede there is possibly a case for the State Government Insurance Office competing against private insurance companies. However, the thing which worries all members on this side of the House, and me particularly, is that Government instrumentalities seem to have a bad habit of not being able to make themselves pay, and the fear is that if we set up a State Government life assurance office, it could run at a loss and represent a charge against the State.

Mr Taylor: Could you answer just one question?

Mr CRANE: If the honourable member permits me to carry on with my speech he will find there will be no need for him to interject. Members from the other side of the House have given what they consider is ample evidence that such would not be the case. They could well be right, but the fear exists in the minds of Government supporters that Government instrumentalities cannot run at a profit. Perhaps this is a bogeyman; I do not know. However, it is a strong argument which members opposite would find hard to break down.

Mr Bertram: Does this apply also to the R & I Bank?

Mr CRANE: The member for Mt. Hawthorn can speak as loudly as he likes; I am a bullock driver from way back, and I assure him I intend to keep speaking.

Members opposite have made several references to the recommendations of the Royal Commission, but I do not believe the report has been discussed properly. For instance, recommendation (c) on page 45 of the report states as follows—

The Office should have only those privileges which are possessed by other insurers in relation to the services of Government officers and the facilities of Government departments.

I think that is quite reasonable; there is a strong case in support of the Opposition's claim that competing on uneven terms with the SGIO would be equivalent to getting in the ring with Mohammad Ali with one arm tied behind one's back. If what members opposite claim is correct, I believe that would be a reasonable assessment of the situation. I do not intend to go into whether or not it is correct; I merely leave that thought for both sides of the House.

I should like to draw attention to the recommendations relating to the last term of reference. This should have been covered earlier in the debate. It is the responsibility of a responsible Government to investigate such a recommendation, and

I urge this Government to do so. I trust all members of the House have read this report, because if they have not studied it I believe they are neglecting their responsibilities. The recommendation appears on page 54 of the report where, at paragraph 138 (a) it states—

On the evidence before the Commission only one insurer requires the insured to bear the costs which he incurs in connection with any arbitration under the policy, irrespective of whether he has been successful in the arbitration (paragraph 117).

When we refer back to paragraph 117, we find that it states—

On the evidence before me only one insurer, R.A.C. Insurance Pty Limited, uses an arbitration clause requiring the insured to bear the costs which he incurs in connection with any arbitration under the policy, irrespective of whether he has been successful in the arbitration. That company has relied on the clause on at least five occasions over the past five years.

It goes on to state the clause, which I shall not read to the House now; it is possible for members to read it themselves. I believe the Government should look at this paragraph from the point of view of protecting the public, and I raised the matter for that very purpose. I refer now to clause 138 (a) where the commissioner states—

I recommend that legislation be enacted as follows:

The copy then becomes so indistinct it is impossible to read. I suggest that if this is the best copy we can produce, we need a new photocopying machine.

Mr Davies: I will lend you my glasses.

Mr CRANE: Paragraph 138 (b) goes on to state—

In Western Australia insurers commonly oblige the insured to agree that the accuracy of the information provided by him shall be a condition of the validity of the policy.

The commissioner considers that such a provision is not reasonable, and I entirely agree with him. This is another area where a responsible Government should act to investigate the recommendation. Those are the reasons I rose to speak tonight because, unfortunately, as so often happens in this House, so much time is taken up in the pettiness of party politics that we tend to overlook the important issues which are at stake and which affect the people.

As a member of this Legislative Assembly and as a representative of the people, it is my responsibility to bring these points before the House; in other words, to remind members that sometimes, they cannot see the fire for the smoke, and the smoke should be allowed to clear. I am sure the Minister is in a position to say the Government is taking steps to correct

the anomalies but if that is not the case, I urge the Government to consider these matters.

