

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 23 June 1993

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

PETITION - DUCK SHOOTING, RECREATIONAL

Reintroduction Legislation Rejection

Hon Derrick Tomlinson presented a petition signed by 11 citizens of Western Australia urging Parliament to reject legislation which would allow the reintroduction of recreational duck shooting in Western Australia.

[See paper No 382.]

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT - QUESTIONS, ASKING AND ANSWERING

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): I thank honourable members for being kind to me yesterday when I was at death's door, and allowing me to go home early.

Hon Tom Helm: Are you feeling better now?

The PRESIDENT: I am much better. However, not being one who allows time to be wasted or to go unused, and because members were here working last night while I was home in bed, I thought they would at least expect me to do something constructive. Therefore, I re-examined my copy of Sir Thomas Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* in relation to the asking of questions.

Hon John Halden: I was wondering what made you sick in the first place!

The PRESIDENT: I know members would be upset if I did not share with them the information I gleaned from my reading. I read this information a long time ago, but it has been condensed a little in the 21st edition of Erskine May; it was a little more elaborate in previous editions. I thought all of us could do far worse than reflect on this information, because it sums up some of the points I tried to make yesterday about the things members should not do when asking and answering questions. On page 293 of the 21st edition of *Parliamentary Practice* Erskine May says, among other things -

Questions are also inadmissible which seek the solution of hypothetical propositions; raise questions of policy too large to be dealt with in an answer to a question; seek information on matters of past history for the purposes of argument; are multiplied with slight variations on the same point; or are trivial, vague or meaningless.

My remarks yesterday related to raising questions of policy too large to be dealt with in an answer to a question. Erskine May suggests that members should not ask a question on a matter of Government policy where the answer to the question would be a massive, time consuming exercise. He goes on to say, on page 295 -

An answer should be confined to the points contained in the question, with such explanation only as renders the answer intelligible, . . .

That is pretty simple. It is a state of affairs to which I want to return. That state of affairs used to be rigorously pursued in this place. However, in recent times, because the President was a little condescending to Ministers, who took an extra inch followed by another, we reached the stage at which members thought that asking so-called Dorothy Dix questions was a proper function of a House of Parliament. It is not. It never was. It never will be.

Yesterday I asked members to forget what has occurred in the past. I also said that because somebody in the past did something which probably was not in order, it is not right to continue that practice. I want question time to return to a situation in which members genuinely seek information, which Ministers genuinely endeavour to provide.

A Minister has no requirement to answer any question if he does not wish to do so. That is a long held view in all our Westminster-style Parliaments. Of course, the remedy is in the hands of the House if the Minister continues not to answer questions. It is in the hands of

members who fail to receive an answer to take action. If a Minister does not want to answer a question, or if he or she wants to recite "The Charge of the Light Brigade", the person in the Chair cannot do a lot apart from remind members that our standing orders, in accord with Erskine May, indicate that answers should be concise and to the point.

Having said that, I feel much better. I have never reached the stage at which I was about to slash my wrists over the behaviour of members in this place. We can be pretty proud of the way this Chamber always conducts its activities. That is something I suggest that people in another place could not say with equal enthusiasm.

MOTION - MIDLAND WORKSHOPS, CLOSURE DECISION

Documents Tabling

HON JOHN HALDEN (South Metropolitan) [2.47 pm]: I move -

That Hon E.J. Charlton, Minister for Transport, table in this House within two sitting days of the date of this order all reports, studies, advice and other documents that were considered by him prior to, or in the course of, reaching his decision to close the Westrail Midland Workshops, including any report, study, advice or other document advising him or the Government against that course of action.

The closure of the Midland Workshops must be probably the most outrageous and mishandled fiasco brought upon the people of this State in this Government's short term in office. We have witnessed an ever reckless Minister continually making inaccurate and blatantly incorrect statements which his poor servant, the Commissioner for Railways, has had to continually correct. As the Minister wreaks havoc in Westrail, branch managers are forced to come to grips with a policy decision which in the long term will seriously hamper Westrail's capability to be a viable carrier of goods in this State.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Mr Halden, you're a joke!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: They are all laughing at the Minister.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Have a look in the mirror.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That is what the Minister should do.

The situation is so bad that last Thursday's branch meeting, at which the "Leader report" was presented to Westrail's branch managers, managers had difficulty coming to grips with the implications of what this Government is forcing on Westrail. Consequentially, the meeting degenerated to the point of near violence and people had to be restrained. This reaction was due to the Government's policy and its implications on Westrail.

The most difficult point to come to grips with in this issue is to assume how the Government arrived at its decision. The Minister said that he would not release any documentation whatsoever on how the decision was made. He said that all the documentation was in a Cabinet minute. I, as well as many other people, do not believe that. When one looks at the Minister's proposition, it must be rejected out of hand. The Minister will not come clean with the true situation regarding the documentation; therefore, one must speculate on how the Minister arrived at the decision. Some presumptions must be made. The first is that the Minister made the decision after extensive economical and technical analysis, discussion, consultation and evaluation of data; this led to the ultimate conclusion that the workshops should be closed.

Hon George Cash: You would not criticise us for that, surely?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: No, not at all. If I had proof that that was the case, I would not be moving this motion.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Perhaps you had better seek leave to go outside the Chamber.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister's performance would suggest that he should do exactly that.

Had the decision been explained to the people they would have been able to accept that savings would be made, that job reorganisation and social and economic consequences had been planned for and were being managed. The second presumption that one could make is that the Minister's instruction to Westrail to draw up a Cabinet minute and close the Midland

Workshops was an ideological or political move. Thirdly, bureaucratic advice could have emanated from the Westrail hierarchy.

Hon T.G. Butler: Don't you mean bureaucratic instructions?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That may well have been the case. It could also be that inside Westrail there was a belief that the workshops had to be closed and that was done through the normal channels and eventually the Minister put his signature to that proposal. It may also have been that the Westrail executive got together and decided that perhaps the best course of action based upon their analysis of data was to close the Midland Workshops. Fourthly, there could have been some external pressure brought to bear that made it essential for the Government and Westrail to come to that decision. It could have been, but it was not, that the Federal Government placed pressure on the State Government and on Westrail to close these workshops.

I remind Government members of the coalition's policies prior to their attainment of Government at the February election. The coalition policy said that the Midland Workshops had not been allowed to develop at the pace necessary to secure its long term future. It surely has not, and will not be able to do that now. The coalition election policy stated that under a coalition Government the Midland Workshops would be better equipped to fulfil its existing role and would be given an important new role to secure its long term future. The coalition said it would establish an institute of heavy engineering that would be co-located with the workshops at Midland. The coalition said the institute would be part of a fully integrated training institute for heavy engineering trades; that it would re-equip the workshops and invite the private sector to participate in the further development of the Midland site to become part of a world class heavy engineering complex to service the needs of rail, mining, agriculture and new value added industries. Of course, the Minister's response when asked whether the closure of Midland Workshops was contrary to coalition policy was to say, "We can talk about that if you want, but it is quite negative to go down that path." I suggest to the Minister that to those people who are about to lose their jobs at the Midland Workshops it is not negative. In fairness to the Minister his answer was more honest than that of the Premier. When the Premier was asked whether the Government had broken an election promise he replied, "No."

Today the Minister has been given the opportunity to make a statement to this House. It is now up to the Government to exhibit some honesty, openness and accountability, and above all else to treat the workers of the Midland Workshops with some dignity and explain how the Government arrived at its decision. People will not accept an arbitrary decision based on the assumption that because one is the Minister one knows all. I suggest that this Minister does not know all.

The reality of the Government decision announced on 29 April was that 1 049 jobs in Westrail would be abolished - 749 from the Midland Workshops and 300 from Westrail generally. That represents a 20 per cent job loss for Westrail. The Minister must come before this House and justify this decision. In a press release on 29 April the Minister said that the reforms would save Western Australian taxpayers at least \$28m. That is not what Mr Charlton said yesterday. On 30 April *The West Australian* ran an editorial which stated that it was difficult to see how the Government would achieve a \$28m a year saving as a flow on from the Westrail reforms. Westrail documents provided to unions on 30 April - two days after the Minister's statement - advising of the closure of the workshops and the subcontracting out of that work predicted an annual saving of approximately \$19m. Someone is wrong, and we do not know who.

On 2 May the *Sunday Times* stated that Westrail would have to borrow at least \$36m to fund the redundancy packages. However, the Minister previously stated that the redundancy packages would cost \$13m. The latest figure in the *Sunday Times* of 20 June put the redundancy cost at \$30m. Dr Jim Gill, the Commissioner of Railways, was quoted in *The West Australian* as saying that the closure of the Midland Workshops would produce a genuine net saving of \$18m a year for Westrail within two or three years. He did say at the time that the figure was a bit vague; however, yesterday the Minister said that the saving would be \$18m as soon as the workshops were closed. On the basis of those continually changing figures which do not correlate the workers of Midland and the people of this State are owed an answer. We do not have clear answers about the running deficit of the

workshops. We have been given figures like \$18m and \$19m. It has also been claimed that the budgetary process at the workshops was a particularly distorted one in terms of guaranteeing its continuing viability. In 1989-90 expenditure and revenue equated with one another, but by virtue of a change in the budgetary system in 1990 and the inclusion of industrial relations bills, notional rent, information technology, quality assurance, engineering services, and restructuring operating expenses an extra \$14m was added to the workshop's budget. Many people question whether the \$14m of contributions has benefited the workshops. Again the Minister has been asked to justify that proposition. To this date he has been silent.

One of the many controversial issues is the disposal and redevelopment of the Midland Workshops site. On 28 April Hon Eric Charlton said that the disposal and redevelopment of the 78.8 hectare site would open exciting opportunities for commercial development, heritage based tourism and residential development for about 2 000 people. I bet that those 2 000 people will not enjoy living next door to the Midland saleyards.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You might not.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Hon Eric Charlton would not either.

Hon E.J. Charlton: The sheep wouldn't enjoy living next door to you.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: They would not enjoy living next door to the Minister.

Mr Charlton went on to say that, because of the close proximity to the commercial centre of Midland and to public transport, the independent public assessment provided to Westrail suggested that civic purposes and residential development were the most likely uses to which the non-heritage part of the site would be put. The Minister failed to say, or did not know, that the site is contaminated by asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls, heavy metals and radioactive sands.

The first three metres of soil would need to be removed at enormous cost to develop the Midland Workshops site. Similar problems have occurred with the East Perth redevelopment project where the same process must be carried out, although not to the same degree as that which must occur at the Midland Workshops site. When the Leader of the Opposition and I met with Mr Charlton he admitted that the land was contaminated and that after it was cleaned up the 78.8 ha in the middle of Midland would probably be worth \$2.1m for residential development and less than half a million dollars for industrial/commercial purposes. Quite clearly, the Government will not make much money if it sells that land.

Calls have been made for this document to be provided, but the Minister has made no comment, except that the document is part of an elusive Cabinet submission. On 29 April the Minister also made a claim about relocating the work to country depots. He said that at the same time a number of country rail centres would be given a new lease of life. In internal report No 1, dated 4 June 1993, the general manager of works relocation said that country centres were already overstaffed and that any additional personnel would be required at Westrail depots. Whoops! Goofed again. That has been the track record of the Minister for Transport. He says something which then falls in a big hole.

Hon N.F. Moore: This is really devastating stuff.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It is to those 749 people about to lose their jobs.

Hon N.F. Moore: Who's lost a job?

Hon E.J. Charlton: How many jobs has your lot caused people to lose?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Members opposite may not like to hear this, but they must listen to it. The Minister also claimed that benefits to private enterprise would occur. On 29 April he stated that the decision would create 250 jobs in the private sector. The Minister has perpetually been asked where the jobs will be created, but no response has been received. This decision was so well planned that days after the decision was made representatives from Westrail's management and the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry met at Perth Oval to ascertain whether the work at the Midland Workshops could be carried out in this State. After seven weeks, the work relocation project interim report still does not specifically state where the work will be carried out and only states, quite specifically, that it will be done in the private sector. Is that the private sector in Western Australia, Australia or

Singapore? Who knows? The Minister quite clearly has not thought through this proposition.

Hon Tom Helm: No wonder his head is down.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister has not told the public that this interim report contains hidden costs and that the private sector will most definitely benefit from it. It will be required to employ consultants to carry out the closure of the Midland Workshops. At what cost will that closure occur? Warehouse capacity will have to be provided from the private sector but nobody knows at what cost.

Hon E.J. Charlton: We are not going to tell you, mate!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That is right. That is the Minister; he is not going to tell anybody. After seven weeks the project team is short on specific ideas, cannot advise the Minister about where the work will be done and is floundering, as is the Minister and his relationship with various people in Westrail as he pressures them down the path. The Minister has neglected to mention further additional costs which are outlined in the interim report. The restructuring may require capital investment to allow the new processes to be carried out. Of course, that restructuring will occur at those country depots and at Forrestfield. However, it is not known how much restructuring will occur or at what cost. The interim management team which has been in existence for seven weeks is not able to provide a figure. The Minister said that he considered this proposition in great detail.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I am sorry, Mr President, I will address you. The problem is that I think I have convinced you already.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member knows that it is out of order to suggest that the President has any views on any matter in this place.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I would hate to do that, Mr President, I assure you.

I did not receive a spectacular answer from the Minister yesterday; therefore, I will remind the House of the question I asked in this place last Thursday, 17 June. I asked the Minister whether he had "... received no detail on a financial assessment of the impact of that closure on Westrail". The Minister replied -

I did not receive any such advice prior to the decision.

Unfortunately, that comment was contradicted by the Premier in another place. Mr Court said -

On winning Government, we were briefed by the management of Westrail. It was made very clear that that organisation faced considerable losses and it was recommended to the Minister who then recommended to Cabinet that a course of action be followed which involved not only the closure of the workshops but also a number of people being removed from the management level of Westrail.

The Minister for Transport in a media statement on 29 April said that projections had been made which showed that Westrail could not compete in a fully deregulated transport market unless it was able to respond quickly to market needs and conduct its affairs in a fully commercial way. That is a very different answer from, "No, I never received detail of any financial assessments." Blind Freddy could work out the difference. The Opposition wants details of the projection; or is that part of the confidential Cabinet document?

Hon George Cash: It is a pity you didn't ask Mrs Beggs some of these questions.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister continues to say that those details are part of the Cabinet submission. However, I suggest that the Minister acquaint himself with a recent High Court decision in the Commonwealth v the Northern Land Council 1993.

Hon E.J. Charlton: That will be a beauty.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It is worth reading. The Minister might learn something. The court ruled that only Cabinet deliberations were confidential, not departmental submissions. The Minister should be very careful in thinking that he can hide behind the claims of confidentiality of Cabinet.

Hon Tom Helm: Was that a High Court decision?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It was a High Court decision.

Hon Tom Helm: The Government doesn't believe in the High Court.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: No, I know that.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson interjected.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It is interesting that when the Government is under pressure it always tries to get the speaker on his feet to go down a blind alley. Members opposite would like that to occur, but they know that the Minister has continually and repeatedly been inaccurate in his answers to the public of this State. It will not work for members opposite to try to encourage me to go down a path that leads nowhere.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Where are you going now?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Probably the same place as the 749 workers at Westrail.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: We look forward to your redeployment.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: However, I can assure Hon Derrick Tomlinson that they and I -

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the honourable member addressing the Chair that he just did exactly what he said he would not do; that is, he went down that wrong path.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I will try to avoid that. The High Court ruling suggests that this document is not confidential. I advise the Minister that it will not be long before people interested in this issue will call upon the Ombudsman to investigate it. While the Ombudsman is not entitled to consider the Minister's decision, he is entitled to review the departmental advice which led to the Minister making the decision. Again, I remind the Minister that we will not have to wait long for the freedom of information provisions, which will enable us to track down the information we seek, to come into effect.

The Minister has given to unions involved in this issue a six page summary which he said was provided to Cabinet. This summary is vague and is lacking in substance and facts. In fact, there are inconsistencies in the summary about the exact loss incurred by the Midland Workshops. Two different figures have been given in the document - they cannot get the document right. Generally, the document is an insult to the people who have lost their jobs because of this Government's decision to close the Midland Workshops.

When the Minister has his opportunity to speak I do not want him to say that no-one at the Midland Workshops will lose his job. I will make a distinction between jobs and employment. It is true that no-one will lose his employment at the Midland Workshops, but 749 people will lose their jobs and that is a different situation. Unlike me, the Minister has not been at the Midland Workshops at 6.00 am to meet with the workers. Some of them have been at the Midland Workshops for between 30 and 35 years and in some cases they have been there for 50 years. They face the prospect of losing their livelihood and their skills and they do not think it is appropriate that the skill level they have obtained over a long time will be dispensed with so quickly. They will go to jobs which the Minister knows are currently contracted out. Those contracts are being abolished. The general position in the community is that the jobs and skills are being lost at considerable cost to the State.

Hon Tom Helm: Does the Minister care?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I doubt it. I have seen him perform at one public gathering and to say that arrogance was the total personification of the Minister is not to understate the fact.

Members should be acquainted with the Rowland report of 1991 which was a Westrail report to investigate the long term viability of the Midland Workshops. The Premier said that the decision to close the Midland Workshops was based on advice from Westrail. One must question that advice in view of what was said in the Rowland report. In that report the consultant said he believed the Midland Workshops had advantages in the wide range of capabilities and high levels of skill concentration on one very big site. A blue collar work force has its advantages. However, those advantages are outweighed by culture and tradition which successful Western Australian firms have tackled and overcome. The second point the consultant made was a lack of marketing intelligence; the third point was a lack of marketing skills; the fourth point was a lack of accreditation and a late start in policy management, and

the fifth point was a lack of design capabilities. All but one of these points relate to the white collar management, yet these are the people who the Premier, not the Minister - he seemingly does not get advice from Westrail - said recommended the closure of the workshops. They are the very people who are criticised in the internal report prepared by a consultant. The report went on to say that it is equally clear that Midland's approach to the obstacles identified in the report will determine whether it is able to take the first step which is to qualify the suppliers' list of major customers to secure quality assurance.

That was of course completed by Lloyds of London after the Minister's decision had been announced to close the Midland Workshops. Only days before taking that step the Minister made a decision, and we are yet to know on whose advice it was made, to close the Midland Workshops.

The first presumption is that the Minister took extensive economical and technical advice and made a decision which was well planned. In the argument I presented to the House it would not only be unlikely, but also totally fallacious to make that presumption. I do not propose to do so and I do not think the Minister suggests that is the case. My second presumption was the decision was made on ideological-political considerations. I advise members that this presumption is alive and well. The Minister said at the Midland Town Hall last Tuesday, and he said it previously, that Westrail should be commercially viable. At the Midland Town Hall the Minister also said that all country railway lines would remain open regardless of the loss they will make, but the Midland Workshops was in for the chop.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You are an unbelievable character.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: We know that a number of the country railway lines make a significant loss. I will not suggest to this House that that should be the only consideration on which we should close all the country railway lines because there are far more considerations on which the decision should be based. We could very well have a particular sector of Government responding to commercial considerations. Surely, if the Government were fair it would look at all of Westrail's operations. Of course the Minister will not close the railway line which runs through Tammin.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You sold it off to the Federal Government.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: We did not.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Of course you did. You entered into a deal.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I will not be confused by the Minister.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You are confused without me helping you.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I am not confused. The situation is that the Minister did not make a fair and reasonable assessment of the Midland operations. He quite clearly made a political decision in the most blatant way imaginable.

My third presumption is that the decision was made on bureaucratic advice. I can say with some surety that the advice did not originate from the lower levels of Westrail. I can assure members that if the decision had been documented at that level I would have a copy of it, but it was not. It may have happened at executive level, in consultation with the Minister, as the Premier said. I again remind members of the critical comment in the Rowland report about the management of Westrail - the same management that may have recommended to the Minister the closure of this site.

The fourth point I raise is that there were external pressures. No-one has seriously put forward that proposition as a possibility. I decided in my travels as shadow spokesperson for transport to visit the largest transport company in this country, TNT. I asked the managing director of that company where it performs maintenance for its fleet of trucks and vehicles. He said maintenance is performed in-house for two reasons: It is cheaper, and in the long term the company can guarantee quality assurance. When the largest transport company in the private sector operates in a way contrary to the Minister's position in this matter, it is incumbent upon the Minister to explain why he proposes to go in the other direction.

At a meeting at Midland Town Hall last Tuesday, the President of the Midland Chamber of Commerce made two important points. One was that he asked why were not those parts of the Midland Workshops which had a monopoly in respect of supply in Western Australia and

Australia retained so that they could continue to make a profit? We have not received an answer to that question because the Minister knows that if he closed down a certain part of the Midland Workshops, the work that is done by certain equipment, such as presses, which cannot be done anywhere else in this State, would have to leave this State. The Minister knows that if he got rid of equipment which was the only equipment of its type in this country, that work would have to leave this country. In fact, in regard to one piece of equipment at the workshops, the nearest competitor is Singapore. The Minister will not come clean with the detail about this matter, and we will never know from this Minister whether that matter was ever considered. The Minister has blindly, whether it be on executive advice from Westrail or for political considerations only, gone down a path which has the potential to export jobs from this State to overseas. These claims are made not only by me but also by numerous other people. All the Minister has to do in regard to the accusations I make - and they are accusations because the Minister refuses to provide the information that led him to make this decision; that is if there was ever any information -

Hon E.J. Charlton: You said there was.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister said there was, in his statement of 29 April. Does the Minister remember the projections, or has he now changed his mind?

This is a simple request by the Opposition for the Government to be open and accountable; to be honest. Not many months ago when Government members were on this side of the House, they talked incessantly about openness and accountability, but at the first opportunity for the Minister to make a major contribution towards accountability, after he has been screaming and yelling for accountability from this side of the House, he turns his back and says no. One can only presume from his behaviour that his decision is based on political considerations or on the advice of senior Westrail management - management that is discredited in respect of reports which it asked to be conducted. It is now incumbent upon the Minister to explain to the House and to the people of this State the reason for his decision, and hopefully in time we will get all of the facts and they will not be inconsistent with what the Minister said yesterday or the day before. I hope the Minister will now make a statement about this matter which will clarify it for the people of this State, particularly for the 1 049 people at Westrail who are about to lose their jobs.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [3.26 pm]: The shadow Minister for Transport has confirmed to anyone who has taken any interest in this scenario that in regard not only to the Midland Workshops but also to the whole of Westrail and every other aspect of his portfolio he is uninformed. He has responded with a load of gobbledegook which has no consistency to it at all.

Hon John Halden: You are one minute into your speech and you are already making a personal attack!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I want to set the record straight. The member has a total incapacity to deal with the situation and with the facts that are provided, and he has misused any opportunity that he has had to get information in order to make a name for himself, at the expense of the people from whom he claims to have support. The member has misused every occasion that he has sought advice and information. He has lacked consistency on every occasion that he has gone into the public arena through the media, and he has not come anywhere near reporting correctly what he has been told. The member could not even get it half right at Midland Town Hall the other night.

Hon John Halden: They liked me a lot more than they liked you.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: After the member had sat in that meeting and heard what was said, he immediately spoke on radio and misrepresented totally everything that I had said. The member does not have to agree with me and the member can have a go at me as hard as he likes, but it seems that the member is prepared only to stoop to the lowest level in order to score a few political points for himself.

