

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 5 November 1980

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (8): ASSENT

Message from the Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Amendment Bill.
2. Firearms Amendment Bill.
3. Colleges Amendment Bill.
4. Hire-Purchase Amendment Bill.
5. Chiropractors Amendment Bill.
6. Liquefied Petroleum Gas Subsidy Bill.
7. Western Australian Marine Amendment Bill.
8. Cemeteries Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Electoral Amendment Bill (No. 2).
Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. Peter Dowling, and read a first time.
2. Company Take-overs Amendment Bill.
Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), and read a first time.

REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS AGENTS AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters (Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife) [5.04 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The amendments contained in this Bill can be placed in two categories.

The first category relates to business agents, and is designed to enable—

- (a) Permit holders under the Act to be licensed as business agents, conditional upon the approval of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board as to satisfactory service, from the expiration of a period of 12 months from the appointed day, which was 1 December 1979;
- (b) permit holders so licensed to be exempted from holding the academic qualifications provided under the Act for real estate agents;
- (c) permit holders so licensed as business agents to be confined to the functions of a business agents as defined in the Act;
- (d) permit holders so licensed to be granted entry to the fidelity guarantee fund from 1 December 1980, on the same basis as now applies to real estate agents licensed under the Act.

The relevant sections of the Real Estate and Business Agents Act, which brought business agents under the control of the Act, came into operation on 1 December 1979, known as the appointed day.

Business agents were given permits subject to certain conditions to continue business for a period of 12 months, with provision for annual renewals. However, the Act provides that permit holders must, within a period of three years from the appointed day, satisfy the academic requirements laid down for real estate agents to become licensed under the Act.

There are 13 permit holders, all former business agents, who, prior to the appointed day and since then, have operated only as business agents and not as real estate agents.

Submissions have been made to the Government that as this is the first occasion on which business agents have been brought under legislative control, provision should have been included in the legislation to permit them to continue their business operations without meeting new criteria, or otherwise qualifying themselves to continue their business.

What the Act sought to do in relation to business agents was unusual, but there was also a special reason for it.

The Real Estate and Business Agents Act sought to eliminate the distinction between the business operations of a real estate agent and those of a business agent, and accordingly provided that when the business agents obtained the necessary qualifications within the three-year period mentioned, they would be licensed as real estate agents.

In 1979, difficulty was encountered by business agents, as permit holders under the Act, in obtaining a bond or guarantee of not less than \$75 000 as was then required. As a result, an amendment to the Act late in 1979 enabled the permit holders to contribute to the fidelity guarantee fund established under the Act at an annual rate of \$750.

The business agents' submission to the Government included a claim that they are harshly treated when compared with real estate agents by reason of the \$750 per annum contribution they are required to make to the fidelity guarantee fund.

It was pointed out that real estate agents contribute \$50 per annum to the fund.

The Government has considered the submission made by business agents and recommends to Parliament that the 13 permit holders—business agents—should be entitled to continue their business operations without becoming fully qualified as real estate agents and on the basis of an annual contribution of \$50 to the fidelity guarantee fund.

This conclusion has been reached in consideration of basic fairness of treatment to business agents, and in part because of advice received that the present course of study undertaken as a means of obtaining qualification to be a real estate agent does not yet have sufficient content relevant to business broking to justify persons already trading solely as business agents being required to undertake that course.

The amendments proposed do not apply to future applicants to be licensed under the Act. Only in relation to the 13 permit holders currently trading solely as business agents will it be possible for a licence to be granted.

All new applicants will need to satisfy the specified academic and other criteria set down in the Act and regulations, and will, when licensed, be entitled to practise as real estate agents and business brokers.

The content of academic courses is being strengthened so that new entries into the field will be trained in all aspects of these operations.

As a result of its experience in the application of the Act, the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board has suggested a number of changes to the Act, which represent the second category of amendments.

These aim to improve the regulation and supervision of persons acting in respect of "real estate" and "business" transactions. They also

seek discretion in favour of the board in certain cases to refund fees paid for triennial certificates.

It is proposed to amend the definition of "real estate transaction" by including a reference to the collection of rents to confirm that this function is a real estate transaction.

The attendance of members at meetings of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board is now controlled to the extent that the office of a member becomes vacant if he is absent for three consecutive meetings of the board without leave granted by the Minister.

Over a period of more than 12 months, the board has met more than once a week and it is not unusual that three meetings are held within 10 days. This is a result of the heavy workload undertaken by the board, both for meetings and formal hearings.

Therefore, it will be acknowledged that it is practically unrealistic to require the consent of the Minister for absence from three consecutive meetings and as a result it is now proposed that a member may be absent from meetings of the board for a period of eight weeks without obtaining leave from the Minister.

The Act distinguishes between a licence and a triennial certificate.

A licensee, if he wishes to operate as a real estate agent, must obtain a triennial certificate. If he does not intend to operate his business, he need not have a triennial certificate, but he will remain licensed.

Proper records, including a separate register, must be maintained for licensees not holding triennial certificates. The Bill makes provision for the charging of an annual fee against such licensees. Authority is also provided to cancel a licence in default of payment of that fee.

It is proposed to strengthen that section of the Act which prohibits charging and paying for keys or for information relating to tenancies. The purpose is to deter unscrupulous operators from receiving or seeking key money.

Another amendment seeks to eliminate inconsistency in the section dealing with the issue of receipts for money received by an agent. Provision is made for specific information to be included in the receipt and for a carbon duplicate of the receipt to be retained by the agent.

In accordance with part IX of the Act, agents are required to deposit a prescribed percentage of their trust accounts to the credit of the deposits trust account, or to lodge a declaration of exemption from this requirement.

It is intended to require that the annual audit verify that the amount deposited, or exemption declared, is in accordance with the Act.

It is proposed to repeal an existing provision which requires agents to keep trust accounts, books, and records at a branch office.

An agent will have the right to decide whether he keeps all records at his principal place of business, or at a branch office, or both.

Under the Act as it stands, a licensee, whether or not he holds a triennial certificate, is subject to the inquiry and investigation provisions of the Act.

The Act treats sales representatives differently because they are not licensed on a continuous basis, but hold annual certificates of registration.

Where a current certificate of registration is not held, the board cannot exercise disciplinary action against the sales representative, and only court proceedings can be taken.

It is considered appropriate that a sales representative who continues to operate after the expiry of his certificate of registration should be subject to disciplinary action by the board.

It is therefore proposed that an application may be made to the board for an inquiry into the conduct of a sales representative not later than 12 months after the day on which his certificate of registration expired.

If the board is satisfied that cause exists for disciplinary action, it will be authorised to exercise the powers given by the Act.

An inconsistency is removed from section 114 which at present refers only to subsection (1) of section 113. This section should refer to subsections (1) and (2) of section 113 and it is proposed to make it clear that both agents and sales representatives do not have to make further contributions to the fidelity guarantee fund when the fund exceeds \$1 million.

As the Act now stands, the board has had no discretion whatsoever to make a refund of fees paid by agents in respect of licences or triennial certificates.

It is proposed in the Bill that in the event of death or other unusual occurrence, the board will be empowered to refund a part or the whole of any fee paid for a licence or triennial certificate, or any sum paid to the board by way of a contribution or levy to the fund.

The temporary continuation of business by an agent, firm, or body corporate, following the death of an agent, a partner in a firm, or director of a body corporate is permitted under the Act,

but there is no provision to cover the situation of retirement or withdrawal of a director or partner.

The Bill makes provision for continuation of business, subject to terms notified by the board, for a period of three months after the death, retirement, or withdrawal of a director or partner.

In several places, the Act refers to the obtaining of licences within two or three years of the appointed day, which was 1 December 1979.

To qualify for the grant of a licence, an applicant must have passed the prescribed examinations.

Examinations for a certificate in real estate management are conducted by the Education Department in November and December, and results are available early in the following year.

So that the results of annual examinations and, if necessary, any associated supplementary examinations may be considered, the various time limits set by the Act for obtaining a licence are proposed to be extended by four months.

Branch managers are required under the Act to be licensed and to hold a current triennial certificate.

However, transitional provisions permit the continuation of certain unlicensed persons acting as branch managers for a period of up to three years from the appointed day.

The Act as it stands might be construed to permit an agent to appoint anyone as a branch manager during the transitional period, and a proposed amendment seeks to eliminate this weakness.

The Bill proposes that during the transitional period, only a person who is licensed or who meets the criteria for continuation, may be a branch manager.

By 1 April 1983, when the transitional provision ceases to have effect, all branch managers will be required to be licensed and hold current triennial certificates.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. J. M. Brown.

ACTS AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [5.18 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is complementary to the Transport Amendment Bill 1980.

Its main purpose is to remove from the State Transport Co-ordination Act those functions that are to become the responsibility of the Commissioner of Transport and which are to be written into the Transport Act.

Of the functions now being transferred the director general in practice has never been involved in those relating to the provision of new or altered road services or any associated matters.

Other functions have been performed only infrequently as, for example, reporting to the Minister on any proposal for the construction of a new railway.

However, in this case the Director General of Transport will be required still to evaluate the proposed works and report to the Minister on their investment potential.

It is also proposed to transfer responsibility for the Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act and the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act to the Commissioner of Transport.

As Chairman of the Taxi Control Board the Commissioner of Transport, to all intents and purposes, has always advised the Minister on this legislation. The practical administration of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act has also rested largely with the Commissioner of Transport who makes recommendations relating to funding and who has been responsible for investigations into the board's administration and functions.

Clearly, all the above responsibilities are more appropriately performed by a regulating agency such as the Transport Commission.

The Bill also more clearly defines the functions of the Secretary of the Taxi Control Board. Although this officer is an employee of the Transport Commission, the existing wording of the Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act does not recognise the fact.

This omission has created some administrative problems in that in respect of his duties with the Taxi Control Board he has access only to the Commissioner of Transport as chairman of the board and is not subject to the usual delegated supervision of the secretary of the commission.

It is, therefore, proposed that the Act be amended to rectify the position.

The amendment also makes provision for the secretary of the board to carry out such other duties and functions and hold such additional positions as may be required by the commission should the need arise.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. F. E. McKenzie.

PHARMACY AMENDMENT BILL*Receipt and First Reading*

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [5.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes amendments to two areas of the Act.

The first is to make provision for the registration of a veterinary pharmacy at Murdoch University. This pharmacy is already in existence and an application has been made for its registration under the Act. However, under the existing provisions, registration is restricted to pharmaceutical chemists, companies, or friendly societies, and Murdoch University does not fit into any of these categories.

Consequently, unless the Act is amended to provide for this registration, or to exempt the university from the provisions of the Act, the pharmacy's continuing operation must be considered to be illegal.

Rather than expand the Act to provide for the inclusion of Murdoch University, which would entail numerous references to that establishment, with the agreement of the Pharmaceutical Council, provision has been made to exempt the university's veterinary pharmacy from the provisions of the Act.

Another area of the Act to receive attention is that dealing with advertising.