As for whether or not the SGIO should compete with the private insurance companies, I do not believe this matter can or will be swept under the carpet. We must all have a little fight with our own consciences and decide whether we really believe in the principles of free enterprise and whether we can make that principle work in the context of a State Government life assurance office for the benefit of the people of our State, or whether we should leave the situation as it presently stands. This is one horse we cannot back each way. Those are the only comments I wish to make tonight. As I said, because I believe the motion is mischievous in the extreme, and was never intended in any other way, I cannot support it.

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [10.09 p.m.]: So effectively did the member for Boulder-Dundas and the member for Cockburn demolish the arguments put before this Chamber by the Liberal Party spokesmen tonight that there is very little left at this stage of the evening for me to demolish.

One of the staggering features of the mentality of members opposite is that they seem never to learn the lessons of history. There are several lessons that history can teach us in respect of this argument which bear consideration by us. This issue is before us tonight nearly three years after the Government made its decision to appoint a Royal Commission into the SGIO. For almost two years the Government has sat upon the report and withheld its contents from the public. It seemed to be running scared for an awful long time despite the efforts of members on this side of the House to have the contents of the report made public.

Repeatedly in this Chamber the Premier and his responsible Minister refused point-blank to reveal to this Parliament and the people of the State the recommendations contained in the report. Consequently, it is now three years since the Royal Commission inquired into the SGIO that we find ourselves debating this type of motion. I suggest that by its hesitance to reveal the contents of the report the Government indicated the very reasons it is unhappy about extending the franchise of the SGIO.

The list of reports being suppressed eventually became so lengthy that the Government has decided to allow the contents of a few of them to be made public. That is probably the only reason that the substance of this report is now available for everybody to read.

The comments made this evening by the member for Gascoyne supported by the member for Albany were a first-class exposition of nineteenth century *laissez-faire* economics. It was a wonderful demonstration to us of exactly the extent

to which members of the Liberal Party in this Chamber will play the role of puppets or front men for large companies. When they publish their pamphlets at election time they protest that they are concerned about people. The member for Gascoyne in particular demonstrated clearly to us this evening that his political party—since we assume that members who sit alongside him concur with his thoughts on this question—is clearly committed to the interests of profit before and well ahead of the interests of people.

I shall now refer to a significant lesson from history. It is now more than 65 years since members of the national Parliament in this country recognised the value to our community of establishing a people's bank. All the arguments we heard this evening from the member for Gascoyne supported by the member for Albany were trotted out on that occasion in the national Parliament 65 years ago and more than 100 years ago in some European countries. On those occasions there was all the fear and the talk of an octopus which would strangle initiative in the private sector. The situation at the turn of the century concerning the banking industry was one which was dominated principally by British banking interests.

The national Labor Government floated the idea of and successfully established a people's bank named the Commonwealth Bank. The legislation was passed in 1911 despite the philosophical objections of so many of the predecessors of members opposite. Yet never once on subsequent occasions after they had been returned to office did they dare take the courageous step of suggesting that the legislation which formed the basis of the Commonwealth Bank should be repealed.

Mr Mensaros: Are you aware that this very people's bank is the only one that does not want to serve the public by collecting SEC bills?

Mr Jamieson: Yes, but they have a policy that they have never done it for anybody.

Mr Taylor: Therefore it should be closed down?

THE ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr BRYCE: The Minister for Fuel and Energy is about to join the debate to try to convince the House that there are very valid reasons for his colleagues in the House of Representatives to take legislative action to wind up the Commonwealth Bank. If members of the Liberal Party are sincere in their beliefs they may well argue that since the war there has been a dual function for the Commonwealth Bank in that it has adopted a reserve bank function. If they believe that is necessary to regulate the economy, well and good; we accept it. But if they are being consistent in terms of their philosophy they

have a responsibility to bring in legislation to wind up the activities of the Commonwealth Savings and Trading Bank.

At that time all the arguments we have heard tonight and all the exaggerations about the strangulation of private profit opportunity and the private business sector were used. It was argued in 1911 and 1912 that if a national people's bank was established the private banks in this country would be squeezed out of business. The same dishonesty of political argument was employed at that time because frequently speakers in those debates argued that a national Labor Government was setting about to nationalise the banks. In fact all that was happening was that legislation was being introduced to establish a national savings and trading bank which was designed to compete with the privately-owned and—I reiterate—British-owned banks because competition was rapidly disappearing from the banking industry at the time.