Hon John Halden: Why not come clean with the report?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I have plenty of time to answer all of the gobbledegook that the member said.

[Resolved, that the motion be continued.]

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: It is timely that Hon John Halden has introduced this motion because we need to challenge the way he goes about his business. He has a track record of acting inconsistently. He has demonstrated that in this House and outside on numerous occasions when in Government. I remind the House of his activities -

Hon John Halden: Which activity?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: When we hear comments by Hon John Halden we should reflect a little on his past performance and analyse what he has to say.

Hon John Halden: Be specific.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: We all know that Hon John Halden has a track record of inconsistency when attempting to get a message across about any issue; we know that consistency and honesty are far from being number one on his list of priorities.

Hon John Halden: I do not know what the Minister is telling me.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Of course. The member does not have a conscience. He is all about hitting the headlines when trying to play the role of some caring person. We heard the Leader of the Opposition this morning talking about the economy and financial arrangements. Even after almost 10 years in this place it still amazes me when I hear the Opposition - that is, members of the previous Government - talking about its caring attitude, the economy, and how it is all for the workers of the State. The important point to be made is that members opposite are the people who destroyed the State Government Insurance Office. They wanted to sell it off. Members opposite criticise the Government for wanting to make changes to organisations to make them commercially competitive, when they are the ones responsible for the destruction of the SGIO, the R & I Bank, and the Government superannuation scheme. What did they do with the funds? The Labor Party built up a \$10b debt in the process and yet members opposite continue to run around presenting themselves as caring, responsible people. They were part of a Government that did not have the capacity to do anything on a businesslike basis. They told people how they cared, but they also played a role in ensuring that one million people are unemployed in Australia and we carry the burden of a \$10b State debt. Hon John Halden has that background but still he attempts to demonstrate he is a caring, responsible member of the Opposition.

Hon John Halden: You haven't answered one question!

The PRESIDENT: Order! I stopped members' interjections when Hon John Halden was speaking. I was feeling quite pleased with the way things were progressing. The member was able to get his message across without much of a hassle. I am disappointed that members have now fallen back into their old style of thinking that every time a member says something it must be answered there and then. That is not the situation. I suggest that the Minister continue his comments and confine his remarks to the motion.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I shall do that, Mr President. I want to put the record straight regarding the background of the motion and the reason for the request that documents be tabled. As the member said, there are no documents. I am able to confirm that there are no documents. We could end the debate here because there are no documents and therefore they cannot be tabled.

Hon John Halden interjected.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member should listen. He is a member of the Labor Party and cannot work anything out for himself but he should try to work this out. If no documents were available to me or to the Government prior to the decision being made perhaps the member should ask some of his colleagues to see whether they know of any documents. Perhaps the member will discover that some documents are available to members of the Labor Party for judgment. First, I do not have any documents. Second, I did not ask for them. Third, they were not provided to me prior to the Government's making a decision. I said at Midland, in public for everyone to hear, that it is very easy for someone to say the same thing over and over again when the fact is that there was only one course of events. That is, Westrail responded to my request, as did all other officers in the transport area, and put forward what they considered needed to be done to improve the situation they were left with. In the case of Transperth, on previous occasions it has requested an increase in fares and charges but that operation -

Point of Order

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The reference to Transperth has nothing to do with the motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): I ask the Minister to confine his comments to the motion.

Debate Resumed

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The facts are as I have outlined. The member wants some documents tabled. I have pointed out consistently that there were no documents, just as there were no documents regarding Transperth. They were put forward to the previous Government, which knocked it back. The same situation occurred with Westrail. The previous Government left an instrumentality in a negative situation.

Hon John Halden: Can the Minister be specific? Is he saying that we rejected it as a Government?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member should listen. Perhaps he should write it down. This is the member's best chance to practise listening.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The member should address the Chair and there should be no interjections.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: When Westrail came back with recommendations on a series of decisions, including the closure of the Midland Workshops, that proposal was part of a plan put to Cabinet. There was no documentation whatsoever. I took the matter to Cabinet. It was Cabinet documentation on which the Government made a decision. Not only was it as clear as day that it was a right and proper decision, but also it was a critical one for Westrail. It is about time the shadow Minister and his colleagues stopped using the workers at Midland as political pawns. It is all the Opposition's doing. I heard the maiden speech by Hon Nick Griffiths last night, and noted questions on notice yesterday, both of which indicate that all members opposite seem to be doing is building up political hype which makes them feel good. When will members opposite actually do something for those people?

Hon N.D. Griffiths: In four years' time.

Several members interjected.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: If the Opposition was in Government for this four year term it would continue to do what it did in its previous 10 years in office. The Opposition, when in Government, created a debt for Westrail; depreciation has been added to the debt and must be serviced by the users of Westrail; and the losses incurred at the Midland Workshops were added to the debt and the users had to pay. Members opposite are very concerned about the 749 workers at Midland, but they do not care about the future of all the other people working for Westrail. If they did care why would they want to burden all of them with the \$18m loss incurred annually at Midland? If they were concerned about all the other Westrail workers, would they close their eyes and minds to that situation, or would they do what they have done in the past and offer a redundancy package every few years, get rid of some more workers and curtail the operations of Westrail; then get rid of some more workers and further curtail the operations? If that situation continued, in the end we would be left with two trains and 100 people and the workshops would have to be closed down. That is where the previous Government was heading. There would be no other option for the future of Westrail if we were to act consistently with the way the previous Government acted.

Hon Graham Edwards: Did you read the article in this morning's paper concerning the northern suburbs rail system? It has been twice as popular as forecast.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Yes, I did. The only thing members opposite did not know was where they would get the \$40m a year to service it. They did not have that in the books.

Hon Bob Thomas: Haven't you heard of economic growth?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! The President said a few words about interjections, and the President's policy carries forth from this Chair, even when I am sitting in it. I hope members take note of that policy.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: We hear a good deal about vandalism, but what we should

concentrate on is economic vandalism. That is what this State has experienced in the past 10 years. Members opposite sit back and puff out their chests with pride at being so successful in a few of the things they did, but those things can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Apart from the northern suburbs railway, what did they achieve?

Hon Graham Edwards: The marina, the freeway, Joondalup.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I could talk about marinas, but I will not do so now. We could spend \$20 million on a marina, but that would not create one job or earn one dollar in export income. The previous Government did not spend any money on the waterfront or on port authorities around the State; it spent money on marinas because that gained it votes, and that is what that Government was about.

I turn now to the comments made by Hon John Halden when he moved his motion. He mentioned the Commissioner for Railways. The commissioner, as the leader of Westrail, was primarily the person who responded to the recommendation that came forward, together with other members of Westrail's management. They were the architects who put this matter forward because under this Government they have an opportunity to achieve what is best for Westrail. They did not have that opportunity before. In response to Hon John Halden's comments about the commissioner and the branch managers of Westrail and what is happening with Westrail, I say that the only thing happening is something which will make things better for Westrail, despite the activities of a minority of people who do not want to see put in place the decisions that have already been made.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I have referred to the Commissioner of Railways and his role, and the branch managers and how they had all been involved, not in the immediate term prior to my taking it to Cabinet, but over a long period. As a matter of fact, even the previous Government would have to acknowledge it had its concerns. As a result of the losses at the Midland Workshops, that Government, in association with Westrail agreed to develop the Midland Workshops into a single business unit in order to identify its financial implications. That had been in process for about three years. This is another important point. Following the decision to employ a branch manager, the Government agreed that the number of workers and the number of rolling stock serviced at Midland would be reduced. On the one hand, the previous Government agreed to the workshop's employing a business manager and to turn the operation into an economic unit while at the same time reducing its operation significantly. With reduced operations it would be incapable of running as a business unit. In an operation involving some 3 000 workers, and where once 300 locomotives were serviced -

Hon John Halden: When were there 3 000 workers?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: A long time ago. The operation was being gradually wound down owing to the changes taking place within Westrail. Part way through that reorganisation a business manager was to be employed in order to turn the operation into a unit that could stand up and be counted. Whether the previous Government introduced the move or agreed with it, the bottom line remains that it agreed to a redundancy package which will see the number of workers at Midland reduced. No-one has indicated that the previous Government also had a plan to further reduce the number of workers at Midland as part of another redundancy package.

Hon Tom Helm: Do you have the evidence?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The evidence is in the Labor Party along with a decision that it would have had to spend \$27m.

Hon John Halden: The \$27m is your policy, not ours.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: That is the minimum amount required to bring Midland to anywhere near an effective operation. I suggest that the previous Government had no intention of spending one cent on the Midland Workshops. As I said initially, the Opposition is using as pawns the current workers who live and operate within the Midland area. One wonders why it did that without reference to or respect for the other Westrail workers. I remind members that the previous Government entered into a deal with the National Rail Corporation which will result in the loss of one-sixth of its total freight movement. Did that Government think

that as a result of that action Westrail would maintain the same number of employees? That is what we are being told. How can anyone, in honesty, not refer to the fact that the previous Government, without consultation with anyone, entered into a deal with the Federal Government to establish the NRC and as a result lose to Western Australia one-sixth of its freight movement? The result of that deal would be a loss of jobs throughout Westrail in such areas as Forrestfield, Kewdale, Merredin and Kalgoorlie. In other words, for every job taken over by the NRC a number of jobs would be lost because the NRC would not take on the equivalent number of lost Westrail jobs. It is about time people understood that.

Westrail and the NRC are presently negotiating the outcome of the previous Government's decision. It introduced a Bill to establish the NRC and paid no attention to the effect of that on Westrail's financial position or its workers. The Opposition knows that; if it wants to deny that, let me point out that every union executive who has been in my office has told me so. Who do I believe, the Opposition or the union bosses? In this case I prefer to believe the unions. With the decision to join the NRC, it was obvious that the ball game would change and the rules under which Westrail would operate would change. Are we hearing from the Opposition now that we should retain all the people currently employed by Westrail and simply pass on the losses to the users of Westrail and see it continue to lose market share and ultimately have to close down other parts of its operation?

Another part of the Government's policy - it was the bottom line of the new decision taken by Westrail management - was to ensure that Westrail moved more freight.

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Is Hon Tom Butler listening? It was to ensure that Westrail moved more freight. He has stood idly by as his Government did in the past, and allowed Westrail to disintegrate to a point where it will lose market share and ensure that within the rest of its operations - whether they be at Forrestfield, Kewdale, Northam, Kalgoorlie, Picton, Albany or anywhere else in the system - the number of employees will decrease all the time. Alternatively, the Opposition can now see that those country areas will not suffer a reduction in their number of workers.

When the Opposition refers to the railway running through Tammin or somewhere else, I remind its members that the role of Westrail is to move freight and that does not happen to be along West Coast Highway; it is in country Western Australia. That is where the action is. That is the whole beam of Westrail. The Opposition made ridiculous and irresponsible comments when it talked about the reasons for keeping railways open and criticised me when I said on behalf of the Government and Westrail that no railway line will be closed. I know that no railway line will be closed because I know they are required to move freight. That is Westrail's job.

Hon John Halden: No matter what they lose?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: It does not lose; if country lines are closed down fewer rolling stock, fewer workers and less maintenance will be required. Is that what Hon John Halden suggests should happen as he consistently did over the past few years?

That is what it did; it closed it down. It does not now cart fertiliser, wool, forestry products, fuel or oil.

Hon John Halden: Who wanted deregulation?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Here he is, the hypocrite I talk about. He makes a statement one day, says something different the next day and tries to get a run in the Press because he is being controversial.

Hon Kim Chance: Are you going to introduce regulations so that they can be carried?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: No. Not by chance, but by being commercial, we will ensure that Westrail not only retains the markets it has, but also that it increases its markets. Unlike his colleagues, Mr Chance will support that, because he is a thinker and he is a little different from those other fellows on the frontbench of the Opposition. I have asked Westrail whether it will now be able to talk to the mining company at Beenup with a view to obtaining that contract. I was told that it would go back and negotiate to see whether it could win that contract. Westrail said that if it had been in that position a few years ago it would have got the rail freight contract from Cataby to Muchea. If that had happened, all of those trucks

would not now be running up and down the Brand Highway. The Opposition encouraged that when it was in Government. We are giving Westrail some life. The previous Government choked and suffocated Westrail to death. Now it will have a chance, as will the Westrail workers. However, this Opposition will keep playing on the emotions of the workers of Midland, none of whom will be dismissed. If no-one wants to leave Westrail, he or she will not have to. What has happened? Over 1 200 workers have signified their intention to leave because the financial package being offered is very rewarding. It will be funded by Westrail over a period.

Hon John Halden: How long?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member should listen to this and get it right. That will depend on how many go over the period. If in the first year 500 go, the difference between paying them a redundancy package and paying 700 or 1 000 is significant. The time it takes for the exercise to be completed will depend on how many want to go. When the commissioner of Westrail or I say there will be an \$18m improvement in the operations of Westrail because of the Midland decision, that is exactly right.

Hon John Halden: No it is not, because you cannot agree.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Mr Halden cannot understand -

Hon John Halden: I can.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Mr Halden should listen and try to get it right this time so that he will not continue to give people the wrong information. The period that it takes for the redundancy packages to be taken up will determine the savings that are made over that period. Therefore, it could be more in the first year; in the second, third and fourth year it could be less. It is as simple as A, B and C, but I do not expect some members on the other side to understand it.

The Labor Party instigated the introduction of redundancy packages and some people took them up. The problem the Opposition now has is that it believes they should be offered only by the Labor Party! When we want to demonstrate our concern and respect for the workers at Midland or anywhere else we will do it this way. The redundancy packages we are offering are totally in line with that which has been offered before. The end result of all of this will mean that Westrail will have a meaningful future because it will know that the bottom line is that it must move more freight.

Let us now talk about one other aspect of Midland. A worker representative at the public meeting held at Midland asked why Westrail did not go out and get more work from the private sector to bring into the Midland Workshops. There are two answers to that: Firstly, this State and nation are in such a sad and sorry state that there is not enough work in the private sector already and it is putting people off - that is why there are a million unemployed even though members opposite seem to think that that is a totally acceptable situation; secondly, the cost of doing work at Midland was assessed at \$60 an hour. When work is brought into Midland at a charge of \$30 or \$40 an hour per transaction, Westrail loses more money. Therefore, more outside work brought into Midland would have meant Westrail losing more money.

Hon Graham Edwards: What does it cost now to send it overseas?

Hon John Halden: You don't have an answer to anything.

Hon Graham Edwards: Let us see some papers.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: What papers? Members opposite were in Government for 10 years, but they do not have a clue about what is going on at Midland, in the transport system, or anywhere else.

Opposition members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Members opposite did not have a clue what was going on. That is why the previous Government wrecked the State.

Opposition members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! When I call for order I mean keep quiet and stop persisting with

the interjections. That is what it means. I usually say it fairly quietly for a start. However, the more I cough, the louder I get and that makes me cough more. I suggest that the Minister forget interjections and direct his comments to the Chair. I guarantee him that he will not get any interjections from here.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: You are right, Sir; they are not worth worrying about.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I hope the member is not talking about the interjections which emanate from the Chair.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Anyone with one ounce of commonsense would understand when these wild accusations about Westrail going out and getting more work from the private sector are made that, firstly, it cannot because there is no work and, secondly, it is not possible because of the cost. Did Westrail have an opportunity to improve that lot at Midland? Yes, it did, but unfortunately it did not take it up. As a consequence, the workshops will not be in a position to do that for a long time in the future without major changes. How could it have done it? The whole Midland operation - the site and the buildings, the machinery, the plant and the technology available - was so far out of date that it could never have competed in the real world.

Hon John Halden: You need to be very careful here. I have some questions to ask that you will not like if you keep that up.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: If the member's next set of questions are like the rest, he will never learn. The Midland operation is lagging behind the rest of the world by so much that bringing it up to scratch to compete with other operations is a long way off. Let me remind the member that the National Rail Corporation ensured that its maintenance work would not be carried out at Midland, despite all the dreaming under the sun. As a matter of fact, a similar operation in New South Wales has been completely closed down as a result of the takeover by the NRC.

Hon Tom Helm: A conservative Government.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: A Federal Government set up the NRC. Hon Tom Helm does not have the capacity to understand that the Federal Government set up the NRC because we were so far out of touch with the railway operations in the other States. The operations at Midland were not in the ball park with regard to maintenance work for Westrail or work for the private sector.

Reference was then made to the site and the member jumped up and asked questions. He provided reams of information, without any basis for that information, about what would happen to the site. The decision by this Government with regard to the Midland Workshops is totally commercial. The future of the site will be determined not by chance or as part of some dream. The future of that site is not reliant on the workings of the Midland Workshops.

Hon John Halden: I never said it was.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: If Hon John Halden can bear to read his comments in the *Hansard* tomorrow - I know he will find that difficult - he will acknowledge what he said. I am putting the record straight on the future of the 78 hectares.

Hon John Halden: Is it contaminated or not?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: If the member stays away, it has a chance! It is not known whether it is contaminated.

Hon John Halden: It is.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I suggest that the member settle down.

Hon John Halden: What does the EPA say about it?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: It has not been to the site but, of course, it will be going there.

Hon Tom Stephens: If you do not sack them first.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I am not in control of that. The future use of the Midland site will be determined in a proper and responsible way, as is appropriate when changing the use of an area in this State. In addition, Westrail is continually monitoring various aspects of that area.

Hon Graham Edwards: Some of your members disagree with you and it will be interesting to hear them speak in a few minutes.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: They do not disagree with me. A number of people have speculated and that is right and fair. Everybody in Midland and all members on both sides of the House should talk about the best use for that site. It is responsible to do so and at the end of the day the Government, along with Westrail, will decide on the future use of that land. Those who write or say anything different are simply misleading people.

Hon John Halden: Is that what Richard Lewis is doing?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Richard Lewis is the Minister responsible for heritage matters and he has referred to a number of options for which that site may be available. That is the right thing to do. If Hon John Halden has any suggestions for the future use of that site, he should submit them rather than be totally negative and talk about reopening the workshops and saving the workers, without caring about other aspects. The site has unlimited potential.

Hon John Halden: But it is worth nothing.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: It is a shame that so many people are totally negative about the future use of that site. I will not go into the opportunities that are available, but people with depth and character are looking at that site and considering its future use.

Hon John Halden: Is the site contaminated?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Hon John Halden does not know and I do not know whether it is contaminated.

Hon John Halden: You told me and the Leader of the Opposition that it was.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The site covers 78 hectares. There is a pond on the site that may be contaminated.

Hon John Halden: What is under the bitumen? It is contaminated, is it not?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon John Halden. One of the things I have been able to say during the years he has been a member is that he always comes to order when I call, but today he is reacting quite differently. I suggest that perhaps it might be a good idea for him to direct a few minutes of his time to Standing Order No 118. He may like to make a few notes and I suggest that Hon Tom Helm do the same thing, because they may well be required to make a speech shortly.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The site will be evaluated and the Government is totally open to any suggestions from interested persons and organisations. The Hotham Valley railway group, the railway museum, industry groups such as the Midland and Districts Chamber of Commerce, and any organisations interested in the historical aspects of the site will be encouraged to participate. As I said in answer to a question yesterday, Gavan Troy has also been to the site accompanied by industry people because he promoted it for a long time during his period as Minister for Transport.

I refer to the point about the plans by Westrail and the task force for the work force currently employed at Midland and the work currently carried out at the Midland Workshops. It must be remembered that until 4 March next year when the workshops close, an ongoing assessment will be made to identify the other organisations that will carry out the work. As a consequence the task force has invited and encouraged interested people as part of a planned management system to participate and to indicate the degree to which they want to be involved in the future maintenance operations of Westrail. That is a proper and businesslike thing to do. At the moment another task force is moving around the State talking to railway organisations in country areas and to the private sector to identify the potential they have to maintain the rolling stock and carry out other maintenance activities of Westrail. Since the decision was made to close the workshops a series of proper management procedures have been put in place. The future of the Midland Workshops will be determined by those people who are employed by Westrail who will be brought in to identify which activities should be carried out by the private sector and which by the people currently employed by Westrail in various organisations around the State - including metropolitan and country. Seminars or business get-togethers are being arranged to enable people to be totally involved. Nobody can say that that is irresponsible or that it is a case of running off without our act together.

This program is part of a plan, and was an integrated part of the Government's decision in response to Westrail management's request. The Government responded to Westrail's request and acted without the political strings attached which have consistently thwarted the ability of Westrail and other Government instrumentalities in the past to operate on a commercial basis.

It is funny that Barry Henshaw, the manager at Midland, has been attacked by the Labor Opposition regarding his role in this matter. The previous Government was involved in appointing that person to the job, yet members opposite criticise him for what they believe he did wrong. I wonder whether members opposite will have a look at themselves and ask who appointed Barry Henshaw in the first place.

Hon John Halden: What an argument!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member may laugh, but he pointed to him; he believed he had a job to do.

Hon John Halden: I did not point to him.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member has mentioned his name. Members opposite cannot have it both ways.

If Westrail users around the State - individuals or companies - believe its service is better than any other option put before them, they will use it. Westrail management is well aware that the organisation's future depends totally on its ability to capture business in the marketplace.

Also, as I have already mentioned, a series of transport seminars will be held around the State drawing together all transport modes. This will drive every dollar further and ensure that the State is not spending money on roads in an area in which a good rail system operates; likewise, we will not encourage Westrail to spend money in areas inevitably served by road. That is acting in a businesslike manner. The Opposition finds this unacceptable because it has no experience of acting in a businesslike manner; if it did, it would not have beset the State with an \$11b debt. Opposition members find it hard to comprehend business.

The facts are before us. The motion to call for documentation to be tabled in Parliament is totally without foundation. There is no documentation. The Opposition has lived and breathed a hoax on the public and Westrail workers. The only defence on which the Opposition operates is that the decision was made on grounds on which political mileage can be made. However, at no time since the election or since this decision was made has the Opposition produced a shred of evidence on how it would operate Westrail in the current circumstances. The Opposition has not done this because during its 10 years in Government Westrail lost market share. Consequently, Westrail introduced the number of reforms to move workers previously employed by Westrail.

The Opposition's attack has no foundation. The Opposition is driven by politics in an attempt to cover up its total mismanagement of Westrail in its time in office. At that time Westrail was never allowed to do what it wished. Every time a decision was about to be made by Westrail management, the pitter patter of tiny feet could be heard at the Minister's office in an endeavour to determine whether the decision was politically acceptable. It is time that people knew how the previous Government operated.

Unlike the previous Government, decisions will now be made by responsible people - given responsibility by the Minister - to manage the facilities around the State. These people are managers to the benefit of the commercial operation of this organisation, and they will be allowed to do their job. They will not be told that they cannot make a decision because it is politically unacceptable. We are about allowing organisations to operate effectively, not directing them.

Several members interjected.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Many people will not be happy about this situation -

Hon Graham Edwards: We will see what happens when they want to close the Broomehill Police Station; we will see intervention strike like lightning!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: We are about allowing organisations to turn the State around. If we do not do that, this State has no future.