There is some concern that persons who are not pharmacists, without penalty are able to advertise pharmacy-related professional services. However, if a pharmaceutical chemist advertises generally and offers professional advice in relation to ailments, he would be liable to action by the council for contravening a regulation made under the Pharmacy Act.

The Bill seeks to remove this anomaly by prohibiting commercial advertising of pharmacy-

related professional services by persons who are non-pharmacists, thereby placing the same constraints on both registered pharmacists and non-pharmacists.

It is also proposed to prohibit persons who are not registered pharmacists from holding themselves out to be such, even by inference.

The Act prohibits the use of a sign or title of pharmacist, etc., by a person who is not a registered pharmacist. However, the provision does not specifically mention advertising. It is proposed to considerably tighten the Act in this area and prevent the misuse of advertising to infer that the person or firm is registered and operating within the Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. J. M. Berinson.

NURSES AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [5.25 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend the Nurses Act in several areas, but apart from one important amendment relating to a new composition of the board, they are of a minor nature and are concerned mainly with administration and registration matters.

The first group of amendments relates to definitions in the interpretation clause.

Probably the most important are the added definitions of "enrolled nurse" which replaces the unpopular term of "nursing aide" and that of "registered nurse" to clarify that term used in the Act.

The next amendment proposes a reformed board with fewer medical profession members and more nursing representation to cater for the many facets of present-day nursing practice.

The present board will be increased from 17 to 18 members and the number of medical practitioners will be reduced from four to two. These will be those representing Medical Services and a major teaching hospital associated with a school of nursing.

"Enrolled nurses" comprise some 3 000 to 3 500 of the board's 13 000 to 14 000 registered

members. They will continue to be represented by two of their members on the new board.

An associated amendment is to provide for the Minister to select a chairman from within the total membership of the board.

It is also proposed to allow the board to elect its own deputy chairman to act in the chairman's absence.

Power will be granted to allow a meeting, at which both the chairman and deputy are absent, to elect one of its members present to preside.

Many minor amendments throughout the Bill propose changes in terminology. These are designed to reflect the present-day thinking and terms used of such things as nursing education—instead of training and instruction—titles for positions, and branches of nursing, as detailed in the Bill.

One amendment proposes to give the Governor power to remove a member of the board from office, if that member is absent from four consecutive meetings for which due notice was given, but for which prior leave was not granted by the board.

Another is proposed to give the board authority to grant approval to other institutions—such as the Western Australian Institute of Technology—to conduct examinations for education under this Act and for the board to withdraw that approval, if ever required.

Additional provisions are proposed, in the registration requirements of the Act, to allow for the recognition of nursing qualifications awarded by other institutions—for example, the Western Australian Institute of Technology—and also for applicants who have qualified sufficiently in institutions outside this State and who have completed such additional training or examinations as required by the board to be accepted as eligible for registration.

One more provision in this part requires applicants to possess a sound knowledge of the English language—and skill in expressing it.

It is proposed to allow the board to accept registration renewals in the two months prior to the present January-to-March period allowed in the Act.

The registration period expires on 31 December each year, and the Act allows application to be made to the registrar any time within the next three months. This means that for the period until they make application, those nurses are unregistered, yet probably are still practising. This amendment should diminish this anomaly.

It should also spread the workload and improve the cash flow of renewal fees to the board.

It will enable new registrations to be registered late in the year without having to charge the applicant the full year's fee for perhaps a few weeks' registration before the next year's fee is due.

One provision proposes to allow for the temporary registration of people working temporarily in the State, undergoing a special training course, or being employed by organisations which may not solely operate within the State.

This refers to organisations such as the Australian Inland Mission which provides nursing services in remote areas.

The period of registration proposed is up to three months, or such further period as the board may approve.

A minor amendment is to delete the provision for an offence and its penalty when a person does not notify the registrar of a change of address.

Such offences have been found to be impractical to police and charge, as the offence is not apparent until the person advises the board, at which time the basis of the offence no longer exists.

The provision requiring advice of a change of address will be unaffected. If a penalty is required to be imposed, it can be covered by the Act's general penalty clause.

Another amendment is to delete the word "gross" from the term "gross negligence" in the provision for disciplinary power of the board. It is apparently very difficult to prove "gross" negligence.

As there is no provision to find a person guilty of any lesser level of negligence than gross negligence, this amendment will provide that facility. This will not detract from the board's disciplinary powers.

Another amendment proposes to grant the board power to impose such conditions on the behaviour of a person being disciplined by a period of suspension from registration. That person will be able to appeal against the conditions, or their imposition. The maximum monetary penalty for disciplinary measures is proposed to be increased to \$100.

A requirement now exists for the surrender of a certificate of registration or badge by a person whose name is removed from the register. Provision is sought for a similar requirement of a person who is temporarily suspended from registration for the period of suspension, and for

the board to be empowered to return that certificate or badge at the end of the suspension period.

Amendments are proposed to the prohibition of a person practising nursing without being registered. The first is to amend the general prohibition requiring any person practising nursing in any of its branches to be registered with the board. This will allow for the case of a fully qualified nurse being employed in a lesser role—say, enrolled nurse—due perhaps to an unemployment situation.

Another proposal in this part is to increase the penalty for individuals practising without being registered, from \$40 to \$80.

Provision is proposed to allow unregistered, but qualified, people and nursing members of the armed forces of Australia to carry out nursing duties in an emergency or disaster situation, without committing an offence under the Act.

It is proposed to increase the general penalty from \$100 to \$200 and the penalty for a breach of the regulations is proposed to be increased to \$100 in separate amendments. These are considered as being reasonable amounts now for the offences concerned.

The final minor amendments relate to the provision for making regulations. The main amendment here proposes to delete reference to nurses' head dress design, as the regulation regarding this was deleted many years ago. Individual hospitals make their own rules regarding this matter.

Earlier in my speech I made reference to a proposal which would reform the Nurses Board.

For the information of members, I would like to mention that it is my intention to move an amendment during the Committee stage of this Bill, which will enable the chairman of the board to be a person from outside the composition of the board itself. This would be on the recommendation of the board to the Minister and I will provide greater detail at the appropriate time.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. H. W. Olney.

BANANA INDUSTRY COMPENSATION TRUST FUND AMENDMENT BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

DAIRY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL*Third Reading*

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [5.34 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I said I would supply further information to members concerning queries raised by the Hon. Neil McNeill in respect of funds of the Dairy Industry Authority.

The funds of the authority are received monthly. These include the margin for administration, the margin for promotion and the margin for the dairy assistance plan. Apart from administration, funds are not always required to be used immediately and are invested under the best interest conditions for relatively short terms.

Most of the funds that become temporarily available for investment are generated by the margin for the dairy assistance plan. Although the income of the dairy assistance fund is committed, varying amounts are required to be expended at different months of the year depending on sales and milk production; for example, for support of market milk quota and for payment of manufacturing milk premium. The interest from investments becomes an important contributor to those funds. At present, investments are confined to term deposits at banks.

The amendment will authorise investments, with the Treasurer's approval, similar to those authorised for trust funds. Some of those type of investments will undoubtedly provide higher interest than current investments for the benefit of the dairy industry and at the same time assist the housing industry where investments are to be made through building societies.

The authority investments at 30 June 1980 were as follows—

| | \$ |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Superannuation (reserve)..... | 621 000 |
| Long service leave (reserve)..... | 60 000 |
| Dairy assistance fund..... | 1 042 000 |
| Authority funds..... | 330 000 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$2 053 000 |

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**RURAL INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE
AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 October.

THE HON. J. M. BROWN (South-East) [5.36 p.m.]: The amendments to the Rural Industries Assistance Act contained in this Bill

are indeed far more voluminous than the provisions of the Act itself. The amendments bring about a redefining of the powers of the Rural Adjustment Authority. At present the authority is only a funding body, and it is proposed to extend its powers to include the administration of compensation and reconstruction schemes in respect of catchment areas where clearing bans have been applied.

People affected by clearing bans in catchment areas of the south-west are precluded from applying for assistance under the existing legislation, and the purpose of the amendments is to make specific provision in respect of the power of the authority to purchase land, hold it, subdivide it, or otherwise deal with it; and this includes Crown land.

However, the powers conferred upon the authority by this Bill require further clarification. One wonders whether farmers affected by clearing bans will be treated in a manner similar to that applying to farmers who apply for rural assistance in other areas, or whether priority will be afforded to those who are fortunate enough to receive Crown land. Is it the intention to subdivide certain Crown land contiguous with the catchment areas, but not affected by the bans of the area? One wonders what the priorities will be.

Furthermore, the Public Works Department has played a significant role in salinity control and clearing bans in these areas, and it appears the department again will be involved in the administration of this Act. In addition, the Valuer General's Department naturally will be involved, along with the Rural Adjustment Authority.

I believe the exact manner in which the authority will act should be spelt out. The Opposition has no objection to the legislation because it believes it will provide a vast improvement on the present situation in the catchment areas; and it will apply only to those areas. We see great value in this legislation to the farmers affected by clearing bans in catchment areas and, therefore, we have no opposition to the proposed amendments.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [5.40 p.m.]: I, too, support the measure. It is interesting once again to learn that the Opposition agrees to this Bill. One would think it did not agree with the original Bill to amend the Country Areas Water Supply Act. Some members of the Opposition, although certainly not anyone in this Chamber, adopted an obstructionist attitude in respect of the amending Bill when it was

introduced to the Parliament. The questions asked by the Hon. J. M. Brown come from a speech made in the other House.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: And the same answers were not satisfactory.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: He is displaying the same type of negative approach. The Opposition has adopted such an approach to clearing restrictions since they were introduced. Members of the Opposition have not put forward a constructive suggestion or even had a constructive idea. They did not oppose the original Country Areas Water Supply Act Amendment Bill, and they made no constructive suggestions. I must give credit to the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, who introduced that Bill to the Parliament and who faced all the flack and built in the flexibility that is necessary. He is responsible for the Bill before us tonight, because it is due to the flexible attitude he adopted in respect of understanding the problems of farmers.

It is a magnificent piece of hypocrisy for a member of the Opposition to stand up and ask, "What is going to happen?" Not once have members opposite made a constructive suggestion in respect of this matter. Their attitude has been one of knocking and wandering amongst the farmers and saying, "This can't be done" and "That can't be done". They have done that instead of phoning the PWD or the Minister and saying, "Here is an idea, how about trying it out?"

The Hon. J. M. Brown: You are belly-aching.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am not. Mr Brown has just come back to this Parliament, and really he has not had much to do with the clearing restrictions.