The banking industry provides us with perhaps the best parallel to the argument this evening with respect to the SGIO. I am surprised to hear that at least one member of the National Country Party has declared where he stands on this motion and is not prepared to support it. I can understand that maybe the wording of the second sentence of the motion urging him to condemn his own colleagues might be distasteful to him. But there is a very important case to be considered by members of the National Country Party in particular.

They need think no further than the Rural and Industries Bank in this State which commenced its operations as the Agricultural Bank. That bank was established specifically to fulfil a social and economic need. The private British banks with their organised opposition to the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank at that time were not prepared to accept the collateral that was being offered to advance the money needed to develop the agricultural parts of this State, so the bank was established specifically for this purpose.

Mr Taylor: To save the farmers.

Mr BRYCE: That was its original function. I suggest that the parallel is worthy of continuation because that bank ran into trouble and had to be transformed into the Rural and Industries Bank. Members of the Country Party at that time during the term of the Wise Government, as I understand it, did not argue that the Rural and Industries Bank in this State should be given a restricted charter. There was no suggestion then that with the establishment of the Rural and Industries Bank private banks in Western Australia would be squeezed out of existence and simply would not be able to compete.

Those arguments did not hold water then and do not hold any water now in respect of this issue.

The Rural and Industries Bank was established as a people's bank. To use the term so eloquently used by the member for Boulder-Dundas, every citizen in Western Australia became a shareholder in the SGIO and the citizens of this State are shareholders in the Rural and Industries Bank. There is no suggestion whatsoever that the Rural and Industries Bank has become the octopus that the member for Gascoyne suggests the SGIO will become if we allow it to compete on the same basis in respect of the insurance industry that we allow the Rural and Industries Bank to compete on in respect of the banking industry.

Mr Jamieson: As a matter of fact they moved to widen its scope yesterday.

Mr BRYCE: This simply illustrates the hypocrisy of their argument. The member for Gascoyne spent a considerable time in demonstrating to us what happened in Queensland. Much has been said about the invalidity of his argument by the member for Cockburn. The one outstanding fact the member for Gascoyne omitted to put before the Chamber was that there was not one iota of evidence to suggest that in Queensland or New South Wales where the equivalent of the SGIO has been given a broader charter, the private insurance companies in those States were going out of business.

Mr Harman: And in South Australia.

Mr BRYCE: A visit to any of those States would belie the logic of that argument. There was precious little logic in the member's argument which was based on emotion and nothing else.

As far as Queensland is concerned, the person who occupies the isolated and lonely position on the extreme right of the Australian political spectrum—he is none other than the Premier of that State—is not shackled by a hostile upper House. There is nothing in Queensland politics to prevent the Premier of that State, if he is sincere in his beliefs, bringing in legislation to abolish the State insurance office.

Mr Jamieson: He knows what the people would do to him if he did that.

Mr BRYCE: He knows the political consequences very well. This illustrates the artificiality of the case put forward by the people who push the interests of profits ahead of the interests of the community. They skate on thin ice, because they know the Premier of Queensland does not dare to re-establish an upper House after it has been abolished.

In the same way the Federal Liberal Party and the National Country Party have never made a move to abolish the Commonwealth Bank. The Premier of Queensland knows he could not move to

abolish the State insurance office, despite the fact that there would be no legislative obstacle in his way.

The final point I want to make revolves around the misrepresentation that suggests that this move constitutes a move to nationalise the insurance industry. That is a gross exaggeration; in fact, it is a falsehood and a gross misrepresentation of the purpose of the motion.

The motion clearly spells out support for the recommendations contained in the Royal Commission report. In essence, those recommendations suggested that there was a valid case to extend the franchise of the SGIO and, furthermore, that the time was ripe to do so.