*Adjournment of Debate***HON MURIEL PATTERSON** (South West) [4.37 pm]: I move -

That the debate be adjourned.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (15)		
Hon George Cash	Hon Peter Foss	Hon M.D. Nixon
Hon E.J. Charlton	Hon Barry House	Hon R.G. Pike
Hon M.J. Criddle	Hon P.R. Lightfoot	Hon B.M. Scott
Hon B.K. Donaldson	Hon P.H. Lockyer	Hon Derrick Tomlinson
Hon Max Evans	Hon N.F. Moore	Hon Muriel Patterson (<i>Teller</i>)
Noes (13)		
Hon T.G. Butler	Hon John Halden	Hon Tom Stephens
Hon Kim Chance	Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan	Hon Doug Wenn
Hon J.A. Cowdell	Hon Mark Nevill	Hon Tom Helm (<i>Teller</i>)
Hon Graham Edwards	Hon Sam Piantadosi	
Hon N.D. Griffiths	Hon J.A. Scott	

Pairs

Hon Murray Montgomery
Hon W.N. Stretch

Hon Cheryl Davenport
Hon Bob Thomas

Question thus passed.

Debate adjourned.

ORDERS OF THE DAY - MAIDEN SPEECH OF HON P.R. LIGHTFOOT*Question Time Deferred***HON GEORGE CASH** (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [4.40 pm] - by leave:
I move without notice -

That the maiden speech of Hon P.R. Lightfoot be taken as Order of the Day No 1 and that question time be deferred until the conclusion of his speech or five o'clock, whichever is the later.

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [4.41 pm]: The Opposition will agree to this motion. Question time is one of the most important orders of business of the day, but we accept that a new member's maiden speech is also something that is very important and something that will stay in the mind of that member for the duration of his stay in the Parliament. While we are happy to agree to the motion, we certainly do it on that premise and not on any basis of diminishing the importance of question time.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

Debate resumed from 22 June.

HON P.R. LIGHTFOOT (North Metropolitan) [4.43 pm]: I intend to frame my speech around Aboriginal Australians and their contribution to society, their genesis, some of their problems and some of those problems inherent in our society generally. Before I do so, Mr President, it is appropriate that I record in *Hansard* your sixth consecutive appointment as President of this august Chamber and to outline very briefly - mercifully so - the contribution that you have made to Western Australia over the past several decades.

I believe, Sir, only Sir John Kirwan, who was elected in August 1926 and served for 20 consecutive years until he chose to retire on 21 May 1946, has exceeded your record here.

God willing, at the end of this term, on my calculations, you will have exceeded his magnificent contribution to this Parliament of Western Australia. I trust that the metaphoric hospital that you spoke about last night will not come to reality. As all members are aware, if I can start with the end of his contribution, Hon Clive Griffiths probably reached the pinnacle of his political life when he was elected to the presidency of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive committee. As far as I am able to ascertain that is the first time an Australian has held that important position. It involves the chairmanship of a committee that administers 122 different Parliaments of the world and they comprise largely, not exclusively, those countries that formed the old British Empire.

In the early days Hon Clive Griffiths was a member of the South Perth City Council, from 1962 until 1966. He is already the longest serving member in either House of Parliament, having been elected in 1965. For those members who do not know, the President attended Fremantle Boys High School. Later he attended the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, something I have in common with him. The President went on after his term with the South Perth City Council to become a member of the Legislative Council in 1965 and, as I said, is now the longest serving member in either House. He held the parliamentary positions of Secretary of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Joint Government Parties from 1974 to 1977. He was elected Deputy Chairman of Committees in the Legislative Council between 1974 and 1977. He has been President of the Legislative Council since 1977. Hon Clive Griffiths is one of the longest serving parliamentary Presiding Officers of the British Commonwealth. He has served as President during both Liberal and Labor Governments. He was Chairman of the Joint House Committee from 1977 to 1986.

The President has made a number of landmark rulings - in these troubled times one can reflect upon this - not the least of which was a notable decision which set a precedent when he ruled that the Commonwealth of Australia had no power to alter the Western Australian Constitution. One of his first decisions as President was to implement non-gender employment in this House of Parliament. He promoted equal opportunities on all occasions.

He has been joint President and Chairman of the Western Australian Commonwealth Parliamentary Association since 1977. His achievements so far, as the CPA Chairman, I would like to read for the record. In 1991 he initiated and led the first CPA mission to South Africa for 30 years. His delegation held more than 18 meetings with key South African leaders, including President F.W. de Klerk, Dr Nelson Mandela and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. In 1992 he ran a post-electoral CPA seminar in Zambia, aimed at helping Zambian parliamentarians adjust to the transition of multi-party democracy. In 1992 our President delivered a paper on democracy in parliamentary institutions as the lead speaker at an international symposium on democracy held to mark the two hundredth anniversary of parliamentary institutions in Quebec, Canada. In that same year he led a CPA delegation at a major international conference on electoral monitoring and assistance programs. The conference, held in Ottawa, Canada, was organised by the United Nations and the Government of Canada. In that year he was a member of the Commonwealth team involved in monitoring the presidential election in Ghana. This year the President was a member of the Commonwealth team involved in monitoring the general election in Lesotho.

The President has a long and distinguished career in community service involving youth work and senior citizens and was involved in the introduction of Neighbourhood Watch in Western Australia. Many other things are attributable to the President but are too numerous to mention at this time. Mr President, this State is lucky to have a man with your ability and the long service you have given to so many areas. I hope you continue to serve this State for many years.

I turn now to the mooted area of Aborigines in Australia which has become prevalent in the Press and in this House already. I do not want to turn this into a lesson, but I begin by compressing the planet Earth, which is about five billion years old, into a 12 month period to gain some perspective of life on Earth. During the first eight months of that year no life existed on this planet, although some microfossils were discovered in recent years in the Pilbara. In the next two months very primitive life forms existed on this globe - marine life - and it was not until well into December that mammals appeared on earth. It was not until 10.00 pm or 11.00 pm of 31 December of that year that the first human form, *Homo erectus*, appeared. In reality, that time covered half a million years. From that time until a minute to midnight *Homo erectus* had developed only into stone age people. Those people had not

developed to any stage of civilisation, although they were beginning to make sophisticated tools of stone. It was not until the last 60 seconds of that year on 31 December that all that we enjoy today as civilisation - the discovery and use of metals, the mastery of the oceans, the air, and land, nuclear energy, and the use of gas and electricity - were brought into being. That is exhibited today as a rich tapestry of life on Earth. In that tapestry is interwoven Aboriginal Australians.

Some members may not be aware that Aborigines came to Australia perhaps as long as 200 000 years ago. One may say that no scientific evidence exists of that, but anecdotal evidence is available. Campfires were found through the recovery of drilling cores that were carbon dated, although one needs more than that. However, that is the oldest hypothesis of human life in Australia. Indisputable evidence is available that Aborigines have been in Australia for 60 000 years and that Australia had Paleolithic and Neolithic Aborigines. The first were the Paleolithic Tasmanians, or the Tasmanoids. Their arrival in Australia was probably the earliest of any known inhabitants anywhere in the world. Science is not too sure from where they came. One may accept the traditional route of island hopping when the ice caps were frozen, south through the islands of the various archipelagoes, through Indonesia, New Guinea and Cape York Peninsula, which was then a continuous land mass.

On settlement at the turn of the 19th century in Tasmania it is generally accepted that perhaps 1 200 to 2 000 Aborigines were residing in Tasmania. Regrettably, by 1876 the only full blood Aborigine to have survived was Truganini, a female who lived to the age of 73. The Tasmanian Aborigines have been described as being retrogressive; that is, they were going backwards in a cultural sense. They were never a civilisation - that is a misnomer. No Aborigines in Australia prior to white settlement had ever formed a civilised community. The Tasmanian Aborigines, for instance, had forgotten how to light fires in the traditional mainland sense. They took fire around in a damp clod. They had no coolamons, the traditional mainland thinly carved dishes, which were so useful, and they had no clothes. I often wonder whether there was not some correlation between the first Australians and continental drift, when Australia was part of the super continent known as Gondwanaland, and whether that drift was not instrumental in allowing Aborigines to come from Africa. There seems to be no dispute that human life evolved in Africa. Dr Leakey, the famous anthropologist, discovered remains of our early ancestors in the Rift Valley in Kenya that have been dated at 1.6 million years old. I remind members that India was part of Gondwanaland and is still moving into what was then Asia. It still is Asia, of course, but it was separate from the Indian subcontinent. The Himalayas are rising about four to five centimetres a year and halfway up the Himalayas, at 12 000 or 13 000 feet, marine fossils can be found.

The question of how people ever got to Australia has always perplexed and interested me. It must be one of the great epics of human endeavour - not just their arrival on this continent but how they sustained themselves here. The Tasmanians were the first. A second wave of Aborigines came here, once again during an ice age when the large amount of precipitation throughout the world was locked up in the two Poles. These people were termed anthropologically the Murrayans, and they pushed the Tasmanians - not entirely but substantially - from the mainland across Bass Strait, which was then a land mass itself, and into what we now know as Tasmania. The Murrayans were largely on the eastern half of the continent. On reflection, I could tell the difference between the Murrayans - who, when I was a boy at school, seemed to be softer, gentler and happier people - and those Aborigines I met later in the desert, the Carpentarians, who seem to have been the last great migration of Aborigines to this continent.

As the name may suggest, the Murrayans settled along the vast watercourses of the Darling, Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers, and for several thousand years they were undisturbed. The last Aborigines to arrive in Australia in any number were the Carpentarians. They in turn usurped the Murrayans and confined them to valleys and inaccessible areas of eastern Australia and largely to the tips of the southern part of the continent - the York and Eyre Peninsulas, though not Kangaroo Island, strangely enough, and not Western Australia. There were few places the Carpentarians did not settle in this continent of three million square miles. There is no evidence yet - and I say "yet" because I believe evidence will eventually be uncovered - that any Aborigines settled or camped on Rottnest Island. I know that matter is topical, with the confirmation of a mass grave of former Aboriginal prisoners there. I

believe that to be indisputable, and I find it rather odd that we have not already taken steps to secure that area. It is not a matter of race; it is not a matter of culture; it is not a matter of religion: It is a matter of everyone respecting any other race's dead. It is something this Government should redress as hastily as possible and set aside that area in perpetuity for the people who were laid to rest there. Undoubtedly they were related to the remaining Aborigines in Western Australia.

The Carpentarians are rather aggressive by comparison. They are slightly taller, not quite as black and they were able to sustain themselves much better than the Murrayans and certainly the Tasmanians ever could. Eventually they evolved into the largest tribe or subethnic people to inhabit the continent. The people I have had the most to do with over the years, who in a real sense occupied the largest area of land in the nation, have been the Pitjantjatjaras. The Pitjantjatjaras occupied the central part of Australia which covers an area from the eastern extreme in the centre of this State, part of the Northern Territory and a substantial part of the north western part of South Australia. The other groups there are the Ngarla and the Ngarni, which are not numerically large. When I was in that area in the 1960s these people were living a traditional lifestyle. They were friendly without being aggressive and they certainly were not inferior. Many of them did not speak English, some of them wore no clothes and they carried spears, waddies, woomeras and boomerangs.

One of the most delightful experiences I had when I visited Warburton Range mission, which was run by a quasi-Christian organisation funded by Victoria, was to listen to the Wangai children sing, "God Save the Queen" in Pitjantjatjara. I wonder whether it was ever recorded.

At the time I visited this area Aboriginal people were not citizens of Australia. Referendums were not held until 1967. Members know that few referendums succeed. One of the great things Sir Robert Menzies did in his last years as Prime Minister was to initiate at a Federal election in 1967 the admittance, which was long overdue, of Aboriginal people as full citizens of Australia. It was brought about by two alterations to the Australian Constitution. The first amendment was to section 51(xxvi) which in 1967 read, "The people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws." It was amended by deleting the words, "other than the aboriginal race in any State". Section 127 of the Constitution, which alluded to Aboriginal people, was deleted. The amendments to the Constitution gave Aboriginal people full citizenship rights for the first time in 1967 and we have worked on that since then. We seem to have been retrogressive in our assimilation practices.

The other Aboriginal groups I have had considerable dealings with in the north west are the Yamajis and the Cunyu people. I could see some difference between the desert dwelling Pitjantjatjara and the Yamajis, but I could not see any difference between the Pitjantjatjaras and the Cunyu. They knew they were different, but I could not see the difference. In my four and a half years in the north west with the Yamajis I spent the most memorable years of my life. I found the Aboriginal people interesting and intelligent and they have prodigious memories that far exceed the average white Australian's memory. The reason for that is in their evolution. I learnt from them how to make spears, woomeras and boomerangs and how they build their mia-mias. I also learnt a little about their culture.

As a civilised nation I do not know whether we could accept Aboriginal culture in its totality. It needs to be adjusted. I am not saying that we should encourage the Aboriginal people to do away with their culture and although some aspects of it have been modified other aspects need to be modified. I refer to their corporal punishment, the easy way in which one can find a spear in one's leg, the easy way their culture determines they should mutilate themselves, such as knocking out their front teeth, which is practised on the young Pitjantjatjara men when they reach manhood, and circumcision with a sharp stone or pocket knife. I am not sure whether that is part of their culture we should encourage them to maintain. Some parts of their culture have gone with enlightenment and settlement.

One of the good things about white settlement in Australia - I will not use the term European in this context because it is a racist term - is that we have had Chinese and Indo-Chinese, Indians and Semites settle here. I may have something more to say about the European aspect of it at a later stage. I could go on at length about the advent of Aborigines to Australia. It would be difficult not to say that they have given a great deal to the colour of

this national tapestry of ours and I hope that after the appalling backlash and fallout from the Mabo decision we are able to talk assimilation, that we are able to talk about one Australia, if not one Western Australia, that we do not have divisions in the community and that we do not have vast areas of black homelands.

I refer to the Mabo decision handed down by the High Court on 3 June 1992 and the ramifications of it for Western Australia. Most members in this House would be aware of these ramifications. Western Australia is particularly affected by that decision. In this one-third of the nation - a million square miles - Aborigines hold about 27 million hectares of land which is inalienable land or land that could easily be made inalienable, or it is land which is very easily claimable under the Mabo guidelines. I can assure members that while the 27 million hectares is substantially in the desert area, it includes areas from Esperance to Kununurra and from the Perth central business district through to Kalgoorlie, Leonora and Laverton. It covers about 11 per cent of the State. In Western Australia there are approximately 45 000 Aborigines. Australia-wide the Aboriginal population in percentage terms is about 1.53 per cent. It has been estimated that when the First Fleet arrived in 1778 there were between 250 000 and 750 000 Aborigines on this continent. Of course, it was a real guess. No-one had settled in this country at that time. The most accurate figure we have been able to ascertain with the benefit of hindsight and science is that there were 300 000 people across a continent the size of the mainland of the United States of America. I want to make a comparison here. Nineteen of the 49 States in mainland USA do not have any reserve land for Indians, even though all of those 19 States have indigenous people living within their perimeters. The remainder of those States have 17 million hectares of land set aside, and on those 17 million hectares live or are entitled to live between 1.8 million and 1.9 million American Indians, or Amerinds. I have said already that 27 million hectares have been set aside in Western Australia alone.

There is a special case for Western Australia because indisputably 80 per cent of the land is claimable under the guidelines set down by the High Court justices, and the continuity of Aborigines living or alternatively being entitled to live on that land seems to make little difference under a judgment by one of the justices, Mr Justice Toohey. For example, if the native people of the Maralinga area who were forcibly removed under a joint British-Australian operation to Yalatta on the Great Australian Bight do not have claim to that land, then the Mabo decision means nothing. However, if they do have claim to that land - and I can assure members that they do, notwithstanding that for 40-odd years they have not been there - then 80 per cent of Western Australia is claimable under Mabo.

Mr Justice Toohey states at page 185 of the judgment that, "Proof of the existence of title is sufficient. The nature of title is irrelevant and the question of whether or not it exists." He states also at the same page that "Presence on land will establish native title to land" - and at page 186 - "as long as it is not merely at random". He states also at page 186 that "Presence is not necessarily the same as possession". He states at pages 187 and 191 that, "If presence existed on 'annexation' and exists now that is enough, even where there have been long absences from the land, as long as the absence has not amounted to an abandonment under traditional native law"; and that refers back to the comment on page 185. Justice Toohey leaves this argument open but does not specifically advance it. I believe he has left it open on purpose, but of course others may not choose to follow this line.

Some members will be aware that Western Australia contributes what will in a few years amount to 30 per cent of Australia's export income, and certainly not less than 27 per cent, yet it has just over 10 per cent of the population of the nation. Most of that wealth comes from gas, oil and minerals, and most of that is within the area that could be claimed under Mabo. There is no question that in Western Australia Mabo is a special case. Members will remember that Mabo refers to an island at the northern end of the Cape York Archipelago. The people who live on the Murray Islands are called Meriam people. They are Melanesian and bear no relationship to Aborigines. They probably came from New Guinea; history will not tell us, but they indisputably settled those islands hundreds of years prior to white settlement. Paradoxically, the Queensland Government during the shameful blackbirding years last century, when these people were taken for slaves or semislaves, brought the islands under Queensland sovereignty as a protection.

Western Australia is, as I said, a special case, but the Mabo decision affects not only Western Australia but also the whole nation and its balance of payments. For Mr Keating to say, "We

will pay compensation" is a sign of his manifest instability. Canberra earns nothing; its revenue comes from the States. Mr Keating is unstable. One cannot take 80 per cent of the most revenue productive land and transfer it to black ownership or to the courts for an interim period and expect investment to continue, the balance of payments deficit to diminish, unemployment to decline or confidence in Australia to increase. The reason that will not happen is that section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution - which is often called the inconsistency section - states that where State law conflicts with Federal law, Federal law shall prevail. So we have the Aboriginal Heritage Act in Western Australia and the Racial Discrimination Act enacted by the Commonwealth, and so long as the Aboriginal Heritage Act does not conflict with the Racial Discrimination Act, everything is fine. Therefore, we are limited in what we can do in this place. However, there is no question, and the judgment by the High Court justices on 3 June spelt it out, that Federal legislation could be enacted, or in the case of the Racial Discrimination Act, rescinded, and the problem would go away. We cannot make the problem go away in Western Australia. We need to resolve this issue in conjunction with the Federal Government. If we do not do that, there could be years of conflict. Members will recall that the Mabo decision took 10 years to bring down, and also that shortly after that, vast claims were made for the Kimberley, which included claims on sea and on land.

I would like to think that we can have a rational conversation about this issue, but I do not think it will be with the Prime Minister. He has gone too far. He needs to appoint a person outside the usual people who have spoken out about Mabo - the Special Minister for State, Frank Walker, and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Tickner, would be no good, and the Prime Minister would be no good. He needs to appoint someone who can meet with the heads of State or with persons appointed by the heads of States to try to resolve the problem. If that is not done, I can see investment drying up and unemployment increasing. On projected figures, Western Australia is already leading the nation out of recession. We have a projected growth rate until the year 2000 of about 5.1 per cent - four per cent this year, five-odd per cent next year, and 5.5 per cent in 1994. That is based almost entirely upon commodity exports. I say with as much sincerity as I can that we are all Western Australians. We cannot arrive at a happy solution when settlement of any problem is based upon the colour of one's skin. I hold no guilt for what happened to the Aboriginal people, and black children can hold no guilt for what happened to the early white settlers who were killed or mutilated. The solution must come from the Federal Government. The States do not have the power. They gave away that power on 1 January 1901. We can fight and we can take the matter back to the High Court, but that will not fix the problem. The problem must be resolved by looking past the colour of one's skin and one's ethnic, cultural or sectarian background. It must be based on a love for Western Australia and for all the people who live in this State.

I could go on but I will mercifully end now and thank members for their attention and for the opportunity to again serve the State of Western Australia.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to. Those in favour say "aye"; those against say "no". The ayes have it.

Question thus passed; the Address-in-Reply adopted.

[Questions without notice taken.]

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Rescission of Vote

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [5.50 pm]: Following the granting of leave to facilitate Hon Ross Lightfoot's maiden speech, was the Leader of the House of the view that the Opposition should now have the call on the Address-in-Reply?

The PRESIDENT: Order! That question is out of order. I will tell members what is the situation once and for all. I remind members again that this is a House of Parliament. As such, it has a very strict set of Acts, laws and standing orders which govern its operations. When a member addresses the Chair on any matter whatsoever and that member concludes his comments and resumes his seat, the question has to be put. No member can speak in this Chamber unless there is a question before the Chair.

In relation to the debate on the Address-in-Reply, I waited for what I thought was an indecently long time before I put the question and nobody rose. Hon Ross Lightfoot had concluded his remarks. *Hansard* will reveal to members who read it that, before concluding his remarks, he warned all of us that he was about to conclude. That, on its own, was sufficient warning to members who wished to participate in that debate that it was getting dangerously close to the time for them to ready themselves to stand to obtain the call. Hon Ross Lightfoot sat down and I put the question. I have called already for a copy of *Hansard* to see what was done in case anybody has any doubt about it. I have no doubt because I know what I did - I put the question. I said, "The question is that the motion be agreed to." Nobody did anything and so I called for all those in favour to say "aye" and waited again. Nobody did anything. I said "those against say 'no'" and then said, "The ayes have it." I took about that much time to do it and no-one responded.

It is not my job as President to pop down onto the floor of the Chamber and jog somebody by saying, "Hey, you are supposed to be standing to obtain the call." A member of the Opposition has approached me already with an argument. Incidentally, I, as President, will not allow that discussion to take place. Members can have the discussion, but they will get rid of me first. The argument is not even a logical one. I agree that there was an arrangement for Hon Ross Lightfoot to intrude into the time that we normally take for questions without notice. However, the permission for him to do that did not carry with it any suggestion that when he finished the question would not be put. The question has to be put in order for me to determine who will be the next speaker to address the Chamber at the conclusion of questions without notice. That is a simple thing to understand.

There is a way out of it if honourable members want a way out of it. I do not know whether the House does, though. Why do members think that I gave my maiden speech on onions, for goodness sake? I know nothing about them and I certainly do not eat them. However, I made my maiden speech on onions because the President put the question on the Address-in-Reply when no-one stood to take the call. The first matter that arose following that was a Bill about onions and I took the opportunity to speak on it. This is not a unique state of affairs; but it is a very undesirable state of affairs, particularly for members who are new and have prepared speeches. However, as I said, this is a House of Parliament and we cannot just waive the rules because somebody forgets to do something. If members want me to do that, they can do a simple thing and they will not hurt my feelings if they do it. However, I warn them that if they want to bring this Chamber into disrepute, they will endeavour to fix the problem by some method other than the correct procedure which is available to the House should it desire to go down that path.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: I have no intention of bringing the House into disrepute.

The PRESIDENT: I reassure the member that I was referring to the House.

MOTION - STANDING ORDER No 171 SUSPENSION

Address-in-Reply, Vote Rescission to Resume Debate Adjourned to Later Sitting Stage

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: I move -

That Standing Order No 171 be suspended in order that I may move forthwith that the vote on the Address-in-Reply passed at this day's sitting be rescinded and that the debate on that question be resumed as if it had been adjourned to a later stage of this day's sitting.