I have had a great deal to do with the restrictions and the situation has been extremely hurtful to me politically at times. In one ballot box where I used to get 56 or 57 out of 65 votes, at the last election my total vote, due to clearing restrictions, decreased to 11 votes. Will members of the Labor Party say they do not believe we should put clearing restrictions on this land, and that we do not need potable water? In no way will they say that. They want to make all the strife they can and offer no constructive suggestions.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: That is not quite correct.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Well, Mr Brown, during the whole two years we have been working on this problem not one constructive suggestion has come from the Opposition. In fact, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the other place virtually had no knowledge of the fact that

clearing restrictions had applied in the Wellington catchment area for two years. Therefore, it is interesting to hear that sort of business being put forward by members opposite.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is very interesting to see the feeling the farming community have for Mr H. D. Evans.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Evans has got away with a fair bit.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What do you mean by that?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: He has got away with a lot.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Of what?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Of knocking, and making no constructive suggestions. There has been not one constructive suggestion. Every time the member for Warren has been at a meeting, he has whinged and whined about what may happen or what may not happen. He never went to the previous Minister or the present Minister and said, "Look, this is a good idea. Why don't you have a look at it?"

The Hon. Neil Oliver: You mean he has not made a firm suggestion?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: He has made no firm suggestion. All he has made is innuendo. He has tried to stir the political pot rather than adopt a statesman-like attitude.

The Hon. J. M. Brown interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: When I was in the country with him, I got quite a different impression.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Would the member proceed without inducing interjections?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I would love to. Induction is not one of my best points.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you like me to give you the opposite of that?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Labor Party has gone around trying to knock what has been done. As I said, not once has there been a constructive suggestion. I will leave it at that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You had better.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: If the Leader of the Opposition wants to challenge me, I am prepared to take up the challenge. I know more about this subject than the seaiders do.

The Hon. D. K. Dans interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Leader of the Opposition can sit there and interject.

Occasionally I agree with some of his interjections; but tonight he does not know what he is talking about.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You are knocking Mr H. D. Evans unjustly.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am not. I am in luck, because I have with me a copy of the *Warren-Blackwood Times* of Wednesday, 29 October, in which the following headline appears—

Mismanagement over clearing bans—
Evans

If that is not knocking, what is? According to that article, Mr Evans said that it has been two years since the bans were introduced. He is wrong in that, because the bans on the Wellington River were in force for another year before. Of course, he was not involved politically in the Wellington bans. The member for Collie worked his heart out trying to get something done, without making it a political matter. The member for Collie belongs to the ALP also—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: A little bit of back scratching going on.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The member for Collie supported the Government. Now where is all the yelling and screaming from the Opposition? Mr T. H. Jones took a sensible approach to it; and he has done so ever since.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think Mr Evans is recognised as an authority.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr H. D. Evans tried to stir the political pot. He failed, because the farmers in those areas realised that he has been trying to do this.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You think so?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: They have been coming to me in droves, saying, "We were told this. We were told that." When I asked by whom they were told these things, they said, "The member for Warren."

The other interesting thing about the matter is that the farmers in the area were taken by surprise. They were extremely angry, as the Hon. Graham MacKinnon will verify, because some of the meetings were extremely nasty. Some people in this place said they were misinformed and they did not have the information. I am not very proud of those members.

The Hon. Graham MacKinnon went out to face the music. By going out and facing the music, he saw that flexibility was needed in the size of suckers that could be cut down; where fence lines should be cut through; where the posts should be cut; and all those sorts of things. The flexibility

was shown because a Minister was concerned. He was prepared to go out into the area and face the music. I hope future Ministers will do that.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: And you rewarded him by taking his portfolios away from him.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am pleased Mr McKenzie raised that. At the present moment, I have not reached the stage where I allocate portfolios.

I believe people should be commended for a job well done; and the Hon. Graham MacKinnon did this job well. He may have been sacked. I do not mind whether he was sacked; but I am giving credit to a man who has done a good job. He has done a better job than any Labor Party member has done in relation to this matter. The Labor Party can squeal—

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Except Tom Jones?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Tom Jones went along with it when it was a *fait accompli*. What did the Tonkin Labor Government do with Mr H. D. Evans as its Minister for Agriculture and Forests? It did nothing.

The Hon. R. T. Leeson: It was not a problem then.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: What rot! It was only Mr MacKinnon who had the guts to face up to the problem. He made sure that the south-west of this State would have a potable water supply for the future, for industry, and for people to drink.

I would like to know where the Labor Party stands on this issue. Does it want to give up the clearing restrictions? Does it want to return to clearing everything? Let us hear from the environmental lobby of the Labor Party. Let us hear their shouting and screaming.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: A very fair question.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am afraid I am not in that lobby.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: What the Labor Party wants to do is to use this matter as a political tool.

The Hon. D. K. Dans interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member is endeavouring to induce people to interject; and the lack of interjections—

The Hon. H. W. Olney: He is becoming political.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Exceedingly so.

The PRESIDENT: The member knows that interjections are out of order. I would like him to proceed.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Can I ask whether that applies to the other five speakers?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have listened for some pearls of wisdom, but I have not gathered any yet.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The exchange system was another of Mr MacKinnon's suggestions. He suggested exchanging land, putting together pieces of land, buying out one farmer and giving another farmer that piece of land, and other things. He suggested the idea that there were some Crown reserves outside the catchment area that could be used for swapping with land inside, to make the farms viable. The Rural Adjustment Authority had to be brought in because the whole thing was beyond the scope of the Public Works Department. The PWD is not involved in real estate.

Before I deal with other matters, I would like to talk about some things Mr Brown mentioned. It is obvious the PWD will be the body which issues the licences to clear, or which says one cannot clear because the land is within a water catchment. There was an announcement in a Press release in June that farmers selling their properties to the PWD and applying for land releases in other parts would be given priority. Another "MacKinnon first".

I ask members what other body would do the valuations on the land? The Labor Party complains that the Valuer General's Department comes in. I would have thought that the Valuer General's Department was there to do valuations for all the departments within the State. The department does them for the PWD; and I know it does them for the Rural Adjustment Authority; so that answers that.

The Rural Adjustment Authority can lend more money if it is needed. It can manoeuvre the land in such a way that it provides a block or series of blocks which the farmer can farm economically. If there is something needed in the way of extra plant, or what-have-you, the Rural Adjustment Authority can assist in that way.

The farmers in the area are the ones who deserve priority consideration, because they are the people who will be affected by future developments in this State. If it costs the State a few bob, I am not worried about that.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Hear, hear!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Even with the tight budgetary considerations we have at the moment, I am not worried about that because these are the people moving out of their livelihoods for the

future of the water supplies of this State. They should be supported to the hilt.

There are several things I would like the Minister to note. I understand that compensation is now not going to be given in lieu of shire rates. I hope my information is wrong. I believe that anybody who chooses to take compensation and goes on paying the rates should have a figure on the compensation amortised so he can pay the rates in future years. That is one of the keys to the problems of the shires, as well as the problems of the farmers. If an amortised amount is put into the amount for injurious affection, then the rates are paid year by year. It should be a generous amount.

Two things ought to happen. The first is something that was suggested to the Minister by me in January last year. The Minister agreed to do it; and the farmers' organisations refused to have a bar of it. They have since changed their minds. It is not too late to do what I suggested—to conduct a survey of the total catchment areas affected by clearing restrictions. Every individual farm should be surveyed on a confidential basis, to find out how much land the farmer cleared, what he intended to clear over the next five years, and what he thought were his needs in terms of arable land for the next 10 years. That would apply especially in zone "A" where the farmer could not clear any land. Such a survey would give a full picture of the whole clearing restriction area. It is not too late to do that.

Some small surveys have been done; but if a full survey were done, the PWD, the Valuer General, and the Department of Agriculture would receive great benefit from it.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: There is a problem with surveys. The Labor Party put a lot of emphasis on it.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That sort of inane comment is not what I need.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: What sort of survey are you talking about?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Quite frankly, if the Hon. Neil Oliver had listened, he would have heard what sort of survey I was suggesting.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: You said "market research".

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I will forget about that, because it is obvious the Hon. Neil Oliver is not following my speech, and he is not making an intelligent interjection.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: I find it rather boring in those circumstances.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The same applies to the interjections by the Hon. Neil Oliver.

The other thing I am worried about is the wording of several documents about Crown land. I am worried that some people think Crown land will be subdivided and given to farmers.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Before the dinner suspension I was discussing the importance of people in the whole scheme of this Rural Industries Assistance Amendment Bill. The Government must continue its very fine efforts in the industry and the efforts of the Hon. Graham MacKinnon by looking at individual cases and people's problems.

There is a need for a survey of the total clearing restriction area. The Government must answer questions on amortisation and whether the rates will be amortised. It does not matter to the Government if it purchases the land because it will be then Crown land and the Government does not have to pay rates.

I imagine the shires would then have to claim under element B of the Grants Commission against the rates they lose from the land which has been purchased. Where compensation is paid to the owner and the owner has kept the land, in the injurious affection part of the compensation the rates should be amortised in perpetuity so that the owner is paid a sum of money for that land he would normally have been allowed to clear but still has to pay rates on.

He should be given an amount of money so that he may continue paying the rates in perpetuity. The amount of money could be \$1 000 or \$2 000 for the injurious affection payments.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Also amortised.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The injurious affection is for loss of income or if a person has to transfer or build fences on another block. For example, if the land held previously was 300 acres and the Government provided 500 acres, the clearing of that land and the building of a house on that land would be paid for under the injurious affection payments.

On top of all that the rates and compensation to the shires must be maintained. It would be quite simple for the Government to say: Under element B when the Government bought the land and it was then Crown land, a shire may be reimbursed every year for the amount it lost. In this way the owner receives compensation only. In other words, he can still run stock on the land, but cannot clear it. In that case the Government should make sure that an amount is amortised so

that year by year, in perpetuity, the farmer may pay his rates. In that way the shire is not deprived of the money.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Do you think element B is the only way to compensate for rates?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I think it is probably the simplest way when we look at the number of shires which have been affected.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Is it the fairest?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I cannot think of any fairer way and if the honourable member can think of any suggestion I am sure the Government would be pleased to hear it, as I would. I cannot see any other way in which the shires could be recompensed, especially when we consider inflation.

The Government should make some statement about element B so that shires are left in no doubt. A meeting of shires was held in Darkan today for the purpose of looking at this problem. The Government has to leave shires in no doubt that they will not lose money and that the people living in these shires will not either.

This Bill is a follow-up of the Country Areas Water Supply Bill of 1976 and the Bill of 1978 included the areas of Warren, Kent, Denmark, and Mundaring. Those Bills probably stimulated farming and agro-forestry; a subject which has caused laughter to be directed at me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What does it mean?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Agro-forestry means balancing timber growth and agricultural growth together. There are many ways of doing this and I am glad the Leader of the Opposition interjected because the Hon. Graham MacKinnon and I have seen a property which is in a 24 to 25 inch rainfall area and which has been taking a steer to the acre. The land has not been cleared and has been top-dressed with both clover and superphosphate. It is in hilly country and all the experts on salinity who have seen this area have said that there is no problem with salinity there, whereas there may be in other areas.