The argument that has been advanced by members of the Opposition is that this is a very worthy cause in the interests of the people of this State. We are talking about all the people, and not a select band of 3 000 people about whom the member for Gascoyne spoke earlier this evening, and who are employed in selling insurance. The honourable member weighed up the interests of the 3 000 people employed in selling insurance against the interests of over one million people living in this State.

We have advanced a very valid argument in favour of extending the franchise in furthering the interests not of a select band of people, but of the community at large.

In the debate this evening we have clearly demonstrated that the Labor Party places the interests of the people before the interests of profit; and members opposite have demonstrated in no uncertain terms that the reverse is the case in terms of their priorities.

I have great pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [10.25 p.m.]: I am very grateful to members on this side of the House who have supported the motion. I acknowledge the contributions which have been made by the two Liberal members, who formerly were employees in the insurance industry, and also the contribution made by the member for Moore.

I was rather surprised at the attitude of the member for Moore who claimed that the motion was a mischievous move on my part. I am sure the House is aware that in the past 2½ years I have been endeavouring to get the report of the Royal Commission tabled. I am sure that if we had not made the representations that we did make, the Premier would have retained the report in his office and would not have tabled it in the House. If that is regarded as a mischievous move on my part, then I do not know how the member for Moore interprets the word "mischievous".

I thought it was the duty of an Opposition, especially a member of the Opposition who is appointed as its spokesman on insurance matters, to make sure the Government tabled the report. I considered that the responsible step to take was to move a motion to request the House to accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and to condemn the Government for not taking any action upon those recommendations. How the member for Moore can claim that to be mischievous I do not know.

Mr Crane: It was the wording of the motion.

Mr HARMAN: Let us see what the motion says.

Mr Crane: My personal view is that you should not have had to ask for the report to be tabled.

Mr HARMAN: The motion requests the House to accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and to condemn the Government for its failure to act upon the recommendations. The interesting part about the stand taken by the Liberal Party is that it now sees fit to condemn the recommendations of the Royal Commission, but when the Royal Commission was taking evidence where were the Liberal Party and the National Country Party?

Mr Bertram: Absent.

Mr HARMAN: Submissions were made by 12 organisations and some individuals. Among them were the following—

Building Workers' Industrial Union of Australia

Law Society of Western Australia

Life Offices Association of Australia

Life Underwriters' Association of Australia

Mr G. P. Miller

Natural Disaster Action Committee

Mr D. Nelson

State Government Insurance Office of Western Australia

Tasmanian Government Insurance Office

Mr A. N. Armstzen

The Australian Labor Party

The Liberal Party saw fit not to appear before the Royal Commission which was inquiring into the franchise of the SGIO. It waited until the report was presented, hoping that the report would be kept silent, would remain the property of the Government, and would not be available to the people of Western Australia. When it became available—and the Premier had no alternative but to make it available—the House was requested to adopt the report and the recommendations, but the stance of the Liberal Party was that it did not believe in the recommendations, and it criticised the Royal Commissioner for coming to the conclusions that he did come to. However, he came to those conclusions only on the evidence given before him.

The commission did not have the opportunity to hear the views of the Liberal Party or the National Country Party so on that very point those parties stand condemned, but now their members come into Parliament and make all sorts of accusations about the evidence and the recommendations and they make all sorts of philosophical announcements about the information in the report.

I suggest to the two members opposite who spoke tonight that they ought to live in the real world for a while. Apparently they are living in a glass tower because if they lived in the real world they would know that private enterprise in Australia is now and always has been propped up by taxation concessions, subsidies, tariffs, and by other means available to Governments to look after private enterprise.

Australia has a mixed economy and the private enterprise system in this country operates only because of the way the Government looks after private enterprise and when private enterprise cannot operate successfully despite all those props, it becomes the property of the Government which carries it on.

All we are saying in Western Australia is that we have a State Government Insurance Office which has been operating successfully for 50 years and we believe that if the franchise were enlarged and the office were able to compete fairly with the other insurance offices in Western Australia it would be a major benefit to the people of Western Australia.