The PRESIDENT: The motion requires a seconder and I advise honourable members that it will require the concurrence of an absolute majority for it to be carried.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [5.58 pm]: The Leader of the Opposition has decided, to overcome what I assume he believes was an inadvertent act by a member in not adjourning the Address-in-Reply debate, to move to rescind the vote of this House to enable the Address-in-Reply to continue. It is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition did not give a reason to the House for his moving the motion because he leaves me to presume what is in his head. Given that it is now one minute to six o'clock and that, under the standing orders of this House, the House will be required to suspend for dinner, I intend to speak until six o'clock to enable him to have discussions with me to determine whether the Government should support the motion.

Hon Graham Edwards: I understood that was our agreement.

Hon GEORGE CASH: We have no agreement. I suggested to the Leader of the Opposition that he ask me a question during question time and invite me to try to resolve what he indicated was a serious problem.

Hon Graham Edwards: I indicated that we should discuss the matter behind the Chair.

The PRESIDENT: Order! In fairness, the Leader of the Opposition was endeavouring to ask me a question and I cut him off. I am giving him the benefit of the doubt that that was the question. I cut him off because the Leader of the Government asked for the business of the House to be resumed. I am saying this in the spirit of ensuring that we do not muck it up.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Notwithstanding whether or not the Leader of the Opposition was attempting to ask me a question, it is quite clear that I need to speak to the Leader of the Opposition in an attempt to resolve what has been put to me as a very serious situation. The time being six o'clock, I assume we will now suspend the sitting for dinner and during that period I hope to have discussions with the Leader of the Opposition so that when we return I can again address this motion.

The PRESIDENT: Let me also remind everybody that the standing order which allows the Leader of the Opposition or anybody else to move this motion in the first place is Standing Order No 461, which says in effect that if in the opinion of the President it is of such an urgent nature that it requires this to be done, it can be done. I would have thought one of the early actions a mover of such a motion would have taken would be to inquire from the President whether he thought it was of an urgent nature. The way to do that is to see the President when the House is not sitting. I take it that the Leader of the Opposition intends to speak to me during the suspension.

Hon Graham Edwards: I surely do, Mr President.

Sitting suspended from 6.02 to 7.30 pm

Hon GEORGE CASH: It has become obvious to both the Leader of the Opposition and me that rather than move directly to invite the House to suspend Standing Order No 171, the proper procedure in accordance with the standing orders is to address the questions raised with respect to Standing Order No 461. If they could be successfully addressed, the opportunity would arise for a member to move for the suspension of Standing Order No 171 in order that the other motion could be moved. It is important for the House to understand Standing Order No 461 which reads -

In cases which in the opinion of the President are of urgent necessity, a standing order of the Council may be suspended on motion duly made and seconded, without notice, provided that such motion be agreed to by an absolute majority of the whole of the number of Members.

Standing Order No 171 states -

Rescission of vote.

171. An order, resolution, or other vote of the Council may be rescinded, but not during the same session, unless 7 days' notice be given and an absolute majority of the whole number of Members vote in favour of its rescission.

Quite clearly there are a number of consecutive steps that need to be taken if we are to move for the rescission of the vote in respect of the Address-in-Reply debate. I will not go into the reasons that no member in this House stood to seek the adjournment of the Address-in-Reply debate when the question was put, and it appears with hindsight that a number of members were of the view that some other member would take the adjournment. Consequently, when the question was put nobody stood and quite properly you, Mr President, called for members to indicate their support or opposition and the vote was carried. In the carrying of that vote technically the Address-in-Reply debate came to an end. After some discussions with the Leader of the Opposition and after limited consultation with some other members in the House, it seems that we cannot condone the closing of the Address-in-Reply debate when both the Leader of the Opposition and I are aware that a list of members who have indicated their intention to speak on the debate is still outstanding. I, therefore, believe it proper under the circumstances - I make the point that I will not enumerate the circumstances put to me or

the Leader of the Opposition during the dinner suspension save to say a number of reasons were put forward - to take certain action. The Leader of the Opposition and I approached the President to determine whether in view of the arguments put forward by us, a matter of urgent necessity had arisen under the terms of Standing Order No 461. I advise the House that the President has indicated that such urgent necessity has arisen and he has given his concurrence with respect to Standing Order No 461. If the Leader of the Opposition agrees to seek leave of the House to withdraw the motion he has moved - in its present form it cannot be supported by the Government because it is not in accord with the steps that must be taken as set out in the standing orders - and that leave is granted, it is my intention to move that Standing Order No 171 be suspended in order that I may move a motion that the vote on the Address-in-Reply debate passed at this day's sitting be rescinded and the debate be resumed as if it had been adjourned to a later stage of this day's sitting.

The reason for the long explanation is so that members will understand there was consultation between the Leader of the Opposition and me during the dinner suspension, that we approached you, Mr President, and that you have been pleased to concur that a matter of urgent necessity has arisen. The Government will not support the motion before the House, and I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition has advised that he intends to seek leave of the House to withdraw that motion. If leave is granted, I will move as outlined.

By leave, Hon Graham Edwards (Leader of the Opposition) withdrew his motion.

MOTION - STANDING ORDER No 171 SUSPENSION

Address-in-Reply, Vote Rescission

On motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), resolved with an absolute majority -

That Standing Order No 171 be suspended in order that I may move forthwith that the vote on the Address-in-Reply passed at this day's sitting be rescinded and that the debate on that question be resumed as if it had been adjourned to a later stage of this sitting.

MOTION - ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Vote Rescission

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [7.40 pm]: I move -

That the vote on the Address-in-Reply passed at this day's sitting be rescinded and that the debate on that question be resumed as if it had been adjourned to a later stage of this sitting.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [7.42 pm]: As with other inaugural speakers, I also offer my congratulations to all members who have gained election to this House. I particularly congratulate the women who have made it to this House as I see that this place has a gender imbalance. My inaugural speech is also the inaugural speech of my party; therefore, I will give the philosophical base from which Greens (WA) policy is derived.

I am greatly honoured that my community has chosen me to represent it in this House, and in accepting this honour I also accept the responsibility that goes with it. This responsibility is to a number of groups: The first is the community I represent; second, is my party, its platform and all the people who helped me during the election campaign; and third, and the one for which I feel the greatest responsibility, is to the future generations of this planet. It is in the last aspect that my party is clearly defined from other parties represented in this Parliament. Our policy is to look beyond the next election and into the next century. Our philosophy springs from an ecological rather than an economic source. We recognise that our greatest need on which indeed our survival as a species depends, is harmonious inter-reaction with our living environment.

We can live without many systems of trade and delivery of services, but we cannot live

without clean air, water and food. We are biological creatures interdependent within the Earth's ecosystem. A feature of Greens policy is the recognition of the interrelatedness of all systems, whether they be economic, ecological or social. Greens philosophy is based on four main requirements: Participatory democracy; social justice and social equity; peace, nonviolence and nuclear disarmament; and a sustainable ecology. These are known as the four pillars and are a feature of green groups worldwide.

The first pillar, participatory democracy, is a good starting point to consider the necessary components to facilitate the other precepts. Participatory democracy seeks to involve all members of society in the decision making process. Governments have a duty to ensure that the powerful, the skilled and the financially well off sections of the community do not dominate the decision making process of the State at the expense of the powerless. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case as those who gain a Government stewardship are usually those who least need it.

The Greens (WA) would like to see an enhanced level of community consultation in all tiers of government. We will be asking the Government not to throw people out of work without first consulting those people and providing them with all the information at its disposal; also, alternatives should be discussed with them. We would like to see real community input in the planning decisions, once again providing the community with all available information. In seeking to uphold the traditions of participatory democracy, I will be working to ensure that the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters are not watered down in the interests of either Government or business.

Other areas of interest to me will be the right of participation in decision making for residents and community groups in matters which will impact on their lifestyles and physical environment. I will resist the use of the Police Force as a tool of social suppression - that is also unfair on our Police Force. All members of our community, now and in the future, have a right to clean air, water and land, and I will protect that right.

Although favouring a greater degree of decentralisation, I believe in the precept of one-vote-one-value. Our community has been treated with contempt by the major political parties at a State and Federal level, as many grandiose promises have been broken immediately following elections. This has undermined democracy, and I will be examining ways to make parties liable for their promises.

State facilities should not be closed down purely on political whims. If good reasons exist for destroying people's livelihoods without examining alternatives, those reasons should be openly debated with full disclosure of all information. Only poor managers keep their shareholders in the dark.

The next precept of social justice and social equity naturally follows from participatory democracy. Australia and other similar countries have entered a period of rapid decline in social equity; many democratic countries have seen a rapidly growing gap between the rich and the poor. Even in Australia, with a Federal socialist Government, corporate salaries and handouts have soared as workers' wages have dropped in real terms. It is most unfair that salary rises are so large despite plummeting company profits. Dr Deming, the founder of total quality management, which many observers believe is behind the success of Japanese business, said the following, as reported in *The Australian Financial Review*, when last in Australia -

... Western-style management had failed to recognise its primary responsibility. The blame for poor quality or productivity was more often laid with the work force, with outside suppliers or equipment; with anyone but with management itself. He said most production problems had common causes which only management could reduce or remove.

"I don't say anything about the work force - they are the part we don't need to worry about," he said.

"All they ask is a chance to do their job. They are not the problem - the problem is management not doing their job."

He continues -

At the heart of any revitalisation of a manufacturing or service company must be cooperation between management and work force in achieving common goals.

Dr Deming sees the Japanese as 30 to 40 years ahead of the West in this, partly because they embraced the idea of cooperation early and partly because they are a cooperative race.

He cites the Japanese experience in developing high definition television, a product that US companies are only just beginning to tackle. The leading Japanese companies developed the technology jointly, but then entered into a period of intense competition as each attempted to bring the best product onto the market as quickly as possible.

Dr Deming said that cooperation does not mean the end of competition. He said -

On the other side of the coin, American-style management -

This would include Australia. It continues -

- was about supervision rather than leadership. It concentrated on short-term goals - the quarterly dividend - rather than on a continual improvement of process and product that would bring the customer back again. And it pitted people against one another in the race up the promotional ladder.

That's what North America was built on - rugged individualism," he said.

"And it served us well. You can't say it was the best system we could have had but it served its purpose. However, the system we used is now obsolete, it doesn't work. The present system has run out of steam."

Dr Deming has no time for the confrontationalist attitudes of the New Right. Confrontation brings a "lose-lose" result, with the company and the workforce both suffering. Common purpose brings the possibility of "win-win".

And he is impatient with the financial paper shuffling and emphasis on short-term goals which he sees as substituting for real business development in the West, including Australia.

The increasing gap between rich and poor is so advanced world wide that we have third and first world communities within each nation. Cities in North America, like Los Angeles, are experiencing the growth of great walled estates for the rich which resemble the fortified towns of the middle ages. These were designed to keep out the brigands, and now the poor. In the streets of Los Angeles visitors are urged to keep their car windows wound up and car doors locked in case of robberies at the traffic lights. Life is cheap in the streets. I do not want this in my country even though the signs are there of its beginning. More and more young kids are being forced onto the streets to live however they can. This is an indictment on our society and on those who govern the country. All of us must do more to tackle this problem and the first place we must look is at social inequity and unemployment.

Most people here will be aware that refugees and others are arriving by boat on our northern coast. Like the United States, where authorities have reported 40 vessels carrying thousands of aliens towards North America, we have a problem. With the world population expected to exceed nine billion in the next 50 years, the trickle we now experience will become a flood. The cause of this flood, apart from population, is the lack of equity between nations. This second type of social inequity will put us under immense pressure for our resources. This is a dangerous situation from the point of view of both conflict and environmental degradation. An article entitled "Environmental Change and Violent Conflict" in the *Scientific American* of February 1993 states -

Within the next 50 years the human population is likely to exceed nine billion and global economic output may quintuple. Largely as a result of these two trends scarcities of renewable resources may increase sharply. The total area of highly agricultural land will drop, as will the extent of forests and the number of species they sustain. Future generations will also experience the ongoing depletion and degradation of aquifers, rivers and other bodies of water, the decline of fisheries, further stratospheric ozone loss and, perhaps, significant climate change.

As such environmental problems become more severe, they may precipitate civil or

international strife. Some concerned scientists have warned of this prospect for several decades, but the debate has been constrained by lack of carefully compiled evidence. To address this shortfall of data, we assembled a team of 30 researchers to examine a set of specific cases. In studies commissioned by the University of Toronto and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, these experts reported their initial findings.

The evidence that they gathered points to a disturbing conclusion: Scarcities of renewable resources are already contributing to violent conflicts in many parts of the developing world. These conflicts may foreshadow a surge of similar violence in coming decades, particularly in poor countries where shortages of water, forests and, especially, fertile land, coupled with rapidly expanding populations, already cause great hardship.

Further on -

Human actions bring about scarcities of renewable resources in three principal ways. First, people can reduce the quantity or degrade the quality of these resources faster than they are renewed. This phenomenon is referred to as the consumption of the resource's "capital": the capital generates "income" that can be tapped for human consumption. A sustainable economy can therefore be defined as one that leaves the capital intact and undamaged so that future generations can enjoy undiminished income. Thus, if topsoil creation in a region of farm land is 0.25 millimetre per year, then average soil loss should not exceed that amount.

The second source of scarcity is population growth. Over time, for instance, a given flow of water might have to be divided among a greater number of people. The final cause is change in the distribution of a resource within a society. Such a shift can concentrate supply in the hands of a few, subjecting the rest to extreme scarcity.

These three origins of scarcity can operate singly or in combination. In some cases, population growth by itself will set in motion social stress. Bangladesh, for example, does not suffer from debilitating soil degradation or from the erosion of agricultural land: the annual flooding of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers deposits a layer of silt that helps to maintain the fertility of the country's vast flood plains.

But the United Nations predicts that Bangladesh's current population of 120 million people will reach 235 million by the year 2025. At about 0.08 hectare per capita, cropland is already desperately scarce. Population density is 785 people per square kilometer (in comparison, population density in the adjacent Indian state of Assam is 284 people per square kilometer). Because all the country's good agricultural land has been exploited, population growth will cut in half the amount of cropland available per capita by the year 2025.

As we know, Bangladesh is already struggling. To continue -

Over the past 40 years, millions of people have migrated from Bangladesh to neighbouring areas of India where the standard of living is often better. Detailed data on the movements are few: the Bangladeshi government is reluctant to admit there is significant migration because the issue has become a major source of friction with India.

... This enormous flux has produced pervasive social changes in the receiving Indian states. Conflict has been triggered by altered land distribution as well as by shifts in the balance of political and economic power between religious and ethnic groups. For instance, members of the Lalung tribe in Assam have long resented Bengali Muslim migrants: they accuse them of stealing the area's richest farmland. In early 1983, during a bitterly contested election for Federal offices in the state -

People do get angry during elections -

- violence finally erupted. In the village of Nelli, Lalung tribespeople massacred nearly 1,700 Bengalis in one five-hour rampage.

We have two main paths to take to solve these problems. The first is to spend an increasing amount on military hardware and personnel to protect our resources. The second - and this is the part of the Green philosophy which rejects violence and conflicts - is that we should work

cooperatively with our neighbours and spend that money on programs for birth control and education facilities, and provide assistance, training and facilities in sustainable agricultural techniques, health and medicine. We should also encourage social equity in those countries and practise it in our own. Only the latter path is sustainable. The first will end in conflict and famine. Although this may be seen as a Federal issue we must bear in mind that the ramifications of the world population increase will affect us at every level, including the risk of nuclear war. Those of us concerned about such a holocaust have observed the spread of nuclear weapons throughout countries such as India, Pakistan, South Africa, Iraq, Israel and North Korea, and Indonesia is now about to build a nuclear capacity. It is madness for Australia to supply uranium to these countries. We must work to rid the world of this menace.

Speaking of the predicted growth in world population brings me to another form of equity; that is, equity between generations. In his Address-in-Reply speech Hon Bruce Donaldson highlighted the major philosophical difference between his party and mine. As I remember, he said it was wrong to leave coal deposits under bushland which would be a benefit for future generations. I think he was referring to Mt Lesueur National Park. My party says that in a market economy if the national park is opened up for mining the mining company will dig up the coal. If we are only opening it up for exploration, why bother? Because past Governments, both Liberal and Labor, have tied the State into buying more fossil fuels than it can use, any further coal supplies will have to be sent overseas. This "use it up quickly" policy will rob our future generations of fossil fuels, cause a continuation of energy wasting policies, ruin a beautiful national park and add to the greenhouse problems. Use it up policies are a disaster for the future of not only this country but also the whole world. We reject this waste of resources.

A misnomer called resource development is used in this field. I call it asset stripping, for that is what it is. As economist Herman Daly so aptly puts it in an article in *The State of the World 1991*, a World Watch Institute report on progress towards a sustainable society: "There is something fundamentally wrong in treating the earth as if it were a business in liquidation." The article states -

To extend this analogy, it is though a vast industrial corporation quietly sold off a few of its factories each year, using an incomplete accounting system that did not reflect these sales. As a result, its cash flow would be strong and profits would rise. Stockholders would be pleased with the annual reports, not realising that the profits were coming at the expense of the corporation's assets. But once all the factories were sold off, corporate officers would have to inform stockholders that their shares were worthless.

In effect, this is what we are doing with the earth. Relying on similarly incomplete accounting systems, we are depleting our productive assets, satisfying our needs today at the expense of our children.

In simple accounting, if we sell an asset for its true value, we gain liquidity but do not increase our overall net worth. In the case of mining, it is sometimes worse because the profits go to overseas shareholders and sometimes the environmental, health and other costs far outweigh any advantage to the community. Perhaps we should look at the gains from places such as Wittenoom. A few people have gained mansions; the less fortunate have mesothelioma, and the taxpayers have a massive bill. No, digging it up is not always the best answer. We advocate that scarce resources, especially energy, should be used as slowly and efficiently as possible.

With only 30 years' supply of oil left in the world we must start thinking about targeting our various energy types for specific jobs. For instance, if we wish to continue world trade we should conserve oil for shipping, not use it in private cars carrying single passengers. Quickly using up our coal reserves will disinherit our heirs in another way; that is, if we do not begin to examine energy savings and alternative renewable energy technologies our future industry will be less efficient and we will be buying our renewable technology from elsewhere. My party would rather our grandchildren be research scientists and energy auditors than hole diggers, otherwise we will have done them a grave disservice. Ian Lowe, from the science policy research centre at Griffith University, has stated that the potential for energy conservation in Australia is pretty bleak because the authorities are doing their

darnedest to sell as much fuel as possible. Does that sound familiar? He says that we have a real problem, and that not only are there no financial incentives, but also we have a string of organisational and structural barriers which tend to discourage conservation.

As time goes by more and more uses are found for the diverse flora of our country. For instance, a Kimberley seed company is planting acacias through North Africa, principally to hold back encroaching desert. Also, the seed of the acacia is becoming a major supplement for the diet of protein impoverished North Africans. This innovative company is now planning to plant large areas of the Sahara Desert with Australian trees. Its seed growing program is providing income for Western Australian farmers. To continue to destroy our biodiversity is more than a mistake. In my mind, it is more in the nature of a crime against future generations.

The next pillar of Green philosophy is a sustainable ecology. David Attenborough has stated that the main value of ecosystems is that we all live in them. He says that the jargon use of the word ecosystem tempts one to think that it is what goes on in a national park or somewhere around the corner, but actually we all live in ecosystems. We live in networks of relationships between animals and plants, big and small, of which we are a central part. However, he says that we cannot live without plants, because without plants we cannot feed. The whole system is so interlocked that if people start messing about with one part of it, they inevitably affect other parts of it, and in fact themselves and other human beings.

Many politicians of various political faiths believe that market forces if left untrammelled by regulation will deliver to us the best of all possible worlds. In a similar way to Voltaire we reject this notion as being simplistic, illogical and dangerous. This popular concept deals with just one small facet of the many complex human needs. While we recognise the obvious need and desirability to maintain a comfortable level of material wellbeing, we also recognise that humankind has a much wider and richer potential built into its psyche. There is more to our lives than the mindless pursuit of material goods and the accumulation of obscene levels of wealth, usually in order to gain power over our fellows. We are determined that the cultural, spiritual, creative and communal aspects of our human nature should not be ignored in the mindless pursuit of materials. Greed is antisocial and should be recognised as such.

In the 1980s corporate cowboys in the spirit of Ozymandias competed to build the highest concrete edifice in their own honour. Those phallic symbols of personal power were, as it turned out, paid for by the taxpayers and unpaid creditors. Unfortunately, the media, which now pillories these wrongdoers, at that time glorified their behaviour. They were treated as demigods with reverence and awe, with regular reports of their account balances, new houses, food and alcohol preferences - always Dom Perignon - and even their affairs were publicised. It is my contention that a society built on the values of greed, divisiveness, exploitation and competition is bound to fail in a very ugly way. Our chance of advancing our society lies with a different set of values. These include cooperation, caring, generosity, community and the love and awareness of ourselves and of others. Having grown up in the country I feel a deep attachment to the place where I live. This spiritual connection causes me a level of pain when I see mindless environmental destruction. For this reason I am obliged to say that I am ashamed that the Premier of this State has seen fit to take up the cudgels for some unnamed big foreign investors in order to suppress the spiritual aspirations of Aboriginal Australians. How can we seriously expect our children to respect the adage that there are some things that cannot be bought? How can this Government be so insensitive to an important section of this community? Why are big unnamed foreign investors supported and listened to by the Premier when the people he represents are unable to speak to him to express their views? Who does he represent?

Whenever I think of or speak about the great disasters facing our ecological world I am always puzzled why our leaders, especially those in this State, do not seem to be taking in the enormity of the problem. One hypothesis I have heard for this and which is promoted by Al Gore, the Vice President of the United States of America, is that because of the enormity and the resultant pain of the problems, people are refusing to face the truth. Like an alcoholic who claims he does not have a drink problem, we are refusing to acknowledge reality. Another view is put succinctly once again by *The State of the World 1991* in an article headed "Two Views of the World". It reads -

Anyone who regularly reads the financial papers or business weeklies would conclude that the world is in reasonably good shape and that long-term economic trends are promising. Obviously there are still problems - the U.S. budget deficit, Third World debt, and the unsettling effect of rising oil prices - but to an economist, things appear manageable. Even those predicting a severe global recession in 1991 are bullish about the longer term economic prospects for the nineties.

Yet on the environmental front, the situation could hardly be worse. Anyone who regularly reads scientific journals has to be concerned with the earth's changing physical condition. Every major indicator shows a deterioration in natural systems: forests are shrinking, deserts are expanding, croplands are losing topsoil, the stratospheric ozone layer continues to thin, greenhouse gases are accumulating, the number of plant and animal species is diminishing, air pollution has reached health-threatening levels in hundreds of cities, and damage from acid rain can be seen on every continent.

These contrasting views of the state of the world have their roots in economics and ecology - two disciplines with intellectual framework so different that their practitioners often have difficulty talking to each other. Economists interpret and analyze trends in terms of savings, investment, and growth. They are guided largely by economic theory and indicators, seeing the future more or less as an extrapolation of the recent past. From their vantage point, there is little reason to worry about natural constraints on human economic activity; rare is the economic text that mentions the carrying capacity principle that is so fundamental to ecology. Advancing technology, economists believe, can push back any limits. Their view prevails in the worlds of industry and finance, and in national governments and international development agencies.