In areas where there is no problem with poison this may be an answer to those people who have received compensation for their uncleared land. There is also a possibility that in the future—though not in the immediate future but when things settle down—there will be some strip planting of trees amongst pasture to control the salinity and also to allow agriculture to continue.

It is interesting to note that in areas where agro-forestry has been tried out, the net gain per acre has been larger from agro-forestry than from agriculture or forestry individually.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: When you say "net gain", is that on the forestry side or the agricultural side?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is a gain in dollars. The combined agro-forestry gives the owner a net gain compared with either agriculture or forestry.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you like to tell me where there are any of these agro-forestry areas?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: There are not nearly enough. I would be pleased to show the Hon. Des Dans an agro-forestry area.

A former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Mr Harman) has a fine example of an agro-forestry area, and I am sure the Minister for Lands would be able to show the Leader of the Opposition the agro-forestry experiments which have taken place.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I would be delighted to see an agro-forestry area.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Didn't the Minister arrange a trip last year?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Minister arranged a trip to inspect areas affected by salinity, but not agro-forestry as such. The Hon. Graham MacKinnon assisted in the arrangements for that trip, and I urge members to look at an agro-forestry area because they are well worth studying. The moneys we put into this business are not enough and the Government should consider more research.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Before the tea suspension you were about to tell us about Crown land.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I was. I do not wish anyone to get into the way of thinking that Crown land outside the catchment areas will be cut up willy-nilly, and given to farmers who have been denied the right to clear land. The salinity control programme has to be a State responsibility. This programme will cost the State many millions more than it expected. The money spent on that programme will be well worth the expense for the overall water situation in the south-west.

Members should acknowledge the great job done by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon in his efforts to face this problem. He really faced the problem in order to ensure that future generations of Western Australians would be able to obtain potable water in the south-west.

The Hon. Graham MacKinnon's actions may have cost him his job and may have made him unpopular, but he will certainly go down in history as the only Minister for Works who has

done a job in facing the problem and the irate farmers.

I could tell some stories about spotlights being put on the then Minister with 300 angry people behind them in the dark slinging insults at him. This happened in a remote country area, and it illustrates how touchy the whole subject was. I must pay credit to the then Minister and the officers of the Public Works Department for their efforts in trying to sell the story of what was going on and why we wanted potable water in the south-west. His officers are deserving of the greatest praise for what they did.

It is about time we took a bipartisan approach to this problem. The matter is too serious for any party to try to play politics and political tricks, putting out Press releases, or addressing meetings about the future of our water. Such conduct does not become any major political party, and I hope that before long the Opposition will come out with an unequivocal statement to the effect that it supports the clearing restrictions, it will support the Government, and will suggest ways in which the Government could implement clearing restrictions to help the Rural Adjustment Authority, the PWD, and the Valuer General. This is too important a subject for an Opposition to just berate the Government. I am sure that the Australian Labor Party will not change the legislation when it comes to power.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: That will be a long time hence!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It may be a long time hence. At this time I believe the ALP should state its position. On quite a few issues we have heard very good speeches from Opposition members who say, "We agree with the Government; we know there is a problem, and we will help you do something about it." I believe this is an issue on which the ALP should take this attitude. I support the Bill.

THE HON. W. M. PIESSE (Lower Central) [7.48 p.m.]: I support this Bill wholeheartedly. If we had passed it yesterday, it would not have been soon enough. With the wisdom of hindsight it may be that this whole unfortunate matter could have been arranged differently, but as has been said, it was because of a great anxiety that the banning of clearing in these areas was instituted.

Some farmers whose land is in areas where clearing is no longer permitted have been caught, and the reason for this legislation is to give these people an opportunity to remain in the home in which they may have lived for a great many years, or alternatively, if there is no possible hope for a farmer to continue to make a living on his

farm, he will need to cut his losses, sell his land, and go elsewhere. So the legislation is of great moment to people caught in that situation.

It is to the credit of the Government that it has endeavoured to do something about retaining potable water in the south-west of the State. However, to this very day we do not know for certain that the actions the Government has taken will cure our salinity problems. We can but try.

With the passing of this legislation some of the most vulnerable areas will not be cleared. Other areas which are already cleared will be replanted in order to ease the problem. However, as far as water is concerned some of the cleared land is not likely to be assisted by being replanted. It may be possible to trade this land to people who own land which cannot be cleared. This would give some of the farmers an area of sufficient size to make a living. Many people are waiting for such offers to be made.

The Bill before us deals also with rates and compensation, and certainly a great many questions are still unanswered. The Hon. A. A. Lewis referred to compensation to shires for rates from properties which were previously rated, but which now have reverted to Government ownership so that rates are no longer levied on them. I do not quite agree with Mr Lewis about the allocation from element B. It is my belief that every shire which has lost rates in this way would be able to give an exact accounting of how much money it has lost. That would be a beginning.

If we knew that amount, then before any allocation were made to local government by either the State or Commonwealth Governments, an amount of money to cover the loss to the shires should be taken from the whole pool. Of course, to some extent this would reduce the allocations to metropolitan and country shires, and it would mean that the whole burden is not borne by the country shires. The provisions of elements A and B could be applied after that reckoning.

I believe that the amount of rates to be paid over, supposedly, many years should be taken into consideration when owners, who are not allowed to clear their land, are offered payment for injurious affection. The term "injurious affection" is very wide and embracing, and it can cover many things. I do not know who coined it, but certainly it gives us a lot of leeway and for that we must be thankful.

I am somewhat dubious about offering agro-forestry as a viable alternative. Certainly it has possibilities, provided the person entering into this field has another form of income. From what I have seen of agro-forestry it is possible to graze

stock among trees, but we must realise there are additional costs involved. Extra fertiliser must be used, and while it may be possible to stock one beast to the acre, this may not be so for a full 12-month period. So all these things must be taken into consideration. Certainly agro-forestry has possibilities, but I fear very much for the farmer who relies completely on it at this stage. Probably agro-forestry will improve, but it is not a lifeline to hold out to people caught in the situation we are discussing unless they are given more land to compensate for the land they cannot clear or unless they have some other form of income.

We must remember that we do not know as yet how long it will be necessary to retain the clearing bans. I defy anyone in this Chamber to tell us the period necessary. No-one could even say it will be forever; this has not been proved yet. Certainly people caught in this dilemma are not convinced that they will not be able to clear the land during the lifetime of their grandchildren. This is what makes the problem very difficult.

It is one thing for a farmer who does not have a son to follow him on the land to sell his land, take his compensation, and go somewhere else. However, for a person who has spent his whole life on a property with a vision that his sons and grandsons will continue to work it, this solution is not acceptable. When a property has been in the hands of one family for generations, people are very loath to sell.

For those reasons I am very pleased that the legislation has been introduced. Hopefully it will be passed, and so we will be a little nearer to a reasonable solution.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis raised the matter of a survey. It is very difficult for people to go around asking questions to find out what is happening. It is a little late to do that, and even with the wisdom of hindsight, it is very doubtful that had a survey been carried out in the beginning the problem would be any less severe now. If the people had realised what would happen, the land would have been cleared ruthlessly because of their anxiety. I do not think a survey now would be appropriate while many people are still quite undecided about what to do.

Let us make it clear to the people what opportunities are now before them in relation to the exchange of land, the purchase of land, or the replanting of land. At least if that is stated as soon as possible then perhaps we could look at the matter again at a later date to see what can be done. With those few words I support the Bill.

THE HON. T. KNIGHT (South) [7.57 p.m.]: I do not intend to delay the House for any length of

time. However, I wish to support the remarks made by the Hon. A. A. Lewis and the Hon. W. M. Piesse.

I consider the legislation does not go far enough. There is still a great deal of trauma and heartache emanating from the legislation we introduced last year. More attention should be paid now to the problem facing the shires. Most local authorities in the area concerned are facing a lack of income, and the Hon. A. A. Lewis put forward suggested solutions to the House.

In a shire such as Cranbrook, with a small population, there will be great difficulties in making ends meet. Certainly Cranbrook has lost a great deal of land from its ratable areas.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Have you any idea of the amount involved?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I have held several discussions with representatives of the council. Unfortunately, as the legislation was introduced only this week, and my office is in Albany, I have not had an opportunity to discuss the actual provisions of the Bill with the council. If the debate had continued, it was my intention to discuss it at length with local government and make known the result of those discussions in this House. I have made several approaches to the Premier and the Minister about this matter and I consider something has to be done to ease the problem.

I do not agree with the Hon. A. A. Lewis on one point. He said that it would be the Public Works Department which would make decisions on what will and what will not be cleared. In the salt affected area in my electorate a tribunal was set up composed of the President of the Cranbrook Shire Council and some representatives of the PWD. I consider that the Department of Agriculture and the Forests Department should also be represented on this tribunal. As was suggested, agro-forestry could be a partial answer to this problem, and so both the departments I have referred to should be involved in decision-making. It will be officers of these departments who will carry out the soil testing and who will advise the farmers whether the level of salt is such that farming can continue in a viable way. Agriculture plays the major part in these areas yet is ignored by the PWD.

The officers of the PWD must be able to put forward their ideas, because they are the ones trying to create a fresh water system. Through me the Western Districts Lions Club made an approach to the Minister for Water Resources about land in the Cranbrook Shire that had been taken over by the Government because it was no

longer a viable farming proposition following the Government's bar on further development. The suggestion was that the land should be used for fund-raising for the particular district concerned. The idea was to establish sporting facilities, charitable set-ups, kindergartens, hospitals, frail aged centres, and so on with the money raised by the club on this land. The plan was that this project would be undertaken with the assistance of the PWD and the Department of Agriculture on a trial-and-error basis. Someone will have to do this to prove it is going to work, and I do not believe we can expect the farmer to do the experimenting for the Government. That approach was rejected on the basis that this legislation was possibly forthcoming.

As I said, this Bill does not go far enough. Many people are very upset about the situation; they were overwrought when the legislation was introduced last year. I say again that I was not particularly in favour of the way it was introduced. However, having examined the matter over a period of time I can see that, as the Hon. Win Piesse said, had the legislation been introduced with plenty of forewarning there could have been the disastrous result that people would have rushed in and cleared large areas of land before the bans came into effect, thus exacerbating the problem. However, I do believe the public relations aspect of the matter could have been handled much better, with consultation with some of the responsible people of the area.

Whilst I support the legislation, I intend on this occasion to examine its effect and ask questions of the Government as to what is going on. I will keep in touch with the people of the area, and closely watch the situation on behalf of the people I represent.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [8.01 p.m.]: I did not intend to enter this debate. In fact, I debated with myself whether I should rise to speak, and I decided I should make the comments I felt appropriate.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Your wife did not instruct you, did she?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: When one looks at the reasons for this Bill, surely one must ask whether our agricultural decisions have been correct in their past assumptions. My answer would be, "No". While we continue on our present path, we will continue to experience problems in agriculture, and problems with our soil. The only good thing about this sort of policy is that we can turn out a great amount of food at a low cost per unit by what we in this House know of old as a system called "the economy of scale".