We are not asking that the SGIO be allowed to compete unfairly. When we were in office we made sure that the SGIO paid its way and that it did not compete unfairly in matters of taxation, rents, rates, and payment to staff. We made sure it competed fairly. All we want is to permit the SGIO, which is owned by the people of Western Australia, to operate and compete fairly with the other insurance companies in Western Australia, both life and general. This does not mean we will be nationalising the industry. That is only another red herring placed before the Chamber by those members who live in ivory towers and who are not prepared to face up to the reality of the situation.

Earlier I said I was disappointed with the attitude of the member for Moore because I believe that one thing which has helped this State of Western Australia—and particularly the farmers—has been the SGIO. It has helped those people living in remote areas particularly because for many years the SGIO was the only office which would cater for motor vehicle insurance. I feel confident in saying that quite a few people around the country areas would be in a far worse position than they are in today had it not been for the existence of the SGIO.

Members have given ample evidence tonight to indicate that if a State enterprise such as the R & I Bank is able to compete

fairly with other banking systems in Western Australia then the people of Western Australia are not disadvantaged. It has been demonstrated quite clearly that the State insurance offices in Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia have competed in all forms of insurance and there has been no downturn in the private insurance industry in those States.

All we are asking is that the SGIO in Western Australia be given the opportunity to compete fairly in the interests of Western Australia and Western Australians.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—15

Mr Barnett	Mr Fletcher
Mr Bertram	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bryce	Mr Jamieson
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Harman
Mr T. D. Evans	

(Teller)

Noes—22

Mr Blaikie	Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne	Mr Old
Mr Craig	Mr O'Neill
Mr Crane	Mr Ridge
Mr Dadour	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Silson
Mr Grewar	Mr Stephens
Mr F. V. Jones	Mr Thompson
Mr Laurance	Mr Watt
Mr McPharlin	Mr Young
Mr Mensaros	Mr Sodeman

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Moller	Sir Charles Court
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Cowan
Mr J. T. Tonkin	Mr Shalders
Mr Bateman	Mr Clarko
Mr McIver	Mr Tubby
Mr A. R. Tonkin	Mr Nanovich

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 14th October, 1976

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (5): ON NOTICE

1. LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS

"Atlas Pioneer" Consignment

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Justice, representing the Minister for Agriculture.

In regard to the loading of the *Atlas Pioneer* with live sheep at Fremantle last week—

- (1) Was Cabinet informed in March, 1974, of the setting up of the Live Sheep Export Committee by the then Minister for Agriculture?

- (2) Did Cabinet approve of the committee's ability to negotiate with various unions, agreements which would limit overseas trade?
- (3) Did Cabinet, during the dispute, take action under State industrial legislation?
- (4) If so—
 - (a) how long had the dispute been running before such action was taken;
 - (b) did other parties request the delay?
- (5) If Cabinet did not take action, why not?
- (6) Does Cabinet approve of the restrictions offered or enforced upon the *Atlas Pioneer* in regard to the ship's return to Western Australia?
- (7) Will negotiations be carried out immediately to ensure its return?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) As the present Government was not sworn in as a Government until 8/4/74, it cannot state with certainty whether Cabinet was advised in March, 1974, by the then Minister for Agriculture, but there is no record of his having done so.
- (2) See answer to (1). Likewise, there is no record of Cabinet approval.
- (3) Cabinet was kept advised of developments related to the recent dispute in respect of *Atlas Pioneer* and the three Ministers directly concerned stood ready to initiate any action permitted under State industrial legislation.
In fact, action was taken on October 4th in the public interest, but would have been taken earlier if the industry had so desired.
- (4) (a) 4 days, but see (4) (b).
(b) The decision to withhold action was as a result of a series of discussions held with the industry which felt other channels should be exhausted before the Cabinet desire to intervene in the public interest was implemented.
- (5) See previous answers.
- (6) and (7) The matters covered by these questions are under review.