In contrast, ecologists study the relationship of living things with each other and their environments. They see growth in terms of S-shaped curves, a concept commonly illustrated in high school biology classes by introducing a few algae into a petri dish. Carefully cultured at optimum temperature and with unlimited supplies of food, the algae multiply slowly at first, and then more rapidly, until growth eventually slows and then stops, usually because of waste accumulation.

The article goes on to say that we need a new measure of prosperity accounting instead of the gross national product or gross domestic product measures currently used. We need to have a system which accounts for the cost of ecological damage, the decline in health and the loss of resources. My party agrees with this idea and has included it in its policies.

At a local level my party is very concerned by the after election turnaround by the Government in a number of key environmental areas. Conservationists everywhere are bracing themselves for the next attack on environmental standards in this State. First, a word of praise: Unlike the Labor Party it seems the Government - most unusual for a Government - will take the advice of a Government committee. In this instance it will accept the advice of the Carnegie report with which my party and the Greens are in broad agreement. It is a shame that party political needs have taken priority over the needs of the State in this issue. I hope the Minister for Energy is able to cope with the political opportunism he will have to face. However, my party is disappointed that there is no meaningful plan to incorporate energy saving - demand side management as it is called - into our future energy system. Energy saving will not only bring cheaper production, but also will create four times as many jobs as energy production. I urge the Government to look at this more carefully.

Some of the other issues I will be pursuing on an ecological front will be the reverse of the Government's position on the Port Kennedy development which, before the election, was a shonkie WA Inc deal. Now it has become an important housing area for young home buyers - that is, if their Keystart home loans will pay the \$200 000 for a luxury marina golf course complex lot. Suddenly the fact that this is the last undamaged remnant of bushland between Yanchep and Mandurah has lost its importance to the Government. WA Inc is alive and well - only the parties have changed to protect the developers.

My party does not feel very safe about the Creery wetlands, the national parks or the logging targets in our State forests. With the environment, as with jobs, the Government has

promised one thing and is delivering another. If the Government were a used car, people would send it back. If the Government really does have new plans for jobs I urge it to tell us where they are coming from. If the Government does care about the environment I ask it to share its good news with us. We certainly need it!

Finally, I will tell members some of my personal aims in this place. The young people of this State have been alienated. Our greatest resource is being poisoned. I noticed that the coalition's social initiatives were largely about the gaoling of children, putting up fares on public transport and scrubbing out graffiti. It is not what I would call a social program. What annoys me about the Government and the *Sunday Times* is that they are waging a campaign against kids who are hitting out at the system. No mention has been made of the majority of young people, many of whom have worked hard for tertiary qualifications and have been discarded by the Government and ignored by the media. I have interviewed young Honours graduates who are seeking jobs and they have told that me their interview, despite many applications, has been the first in many years. This Government, like previous Governments, is dealing with effects, not causes. Nobody seriously believes that mining will employ these often highly trained young people. We cannot go on being diggers; we must start using our intellectual talent which has been locked away in these kids. I urge the Government to lift its game.

Another personal interest of mine is urban planning and regional development. Our city is becoming less communal. Because of poor planning people are becoming more isolated. The city is becoming polluted, and even though we know better, we continue to build highways and neglect public transport. Worst of all, we are not meeting with or listening to the needs of our citizens. At this time, we have many solutions and technologies to deal with the problems of our developing world. Only the political will to make necessary change holds us back. I urge members of this House to have the courage to listen with an open mind to ideas that are not their own, openly express their concerns, accept valid criticism, discard outmoded thinking, put aside prejudice and work together to improve our State.

I conclude by leaving with members the thoughts of Professor Ian Lowe, which address the responsibility which each individual member of this House and of the community has to this State. He states -

What the individual can do is think about how they contribute to the political process of changing the structures. We can only use public transport if there's economic, accessible, reliable, clean, safe public transport. We can only cycle to and from work if there are cycleways so we don't have to risk being mown down by a truck. Politicians respond to what they think people will let them get away with. I believe we all have a responsibility to play a part in that political process of maintaining the pressure for change, so that the structures are there to enable us all to live responsibly.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [8.21 pm]: One is always a bit apprehensive about a first speech. Of course, I could speak for five minutes, sit down and make a virtue out of brevity. I understand it may be a virtue indeed in this parliamentary era of talking under wet cement. I have suffered some of the filibusters in years past in this place as a spectator in the Public Gallery. Having said that, I will perhaps take more than five minutes in this address. It was nearly zero minutes and the onion debate. I am grateful to the House that it is more than that on this occasion.

This evening I will take the opportunity to introduce myself to the House and address some comments relevant to our parliamentary and governmental system and the findings of the recent Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters. Firstly, I thank the 38 000 electors of the South West Region who placed their confidence in the Australian Labor Party at the February poll and elected me to this place. I shall not disappoint them. I shall adhere to the platform on which I was elected and address those immediate concerns about quality of life, job creation and security, the provision of health and education services, and environmental protection that were and are foremost in their minds.

I have been actively involved in politics for the last 22 years as a member of the Australian Labor Party. For almost 10 of those years I served as Assistant State Secretary of the Australian Labor Party. For five years I served as a Commonwealth public servant, working with Senator Peter Walsh, Mr Graeme Campbell and Mr Kim Beazley as Minister for Employment, Education and Training. Over those years I have met and worked with people whose commitment is great and whose principles have served as a guiding light. I am privileged to count among that number our former Premiers John Tonkin, Bert Hawke and Frank Wise, who have advised and encouraged me over the years.

I pay tribute to Edward Gough Whitlam. When the Whitlam Government was elected in 1972 a revolution was started. To that revolution I owe my tertiary education. The restoration of the University of Western Australia to a free university was an achievement of the Whitlam Government from which I benefited directly. The Whitlam Government also ended our involvement in Vietnam and conscription. Without the change of Government in 1972 I would have been subject to the infamous death lottery in 1973. I always find it sobering to look at that list of 500 young Australians who needlessly lost their lives as a result of the arrogance and self-serving stupidity of one Australian Government. Over the years I have appreciated the friendship of Mr Whitlam. He has been generous in his advice and counsel. He is our greatest constitutional advocate and reformer.

I have learnt much from my colleagues on the State Executive of the Australian Labor Party over the nearly 20 years that I have been a member of that body. I acknowledge in particular the late Colin Jamieson, Hon Tom Butler, Hon Cheryl Davenport and Stephen Smith, the Federal member for Perth. I make special mention of two people. I mention firstly the Reverend Keith Dowding, a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in this State and a longtime member of the Labor Party. What can one say about a man who performed a Christian burial ceremony for the first Japanese pilot shot down over New Guinea? He was cashiered as a padre by the Army High Command. He then joined as an ordinary private and spent the next four years in the front line. It was this man who was expelled from the Australian Labor Party for opposing the white Australia policy. He did not come back to the party; the party came back to him. The ALP eventually caught up with Keith and I am happy to say that it was my pleasure to propose his life membership of the ALP a few years ago. Keith's Christian socialism has been and must remain a central element in the ideology of the Australian Labor Party.

The other person whose guidance and friendship I particularly value is Mr Gil Currie, an old style union secretary, if you like. He was a gentleman of the Trades Hall, who served his fellow workers in peace and his country in war. I do not think Gil's union ever went on strike in the 40 years that he was associated with it.

Mr President, I congratulate you on your re-election to the office of President. I know that you have enhanced the standing of this Parliament, particularly through your role as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Your mission to South Africa to advise on progress toward democracy, as well as the reorganisation of the CPA headquarters in London with the appointment of a new secretary general, must significantly enhance the ideals to which we all subscribe. Mr President, I believe that your role in the next four years will be crucial to the development of parliamentary democracy in this State, the fulfilment of the expectations of the royal commissioners and the continued relevance of this House.

I turn now to the institution of Parliament in this State. The absolute dominance of the Executive and of the Government over the Legislature has been well documented. The disturbing level that this dominance has reached was noted in the recent Report of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters. I note the fine words of many members of the current Government when they were in Opposition in respect of the meagre resources available to ordinary members of Parliament. They were quite right. The legislators of this State cannot hope to fulfil the role ascribed to them with the resources, particularly staff resources, at their disposal. I hope that now the new Government members are in a position to do something about it, they will. I fear, however, that the words of the current Ministers will become as meaningless and their promises as hollow as those of all of their predecessors now that they have ascended to the ministerial purple. We all know the so-called supremacy of Parliament is a sham. The status of this place is clearly evident by the state of the premises which we occupy.

There is nothing behind the fine facade that faces St George's Terrace. In fact, I notice that even the facade has started to crumble in places. I cringe when international guests are brought up here. The heart of this place, between the two Chambers, looks like the back of an ablutions block, except of course for the kegs waiting to be collected from the parliamentary bar. The so-called Cabinet dining room is a plastic partition pulled across part of the main dining room. Library facilities are minimal. What staff there are in this place find themselves operating from temporary cubicles that line most of the corridors. They freeze in winter and boil in summer in the extremities of this building. Many staff members operate in prefabs and lean-tos scattered around the neighbourhood. Members are bundled up three or four to an office. Their one staff member is back in the electorate office trying to cope with all the constituency problems while Parliament is in session. The Chambers are conveniently unairconditioned so that members are encouraged not to dally too long in questioning the Government or considering proposed laws.

At least the Crown used to be more direct and forthright in dealing with the Legislature. Louis XVI had the Third Estate locked out of its meeting Chamber. They ended up adjourning to a nearby tennis court. I often think that this Parliament would have more notice taken of it by the Executive Government if it adjourned to the tennis court next door. At the very least, the Parliament of this State deserves some space and functional buildings. If the 91 legislators of this Parliament swapped places with 91 senior officers of the State Public Service I would like to see how long it would take before conditions were rectified.

My views are not unique, of course. Members have been trying to upgrade this place since they moved in, in 1904 or thereabouts. In 1911 it was suggested that the building be given to the university. We have not progressed very far since then. We may as well go back down the Terrace to something that is more functional if nothing happens in the near future. I know that the Presiding Officers have fought in recent years to have some of the problems rectified. I commend you, Mr President, and the former Speaker, Mr Barnett, for your efforts. However, I am not advocating the sort of solution that requires huge expenditure or the building of a palace based on the Canberra model; far from it. With a little imagination Harvest Terrace could be closed off and a parliamentary precinct created that includes this House, Dumas House, the old Observatory, and the old Hale School buildings. The various parliamentary annexes around the place could be moved into the precinct. Our long mooted constitutional history museum could be created and various departments, currently squeezed into this building, could be relocated. We could do something to give decent working conditions to parliamentary staff and members, and involve the general public more in the functioning of their own Parliament.

I now turn to the role of our own Chamber in the scheme of things. Second Chambers must earn their keep. We are not the popular Chamber where the Government is formed. We do not initiate financial policies that determine the course of the State. Some have held the view that there is no role for second Chambers at all. St Simon offered the view that if a second Chamber agreed with the first, it was superfluous; if it disagreed, it was obnoxious. Either way it should go. Put somewhat more vulgarly, Sir George Read, our only conservative free trader Prime Minister, stated that if he needed a second Chamber he would use a kerosene tin. Ah, the cry goes up, but we need the Western Australian Legislative Council because it acts as a check and balance. But in Australia we have a constitutional system that has many checks and balances. We have a Federal system which involves checks and balances. We have a judicial system which acts as a check, and we have local government. But, more importantly, we have a long history of democratic government and a pluralist society; the people are the ultimate check on Governments. I do not think that a majority of Western Australians would even know that we exist. Do we need yet another check in the form of the Western Australian Legislative Council? In a country with almost 1 000 paid politicians people must start to become a bit sceptical as to whether all these politicians are necessary. There is perhaps a case for a national bicameral Legislature, but people must begin to wonder about the necessity for 700 or 800 State politicians. The Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Queensland operate quite well with a unicameral Legislature. May not the other five States do just as well with a single House? We could cut out a couple of hundred superfluous politicians. Who would notice the difference?

If the taxpayers were to judge this Chamber on its record I suggest that we would be out of a job tomorrow. For half of its existence this House has not acted as a check or a House of

Review. It has acted as a partisan Chamber, slavishly following the dictates of conservative Governments. One need only look at the number of Bills defeated during periods of Labor administration compared with periods of Liberal administration. Even when, during periods of Liberal Government, eminently defeatable Bills or regulations - such as 54B of the Police Act or the measures to restrict electoral enrolments by requiring a justice of the peace to act as a witness - were presented to the Council, they were blindly allowed through. This Chamber, when it has acted as a check on Government and the Assembly, has acted only as a check in the most reactionary and retrograde manner. Which Chamber knocked back a divorce Bill on the basis that it was too liberal? It allowed a woman to sue for divorce on the grounds of adultery, six years' desertion, three years' habitual drunkenness, three years' irreversible insanity or 10 years' proven and consistent ill treatment. Who blocked a Bill to limit the working week to 44 hours for women and children? Which Chamber blocked a Bill to allow women to stand for Parliament? Which Chamber blocked for 36 years Bills to allow women to serve on juries? Picture, if members will, the scene in this House as late as 1957 when the first female member addressed her colleagues. Hon Ruby Hutchison stated in debate on the Juries Bill -

I support the Bill. We all know that a similar measure has been introduced in this House many times previously. I hope that we shall have the satisfaction in the present session of Parliament of putting on the statute book a much needed reform and, one eagerly anticipated by the women of Western Australia. Time has brought forth the report of the select committee; and I make bold to say that the evidence has been overwhelmingly in favour of women serving on juries.

... There is no evidence in the select committee's report to support the suggestion made in this House that the provisions of the Bill were not needed in this State and had not been sought by women.

The debate then meandered down a very familiar path. Who blocked for 60 years initiatives to grant the franchise to all citizens and end plural voting? No prizes for guessing the right answer.

During World War II the bolshie Labor Government attempted to give all soldiers who were fighting for their country the right to have a vote. No prizes for identifying who saw this as the thin end of the wedge and knocked it off. Which Chamber refused to give Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver's abolition of the death penalty Bill even a first reading? Who kept the whipping of juveniles on the Statute book for decades in the face of Government attempts at reform?

It is interesting to read some of the debate. Hon H. Seddon, in horror when he realised what was going on, said that the clause cancelled the power of the magistrate to order a boy's whipping. The Labor Minister said that it was now agreed by practically all authorities that the young should not be whipped. No such thing! This was the Legislative Council of Western Australia to which he was trying to talk the language of care, compassion and reason.

Which august Chamber would not allow universal suffrage in local government until the 1980s? Who prevented Aborigines from gaining citizenship rights for decades? One reads with dismay the shameful actions of this Chamber in the 1950s. The Minister introducing the Bill to give Aborigines citizenship rights said -

I think it was as far back as 1841 - long before Responsible Government - that the first measure was introduced which had any relation to the native community. Over the years, various Acts were passed until 1886, when what is known as the Aborigines Protection Act was passed and in 1905, after Responsible Government was granted, the Native Administration Act was placed on the statute book. However, if one will study the provisions of the Native Administration Act dispassionately, one must come to the conclusion that many of them are not in the interests of the native community; that many of them are punitive and many reprehensible as far as the natives in this State are concerned. I propose to quote a few sections of the Act which it is hoped Parliament will remove from the statute books.

The Minister then went on to point out how Aborigines could apply for citizenship. He said -

They had to apply to a magistrate, and if the magistrate was satisfied that the applicant was a suitable person, he or she would be given those rights. Briefly, an applicant had to indicate that for two years prior to the application, he or she had not mixed with the native community or had not lived the way of the aborigine, had to understand English well and was free from certain diseases. The applicant had to produce two references from responsible people in the community. Under the Act, certain of those people were granted citizenship rights which could be cancelled. I opposed the principle in this Chamber on previous occasions. I shall not rest until that stigma and unfairness are removed. This stigma or unfairness does not apply to any of us. Under the present Act the Commissioner for Native Affairs or any person can apply to the magistrate for a cancellation of citizenship rights, after those rights have been granted. I suggest that citizenship is something far too important a thing to be bestowed on a person one day and then cancelled the next. That Act still stands.

The Act continued to stand after debate was concluded in this Chamber. Once again, it was only after the responsibility for Aboriginal affairs was taken out of the hands of the State of Western Australia and put into the hands of the Commonwealth, as it had previously been in the hands of the Imperial Government, that we got some real progress. In the 1980s this Chamber killed an Aboriginal land rights Bill that may have affected up to nine per cent of the land area of the State. We could not even contemplate the crumbs off the table. Spurious arguments of equality saw us justify all the nineteenth century alienation of the best Crown land in this State to white settlers for nothing or next to nothing, while a century later we could not even bring ourselves to vest the native reserves in the Aboriginal people. We have much to answer for in our stewardship. I can in this context understand easily Oliver Cromwell's injunction to the Rump Parliament on 20 April 1653. He said -

You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!

But the recent Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters said that we should give bicameralism another go. Redemption is possible for the Legislative Council. The royal commission's report says the Council has an unrealised place in our constitutional fabric, that it should be a House of vital importance to the public, that measures can be adopted that will enable the Legislative Council to more effectively serve the public interest. Members will note that the royal commissioners spoke in the future tense. How far we are from an ideal situation may be ascertained by the long list of upper House reform proposals contained in the royal commission's report.

The royal commission is quite right - we need to clean up our act. There is no place for us to continue as an unreconstructed House of Lords with all the powers and pretensions of the pre-1911 House of Lords. We must give up our pretensions to being a House that can make and unmake Governments. That is the role of the Legislative Assembly. To its credit this House has never blocked the Budget or Supply, but it has come close. I remember 20 years ago sitting in the Public Gallery of this House when directions were received from the other place that Liberal and Country Party members in this Chamber should block the Budget. That was only six months before a scheduled general election. It was a proposition to rip up all constitutional conventions for the sake of power, six months early. To their credit the Liberal and Country Party members of this Chamber voted the Budget through and the election was held in the normal course of events in 1974. The Court Liberal Government was elected to office. The efforts of the National and Liberal Parties in trying to outdo each other in threatening Supply in this Chamber over the past couple of years was an unedifying spectacle. We must give up this posturing and get on with more constructive things.

Both the 1984 Royal Commission into Parliamentary Deadlocks and the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters were of the opinion that this House should not have the power to defeat money Bills. In that I concur. Nor should it have the power to block money Bills indefinitely. There must be a deadlock resolution procedure whereby disputes between the Houses may be referred to the people. The current resolution procedure of a Conference of Managers is unsatisfactory. I do not know whether this is still National Party policy, but it certainly used to be.

We must not become the Administration's poodle. The royal commission recognised the danger of Executive domination and proposed a number of measures to prevent this

happening. It suggested that a proportional representation system would allow for the representation of minority interests with significant community support. The implication of this recommendation is that the Council would operate more effectively as a House of Review if the system counted against the Administration of the day, whether it be Labor or Liberal, having a majority in the Council. I have no difficulty with a Statewide system of proportional representation with, say, a five per cent threshold for representation. The royal commission also recognised the danger of ministerial domination by means of the presence of Ministers in this Chamber and the influence that ministerial preferment may have on upper House members. It is a matter of concern that the proportion of Ministers to other members in this House appears to be escalating dramatically in recent times. The escalation to four Ministers under the previous Labor Government and five in the current Administration was and is unwarranted.

The royal commission's report also refers to questions that can be raised about the current legitimacy of the Legislative Council given its present electoral system. We clearly cannot continue with the grossest malapportionment in the Commonwealth. The current 17:17 split between the city and country must end and the principle of one person, one vote, one value should be adopted.

I suggest we have the opportunity of putting our house in order on this matter before the courts do it for us. Most persuasively, the royal commission argued that the future of this House lies with the development of the committee system that would allow the Legislative Council to review and scrutinise the management and operations of the public sector of the State. The commissioners' arguments are unimpeachable. The future of our bicameral system depends on these essential reforms. If this Chamber fails to take on the new and important role envisaged for it by the royal commission in scrutinising Executive Government and becoming a genuine House of Review, it will continue to act as a rubber stamp for any Government initiatives. If its role in the next four years were that of Richard Court's poodle, devoid of electoral and public legitimacy, it would sink into obscurity and irrelevance.

Already the trends are ominous. This House is now under the control of the governing party for the first time in 10 years. The coalition has a record five Ministers in the Chamber, covering the most important sectors of Government. I fear that betrayal of the royal commission and its recommendations is in the offing. However, members should make no mistake: Without reform this Chamber is doomed to irrelevance. Already Professor Paddy O'Brien and the populists have denounced our form of representative government as a failure and are demanding a move back to direct democracy. Their cry is that of the initiative, referendum and recall. The Labor Party may yet have recourse to this solution. It was, after all, a Labor Government which introduced a Bill to allow for popular initiative and referendum; that provided that if 15 per cent of the electorate proposed a law, it had to be considered by Parliament. If Parliament did not pass it, it had to go to referendum. We did not get so far as the recall on that occasion. Nevertheless, others are turning to the courts and the Commonwealth to safeguard their interests. No-one looks to us to safeguard their liberties or to protect their rights. We are irrelevant to the whole process of government. It remains for us to make ourselves relevant.

I conclude by referring to our Federal system. I stand by and for the Commonwealth of Australia. Western Australia is not a sovereign State, nor ought it be. I view our latter day secessionists as cheap exploiters of parochialism for personal profit or political gain. Secession has become the last refuge of rogues and scoundrels. We hear the cries already: "Secede to deny the Aborigines any land; secede to save the monarchy and King Charles III." If the embers of parochialism are ever fanned into the flames of secession in this State, as they were in 1933, some of our tin pot demagogues will have a lot to answer for. We cannot ever again afford to have our community divided by a dominion league and a Federal league. Members must be in no doubt that a serious secessionist movement can only lead us down the road of partition and break-up, not of the Commonwealth of Australia, but of Western Australia. I support the motion.

[Applause.]

HON DERRICK TOMLINSON (East Metropolitan) [8.55 pm]: I am pleased to associate myself with the motion moved by Hon Bruce Donaldson expressing loyalty to Her Majesty

and thanking His Excellency in his speech delivered to this Parliament. I think it was during only the last Address-in-Reply debate that members of this House wished His Excellency a prolonged and enjoyable retirement. I am reluctant at this stage to again wish His Excellency a prolonged and enjoyable retirement for fear that he may be somewhat like Dame Nellie Melba - constantly returning and constantly being farewelled. However, I hope that His Excellency has an opportunity to retire before the republicans turn him into a historical anachronism. It would be a great shame for a person of such dignity who has given such great public service as Sir Francis Burt to be reduced to a historical anachronism.

I join with those who have congratulated you, Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), on your election to the office of Chairman of Committees. I also join with those who have congratulated the President on his re-election. He has served this House with considerable dignity and wisdom, as we saw this afternoon when members on the floor were not alert to the proceedings of the House. The President gave us the opportunity to respond, but then continued according to procedure laid down in the standing orders of this House. He has upheld those standing orders not only with great impartiality but also with considerable firmness.