I believe we are going to reach a conclusion—certainly in my lifetime—when we find those economies of scale as applied to farming have been very wrong, particularly in relation to the methods we apply to our farming. We will find that whatever we do under the present system actually will destroy the soil. The destruction may be fast, or it may be slow, but certainly it will affect the quality of the product grown on the soil; it will affect the quality of the water we drink; and, it will affect the amount of salt which comes to the surface of the soil which, in turn, affects the amount of produce which can be turned-off.

As I say, this process may appear to be slow when considered in terms of the life of a man—of 70 years or so. However, when we look at it in terms of the life of mankind, it is happening very quickly indeed.

As members would know, I am carrying out a few experiments of my own. If they had read *The Sunday Times* and *The Weekend Australian* last weekend they would have seen my experiments—particularly those involving earthworms—reported there.

I am not going to speak against the Bill because it is a modern method of overcoming the problems. However, I am not sure that this modern method is the answer because, frankly, I do not know whether we have gone on the correct path of farming in the past. I do not know whether we are correcting the problem in the right way. I do not have the expertise to answer those questions and, frankly, I do not think any member has the expertise to judge whether this Bill will be the answer to the problem.

Neither do I think the officers in the Department of Agriculture or the Lands Department have the answers; however, at least they are trying through the administration of their Ministers and this Government to come up with a quick answer. I do not believe the answer can be quick.

When one reads books such as *The One Straw Revolution* which details the work of a Japanese scientist in using old systems of farming to help the soil and improve productivity, one's heart is given a great boost in understanding what that man is trying to do. However, if we tried to use such a system to feed the world, we would have a lot of peasants and millions of starving people.

So, what do we do? Do we say, "We will adopt the modern system with the quick, modern answer, as this Bill appears to provide, and hope we can come up with something which is right so we can feed the world"? Or, do we revert to the

old system and say, "We are not going to destroy the soil. We are going to look after our water quality, and the quality of life for future generations. However, in the process we are going to ignore totally the needs of millions of people throughout the world"?

What I am doing here and now is presenting my dilemma and also the dilemma of all thinking people. We do not know the answer. However, this Bill at least is trying to find a temporary or a quick answer. Therefore, I support it.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [8.07 p.m.]: I suppose it would be surprising if I did not have a few words to say on this Bill. I commence by commenting on Mr Withers' remarks. If the fault for the salinity dilemma we face in this State rests with anyone, it rests not with the Department of Agriculture or the Lands Department but fairly and squarely with the politicians—as, of course, do 99 per cent of the problems which beset us. The responsibility properly rests with the politicians because, in the ultimate, the politicians make the decisions.

It was a political decision that one million acres of land a year be opened up to agriculture, and I was one of the politicians who made that decision. In retrospect, it was wrong.

It was in the 1920s that Dr Teakle, the then Director of Agriculture, warned us about the salinity problem. It was in something or other BC in Mesopotamia where a civilisation was first recorded as having been destroyed by salinity problems caused by agriculture. Again, it is the authorities who allow these things to happen.

I do not think any blame can be apportioned in this matter, any more than blame can be apportioned for hundreds of other things which have happened because we simply did not know. It is quite understandable that people want to be fair. I must admit I was a little surprised the other day to hear talk of another three million hectares of land being opened to agriculture. I have been approached right, left, and centre about the wisdom or otherwise of such a decision.

There is no doubt that this piece of legislation will accomplish the purpose for which it is intended, which is to allow the trading in land to alleviate the position of farmers who are disadvantaged and inconvenienced because of the clearing bans imposed by this Parliament. It will allow the Rural and Industries Bank and the Rural Adjustment Authority to trade in land which, of course, the Public Works Department quite properly is not authorised to do.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Do you believe in the principle that land should be exchanged?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I believe in it implicitly; in fact, I originated the idea. It is purely and simply the fulfilment of a proposition I put forward. However, on this occasion I believe the Hon. Sandy Lewis laid it on a bit thick, although I thank him for his kind remarks.

It was a tremendously arduous time. We had three meetings, at Perillup, Chowerup, and Manjimup. At the second of the two meetings, which was held at Chowerup, for the first time in my political life I was in actual fear. I would not have minded so much had I been entitled to the credit of originating the idea. However, the decision was made by a committee of the Liberal Party, of which the Hon. Sandy Lewis happened to be a member. It decided these clearing bans should be implemented, and I must admit it made my job particularly arduous on that occasion.

I was pleased to hear Tom Knight's speech. At the time, he accused me of hoodwinking him, which I thought was an extremely unjust accusation, as he happened to be in Italy at that time. He was quite honest in saying he did not vote for the measure; he could not vote for it, because he was overseas! I was quite upset with that accusation.

From the time of that meeting, I have never ceased to hold a secret admiration for the Hon. Win Piesse. At the first meeting, we had a question and answer session straight after lunch until about six o'clock that evening. She stood up and spoke a few well-chosen words to contradict statements supporting Mr Knight's claim that he had been hoodwinked. The Hon. Win Piesse informed the meeting that, in fact, I had stated unequivocally when introducing the Bill, exactly what was intended.

In fact, my second reading speech, which appears at page 4178 of *Hansard* for 1978 states as follows—

This Bill proposes a number of significant amendments to the Act. It extends the control of clearing to include the Mundaring Weir and Denmark River catchment areas, and the water reserves of the Kent and Warren Rivers.

This action, which was initiated by a committee of Liberal Party members, followed an action which had been taken a couple of years previously relating to the Wellington catchment area.

Members expressed doubt as to the manner in which this legislation has been introduced. I remind them that when the proposal to implement clearing bans on the Wellington catchment area first saw the light of day, it was delayed, discussed, reported in newspapers and debated

with the net result that somewhere between 15 000 and 20 000 acres of land were bulldozed before the bans came into effect. It was in an area marginally dangerous at the time from a salinity point of view, and the additional clearing put that margin over the hill. The situation at Wellington Dam is very worrying.

The committee recommended strongly that no such action should take place on the second time around, so for the Public Works Department or its Minister, whoever he might happen to be there was no room to manoeuvre. It was sheer chance that it was me; it could just as easily have been Mr Ray O'Connor. There had been a movement of Ministers and I took control. It was easy to see that it was very much an environmental consideration.

The only thing the Hon. A. A. Lewis said with which I would like to disagree to some extent is that irrespective of the way individual members of any party may act, the legislation we passed is firm policy of both major parties; it is firm policy of all parties in this Chamber. There is no question about that. There is no question of this legislation ever being reversed, because it is naturally a part of the ALP policy. Any party which has any pretention to govern in this State or in this nation would have to include in its policies measures to combat salinity, irrespective of any individual's desires in respect of his political survival.

There may be argument about the way we go about solving this problem and the way people are compensated, but I happen to know that it is ALP policy just as firmly as it is Government policy. I do not think we can argue about that. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, because if members look at page 4395 of the 1978 *Hansard* they will see that at the conclusion of my remarks I thanked members for their support of, and interest in, the Bill, and then the question was put and passed and the Bill was read a second time. There was no division, which in the light of one or two comments in *The Countryman* and the *Farmers Weekly*, is perhaps a little surprising.

There were a couple of queries with respect to one clause, and these were raised by the Hon. Neil McNeill; but the Bill was finally reported without amendment and, on my motion, read a third time. Papers with respect to that Bill lay on the Table of the House of the Legislative Assembly for a period of three or four weeks before the Bill was debated there, but the Bill received the support of all parties in both Houses.

We do not want a repetition of the problem we are experiencing with the Wellington Dam. The

problem of salinity is grave indeed; grave not only in Western Australia, but also throughout the world. Only a few weeks ago I read about one State in the United States of America which had been predominantly an irrigation State and a very rich farming area which, through salinity, is now going through a stage of metamorphosis; it is changing from an irrigation area into a grazing area with a resultant tremendous loss of individual family revenue. That State has a different sort of salinity problem; it has a geological-type salinity problem where the salt is in the soil itself. Our salinity is caused by the salt being brought in by the rain. The way in which salinity increases in this State happens to be the worst example in the world. Very simply, a lot of salt thrown into the atmosphere by the waves in the ocean allows that salt to escape into the atmosphere, and the wind picks up large amounts of it.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: We are second to the west coast of South America.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The salt there tends to run off more quickly and does not accumulate. There is no doubt that deforestation has brought the water level up and there is no doubt that there is a distinct possibility that reforestation will reduce the water level and keep the salinity down.

There are many theories on how to overcome the problems as there are people interested. The most notable of the theories to this stage would be the Whittington interceptor banks, a system with which I firmly disagree. I was talking about it with members of the Murray River Commission with whom I met to discuss the problem. They told me they could send me a bus or even a jumbo plane-load of individual people who had their own particular theories and with the same following as does Mr Whittington.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: There is a proliferation of Whittington interceptor banks as the days go by.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I think that is a great pity. Reverting back to what the Hon. W. R. Withers said, the Department of Agriculture has strongly recommended against farmers carrying out experiments with this system, and yet farmers are still prepared to spend something like \$10 500 a mile to put in these banks.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: Hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: If the department had said in the first place that this is what should be done, there would probably have been a revolution; but because it says it should not

be done, the farmers spend all this money installing these banks.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You can account for this because the farmers are desperate to do something.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Perhaps it is like a person who has cancer and is prepared to see the Bryches of the world.

An experiment was carried out at Bataling Creek. Experiments were conducted strictly in accord with the recommendations of the WISALTS group; everything that could be done and which was requested be done was implemented. A number of members have been to see the work carried out. But the results of the experiments were negative. We cannot say that the Whittington system was disproved, but the results of this particular experiment were in fact negative.

Really, what the Forests Department, the Public Works Department, and the Department of Agriculture have agreed on is the theory of the rising water table which brings the salt with it, and the tonnages of salt are quite tremendous. Trees take water from the ground through a process called evapotranspiration. The water is taken from the ground and expelled through the leaves of the tree.

I know an area in the Wellington region where a now deceased gentleman by the name of Steen had an area which was put under trees, and this seems to be working well. There is a theory that once the salt commences to move it takes the trees a long time to stop it, but that remains to be seen.

Certainly there is no one solution to the problem. I think the Hon. A. A. Lewis did not say that agro-forestry was a solution, but it is one of the things which will help. We are wanting to keep salinity below a particular level and certainly below the level currently being experienced in the Wellington Dam.

There are a number of methods of doing this. One of the proposals which was put forward by the Moberg Branch of the Liberal Party—and I am not being party-political about this—was that we should trap off the head waters which come from far back in the very salty country and we should bypass those head waters and run them into one river, perhaps one such as the Blackwood which is already heavily infested with salt. We should use such a river as a drain for the very salty water and thus keep those waters from running into waters which could be of use.

The problem with that is that it seems to be a tremendously expensive solution. But a

combination of a number of these things could well work.