Members who have congratulated the President and you, Mr Deputy President, on your election, should themselves be congratulated. Until the past couple of days I regarded the best maiden speech I have heard in this place as that presented by Hon Kim Chance after he entered the House on the retirement of Hon Jim Brown. I regret to advise Hon Kim Chance that he has been bettered. The maiden speeches we have heard from new members were commendable on their research, rationale, reasoning and delivery. I look forward to the next four years when we will have debate characterised by those features. It would be a change from some of the raucous exchanges which have characterised the debate in this place from time to time. I look forward also to serving in a Parliament where the corridors are not cluttered with temporary cubicles, where members do not have to share their offices with others, where there are places for Ministers to meet constituents and hear reasoned argument on important issues. I stumbled across the Minister for Health during the dinner break listening in the corridor to a submission from a group on a matter which I am sure was profoundly important. I am so encouraged by the proposition that considerable improvement will take place in the physical facilities of this building that I am now determined that I will stay. I will bend my mind to now being re-elected rather than seeking greener pastures elsewhere.

I am one of the five members for East Metropolitan. It is necessary, therefore, that I should engage in the debate which to some extent has dominated the proceedings of the past few days; that is, the Government's decision to close the Midland Workshops. In his address to this House last evening, Hon Nick Griffiths challenged the House with a statement that the people of East Metropolitan, in particular the people of Midland, were poorly served in the Cabinet room. He then indicated that he looked forward to hearing Hon Peter Foss account for his actions in this matter. I do not speak for Hon Peter Foss; my experience is that Hon Peter Foss can speak for himself. Tonight I speak for myself as a member for East Metropolitan.

I am not afraid to admit that when I heard the decision to close the Midland Workshops I was initially embarrassed and then I became angry. I was embarrassed because I was one of the candidates endorsed by the Liberal Party who argued the policy which has been recited in this place by Hon Nick Griffiths, by Hon John Halden and by Hon Graham Edwards. I visited the Midland Workshops during the election campaign and took part in a flagpole meeting. At that flagpole meeting I argued the policy which the Liberal-National Party coalition had espoused. I am embarrassed to tell the House that, apparently, I was so convincing that one of the workers from the workshops decided that he was so confident about their future that he would formalise a loan from a bank which he had been delaying for six months, because of uncertainty about the future of the Midland Workshops, to undertake some alterations to his house. I was exceedingly embarrassed when that person came to my office and told me what he had done, why he had done it and about the effects of the Government's decision.

Then my embarrassment turned to anger. I will explain why. I want to explore what we understood was the background - because the fact is we knew nothing - when we formulated our policy on the Westrail workshops at Midland Junction. We understood that, in May

1990, a manager had been recruited from the private sector for the Midland Workshops. His task was to improve the efficiency of the workshops and to formulate a business plan which would make them a viable and competitive enterprise - they were to compete equally with the private sector. We knew also that, after the appointment of that general manager, a business plan was formulated to rationalise the workshops. That plan looked closely at delivery performance, it looked closely at quality, and it looked in particular at cost reduction. That business plan was submitted to the Lawrence Government in August 1990. The plan was that the workshops were to operate as an autonomous unit at arm's length from Westrail, that that autonomous unit would be competitive with the private sector and operate on a commercial basis by July of this year.

We know that the then Government was then confronted with union intransigence. It was placed under considerable union pressure to reject the business plan. However, even though it was under pressure, it approved the plan in May 1991 subject to these conditions which were given to Westrail management. First, in addition to redundancy being strictly voluntary, redeployment at the workshops was to be also voluntary. If redundancy and redeployment were strictly voluntary, it followed that any attempt to streamline and reduce the labour costs of Westrail's Midland operations were doomed to failure and fail they did.

The second of the directions given to Westrail by the Government was that any proposed changes were to be done via a consultative approach with considerable employee involvement and they would require consensus before introduction. That same intransigent group of unions that insisted on redundancy and redeployment being voluntary was then to participate in the consideration of any changes, but any change could proceed only if there was unanimity - if there was consensus before introduction.

Hon Peter Foss: A veto power.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: A veto power as Hon Peter Foss said.

The third constraint imposed upon the work plan by Government was that the subcontracting work traditionally undertaken at the workshops would be allowed only with union agreement regardless of the economics. The net result was that subcontracting was virtually eliminated as an option available to management of the Westrail Midland Workshops. We knew those things when we formulated our policy, and also that in June 1991 the workshops consultative committee was formed consisting of union officials, union conveners and management. The purpose of that committee was to implement a rationalisation plan through consultation. That rationalisation was hamstrung at the outset by the directives given by the Government to Westrail management that redundancy and redeployment were to be voluntary, there would be no subcontracting, and any changes had to have consensus agreement before they could proceed. We knew when we formulated our policy that in almost two years that process achieved very little indeed, largely because of the inability - or perhaps unwillingness - of the unions and the work force to make the hard decisions necessary to turn the business around. That situation was made even worse by the entrenched culture of the workshops, coupled with the power of the four unions on the site - a closed shop site - with their own agendas and power struggles.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: You are against closed shops?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: My word, I am against closed shops. The net result is that productivity at the workshops was extremely low. It needed to be doubled if the work plan to make the workshops commercially competitive by July of this year was to be realised. We knew those things when we went into the election with a determination to make those workshops a very productive component of Westrail.

Hon Tom Helm: Secret policies. Lies and innuendos.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: We have been accused of secrecy and I must confess that part of my embarrassment when the decision was announced was a perception of secrecy; that I had entered the election and contested it with a policy which had been formulated with all of those factors known to us. Then a decision was made which was contrary to that policy and part of my embarrassment was that I felt it was secret. I received a telephone call in my electorate the Monday before the decision was announced, in which the caller asked what I was going to do about the proposal that the Midland Workshops be closed. I told him not to be silly because our policy was to retain the workshops. The very next day the

announcement was made and I knew nothing about it. The following day I had lunch in this place with Hon Peter Foss and expressed my anger to him because he was a member of the Ministry that made that decision. We had been very close colleagues for four years as members for the East Metropolitan Region and had a good working relationship. I felt I had been betrayed by my own party. But let us see what the secrecy really was. Yes, there was secrecy; yes, there was concealment. As Hon John Halden indicated yesterday, the whole of the workshops scheme management by the previous Government was an outrageous mishandled fiasco.

Hon Reg Davies: Are you and the Minister still friends?

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: We will be friends until we both leave this House with grey hair and no teeth.

Hon Peter Foss: Next year!

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Let us look at the secrecy which underlay those things we knew about the work plan which had been formulated and presented to the Government in August 1990, emasculated by the Government in May 1991, and supposed to be implemented by a committee which had the absolute power of veto. If that is not bad enough, this is what we have since discovered and this is where my embarrassment turned to real anger, and not just the anger of disappointment at not being consulted because I was a mere backbencher. It was real anger because of the betrayal of the workers at Midland by the Lawrence Government. By August 1992 Westrail had established that the operating results of the Midland Workshops on a true commercial basis indicated an annual loss in the range between \$15m and \$20m. It was November 1992 before those figures could be fine tuned to the point where they could stand audit, but about August 1992 Westrail had determined that was the projected annual loss on a commercial basis. During the period between August and December 1992 the workshops' management convened a number of meetings with union and employee representatives and discussed the seriousness of the situation. It attempted to gain their support for remedial action, bearing in mind that the workshops' consultative committee, on which those four unions and management were represented, had the absolute power of veto over any plan for change. In August 1992 the general manager, Mr Henshaw, briefed the workshops consultative committee on what commercialisation meant. It was indicated to the workshops consultative committee, on which the four unions were represented, that the projected loss for 1992-93 was \$12m to \$14m. Mr Henshaw informed the committee that the approximate loss for the previous financial year of 1991-92 was \$16m. That was the result after some rationalisation had been allowed, and if that had not occurred the 1991-92 loss would have been in the order of \$22m.

On 13 August 1992 Mr Henshaw addressed a gathering of employees of the Westrail Midland Workshops at a flagpole meeting. Those members who know the workshops will be familiar with the significance of a flagpole meeting. He indicated to the work force the losses I have cited. A discussion followed on productivity. It was indicated to the work force that the progress of change was too slow. In November 1992 a meeting of the consultative committee was given a detailed five year plan for the workshops. On 21 December 1992 Mr Henshaw again addressed a flagpole meeting. He indicated that the report was not all bad news. He told the workers of the good results that had been achieved with the foundry electrical project, the EMU bogeys, the XWA and XWB wagon projects, and with improvements in delivery performance. He told the workers that he also had some bad news. He indicated that the necessary rationalisation of the Midland Workshops to make it commercially viable was again occurring too slowly. By the time of the meeting of December 1992, the workshops had already overspent its budget for the year by \$2m. Mr Henshaw advised the workers that 10 per cent of production hours had been lost to meetings. On a 10 day fortnight, that represented one day lost to meetings. The loss in a nine day fortnight, which is worked at the workshops, can be worked out by members; nevertheless, it represents more than a day lost to meetings.

Mr Henshaw then discussed with the work force the effects of deregulation on Westrail in the reduction of locomotive and wagons, and discussed the outside work shortage. The effects of Parliament's decision on the National Rail Corporation was also discussed, and the workshops staff was advised that a decision had to be made in early 1993. However, it was the constraints the Lawrence Labor Government imposed on the workshops which prevented

it from making a decision without the consent and support of the intransigent unions. That support was not forthcoming.

Now we move to the true secrecy and deceit: Early in November 1992 a meeting was held with the then Minister for Transport, Mrs Beggs. The Government was advised that the situation at the workshops was serious, and the predicted losses of \$20m for that financial year were outlined. The Government was also advised that no support was received through the consultative process the Government had imposed on Westrail. At that meeting the Minister was advised that Westrail had formulated a recommendation and a plan was being developed to arrest the situation. It was without doubt that if the plan were implemented, it would be politically unpalatable. The reply given by the then Minister was that a Labor Government was in power, unemployment levels were very high and an election was coming. The Minister indicated to Westrail management that she was not prepared to deal with the matter before the election. She said that management might continue to formulate a plan, but it was to be treated as strictly confidential. This was November 1992. A politically unpalatable plan was to be formulated, yet the Minister replied that she did not want to discuss it. She said, "Go ahead and prepare it but don't tell anybody." Where was the consultative process then? Where was the secrecy?

On 14 December 1992 the Commissioner for Railways met with Mrs Beggs and advised her that Westrail's forecast for the financial future at Midland Workshops indicated the workshops must be closed. I sincerely hope that Hon Fred McKenzie continues to read *Hansard*. As Hon Nick Griffiths indicated in his speech last night, Hon Fred McKenzie was a truly honourable man. He was honest to his socialist ideals and was respected by all members in this House for his honesty and integrity.

Hon Mark Nevill: He still is. Don't speak of him as though he has passed away.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Indeed, Hon Fred McKenzie is still all those things, and I am sure he will be as angry as I am when he learns that on 14 December the then Minister for Transport was advised that the Midland Workshops would probably have to close. He will be as offended as I am at the Minister's reply that she did not want to discuss the matter further at that time. Why at that time? Because there was unemployment; there was an election imminent. That was the information that was concealed from us, from the Caucus committee on transport, from the work force at Midland, and divulged only after we became Government. That is when secrecy ended and that is when a Government made the right decision, the only sensible decision, and accepted the advice of Westrail that the workshops would have to close if Westrail was to grow as a commercially competitive transport system.

Hon T.G. Butler: Why did you not make this speech to the rally at the Midland Town Hall rather than making it here?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I was not even invited to attend the Midland Town Hall gathering.

Hon T.G. Butler: You were there.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: My word I was there, but I was not invited; neither was I invited to speak. Had I been given the opportunity to speak I would certainly have exposed the duplicity of the Labor Government that had brought Westrail to this position.

Hon Peter Foss: It's like setting a time bomb and walking out and then blaming the person who gets blown up when it goes off.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Let us consider who was hit by that time bomb. The people who were hit are the employees of the Midland Workshops. I have already referred to one who came to my office and embarrassed me by telling me that, as a result of what I had said at the flagpole meeting during the campaign, he had the confidence to proceed to secure a loan for extensions to his house, a loan which he had prevaricated about for six months because he was aware of the uncertainty of the future of the Midland Workshops.

Hon Tom Butler interjected.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I am pleased to hear that the champion of the working classes is so uncaring about the effect of his Government's dreadful behaviour with respect to the Midland Workshops that he can sit there and be disparaging about those individuals.

Hon T.G. Butler: Stop blaming everybody else for your shortcomings.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! One or two interjections are fine but when the House is called to order, members know the rules.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: That individual prided himself on being a third generation railway worker. His grandfather had been an employee of the Western Australian Government Railways; his father had been a guard with the Western Australian Government Railways; and he had served an apprenticeship at the Midland railway workshops and had been employed there for 26 years. He had three children: An eight year old son, a daughter of six, and a daughter of three. His wife was a homemaker. His job had been declared redundant two years previously. I asked him what was done to make him an employable person, to give him skills which would make him a productive unit in our society. He said, "I was put on Mickey Mouse courses, three weeks here and six weeks there, none of which gave me anything." He was concerned about his future. He was concerned that his wife was suffering considerable anxiety. He said, "I know the wife is anxious because she is shouting at the kids; she is saying nothing to me, but she is shouting at the kids. I know the kids are anxious because they do not want to go outside to play. I have lived with uncertainty for two years. I took your presentation as a sign of confidence and committed myself to a mortgage to extend my house because I felt I had a secure future with the Midland Workshops. I am looking to redeployment, but the redeployment I am being offered is as a cleaner." He is a skilled tradesman. Nothing is more demeaning for a skilled worker than to be reduced in status in that way. He would have retained his salary at the award level at which he was employed as a skilled tradesman, but he would have been employed as a cleaner. He said, "I don't want that; I want some security of employment. I realise that the skills I trained in 26 years ago are no longer saleable. I want the opportunity to retrain so that I can be employable." He had a quite clear plan formulated. He knew his ambitions.

Another example concerns a skilled tradesman, one that Hon Tom Butler may empathise with because this man was employed in the paint shop at the Midland Workshops. This man had a three year old child who required speech therapy. He had a five year old who had just begun preprimary school. For him, transfer to the country was not a proposition he could entertain if he put the welfare of his child ahead of other interests - and he put the welfare of his child above other interests. He was one of 18 employed in the paint shop. They were competing for three jobs for painters in Westrail at Forrestfield. Fifteen of those workers would miss out. He did not want to be a cleaner either.

We can be as angry as we like about this decision. We can accuse one another of duplicity. We can maintain our willing suspension of disbelief and say, "I do not believe the truth even when it is given to me", but we cannot lose sight of the fact that this decision has a human consequence. Those people who simply want to turn this into a political opportunity have not the human interest at heart. If all members were truly intelligent they would accept the truth and the reality that the previous Government would not consider until after the election. They would accept the reality of what this Government, according to its principles of good management, accepted and acted on after the election. Members would then turn their energies to seeing what could be done to ensure that the hopes and aspirations of workers and their families and children are protected and realised. It is a fairly simple thing to do.

I take the case of the individual who, two years prior to the Government's decision for closure, had his job listed as redundant. Members should consider that the consequence of his job being listed as redundant was that the individual also was listed as redundant. Rather than continue in his trade as a coach fitter, he had for two years been filling in time in meaningless occupation making industrial clothing. For two years that man could have been paid a full wage, enrolled at TAFE, as he wanted to, have completed a diploma in business management, and been employed in the management of Westrail. That could have been done at no cost to Westrail. However, he was instead given Mickey Mouse programs which included such things as self-realisation and how to write an application for a job. This is a man who had spent 26 productive years as a skilled tradesman. I suggest that members must accept that Westrail's position is simply symptomatic of a fundamental economic change in our society. The rate of technological change is such that the work force will need to be continuously retrained. The era in which a person could be trained for a lifetime of

employment as a skilled person has gone. Members must accept that those who work for wages as skilled persons will need to change their skills at least thrice in their working lives. Therefore, instead of inanely interjecting as Hon Tom Butler is trying to do, we should be putting our energy into intelligent approaches for retraining people for meaningful employment.

I indicated earlier that when I first learnt of the decision to close the Midland Workshops I was embarrassed. I then became angry when I learnt of the duplicity of the previous Government, which had been advised of the need as early as 1992 to close the workshops, but which refused to listen to it at that time. The Labor Government was prepared to wait until after the election for a decision to be made. The decision was made by a coalition Government; however, had there been a Labor Party on this side of the House the decision would have been the same.

Hon Bob Thomas: You are wrong.

Hon E.J. Charlton: The tragedy was that they didn't respond two years ago.

Hon Graham Edwards: They did respond; they told them to go away, and that they weren't going to close it.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The Labor Government responded two years ago by shackling any attempt to turn the workshops into a commercially viable or competitive enterprise by the constraints it imposed upon the consultative committee. I sincerely hope that we do not impose similar constraints on the opportunities that are now needed to ensure that those people whose employment has been jeopardised by the decision are given a proper opportunity for retraining and for employment elsewhere. I commend the motion to the House.

HON M.D. NIXON (Agricultural) [9.46 pm]: Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), I congratulate you on election to the office of Chairman of Committees. I wish that the President were here so I could congratulate him on his re-election to office and thank him for the assistance he has given me and other new members with an introduction to the House and an explanation of the techniques of it. Already today members have seen a demonstration of his extreme skill and the wisdom of experience that goes with the many years he has served as President. I hope that he continues in that position to become the longest serving President in this Chamber.

I congratulate my fellow honourable members who have been re-elected to this House. That is a great honour and an indication of the work they have done in their various electorates. I also congratulate new members, of which I am one, on their election. I know how difficult it is to be elected to this House because I have tried before. On the previous occasion four years ago I had the privilege of campaigning against some other members who are present tonight. I was in the company of Hon David Wordsworth and Hon Margaret McAleer. That was a great pleasure for me and formed part of my education in politics. During that time not only did we run a pretty useful campaign, but also I came to learn how highly respected both members are.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon M.D. NIXON: I had known both members for a number of years, particularly Margaret McAleer because she was my local member in the old Upper West Province. It has been only four years since that province was incorporated into the new Agricultural Region. During that time if ever a function was held in the electorate Margaret would always attend if it was humanly possible. She was well known and respected, particularly among the people in the Geraldton and midland areas. She later established a reputation for service in the central and other areas when they were included in the Agricultural Region. I have not known David Wordsworth for quite as long, but during the period that I was associated with him I got to know and respect him greatly. His expertise as a farmer, his knowledge and education, and the way in which he has served the south west areas is similar to the service which Margaret gave in the northern areas. Both former members are farmers, and they will return to their farms. I know that they will continue to make a contribution to their community in many ways, and that all who associate with them will benefit from their experience.

I am very happy and comfortable to be in this House which developed out of our long British

and Christian heritage. A couple of years ago I had the privilege of visiting the United Kingdom. While I was there I visited Westminster and I was in the room in which, I was told, the first Parliament took place many years ago. I was also told that was in the days when the Benedictine monks ran the establishment. In the meantime there has been a change of management and although there have been a few major policy differences, generally speaking business has continued. I also found it interesting that one of the rooms was used to issue the currency of the land. It became obvious to me from what I saw that our democratic Westminster system grew out of the church.

One of the most important things I learnt from my visit to the UK was the effect churches had on the community and our history. I do not think it matters which church one visits in the UK, it will reflect the life of its community. One might visit a church which was frequented by the fishmongers or some other craftsmen. This is part of the reason that Britain and the democratic system which came from it has the stability it has. It was based not on perfection, but on seeking moral values and the concept that a community should strive to live in accordance with those principles.

I am very much at home in a Westminster system with a constitutional monarchy. I suggest that over the years the monarchical system has served us at least as well as the parliamentary system. When I visited Coventry I had the opportunity to see the old church from which the famous statement "being sent to Coventry" originated. It was where Oliver Cromwell, who superseded monarchs for a short period in history, sent those people who opposed his views. It is a tiny church and I was told that hundreds of people, mainly Scots, were put there under atrocious conditions. I am mindful that the British people soon learnt that the tyranny of monarchs was only exceeded by the tyranny of Parliament. This led to the restoration of a constitutional monarchy with its checks and balances.

I am not a pessimist and believe that this House does serve a purpose. The performance of us all will determine what service it does render to the community. It has a very important role as a House of Review.

At the recent election I was elected as one of five members to represent the Agricultural Region. I thank the others who ran with me and, although Hon Bruce Donaldson and I were the only people elected from our team, I acknowledge the contribution of Peter Lee, Steve Boylan and Fran Weller.

The Agricultural Region is an enormous electorate which extends from Kalbarri to Esperance, from Gingin, around the metropolitan area and east to Westonia. While the region is served by proportional representation, it is almost impossible for members to cover such a huge electorate and have the close association with their electors that they would choose. It takes approximately two days to drive across the electorate. If we were to make the electorate any bigger by adopting the principle of one-vote-one-value, the quality of representation would be destroyed. The Senate is an essential House, but I suggest that very few electors know their senator personally. The reason is obvious: Although senators serve a necessary function, it is almost impossible for them to know in detail the entire area of Western Australia. I am sure country members of this House suffer from much the same fate.

Within the Agricultural Region are 66 shires, or part thereof. Members can imagine the number of Government instrumentalities and functions involved in the area. It is difficult to become familiar with the major services the Government provides; for example, schools, hospitals, water and power. Be that as it may, the members who represent the Agricultural Region must be very proud. It is a wonderful electorate, called the Agricultural Region, and its agricultural wealth is astounding. It certainly produces most of Western Australia's grain and a large proportion of Australia's grain. Its wheat, lupins, barley, oats and oil seed production is enormous. In addition it produces sheep, wool, lamb and beef.

A new industry in the Agricultural Region is the wildflower industry. This industry, which will grow and develop, is something uniquely Australian. It has tremendous potential and some of the people in my electorate who depend on this industry are doing a wonderful job promoting it. I do not know how one cultivates "wild" flowers but I can see Western Australia doing better in this industry than other States.

The fishing industry is also a major industry in the Agricultural Region. The jewel in the

crown is probably the industry which exists along the west coast in Geraldton, Dongara, Jurien Bay and other towns. However, the south coast also has an important fishing industry. In addition, the Agricultural Region has important mineral wealth, some of it is yet to be realised. Whether it is minerals or energy the Agricultural Region has it. It really is a diverse electorate.

In maiden speeches most members refer to those people who have had an influence on their lives. I will outline my history to give members an understanding of the influences which have had a bearing on what I believe. My mother's family came to the goldfields at the turn of the century. My grandfather drove a winding engine on one of the mines. I recently visited Kambalda and I understand that my mother was one of the first white babies in that area in 1904. My grandparents' family arrived from Britain in the 1840s to farm in Victoria. They went on to Kalgoorlie because the mining industry offered them a chance of prosperity. It was not long before my grandfather established a produce business at Kalgoorlie which he then moved to Perth. At one stage he was one of the leading marketers of potatoes in the State. If, when we debate statutory marketing authorities, I appear to be unimpressed with them it is probably because of my grandfather's influence on me.

My father's family came from England specifically to farm in Western Australia. They established farming properties at Dalwallinu and Kalannie before the railways were established and they were involved in the breeding of livestock and produced a lot of grain. It was only 16 years after they came from England that the developing agricultural industries were affected by the Depression. Anyone who lived through that period was scarred for life and I am sure the farming community was scarred more than most. Although I was not alive during that period, I was brought up to understand some of the problems the economic recession brought to country people.

My mother was a schoolteacher and was one of the early graduates of Perth Modern School and the University of Western Australia. In those days that was rather rare because it was not common for women to be educated at university. It is probably due to the fact that she was reasonably well educated that she had a tremendous influence on my upbringing. This is particularly so because my father was killed in a motor accident when I was a small lad and my mother raised me and my three brothers. I was fortunate that my father was one of five farming brothers. He also had two sisters. I probably benefited from the fact that I was under the influence of more than one "father", which broadened my outlook so that I could look at things and analyse various points of view better than had I grown up in only one "family" on one farm. I suppose if I have developed debating skills it is because I had to cope with three brothers and we always argued, so that experience will probably stand me in good stead.

During my early life I was involved in Junior Farmers, grower organisations, various agricultural societies, and all of the things which young people do in agricultural areas, so I know about agriculture. I started off by share farming at Dalwallinu and Kalannie. I currently farm at Moora, but over the years I have had farming interests with my brothers from the West Kimberley to the south coast, so I have had reasonably wide experience in the farming sector.

Much of my time over the last 30 years in public life has been spent in the Liberal Party, and the reason that I am here today is not because of my good looks and ability but the tremendous performance which so many people have put in over so many years in ensuring that the Liberal Party is the most successful party in the Agricultural Region in respect of the number of votes received. I suppose all political parties depend on volunteers and the staff they employ, who in many cases give tremendous service. We can argue amongst ourselves but we all agree it is only the true believers in this world who make things happen.

Many people have had a tremendous influence upon me and have given me tremendous support in the areas in which I have been involved both as a divisional president and as a State office bearer of the Liberal Party; and I apologise if I forget to mention any of my friends who believe they should be mentioned. I acknowledge the work of Tom Richards and Henry Hall from Quairading, who are great stalwarts of the party; Harold Lundy; John Dival; and the current divisional president, Geof Whitehurst, and members of the executive, particularly Greg Weller and Ian Mangan. I acknowledge also the support and guidance given by our Federal member, Wilson Tuckey.

As an office bearer of the party I have relied upon the service of outstanding staff, and I acknowledge the work of Michael Flanagan during the period when I was president of Moore division, Ross Twine, and, more recently, Marcia Sullivan, Adrienne Bartrop and Neil Williamson, staff members of O'Connor division during my period of presidency. We had outstanding staff for most of my period at head office. Two people whose service I remember in particular are the previous State director, Chilla Porter, and Helen Leslie, both of whom gave outstanding service and I am grateful for the support which they gave to me.

I am sure that the reason that the Agricultural Region exists is that it has competitive industries. There is a view today that Australia is a lucky country and that things are the way they are because we have been lucky. That is great, but I would like to put a couple of contrary views. One view is that there is a great time lag between cause and effect, and sometimes when something is done it is many years before it bears fruit. I suppose that is why it is easy for those who criticise economic rationalism to say that in the time of protectionism Australia was very prosperous, but I put it to members that what has happened over previous years flows on to cause the problems or successes that a community suffers or enjoys at a later date. It must never be forgotten that the prosperity of the Agricultural Region depends upon competitive industry. Nearly all those industries which I mentioned previously must compete on world markets or with imports. It is all very well to wish that market forces do not exist, but they are a reality and we neglect them at our peril.

I remember as a small boy watching the last team of horses come out of the paddock. They were replaced by tractors. Horses would probably have been phased out in the early 1930s had the Depression not intervened. People could not afford to put fuel into their tractors, and that extended the use of horses by 15 years and gave my father additional time to breed horses. In the end, the horses went and the tractors came, and it was no good pretending that we should retain horses because they were beautiful animals and because they had served mankind well.

Our industries must bear in mind that while it is important to have sentiment in industry and between people, in the end an industry must have a reason to exist or it will not exist. That is very true in the mining industry. We must never forget that when the need for the mine disappeared from even a large town or prosperous community, the town also disappeared. It is important to realise also that the agricultural areas in Western Australia and Australia generally have depended upon the service industries that made them competitive. Australia has been well served by many manufacturers in the Agricultural Region, which have a special feel for what is required. I fear that latest economic decline and, with many of our Australian manufacturers going to the wall or producing overseas, agriculture now faces a situation where it must use the same machinery that its competitors use, pay twice as much for it, perhaps pay twice as much to fill up with fuel, and perhaps receive half as much for its produce. It is difficult to believe that we can continue to produce or achieve increased prosperity if we have those handicaps. It is only with a prosperous Australian manufacturing sector developing technically innovative machinery that we will maintain our competitive edge. And there are many specialist manufacturers in the Agricultural Region! Be that as it may, we must be competitive.

So much for the economic side of things. We must realise also that in many respects the people in the Agricultural Region are the same as the people in any other part of the State. They need the same basic health services to serve them from birth through to death. However, in other ways the people in my electorate are different from many others. One of the things which they do better than anybody else is provide community spirit. The volunteer workers in the country areas of Western Australia provide a service and a standard of living which would be absolutely impossible to provide if it had to be paid for by the taxpayer. I pay tribute to all those people who have worked as volunteers. It is a tradition in farming areas that if a farmer suffers injury or death, his neighbour will move in to do the cropping, the shearing or the seeding and get the show back on the road. That is done with minimum cost and with great fun and enjoyment, and with no expectation of reward. People do it because they are volunteers.

Many small businesses and manufacturing plants in our community have the best industrial relations policies one could find anywhere. That is probably because they are small businesses. It is very difficult to baby-sit people's children, play golf with them on Sunday and on Monday have industrial conflict with them. Employers and employees in the

Agricultural Region have a wonderful relationship which is very difficult to achieve in the big cities, where management is removed from employees and where there are larger work forces and corporations. This reflects highly on country people and on the way in which they operate.

At times the market might dictate that the employers should lay off staff because the bottom line is that they cannot afford to keep them on. My experience is that in many instances the employers have carried the burden of retaining staff during tough times - and there have been some very tough times, with prices down and the seasons unfavourable - because it is the right thing to do. The employers feel a commitment to their staff. That is highly commendable but the important point is that employers do it voluntarily. It is not forced on them; they make the choice. I am not saying that every employer or employee in the country is perfect but as a group they create a model which much of the larger industrial areas would be wise to follow.

A current problem is that many of our agricultural industries are not enjoying the profitability they should be enjoying. Perhaps the wool industry is a classic case. I do not claim to know the solution to the problems of the wool industry but I suggest that it will be solved by the growers, not the Government, because Governments do not have a very good record of solving problems. The producers will diversify into products where there is a market. They will maintain their basic breeding stock and probably move into the meat industry, and where there is an opportunity they will export wethers and maintain breeding flocks, and when the situation picks up once again Australia will have a wool industry which will again play an important part in this country. Many people believe that by centralising the control of marketing, the problems of agriculture will be solved. If we have learnt anything in recent years it is that centralising power does not solve problems. We have witnessed entire nations failing because they have tried to do that. The people on the spot making decisions about things they understand will, on average, make far better decisions than anyone else.

I turn now to the industry about which I know most, the beef industry. This is one of the few industries which has always rejected the need for statutory marketing. Having said that, the relationship between government and industry has been a profitable one. Governments have done those things which they could do; they have regulated areas such as health and standards within the export system. They have negotiated in many ways, and that has worked to the best interests of the industry. The beef industry is private enterprise through and through. It starts with the farmer. In many cases, a lot of small producers in the industry are very efficient. The products are usually shifted by private contractors, often the owner-operator in his own truck. That is an efficient method. Products can be marketed in many ways directly to privately owned abattoirs or sometimes to a central market for auction. Once again, that is a private system which allows people to compete to buy the products. It is interesting that at the end of the day the producer produces a quality product and in most cases the consumer receives a quality product. The producer receives between 40 per cent and 50 per cent of the price paid by the consumer. Few industries are able to produce a product as complex and perishable as beef, right through from farm to consumer to the retail counter, where the producer receives such a high proportion of the consumer dollar. As a wheat grower, I wish I received 40 per cent of the amount the housewife pays for bread or a packet of Weeties. We can learn from that. The beef industry has survived because it has done things well and produced a quality product. If we want stability in the agricultural industry that must be the model we follow.

With the export beef market the marketeers obtain export contracts. One view is that if we have many people in the marketplace the price may be bid down. That does not happen for one simple reason. When the marketeers return home they must buy the product, and they must do so in the marketplace. Every marketeer has two objectives in the marketplace: First, he tries to sell because we need people making sales; second, he tries to get the best price on the available market because he knows if he sells too cheaply, when he returns home he will not be able to fulfil the contract. That is why the system works well. At times the market is not there. The most recent example of that is the restrictions on the Canadian market. While one may not like the market, the smart thing for any country to do is to realise that in the long run we are all better off if we have competitive industries and nations throughout the world trading in the products that they produce best. However, there is no sense being foolish and making unilateral decisions to reduce the protection of one's own

industry and expect everyone else to be nice. It will not happen. Gradually, we should set an objective to free up trade. We must never lose sight of that objective. It will not be easy to attain but it is essential that we do so.

An important point to realise about the market is that it is often hard and one must face up to it, but it is usually fair to all the people involved. If it is unfair it is usually because the people with the monopoly have been able to use some form of coercion to get an unfair advantage and very often they use the Government to achieve that. It is imperative that people be free and responsible. Those of us who appreciate a community and want to see it develop, particularly members on this side of the House, believe that better communities come from better people. We cannot do it the other way around. We cannot control the situation from the top. The only way to boil the kettle is from the bottom. If we can create a situation where people can develop as individuals, out of that will grow a better society. Governments have a tremendous role to play in enabling people to achieve that end. We must work to improve the ability of all people in all walks of life to control their own destinies and choose their own goals. Individuals know their goals; Governments cannot suggest them.

I will address a few local issues. I would be here all night if I explained them all. I do not claim to know them all yet, because of the size of the area I represent. The Avon Valley is part of the Agricultural Region. Two towns of particular importance in the region are Northam and Toodyay; they are close to the city of Perth. Many people are moving out of the cities because they want a country lifestyle. I believe that, because of the standard gauge railway line into the Avon Valley and its close proximity to Perth, in the long term people will have an opportunity to enjoy a country lifestyle, and still commute to Perth. It will be a chicken and egg situation because it is difficult to have trains before we have the people, and we will not get the people before we get the trains. However, I am sure that with skill and good government many people will choose to live outside the metropolitan area and use public transport to commute.

Geraldton is probably the greatest port and regional centre in my electorate. It provides services for major industries, particularly fishing, farming, mining and tourism. Education is a very important service in the area, from preschool to technical and further education. Recently I visited the TAFE college. I was most impressed with the facilities, the staff and the sort of work they are doing. I had an opportunity to meet members of the board. They put it very clearly to me that it is essential that technical education be provided close to industry. Geraldton is the centre of the fishing industry on the west coast, and what a wonderful place to learn all those maritime skills which are so essential. It is a similar situation in Kalgoorlie, where people are taught mining.

We must train people in an area where the culture and lifestyle is in accord with those industries. The midlands area is looking forward to the development of a pulp mill at Moora. It is based on cropping, which is something we do well. If it gets off the ground it is a way of utilising a by-product and will give tremendous stimulation to the area.

Not far from me is the little settlement of New Norcia. It has an incredibly interesting history. In the 1840s it was a native mission and later played an important part as an educational centre, but unfortunately those days passed. The settlement is unique in Western Australia and probably Australia. It is managed by the Benedictines who had a part to play in the setting up of the Westminster system in England. It is interesting that these people, hundreds of years after they had an influence in Britain, still have an influence in my area. Our community must ensure that the great heritage of New Norcia is not lost, but maintained. It will cost a large amount of money and I hope the citizens of Western Australia will realise its value and make sure that a commitment is made for the work that is required.

The coastal towns have developed tremendously in recent years. My colleague mentioned the population on the west coast and how transport is essential for towns from Kalbarri right down the coast. The roads in that area are well below standard. One must come miles off the coast on the Brand Highway, which once upon a time was known as the Coast Road although it is an awfully long way from the coast. Time is wasted getting from one community to another. A coastal road would not only be a tremendous advantage to normal community activities but also would develop the tourist industry which is a major industry in my electorate.

The south east of the electorate has a different problem. The residents want to see the opening up of the Lake King/Cascades Road. Transport is the key to development and the future of our vast State. Perhaps the jewel in the crown of our coastal towns in terms of beauty is Esperance. It is so far away from other regional centres that it is almost a State on its own. When one gets there one experiences a totally different culture and lifestyle from most other towns in the Agricultural Region. We are awaiting an environmental report, and we have a classic case of a political decision having to be made. The very vital industries of that area depend on getting products through the port at a reasonable cost. Certainly on the one hand the shipping of iron ore out of Esperance would be a factor in reducing costs, but on the other hand Esperance is a magnificent and beautiful town. The arguments must be weighed up to see which is the most important. I feel sure that most people would accept that iron ore be shipped out of Esperance only if there were no risk to the environment of the area. In general, Government must provide vital services to the electorate. The electorate has plenty of water, particularly in my area along the west coast where the Agaton basin is a proved resource. Over recent years we have found it financially impossible to pipe that water to areas with a deficiency. We have the water, but we cannot afford the plumbing. That might be a message for proponents of the north west pipeline: If the State cannot afford to pipe water 50 or 60 miles, it will be very difficult to bring it down from the north west.

Energy will be the key to the development of manufacturing industries which can and should develop in our area. It is essential that not only should electricity be available at a reasonable price, but also new sources of energy like gas, which exists in the electorate, should be available in those areas which wish to base manufacturing on that resource.

Health services are certainly vital to us all. Our many hospitals and other care centres must be maintained. Education is the key to the future of our youth. Beyond any doubt, the greatest asset of the Agricultural Region is its people. One other thing that concerns me, perhaps more than anything, with the current agriculture recession is the loss of youth out of agricultural areas. I have three daughters, two of whom are married to farmers' sons, neither of whom are on farms. I am sure they are doing very well where they are and they made a wise choice, but how often do we see people who could have remained in the country and been leaders in the community move onto other things because there is not the incentive to stay where they are? Beyond all doubt, we need to maintain competitive industries; without that we will not maintain the rural population. Population enables communities to compete, to have those vital services which enables them to be born, educated, raised and, if they choose, to stay in the area. It is perhaps even more important that people have the chance to retire into an area, because in any community the youth can learn so much from the old. Probably one of those things that comes with age is that people feel a need to speak to youth and to give them the benefit of what they have learnt during their lifetime. Recently I had the opportunity to visit Pioneer House at Dalwallinu. I met an old friend I had not met for many years who had lived in the Dalwallinu district since 1935. A group of retired people is living in the middle of town. They are going to move into the shops and the community services and I am sure the town will benefit from their experience.

I pay a special tribute to my wife and three daughters who, over recent years, when I have often done things in public life which have interfered with the garden and some of the other responsibilities of a parent and husband, have given me tremendous support. I acknowledge the contribution they have made in making it possible for me to be with you in the future.

The greatest asset of the Agricultural Region is the people. The Government has a role in encouraging a responsive community where the young have a future and where citizens would wish to retire. I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Election

On motion without notice by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the following members be elected to sessional committees -

- (1) House Committee - Hon W.N. Stretch, Hon P.R. Lightfoot, Hon Sam Piantadosi, Hon Tom Stephens.

- (2) Library Committee - Hon Muriel Patterson, Hon T.G. Butler.
- (3) Printing Committee - Hon B.M. Scott, Hon T.G. Butler.
- (4) Standing Orders Committee - Hon Derrick Tomlinson, Hon W.N. Stretch, Hon Murray Montgomery, Hon Cheryl Davenport, Hon Sam Piantadosi.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Reconstitution

On motion without notice by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the Delegated Legislation Committee be reconstituted with the same order of reference as that under which a committee of the same name was constituted in the Thirty-third Parliament and that the Legislative Assembly be invited to pass a similar resolution.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [10.32 pm]: I move -
That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - Northampton District Hospital-Royal Perth Hospital

HON SAM PIANTADOSI (North Metropolitan) [10.33 pm]: I refer to an article which disturbs me and which appeared in *The Geraldton Guardian*. It is headed "Hospital plans labelled cynical". I can well understand why my good friend and colleague, Hon Kim Chance, is cynical about some of the comments and attitudes of the Minister for Health.

Hon George Cash: That is not a very charitable way to start off the new session.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Protestation comes from the Leader of the House. I guess he needs to protect his members, but if they are not able to stand up for themselves they should not be here. I am referring to this article in order to assist the Minister and to set him on the right track before he makes another gaffe. Members may see a bit of humour in it when I read it. As one of the members for the North Metropolitan Region, Hon George Cash may be concerned for one of his own colleagues.

Hon Peter Foss: Did you read the apology in the paper about how it got the story wrong the week before?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The article reads -

Mr Chance claimed Health Department figures he had obtained indicate hospitals in Mr Foss' electorate were more expensive to run, have lower occupancy rates and hold patients longer than the Northampton District Hospital.

Hon Peter Foss interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Perhaps Hon Sam Piantadosi should address the Chair.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: On the one hand Hon Murray Nixon, who also represents the area, has just told us of the need to keep services in country areas and in the Agricultural Region. He sits alongside the Minister who wants to close Northampton District Hospital. They have completely contradicted one another. The article continues -

He claimed Northampton Hospital could treat patients at a lower cost than any metropolitan hospital and he called on Mr Foss to explain why he chose to downgrade Northampton Hospital.

"Mr Foss should explain why he is not using his own electorate for this experiment, rather than making 'guinea pig' of people who live in remote and isolated areas," Mr Chance said.

"At least the people of the East Metropolitan Region would have other options available to them that people at Northampton, Yuna or the Murchison River do not have.

"I challenge the Minister to tell the people of Northampton what they have done to deserve such appalling treatment."

Mr Foss today said he was disappointed at Mr Chance's "public posturing" and claimed the Labor MLC had made an extraordinary misrepresentation of the department's figures.

He claimed that Mr Chance had missed the point and said a comparison could not be drawn between Northampton Hospital and those in his electorate, which included Royal Perth, Swan Districts and Kalamunda Hospitals.

I know that the Minister for Health has an affinity with the North Metropolitan Region, where his office is located. However, he represents the East Metropolitan Region. I inform him that - although he may have other plans - Royal Perth Hospital is not in the East Metropolitan Region, but in the North Metropolitan Region. If he has plans to shift Royal Perth Hospital to the East Metropolitan Region I would like him to come clean and inform the House that the change is afoot. I thought he would inform other members that he was laying claim to Royal Perth Hospital, which is not in the East Metropolitan Region. I sincerely hope his leader will speak to him later, because he also serves the North Metropolitan Region. I hope we can set the Minister on a straight road so that these gaffes do not keep occurring and that the people of Northampton receive a fair deal. Mr Nixon may be able to persuade the Minister to retain those services. Surely the people of the Agricultural Region as well as the people of the East Metropolitan Region would be better served if the Minister were to move his office out of the North Metropolitan Region into his own electorate.

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan - Minister for Health) [10.36 pm]: I will explain something about the Health Department to Hon Sam Piantadosi. The Health Department's principal hospital in the east metropolitan health region, which serves the East Metropolitan Region, is Royal Perth Hospital. Unfortunately, the principal hospital of my electorate happens to be slightly outside the electorate of my constituents, unlike Mr Chance's members, who are lucky enough to attend a hospital within their electorate.

Hon Kim Chance: I will swap.

Hon PETER FOSS: The fact is that the principal hospital for the East Metropolitan Region - the one from which the region is in fact managed and which my constituents attend - is Royal Perth Hospital.

Although I will deal with this in greater detail later, I will point out why it is important to understand the relative costs of various hospitals. Royal Perth Hospital is a good illustration of this point because it is the premier hospital in this State and carries out cardiothoracic surgery and many other complicated procedures. As one might expect, those procedures are more expensive than procedures carried out in other hospitals. Any hospital which carries out surgery has a tendency to be more expensive to run than one which does not. The Northampton hospital does not carry out surgery, nor a great many other procedures. One of the reasons I suggested to the Northampton hospital that it seriously revise its services was that it is not enough merely to spend money; money must be spent on providing a useful service to the community.

Hon Tom Helm: What about consultation?

Hon PETER FOSS: I will make a longer speech to explain the process of consultation. A very sensible example is the Goomalling and Districts Hospital, which is similar to the Northampton hospital and which had a fully equipped operating theatre. Quite sensibly, it realised that the operating theatre was not being used and that it was ridiculous to spend any money on maintaining it and keeping it in an operating condition because that money would be wasted.

Hon Kim Chance: Northampton has never had a theatre.

Hon PETER FOSS: The member should wait and listen. Goomalling hospital has made a sensible decision to stop spending money on services that are not being utilised. I am pleased to say that Northampton is also doing the same thing. It is ridiculous to keep maintaining a full set of staff day and night as is required for a hospital that is maintained for 24 hours a day, seven days a week if it does not have the people to use that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year service. We have to look at the needs of the community and make certain that the money spent actually provides a useful service to the community. That is what is being asked of the Northampton hospital. I am pleased to say that the

Northampton hospital is taking a positive attitude to the consultative committee which is consulting with the community and which I believe will come up with a positive result for that community. I intend to deal with that in more detail at a later stage.

It is important for people to understand that the measure of success in providing health care services is not only a matter of how cheap they are but also of how good and appropriate they are. My role as Minister for Health is to make certain that what we provide for the people of Western Australia is of the highest quality and is the most appropriate service and we must examine every single service that we provide to see that it is not only needed but that it has the appropriate priority. If we do that, Western Australia will have an opportunity of having a high quality health care system at a reasonable price which meets the needs of the people of Western Australia. If we are not prepared to do that and we insist on spending money on things that we do not need and which have a very low priority, we will not be able to provide the health care service that is needed by the State. There is little enough money around at the moment and little enough will be provided in the future due to the exigencies of the budget that has been left to us to provide health services to the people. Unless we are careful in our management, we will provide services that are not properly utilised.

I hope the result of the consultation process - I have indicated that the Northampton people have at least eight months to involve themselves in it before changes are made - will be to provide a service that not only suits the local people but also increases the useful services that are there. That will mean that the State is spending its money in a most wise fashion. I will take great pleasure in going through the details of the matters raised by Hon Kim Chance when a more leisurely and appropriate time arises. I do not think it is appropriate to deal with them now.

Adjournment Debate - Eviction Operation, Arnold's Riverland Property, South Australia

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [10.45 pm]: I apologise for holding up the House. I will not even mention the Northampton District Hospital because I hope that we will have the opportunity of debating it tomorrow. So that I can have the last word though, I want to quote another section of the *Geraldton Guardian* which includes further comments by Mr Foss. He said -

What I'm trying to do is to get their (Northampton residents) money spent on the health services they need. We're spending too much of their money on services that they may want, but that they do not really need.

Big brother knows best!

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Don't you know the difference between "want" and "need"?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do indeed. I promised I would not take long.

Hon N.F. Moore: Another broken promise.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I want to raise an extremely serious matter that has yet not occurred in Western Australia. A fax came to me today from South Australia about something that concerns me deeply, particularly considering some of the things we have heard about the recession in the country. I think matters relating to problems in the bush appeared on the front page of *The Australian* today and were also mentioned in *The West Australian*.