The example given by the Hon. A. A. Lewis of Mr Hearman's property which has not been cleared and in which the technique has been developed so that very good stands of clover under the trees are produced is a very exciting possibility. I had not seen it before Mr Hearman brought the method to my attention. I arranged for officers from the Forests Department, the Public Works Department, and the Department of Agriculture to look at it.

One of the problems with the salinity difficulties we face is that they differ so much from those in other areas. People say the Murray River in Victoria has difficulties, and it has. Pakistan has some problems; but they are different salinity problems from the ones with which we are faced. The ones we face have been caused because we were not so much careless, but too enthusiastic about opening up land. To combat rising costs, farmers quite rightly cleared more land than perhaps they should have done. If we had had a crystal ball into which to gaze we would have been infinitely more careful. In the very early days, my experience was that farmers were infinitely more careful. The tops of hills were covered in trees and there were belts of trees left for a variety of reasons.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse: A clean sweep has occurred.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes, a clean sweep with big machines; the farmers were remarkably efficient. I do not know of any group in the industry which was as efficient as were the farmers in keeping down their costs and still being able to make a profit. They were more efficient in that regard than was any other industry. One of the methods was to clear bigger areas with larger machines. Like most things which are new, at the moment the first step had been taken in clearing control everybody knew how it should be done; very few people were reticent in any way about rushing to print to say how they would have done it if they had been in the position. They were not in the position, and in that regard they could gain a lesson. It took a deal of discussion and painstaking demonstration of goodwill. In that connection I thank those members who accompanied me. Already I have thanked the Hon. Win Piesse for the stand she took and the Hon. A. A. Lewis for the stand he took.

I place on record that I achieved excellent rapport with the President of the Farmers' Union (Mr Boucher) who took a position on one of the major committees to co-ordinate the

experimenting to which I want to refer in a few moments. I also place on record my appreciation of the very sensible approach of the Vice-President of the Farmers' Union (Mr Winston Crane) with whom I had innumerable fairly firm discussions—arguments for a while—and Mr John Grove who accompanied me on several trips and when we went to talk to the people at Manjimup where the meetings were extremely difficult. Someone moved a motion at the meeting that asked the members of the Farmers' Union to break the law; to proceed with clearing illegally. Mr Boucher refused to accept it and got a few catcalls from the audience over that. He was a man of great courage and had a great capacity and I learned to admire him for his stand on that day.

Those trips and talks were difficult because we were dealing with people absolutely and totally antagonistic and no way existed for me to say—nor would I have said this—that anyone else should play any part in it. At that time there was no question of credit, only the question of blame. I was being paid for it and I considered I ought to take the responsibility. I believed that is the way it ought to be and I now believe that is the way it should have been, and that is the way it was. Gradually the position improved because we were able to make the sorts of modifications that this proposed legislation seeks to make although it will not be the last such piece of legislation, but hopefully close to it.

What we wanted to do was to stop more clearing in certain designated areas, which were the areas zoned off. Zones designated "A", "B", "C", and "D" had been marked off to indicate where the rainfall was heavy enough to wash out the soil and keep the salinity down and the farmers could then clear almost at will, but not quite. In the zones where the rainfall was not so heavy and a build-up of salinity had occurred clearing had to be kept to an absolute minimum. Someone wanting to clear had to have a special licence; even if a farmer wanted to clear land to erect a fence or just to build a house he required a licence. However various graduations did exist between the two types of areas.

We were able to find some people who wanted to sell out and therefore we were able to buy their properties, give them some land in return, swap their property for another, sell it, combine one place with another, or whatever. We found that the Crown Law Department, under the watchful eye of the Attorney General, showed us that we could not do that and that the department could not do that because it was not a department set up to deal with land. So, a solution had to be

found. In discussion around a table or over a cup of tea someone suggested that we ought to use the rural assistance group which was headed by Mr Whitely. We thought about that and somebody went to see Mr Whitely. The matter was quite quickly—not as quickly as I am telling the story—arranged whereby we could do what was wanted to be done. It was an exercise which the relevant section of the R & I Bank was geared to undertake.

It had the knowledge, the experience, the expertise, the staff, and everything else necessary to carry out the exercise; however, it lacked the ability to buy and sell land, which the proposed legislation will give it, and hopefully it will go a long way towards solving the problem. It will make it easier for farmers who are inconvenienced to obtain some further redress. I am quite sure that over the next year or two some other problems will arise which will call for some other solution.

It must not be forgotten that the sorts of things happening nowadays in the name of environmental protection or whatever it might happen to be, are frequently of very traumatic proportions for the people engaged in the activity presently under examination. I am referring to the sorts of re-examinations mining companies carry out during their operation, which are similar to those that have to be made by farmers. It is not so long ago that whenever a farmer cleared another acre of land or produced another bushel of wheat, he was applauded and quite properly. Our hearts bleed for the people who because of drought do not have that sort of increased production. It is said that with the multiplier factor working and with everything else experienced with this current drought the drop in income suffered by Australia will be \$4 000 million—that is something which I read today, which is absolutely incredible. That loss of income will make quite a difference.

A member: It is alarming.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes, it is alarming and will affect farmers for many years to come. The situation has changed their whole way of existence. Farmers who look forward to having enough land on which to settle suddenly find that they are the villains of the piece, not the good people.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Don't you think the people living in the wheat belt are finding the same difficulties?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Sure they are. The problems with salinity are felt Australia-wide. When this matter was put to me by the Government committee very serious thought was

given to making the clearing controls apply to the whole of Western Australia. I was discussing recently with the Hon. Mick Gayfer, one of the most knowledgeable gentlemen on farming here, the problem that exists in the wheat belt areas. It was decided not to apply the Act State-wide. The State could not afford compensation if it were demanded by all the people who may have wanted it. If any suggestion had been made in that line then the rate of clearing would have been so great that we could not have coped. However, some clearing has been carried out. Farmers think they should get in before the Government and clear their land. I think that is deplorable, but nevertheless it is understandable. The whole State is a catchment area for the water that runs into all the rivers and some of that catchment area land is being cleared.

Something that happened last year which does not really have a bearing on this Bill made people realise that so little was known about the research carried out in regard to soil salinity and it was decided that a world-class seminar ought to be conducted in Western Australia. It was considered that it would take some 2½ to three years to organise, but it has been organised quicker than that; it will take place next week.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: On Wednesday and Thursday.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes, on Wednesday and Thursday of next week at the Murdoch University.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: What about the *Prospector* trip?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is a pity that the *Prospector* trip was arranged for one of those days, but this seminar in a State where water is of such vital importance should be number one, and members ought to be attending it. It is a great pity. I would have loved to do the trip, but as I was instrumental in organising the seminar I want to attend it.

A number of world experts will be here. One has to be careful about using the word "expert". I remember the story that an expert is a drip or a spurt of water under pressure, but I do not want to go on with that. Talking of stories, the Hon. Mr Brown told me about the farmer who said the frogs at his place are four years old, but have not learnt to swim. I quite believe that story when the Hon. Mr Gayfer tells me about the drought problem in so much of his area. I must admit I become a little sick of hearing words of the old song, "It is not what one does, but the way one does it". It ought to be borne in mind that the Wellington catchment area has a huge dam and

that the area it serves is in grave danger of being of no use at all because of the delays and the talking. No doubt whatsoever exists that what was done was correct and that the speed with which it was done was necessary. As for the rest of the matters I am not quite sure how with the wave of a wand one can manufacture expert people in the field of public relations who can sell the story. It is said quite often that we should have first-rate people to sell the story, but in the next breath it is said that we will not be able to because we have to keep down the taxes. First-rate people with the knowledge, training, and expertise necessary to head this sort of exercise are hard to come by on a world-wide basis, let alone out of a population of one million people. No doubt exists in my mind that this proposed piece of legislation needs to be carried, and I thought I should say something about it.

I am still of the firm opinion that what the Hon. Mr McKenzie said was right and that my fate was to some extent tied up with this matter of soil salinity and other things. Nothing is ever on its own. Be that as it may, I want again to thank the Hon. A. A. Lewis, for what he said unequivocally. If anyone is in any doubt concerning my view of the move which this Government took with regard to the control of soil salinity in this State, let me say that it was one of the greatest moves of environmental protection that is ever likely to be taken by this Government and a move my association with which will always make me feel extremely proud.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. M. McAleer.

MINE WORKERS' RELIEF AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 4 November.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [8.45 p.m.]: I support this Bill with a great deal of reluctance. The Mine Workers' Relief Fund initially was instigated in 1914, some 20 years after mining commenced in the eastern and north-eastern goldfields. It was found that miners were dying from a type of lung disease which was diagnosed as silicosis. In those days there was no such thing as workers' compensation, so it was decided to set up a voluntary scheme, the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, in an effort to alleviate the hardship caused by the disease.

The fund came into existence in 1914, and in the following years it served a good purpose. However, by the late 1920s the fund got into a great deal of financial trouble, and in 1932 the

Government passed the Mine Workers' Relief Act in order to assist in that particular area. Since that time we have had many amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act pass through this place. The Workers' Compensation Act has gradually improved, and it has helped to alleviate the problems of miners suffering from silicosis, and other people working underground.

As a result of the improvements to the Workers' Compensation Act, the Mine Workers' Relief Act gradually became redundant. Miners who contracted silicosis became eligible for mineworkers' compensation payments. As they exhausted their workers' compensation, which amounts to slightly in excess of \$50 000 at the present time, they reverted to payments from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund.

The payments from the relief fund amounted to only \$4 a week for the mineworker, and \$4 for each of his dependants. The same sum was paid to the widow and children of a deceased miner. The sum of \$4 a week had not been increased for many years, but neither had the contribution been increased during that time. Contributions are made by all mineworkers in the industry, including those in the iron ore industry in the north-west. The mining areas are designated in the Act. Contributions are made by the State Government, and also by the employers.

As there has not been an increase in contributions over many years, there has not been an increase in the payment which is still \$4 a week.

The fund has an excess of \$2 million, and it has been decided by mutual consent of all those represented—members of the Public Service, members of the unions, and the chairman—that the fund will be wound up over a period in excess of three years. Many meetings were held, some of which I attended, and as a result of discussions it was decided that for the betterment of the mining industry in general it would be better to wind up the scheme.

This leads me to another point I want to raise. I hate to see a fund such as this wound up with nothing established in its place. It is most important to remember that not very much assistance is available to injured miners.

Those who have had occasion to work in the mining industry, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of Western Australia, look jealously at the scheme which operates in Collie and which provides a pension to workers.

The mining industry within my province includes nickel mining, and other mining apart from gold and we have only this meagre scheme.

Apart from that, miners face one hell of a battle when trying to put forward a case for compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act. Those members who have had anything to do with the procedure involved will know what I am talking about.

On a number of occasions we have asked the Government to consider setting up some sort of scheme along the same lines as the Collie scheme. This Bill has been kicked about in another place, and probably it is history once it gets here. However, because of the system we have to go through the motions. The Bill was debated, and publicised, and I am attempting to publicise it again now. I want to raise the matter again because we regard each House of Parliament in isolation.

Many people do not realise how many miners are killed underground. We hear talk about people killed on the roads, people killed in the two World Wars, and people killed in all sorts of accident situations. However, a tremendous number of workers are killed while working in underground mines. I venture to say that the number of miners killed in mining operations as a result of both accidents and contracting silicosis would run into thousands in the last 80 years. That is a great number of people, and many are still dying. During the last few weeks a large number of dusted miners have died in the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital.

That is about all a miner can look forward to, sometimes after only three years working underground. It applies particularly to the miners who have worked in the north-eastern and Murchison mines which have a very high quartz content. In those situations workers can contract silicosis in less than three years. The situation is similar at Wittenoom where the miners contracted misothelioma. That disease is a fairly recent one whereas silicosis has been with us since 1896.

The situation is difficult for the miners in the goldfields and they have asked for something to be done. Once again I sincerely ask the Government to look at the position. Whilst we look jealously at the situation at Collie, probably it could be said that the squeaking wheel gets the most oil. I must admit there has not been very much squeaking at the goldfields because the people who live there are the type who, for the want of another term, "cop it sweet". That is part of the situation we have had for 80-odd years, and we will have to live with it while we have mining in the area.

That is a sad thing to have to say, but that is the situation. Fortunately, I did not work underground. We have had members in this House who suffered the consequences of working underground. The Hon. Claude Stubbs is a silicotic, and the Hon. Jim Garrigan who preceded me, was a silicotic. It is probable that members knew many other people living in that situation, long before I came here. The members who represented the provinces now represented by the Hon. Norman Moore and the Hon. Philip Lockyer were miners who used to wheeze while walking up and down the stairs and around our corridors. I am sure that the Hon. Graham MacKinnon would have vivid memories of some of these people.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You fellows are starting to make me sound like Methuselah.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I am sorry about that! My father contracted silicosis and died as a result of it. It breaks one's heart to see people go that way. It is a type of cancer, and it is not very much different from misothelioma contracted by the asbestos workers at Wittenoom. Silicosis is contracted by those working in the goldmining industry and the nickel industry.

I sometimes wonder what will happen in the years to come as a result of our new mining ventures. We are now mining uranium, and we have been mining iron ore for some 15 years. It is possible that the miners will contract other diseases in those areas. It is sad to see this sort of thing happening; a fund which has existed for some 60-odd years, and which has an excess of over \$2 million, is to be wound up over a period of three years. The beneficiaries will be paid either in lump-sum payments, or by weekly or fortnightly payments until the money is exhausted. The fund will then go out of existence, and those affected will have to rely solely on workers' compensation. I hope like hell we do not run into problems in the future in relation to workers' compensation payments to the miners, or their widows and children. We should not take away from those people something which they enjoy at the moment. It has to be borne in mind that in the ultimate something will be taken from them for which they fought for many years.

The fund was not a big thing, but it was something which has been held closely to the hearts of the many people it helped. It is history that the parent Act was fought for by many good, honest, hard-working men, and because of that I reiterate my hope that the Government will give some consideration to examining workers' compensation because these people will need it desperately.

We have reached the situation where the goldmines are to come back into operation. The Golden Mile is a deep underground operation, and the working conditions are confined. It is what is known as a "narrow ore body" with air legs, not wide jumbo drilling which is carried out in Kambalda and some other underground operations. Because of the high quartz content of the areas to be mined, many people will be affected in the future.

I was hoping that perhaps with modern mining techniques we might have been able to get away from this, but unfortunately because of the type of scattered lodes of the Golden Mile, they are not able to be worked on a large basis. It is more of a rabbit warren type of operation, and we are now going back into areas that were worked many years ago. Unfortunately the ventilation system must be upgraded considerably, and there are problems with that.

Therefore, this is an issue which will be with us for a long time to come. We recall the problem which arose in respect of Wittenoom and the great panic which occurred on the part of people in the city and country areas about the asbestos mining there, which causes lung cancer. We even went to the town and said all the people would have to shift out of it. But we forgot about the thousands of people who have died in the past and the hundreds more who will die in the future in deep mining operations.

Collie is in a different situation, because miners there have a tribunal which seems to lend a friendly ear in respect of every little problem that might arise. Other mining areas of the State do not have that sort of thing, and miners just have to rely on the good grace of the Government of the day for the provision of assistance. When one considers it is now 1980 and diseases of this nature are still occurring, one wonders whether we have really made progress.

This subject has been fairly close to me. I have done a great deal of work on it over the years, and I could probably bore members for another hour.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are not boring us.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: That is something I do not like doing; I believe if a member has something to say he should get up and say it, and that is what I have tried to do.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are speaking a good deal of sense.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Perhaps in the future I will raise this issue again; please be kind if I do. We will do our best for the people who

have suffered in our area, and I do not suppose we can be blamed for that.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: It is your proper function to do that, and it is appreciated by the House.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: And you are doing it very well.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I thank members for their indulgence. As I said earlier when I first stood up, I support this Bill very reluctantly because it is taking away the last little thing that many people in my area look forward to. I hope and trust that in the future we can look forward to another system of compensation or pension payments of a type which are fitting for these Western Australians who are doing a job well done.

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.04 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for its support of the Bill; and I suppose that is a fairly trite remark to make and one which is often made. I think it is appropriate for me to say that all members have appreciated the constructive comments made on this Bill by the Hon. Ron Leeson. It is not often that we are able to hear from somebody who has personal experience in a field such as this. We did have the Hon. Claude Stubbs in this House for many years, and I found I always benefited from hearing what he had to say. I feel members tonight probably feel exactly the same way about the comments made by Mr Leeson. Obviously he speaks from the heart on a subject about which he has personal and direct knowledge, and obviously everything he says is accurate and based on his personal experience. That is what this House appreciates.

I suppose it is a sentimental time when a fund like this disappears by being wound up. This Act goes back a long way, right back to 1914, and the struggles the early miners had to establish some recognition for diseases which had not then been recognised by medical science. Times have changed to such an extent that in these days we have workers' compensation and social security which in many respects were unheard of—or certainly to the degree that we now have them—way back in those days. Social welfare benefits really came in only after the war when the Commonwealth took over and we had a regular system.

As Mr Leeson said, many of these diseases were unrecognised at that time. I would like to remind members that although some former members have been mentioned tonight there is one who was not mentioned who should be. That

is Dr Gordon Hislop who was a leading physician in Perth and perhaps the leading physician in Western Australia. Certainly he was one of our foremost physicians. He decided to make a special, personal study of the diseases of miners, in respect of which he did a great deal of work.

He was one of those who were instrumental in having many lung diseases recognised under the Workers' Compensation Act. He took a particular interest in certain cases, and spent a great deal of time looking after people from the goldfields who were suffering from complaints which at that stage were not generally accepted as being work caused. Certainly those cases at that time had not been accepted by the Workers' Compensation Board.

So many people have contributed in this area. As I said, I suppose this is a sentimental occasion, particularly for miners and those associated with them on the goldfields. It is a sentimental moment for all miners, apart from those in the coalmines who have a special basis of compensation. I suppose there is little more to be said on that score.

The other comments made by Mr Leeson will be referred to the Minister, and I am sure they will receive careful attention.

I thank him for his comments, and the House for its support of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Leader of the House), and passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed from 30 October.

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [9.13 p.m.]: The burden of my speech tonight will be rather different from what I intended when I first worked out what I would say on this motion, because since then the whole Belmont Senior High School affair has blown up. But it will be also rather different from what I would have said had I made it a week ago, because the whole Belmont Senior High School

affair has died down. However, I will still talk about it at some length, not in any great spirit of bitterness, but to put certain matters on the record.

Before that, I want to make brief reference to some of the things I would have spoken of at greater length had this issue not arisen. I will depart from my usual custom this year—for the first time since I have been in this House it is not my intention when talking on the Budget papers to talk about the Budget. That probably will relieve many members who think I have no great expertise or knowledge on that subject.

Instead, I want to talk very briefly on some matters that I regard as important, and then get to the question of the developments in the Belmont Senior High School which occupied the Press to some extent in the past couple of weeks.

I first mention something specific with which I was brought into contact through one of my constituents. I have had my first visit to the Family Court. Through this, I have become rather perturbed about the Family Court. I must inquire more deeply into it. Contrary to what I have been told by some people, I found it was not a court that one could walk into. It was not a public court in the sense that the other courts in the State are. When I went to enter the courtroom, I was asked what my interest was. I had to justify my being there; and if either party had said I could not enter, I could not have been there.

It appeared to me that the Family Court had developed into a cosy little club of judges and counsel who had fallen into their own ways. In fact, there is very little public scrutiny at all. I know many people have been saying this in the past, and I had not taken very much notice of that. I am not saying there is anything improper going on; but it seems to me that the court is too closed.

I am not suggesting that the proceedings should be published; but we need to look at the court more closely. Certainly I intend to do that over the Christmas recess. Perhaps I will have more to say about it later.

Another matter that perturbed me—and I wonder if the Attorney General could take some interest in this—is that the case concerning the person in whom I was interested finished nearly four weeks ago, but no decision has been brought down. When I inquired, I discovered that a number of decisions in custody cases have been waiting for a matter of weeks. The case I was interested in took some time to go before the court; and it has been off and on since last

February. I wonder how many cases of custody are before the court and go on for an inordinately long time, with the people having to wait four weeks or more before they learn of the decision. This is a most important question in the case of children who are five years old, two years old, and seven years old who go through a period of hiatus when they are not sure who will control them and what will happen to them.

I have heard also of a case in which the decision on a property settlement has been reserved for the last 11 months. I wonder whether the Attorney General can tell me in due course, when as Leader of the House he replies to this debate, what is considered a fair time for a decision after a judgment has been reserved. I ask if the concern I have heard expressed by some people that some decisions are taking too long is justified. I do not know what we can do about it. I have no real knowledge about this. It is something that I learned as a layman because I was brought into the matter by a constituent.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: There are always odd cases which do take a while. We can usually sort those out if we know about them. It is a question of what the average case is, really.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It has been suggested to me that some of the averages are becoming too long. I will not mention any specifics at this stage; but some disquiet has been expressed to me by a source that I regard as a good one.

I know that at various times the Attorney General has expressed some misgivings about the Family Court and its secrecy. I think that is correct; and I am about to join him in that. I am just saying that I have worries that I did not have before. I intend to pursue this subject; and I hope the Attorney General is pursuing it so that we might see some Government action next year, if such action needs to be taken.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You mean the secrecy or the delay in custody cases?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Either or both.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: I will certainly make some inquiries about the custody cases.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Thank you.

Another matter I want to mention briefly has been dealt with in the newspapers in the last week. We seem to be in for another spate of building in Perth. There is the thought, "If it's bigger, it's better". There is a new competition running to have the biggest one in Perth. If the city centre has a big building, then the energy

plaza which is to be built on the site of the Forrest House Motor Hotel has to be a bigger one; and Mr Bond has to have the biggest one in Perth. Two towers are being developed. I wonder when this will stop.