I will not read all of the fax, but it came to me from the Rural Action Movement in Western Australia. It advises that an eviction operation will take place on a Riverland property owned by Owen and Jenny Arnold. Apparently the sheriff will be accompanied by the South Australian Police who will be fully armed. It will be extremely stupid and dangerous if this sort of thing is going to start happening in country areas. The worst thing that anybody could do to people who are experiencing this kind of financial and emotional stress would be to walk onto their property supported by the police. If the sheriff is turned around and the court makes a separate order for the sheriff or the bailiff to go back accompanied by the police, it would be a different matter. However, banks and police combining to send in armed support is a gross abuse of the police.

Hon Peter Foss: Is there any suggestion that this person would confront them with arms?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do not have that information. It is very sketchy stuff. I simply wish to draw the attention of the House to it so that all members are aware not only of this

operation in South Australia but also that at some time in the future we may hear of this type of thing happening in Western Australia.

Hon E.J. Charlton: It will, if your Federal colleagues do not do something about it.

Hon KIM CHANCE: In this matter I do not care what kind of Government we have. It is as evil for a Liberal Government as it is for a Labor Government.

Hon N.F. Moore: It is a Labor Government.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do not care about that. This action is reprehensible and we must be aware of it. I announce now my intention to direct a question on notice to the Minister representing the Minister for Police to ensure that this cannot happen in Western Australia.

Hon George Cash: I hope you are also addressing questions to the Federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy and the Minister in South Australia.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do not have jurisdiction in South Australia as a Western Australian MP. However, it is a good idea and I will consider it.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.47 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY, DEPARTMENT OF - PREDICTIONS

Real Gross State Product Growth; Employment Growth; Inflation Level

2. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What is Treasury's predicted real gross State product growth for -
 - (a) 1992-93;
 - (b) 1993-94; and
 - (c) 1994 per annum thereafter?
- (2) What is Treasury's predicted employment growth for -
 - (a) 1992-93;
 - (b) 1993-94; and
 - (c) 1994 per annum thereafter?
- (3) What is Treasury's predicted inflation level for -
 - (a) 1992-93;
 - (b) 1993-94; and
 - (c) 1994 per annum thereafter?
- (4) Has the Minister other predictions of these indicators by consultants or other Government bodies and, if so, what are they?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

(1)-(4)

The Western Australian economy is enjoying stronger growth than the national economy and stronger growth than all States with the exception of Queensland. The State's stronger performance is evident across a range of indicators including gross State product, employment, building activity export performance and lower inflation.

I have previously announced that the Treasury has forecast that the Western Australian economy will grow by 4.5 per cent in 1993-94 following forecast growth of around three per cent in 1992-93, compared with forecast national growth of 2.5 per cent in 1992-93. Employment growth in Western Australia in 1992-93 is currently running at around two per cent and Treasury is expecting this rate to increase to three per cent in 1993-94. Inflation in Western Australia is currently lower than all other States at 0.5 per cent for 1992-93. Due to the expected increase in economic activity the inflation rate is forecast to rise slightly to 2.5 per cent in 1993-94. This will remain substantially below the inflation rate of our trading partners. Expectations for subsequent years are generally consistent with the projections for 1993-94.

Forecasts of economic performance in the next financial year are sensitive to State Budget decisions and to decisions which will be made at next month's Premiers' Conference concerning the level of Commonwealth funding that will be made available to the State in 1993-94. These forecasts will therefore be reviewed in the context of the Budget for 1993-94 and details will be included in the Budget papers. Forecasts by private firms of economic activity in Western Australia broadly align with those of Treasury.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - CONSULTANTS

Fees; Work

113. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

In respect of the Independent Commission of Audit -

- (1) What fees were each individual consultant paid for work done for the inquiry?

- (2) What work was done by each of the consultants?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I do not have the information requested by the member. The Government provided the commission with a budget for its inquiries and the appointment of consultants and committees, including the terms of their engagement, was entirely a matter for the commission. I understand that the commission proposes to list consultants and other persons who contributed to the commission's work in the second volume of its report.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - TREASURY COSTS

114. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

In respect of the Independent Commission of Audit -

- (1) What is the estimated person hours of work involved by Treasury in compiling and providing information to the inquiry?
- (2) What is the estimated cost of the work done by Treasury in response to requests generated by the commission of audit?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

(1)-(2)

Treasury does not maintain complete records on this basis. The work for the commission has been absorbed within existing resources. Treasury has also seconded a senior accounting officer and a senior secretary to the commission and provided some clerical support.

BUDGET (STATE) - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND *Cash Receipts*

115. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What were the total cash receipts for the consolidated revenue fund from 1 July 1992 to the end of May 1993?
- (2) What percentage of the total cash receipts estimated by Treasury for 1992-93 did that represent?
- (3) What were the total cash receipts for the consolidated revenue fund from 1 July 1991 to the end of May 1992?
- (4) What percentage of the total cash receipts estimated by Treasury for 1991-92 did that represent?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) \$4 406 045 025.
- (2) 87.1 per cent.
- (3) \$4 472 966 229.
- (4) 85.6 per cent.

BUDGET (STATE) - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND *Cash Payments*

116. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What were the total cash payments from the consolidated revenue fund from 1 July 1992 to the end of May 1993?
- (2) What percentage of the total cash payments estimated by Treasury for 1992-93 did that represent?
- (3) What were the total cash payments from the consolidated revenue fund from 1 July 1991 to the end of May 1992?
- (4) What percentage of the total cash payments estimated by Treasury for 1991-92 did that represent?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) \$4 601 571 043.
- (2) 90.9 per cent.
- (3) \$4 731 996 416.
- (4) 90.6 per cent.

BUDGET (STATE) - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

Cash Payments and Cash Receipts, Difference Between

117. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What was the difference between cash payments and cash receipts for the period 1 July 1991 to the end of May 1992?
- (2) What was the difference between cash payments and cash receipts for the period 1 July 1992 to the end of May 1993?
- (3) What is the reason for the improvement or deterioration in cash receipts?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) An excess of cash payments over cash receipts of \$259 030 187.
- (2) An excess of cash payments over cash receipts of \$195 526 018.
- (3) The improvement of \$63.5m reflects in large part the additional cost of voluntary severance payments in 1991-92.

MINING TENEMENTS - VALUATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

Valuer General's and State Taxation Commissioner's Roles; Stamp Duty Revenue

118. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) Is the Valuer General subject to direction from the Commissioner for State Taxation on matters pertaining to valuation of mining properties?
- (2) If so, in what areas can the State Taxation Commissioner direct the Valuer General?
- (3)
 - (a) Is the State Taxation Commissioner obliged to refer all questions of valuation of mining tenements for stamp duty purposes to the Valuer General; and
 - (b) If not, why not?
- (4) If the State Taxation Commission is not obliged to refer all valuation issues pertaining to mining tenements to the Valuer General, then -
 - (a) what criteria are used or under what guidelines does the State Taxation Office operate when valuing mining tenements in Western Australia;
 - (b) what criteria are used or under what guidelines does the Valuer General's Office operate when valuing mining tenements in Western Australia; and
 - (c) is mining information given a specific or deemed value in valuing mining properties for stamp duty purposes?
- (5)
 - (a) What number of mining tenement valuations were recorded from July 1 1992 to May 31 1993;
 - (b) of that number, how many were referred to the Valuer General for valuation for stamp duty purposes;
 - (c) how many of that number were disputed; and
 - (d) were the disputed valuations a result of the Valuer General's work or were they those calculated by the State Taxation Office using their own methods without reference to the Valuer General?
- (6) What was the amount of stamp duty collected in respect of mining tenement transactions from July 1 1992 to May 31 1993?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3)
 - (a) No.
 - (b) No such obligation is imposed by the Stamp Act.
- (4)
 - (a) I am advised by the Commissioner of State Taxation that mining tenement valuations are now referred either to the Valuer General or to a mining expert.
 - (b) I am advised by the Valuer General that mining tenements are valued in accordance with the requirements of the Stamp Act having regard to accepted valuation principles, court precedents and guidelines prepared by the Mining Industry Consultants Association.
 - (c) The Valuer General advises that neither a specific or deemed value is given to mining information but that this information discloses the value of the mining tenements.
- (5)
 - (a) The State Taxation Department does not maintain a record of mining tenement assessments or valuations but the commissioner is certain that all mining tenement valuations for assessment purposes would have been carried out by the Valuer General during this period.
 - (b) The Valuer General advises that his office received 90 requests for mining tenement valuations from the State Taxation Department during the period.
 - (c) Formal objections were lodged in respect of two of these valuations.
 - (d) In both cases, the Valuer General had made the valuations.
- (6) The State Taxation Department does not keep a record of stamp duty revenue collected in respect of mining tenement assessments.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BUDGET (STATE) - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND *\$48m Hole*

29. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

Will the Minister explain the Government's claim regarding a \$48m hole in the consolidated revenue fund in the current Budget, and how that figure grew within a week to \$63m in the Premier's speech to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I can answer part of the question; the remainder should be placed on notice. Part of the reason for the hole, from memory, was the \$20m to be brought into revenue from the sale of the State Government Insurance Office. I will provide the other information.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - CONSULTANTS *Signing of Confidentiality Contracts*

30. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

I understand that the Minister has insisted that the consultants involved in the Independent Commission of Audit sign confidentiality agreements. Am I correct that the Minister has done this to ensure the companies do not come back to exploit the information in breach of their contracts?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

This is the first I have heard of the signing of contracts of confidentiality. I

am not surprised. Obviously this is so that the companies do not disclose information gained as a result of their investigations. For most companies, this is part of normal business ethics, I assume, so that they cannot use the information in conflict with other statutory authorities.

Hon Mark Nevill, by leave, tabled the contract.

[See paper No 383.]

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - COSTS DISCLOSURE

31. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

Given the Minister's commitment to accrual accounting and the need to reflect the true cost of Government activities, will he disclose all the costs of the inquiries of the Independent Commission of Audit, including the costs associated with the preparation of the two reports and the individual payments to companies and consultants?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I ask the member to place the question on notice. The Government will provide the information for the Budget but I am not sure that the information will be available before that stage.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - CONSULTANTS

Payments Disclosure

32. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

After the Government has made out the cheques to pay the consultants, will the Minister disclose the payments to the House?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The member should place the question on notice. These are factors out of my control.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - REPORT, MINISTER'S COPY

33. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

When did the Minister receive or read the report of the Independent Commission of Audit?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I was privy to a copy of the report last weekend.

MIDLAND WORKSHOPS - ANNUAL LOSS

34. Hon P.R. LIGHTFOOT to the Minister for Transport:

What is the annual loss of the Midland Workshops?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Midland Workshops has incurred an approximate loss of \$20m a year. The loss in 1989-90 was \$22.7m; in 1990-91, \$19.8m; in 1991-92, \$18.2m; and in 1992-93 it is anticipated to be \$21.2m.

WESTRAIL - OVERSEAS CONTRACTS

35. Hon B.K. DONALDSON to the Minister for Transport:

Given the claims made by the Opposition today, what commercial activities will Westrail undertake overseas?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Commissioner of Railways, Dr Jim Gill, has advised me that no overseas contracts will be undertaken. Westrail will continue to operate in the same way as it has in the past.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - INFORMATION, MINISTER'S
ACCESS

36. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

Did the Minister have access to any material provided to the Independent Commission of Audit other than Radio 6PR and Totalisator Agency Board documents?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I would have had access to the information on the State Government Insurance Commission but I am not too certain what was done. The State Government Insurance Office is to be privatised and comes under my jurisdiction.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - CONSULTANTS
Employment after Contact with Minister

37. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

Were any consultants employed by the Independent Commission of Audit after contacting the Minister to offer their services?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

Only one firm contacted me. It was disappointed that it had not got any work from the commission. I put that name before the commission. It was fairly late in proceedings, I think in late May. I understand that the firm wrote another letter to the Premier because it had not received any work. I did not help the firm get any work. I do not know of any other firms.

ECONOMY - WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Top Ranking

38. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance :

- (1) Is the Minister aware of recent reports by the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry and by the New South Wales Treasury referring to periods in 1991-92 and up to the first quarter of this year which rank Western Australia as the best performing of the Australian States on a wide range of economic financial indicators?
- (2) Has the Government assessed the impact of its announced policies of increased taxes and charges and cuts to public sector employment on Western Australia's top ranking with respect to low inflation and high employment growth?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

(1)-(2)

I am not aware of the report by the two bodies. There is a tendency to say that we are the third ranked State in Australia after Queensland and New South Wales. If at one's home location the next door neighbours are bankrupt and one has \$2, one is wealthier than the neighbours. The States with a lower ranking than Western Australia are South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. Therefore, our finances are not so good when compared with Queensland's. An increase in growth has been forecast but at the same time we must deal with a huge debt problem. The difference between income and expenditure this year, both capital and revenue, will be the extra running costs of about \$64m next year. We have earned interest of up to \$60m yearly on earnings on short term investments. Next year no interest will be earned in that area. That is how our economy has gone and we will need an upturn in other areas. The serious problem arises, when can we expect to earn interest on investments? Anyone can have money invested one year and earn interest but can then lose the money or put it into non-income earning assets and therefore lose it. The economy might be showing an improvement but we still have financial problems.

ECONOMY - WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Independent Reports, Minister's Comments

39. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

Will the Minister undertake to scan the two independent objective reports, the New South Wales Treasury Report and the Victoria Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry Report, to discover what is the perception of the Western Australian economy?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I will be only too pleased to do so, and to provide my comments.

REVENUE - WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Source Revenue Decrease

40. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the Commonwealth Grants Commission's analysis published earlier this year which shows that on a per capita basis Western Australia's own source revenue is lower than that of New South Wales and Victoria?
- (2) Has the Government assessed the impact of its announced policies of increased taxes and charges on Western Australia's ranking with respect to its own source revenue raising?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

(1)-(2)

I am not aware of the exact figures. Our revenue is down considerably because stamp duty over the last couple of years has dropped. We estimate a decrease in that area. Alcohol revenue is down this year by \$8m or \$9m. Gambling revenue is up. Financial institutions duty is down because fewer persons are paid. With so many people on the dole not so much money is being banked. Tobacco revenue is up by about \$12.5m because our tobacco tax is less than that in other States. We charge only 50 per cent tax while other States charge between 75 and 100 per cent.

The excise received from tobacco sales is \$12.5m, which means that \$37.5m from tobacco product sales goes out of Western Australia to other States. It is not illegal to go out of the State, but it is illegal to on-sell them in the other States. If one is buying privately, one has no problems. I am not certain how payroll tax stands in comparison with previous years. We have a problem with land taxes where valuations have dropped and indeed, in the last few years, frozen. In previous years there was a benefit, but now Western Australia's basis for land tax is different from that of other States. It is logical that Western Australia should receive less revenue per capita from Government taxes and charges, but before one can make a comparison one must work out those differences. As the member knows, royalties from minerals and timber and sale of assets come out of territorial accounts and not taxation.

AUDIT, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF - AUDIT, USE OF WORD

41. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Fisheries:

Is the work of the Independent Commission of Audit an audit in the way that the word is customarily used?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

No, it is not an audit as the word is customarily used. It is based on an historical use of the word in New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, which States have all had Commissions of Audit. The term is used incorrectly. The New South Wales Commission of Audit received quite a reaction against its use of that name as the NSW Auditor General considered it to be a slight on his department to bring in another body to conduct an audit. However, that

was not the commission's purpose. A degree of auditing was done by the commission in NSW because accrual accounting for statutory authorities was not introduced until 1 July 1987. Outside firms were brought in to conduct audits to get a true picture of assets and liabilities as a lot of things had been omitted. The accounting method of the old Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust in Western Australia used to omit interest accrued of \$14m a year. There has been an investigation of the Commissions of Audit in Tasmania and Victoria and they did not conduct audits. Audit is the word for "hear" so one could say that an auditor is a person who hears what other people have to say; so in that way it is an audit.

RAILWAYS - NORTHERN SUBURBS RAILWAY

Passenger Increase - Fremantle-Mandurah Rail Link, Construction Priority

42. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Figures released by Westrail reveal that nearly 50 000 people a day are using the Joondalup rail service; that is, double the predicted figure and double the previous bus usage figure. Passenger loads have increased 30 per cent on the Fremantle, Midland and Armadale lines.

- (1) Will the Minister acknowledge that the policy adopted by the previous Labor Government in increasing and electrifying the metropolitan rail system is supported by the people of Perth?
- (2) Will he give priority to the construction of the much needed Fremantle to Mandurah rail link?
- (3) Bearing in mind this startling result, is it the Government's intention to raise Transperth fares in July?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

When I opened the Joondalup railway line I acknowledged the decision by the previous Government to upgrade that system. I also said that it was a shame the Government had not provided the financial resources to pay for it. It will cost \$40m a year for some indefinite period.

Hon John Halden: There is increased patronage.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: As a consequence of that increased patronage, as is stated in today's *The West Australian*, further capital investment is required. Western Australia's losses on public transport have increased from in excess of \$100m to \$200m as a result of the construction of that rail system. If the Government were to double the fares the money raised would not match the cost of operating the service.

- (3) Increases in fares will be announced at the appropriate time by Transperth and the Premier.

RAILWAYS - FREMANTLE-MANDURAH RAIL LINK

Construction Priority

43. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Government giving priority to the construction of the Fremantle to Mandurah rail link?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The previous Government introduced legislation to provide for that rail link, but it carried out no planning that would have enabled that to be provided. The Government's publicity was nothing more than political point scoring as is usually the case with the Labor Party. This Government is in the process of appointing a group comprising the Department of Planning and all relevant sections of the Department of Transport to consider the best options and will proceed to reserve any land that is required. That is the way businesslike people operate. They do not announce to the public that there will be a

railway and some years later try to find the land as the previous Government did. In line with proper management procedures the committee, in full consultation with the local communities to keep them aware of the future development, will ensure that an area of land is set aside for the appropriate form of transport.

NATIONAL RAIL CORPORATION - WESTRAIL
Rolling Stock Transfer

44. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Transport:

Did the previous Labor Government Minister for Transport, Pam Beggs, intend to transfer a large segment of Westrail's locomotive rolling stock to the National Rail Corporation?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank Hon Bill Stretch for advance notice of the question. If Western Australia had remained a shareholder of the National Rail Corporation, Westrail would have been obliged to transfer or lease to the NRC assets identified by the NRC as required for its interstate business. Prior to Western Australia's changing its status to a non-shareholder on 6 May, the NRC indicated it required 22 L class locomotives and in excess of 200 wagons. Under the current status Westrail is not obliged to transfer or lease assets and has indicated to the NRC that it has no locomotives available for transfer or lease.

MIDLAND WORKSHOPS - ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY
Contamination of Soil Report, Response

45. Hon T.G. BUTLER to the Minister for Transport:

What is the status of Westrail's response to the Environmental Protection Authority's report on levels of contamination of soil at the Midland Workshops site?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Westrail will monitor and liaise with the Environmental Protection Authority until 4 March 1994 in consultation with the residents of Midland, industry and other potential users -

Hon John Halden: Just answer the question.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: - as to the degree of contamination, where it is located and what needs to be done about it. That will be an ongoing operation between the EPA, the community and Westrail.

MIDLAND WORKSHOPS - CHURCHILL CRANKSHAFT GRINDER
Retention

46. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Will the Government retain the Churchill crankshaft grinder at Midland Workshops?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I am interested in the member's specific detail about that operation in the Midland Workshops, although a number of other operations take place at Midland.

Hon John Halden: Give us a simple yes or no.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member might be a simple person but I will not give him a simple answer.

The activities which currently take place in Westrail will be determined by Westrail in consultation with Westrail's work force in other areas, as I mentioned earlier today. The results of the getting together, to which Hon John Halden referred earlier, being done on the run is part of the planned

management structure that will ensure that Westrail's operations at the Midland Workshops will continue in Western Australia.

TRANSPORT - CHURCHILL CRANKSHAFT GRINDER
Retention in Western Australia

47. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Minister for Transport aware that if the Churchill crankshaft grinder is not retained in Western Australia, the only other place in the region where the relevant work can be carried out is Singapore?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The member has a very closed mind to the great potential of Western Australian industry. In future it will have opportunities to do a range of things which it has not been able to do in the past.

WORKPLACE AGREEMENT ACTS - MINIMUM CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT
Inclusion in Complementary Legislation Date

48. Hon T.G. BUTLER to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour Relations:

Will the Minister advise how soon the list of minimum conditions of employment to be included in the complementary legislation to the envisaged workplace agreement Acts will be available?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

The member will be aware that the details he is requesting are made available at the second reading stage of a Bill. It is not the Minister's intention to vary that procedure. However, as the Opposition claims it has a copy of the Bill in question I suggest the member consult that copy.

RAILWAYS - COMMISSIONER
Appointment Made Under Royal Commission's Recommendations

49. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Will the appointment of the Commissioner for Railways be made in accordance with the recent royal commission's recommendations regarding the appointment of chief executive officers?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

That appointment will be made under the proper terms and conditions that apply.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT - AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS

50. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

For what agencies and departments is the Minister responsible?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I am responsible for all those areas which generate a range of services to the public and which include Westrail, the Main Roads Department, Transperth, the Department of Marine and Harbours, the Department of Transport, Stateships, the Fremantle Port Authority and regional ports, regional airports and anything else which requires some action and in which I am interested.

MINISTER FOR FINANCE - AGENCIES

51. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Finance:

As the Minister has now returned to the Chamber I will ask him: For which agencies is he responsible?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I was expecting this question last Thursday. Hon Joe Berinson advised me that it would be asked because we asked him the same question when he was

Minister for Budget Management. I am responsible for the State Government Insurance Commission, the State Government Insurance Office, the Government Employees Superannuation Board, the Pay-Roll Tax Act, the Stamp Act, the Land Tax Act, the Valuer General, the Valuation of Land Act, financial institutions duty, bank accounts debit tax, the Betting Control Commission, the Gaming Commission, the Totalisator Agency Board Betting Act, the Lotteries Commission Act and fundraising and gaming. I am also responsible for Lewara Pty Ltd and radio station 6PR, which is 100 per cent owned by the Totalisator Agency Board, and Fairplay Print, which is one-third owned by 6PR. I am responsible for one-third of 60 per cent of DBM, the computing company, of which the private sector owns 40 per cent; the Government has 20 per cent and the two racing codes have 20 per cent each. I am also Chairman of the Parliamentary Superannuation Board and therefore must put up with Hon Tom Stephens.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. Moore: Sit down.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No; I only have to sit down when the President stands up. When he calls "Order", I wait until he takes the call.

The PRESIDENT: That is not the case.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: With due respect, have the rules changed?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The rules have not changed. When the President calls "Order", the member should sit down and stop what he is doing. I am not being pedantic about the matter but I am insisting on this because he was defying me. It does not matter that much; it is not a big deal and we will not become bad friends over it. When I call "Order", you should sit down. You should certainly sit down if I stand up. It is to your benefit also. That is one of the unwritten rules that new members in this Chamber will have referred to them. I remind all members that one of the unwritten rules is that it is considered out of order in this Chamber to refer to a member's absence from the Chamber. A member needs to be out of this Chamber for many very important reasons on parliamentary business. New members should not necessarily say or do what other members do in this place.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, now that you have provided the House with your expertise on these matters will you please assist me further regarding the standing order which relates to when the President calls "Order".

The PRESIDENT: It used to be Standing Order No 64. It is now Standing Order No 74.