When I first saw this city in 1966, the Barracks was still standing. We did not have this ridiculous little arch standing there, alone and forlorn, looking for a building.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You have no idea how lucky you are to have that.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have an idea. I was here when the debate started. Certainly I was not here as a politician; but I was here as an observer.

The Hon. P. G. Pendal: One of those refugees from the Eastern States, are you?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is correct. Did not the honourable member know—a "t'other sider" from South Australia.

In those days, St. George's Terrace was regarded by many people as one of the most pleasant boulevards in the world. It was rivalled by North Terrace in Adelaide; and there are people who regarded St. George's Terrace as the better of the two. I am naturally prejudiced, so I will not buy into that argument. Today St. George's Terrace is becoming a forest of tall buildings, and it has become a wind tunnel. I am told we do not have to worry about that any more; it is so bad that it cannot become worse.

We seem to be trying to develop our little island between the river and the railway into another version of Manhattan in New York, with towering forests of buildings, and shade at the bottom where people do not see the sun. The end result will be the kind of visual pollution, if we are not careful, that exists in New York.

This is a very sad development. It is time we called a halt and decided what we were going to do with our city. We should decide that there be a limit placed—

The Hon. N. F. Moore: What is the alternative, given the demand for office space?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: There should be alternatives. The French worked out some kind of alternative. The size of Paris has been limited since 1870.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: It surely covers a huge area.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It certainly covers a huge area; and Perth is covering a larger area all the time.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Nothing like Paris.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not see that it is necessary to go ever upwards until we have a forest of buildings. We need to know where we are going.

It is disturbing that we have the competitiveness in the business world that we used to have in the church. In the middle ages, one town would build a cathedral, and another town would build a bigger cathedral. After the Reformation, the different denominations all built bigger cathedrals. In Melbourne, there are two cathedrals, both triple-spired. When I was there as a boy, one cathedral had a design for a spire of a certain height. The other one then built a taller spire, so the first one was redesigned, and it was a bit higher still. This was trying to show that "bigger was better", I presume, in the service of God. Now we are trying to show that bigger is better in the service of Mammon.

When we look at these great symbols of power, we should stop and wonder whether, in fact, we are merely meeting the demand for office space, or whether we are allowing the people who build them to express their repressions, their ambitions, their fears, or their Freudian desires through their wealth. As a matter of fact, when I looked at the model of the Bond Building, with its aluminium, glass, and shininess, I saw it as an interesting cross between a silver cachou-decorated birthday cake and the symbols of power. If in order to retain this rather, in my opinion, undistinguished piece of Victorian nostalgia in the Palace Hotel, we need to have this frosted phallic symbol towering over the skies of Perth, the price we are paying is too great.

It would be a good idea for both the Government and the city council to think again about where the City of Perth is going. Do we want it to become another New York? Do we want it to become another Sydney? Do we want to follow all the mistakes that have been made in other big cities in the past, or do we want to maintain our city as something that is pleasant to the eye, pleasant to work in, and pleasant to live in? It is still not too late; but it is disturbing.

It seems that the new buildings are a symbol of progress, so-called. We live in an economy which seems to be able to introduce technological changes which increase productivity, but which, at the same time, fails to solve the problem of how to consume all the things we can produce. It is an economy which produces yet another round of unemployment. The new President who has just been elected in the United States of America has promised to return to the old verities; and there has been a reaction in America and here.

I was sorry to hear what I regarded as a reactionary speech by the Hon. Phillip Pental the other night when he was talking about education. I was perturbed.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: I think you should tell me what was reactionary about it. Perhaps I will agree with you.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I could perhaps read the definition of "reactionary" in the dictionary, as dictionaries are "in" today. However, I will not.

I was also perturbed to read an article by the Minister for Community Welfare (the Hon. William Hassell) in which he said that families are vital commodities. That article appeared in *The Sunday Times*. I am not objecting to people believing in families, except that they seem to be believing in nuclear families. However, some of the things said in that article suggest how much families should provide, and how much they should be expected to help themselves.

The return to the old nuclear family is regarded as a wonderful thing. It was seen that way in the past. I hope members do not take me wrong, because Mr Hassell has made some announcements about the steps he intends to take as far as child molestation is concerned for which I have nothing but approval.

I find the present Minister for Community Welfare an odd and interesting mixture. On the one hand he takes action which I find progressive, but on the other hand he does things which are dubious and perhaps look nostalgically back into the past. What Mr Pental said roughly—

The Hon. P. G. Pental: Not too roughly!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I thought he spoke very well.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am glad the Hon. Alexander Lewis thought the Hon. Phillip Pental spoke very well. Indeed he did and always does, but I do not happen to agree with all he said. On this occasion the member was concerned about the increased expenditure on education and wondered whether the technological devices we are introducing into our schools were necessary. He thought perhaps if we cut expenditure on education, we would in fact obtain better education. I believe that is a fair summary of the point he made.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: It is, apart from the last phrase. Each new device instituted must be paid for by someone, and the person who pays for it is the taxpayer.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have no doubt somebody pays for these things and it is the taxpayer who foots the bill.

The Hon. P. G. Pendal: Your people grizzle continually about the level of taxation payable.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Mr Hetherington does not.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: A statement of mine appeared in a newspaper some months ago. I did not receive great praise from some members of my party for saying that, in my opinion, people on my salary could often pay more taxation in order to provide greater equality and more services for the people in the community who are still in great need.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: I do not believe you confined it to yourself. I think you included others.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I read it, and I am aware of what I said.

The Hon. P. G. Pendal: If you say there are people in the community who are still in great need, how can you justify giving more and more to people who do not have that same degree of need?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am trying to make a speech with regard to my views on education. I would be only too happy to get into a tutorial situation with the honourable gentleman in due course; but if we are going to conduct a dialogue, it will take a long time for me to get to the end of my speech. Members will be very weary by the time I arrive at the major part of it, which I still have to do.

I am aware the member did not follow up the suggestion to its logical nastiness, as some other people do, but he raised the question that we seem to be spending more money on education at a time when people are complaining young people who come out of our schools are less equipped to fit into our society than ever before. I have spoken about this previously and I will speak about it briefly again. I argue that we are developing a high technological society and with the development of computers, sensors, and other technology, we are gradually getting rid of the unskilled labour that used to be the mainstay of employment in this community. Manufacturing industries put people into jobs, because they employed labour. However, labour-intensive industry is vanishing; therefore, there are fewer jobs proportionately for people with less education.

We have always produced people who are functionally illiterate in our society. This certainly

occurred when I was a boy attending school. I was not one of them, but there were plenty of people who left school at grade 7, went out to look for work in the Depression of the 1930s, and were unable to obtain it. Mr Lockyer may very well say I am almost a geriatric if that is his wont, because I am getting older. I have been around a reasonable length of time. However, the war mopped up these people and then the development of the manufacturing industries by the Chifley and Menzies Governments which followed in the post-war period meant unskilled labour could be employed. This is no longer happening.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: They were mopped up well before 1933. I do not like your terminology.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: During the 1920s between five per cent and 10 per cent of the population was unemployed. From 1929 to 1933, 30 per cent of the work force was unemployed. By 1939 there was still a high rate of unemployment.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: What was the rate?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not have the figure with me, but I will supply it one night for the member opposite. I have said before in this House many people joined the sixth division of the Australian Imperial Forces in 1939 and a large number of them had never previously had a job. They were men who were 18, 19, 20, or 21 years of age. I remember those days well and bitterly.

What I am saying now is that we need to educate people to a higher standard than they have been educated in the past, because we are developing a high technology society.

The Hon. P. G. Pendal: I agree with that, but that does not overcome the fact that many employers simply reject the product which is coming out of the schools, because it is inadequate. I know that and I can produce many employers to back up what I have said.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I also point out to the honourable gentleman that previously approximately five per cent of students who left school went on to tertiary education. Today the percentage is much greater. In other words, people who are leaving school and looking for jobs immediately are in the lower percentile of results.

One of the other situations which occurs is that, because so many people with higher educational levels than are required are unemployed, employers are looking for people with higher abilities than are actually necessary for jobs. This is compounding the whole issue, because people obtain jobs for which they are intellectually superior and they become bored and fed up.

What I am saying is that we are facing a very difficult period ahead and we certainly will not solve the problems by saying, "Let us get back to the three Rs" or by taking simplistic attitudes to the difficulties. We will not solve it—

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You know, he is right. That is why we are getting so many of them here!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The development of the Achievement Certificate had much against it, because children with ability could achieve what they had to quite easily and they were not extended. Now we are introducing classes for gifted children into our schools—because we are facing this problem—and we are setting up special schools to cater for gifted children. We could well be compounding another mistake by creating an elite of gifted children who are chosen at a certain stage and "force fed". Certainly when I read of the notion that gifted children will not be extended in school time, but will have to do extra work, it seemed to me we were entering into some kind of lunacy.

However, be that as it may, I know people in the Education Department are groping for the solutions which are difficult and complex. We do not solve the problems by knocking everything and saying, "The Education Department is not producing what the employers require."

The Hon. P. G. Pental: I did not knock everything.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: We will not help matters by suggesting the solution is to be found in some of the smaller, non-Government schools which do not have a great deal of equipment, but which seem to produce a better product.

I do not know what sort of evidence Mr Pental had to support his contention and I do not really take great issue with him over it. It seems to me his speech skimmed the surface of the issue. I am glad he is concerned with this important matter and I hope he, like I on other issues, will examine the matter further and see if he can play his part in seeking solutions.

In the same way we have to be careful we do not say, as the Minister for Community Welfare said in an article in *The Sunday Times* of 7 September 1980, as follows—

The family, as the basic unit of our society, has never been under greater threat.

A variety of social factors including the high divorce rate, a declining birth-rate, the changing role of women and the growing number of single parent families, are

undermining the family as the traditional cornerstone of society.

This may be true, but we are not quite sure whether it is a situation of cause and effect and if in fact it is causing all these problems.

One of the results which has occurred, and we are becoming more and more aware of it as women's refuges are established, is that for centuries in Britain and Australia the "domestic bliss" of the nuclear family has often resulted in battered wives and children. This is one of the problems we have to solve and certainly I am glad people are setting up institutions to try to help and support those whose children are at risk and to alleviate problems where situations of violence arise.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: Were those percentages you quoted earlier for Western Australia or Australia?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: They are Australia-wide figures. I find it very difficult when I am some way away from a matter I raised earlier to have to listen to Mr Oliver pursuing a little point on which he wants to check up. It might be a good idea if he did that at some other time, because it makes it difficult to maintain one's train of thought.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: One hundred lines!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not approve of lines. The whole problem of domestic violence and violence in our society is important and urgent. We can solve this problem only by spending more money and setting up more agencies. If we can, we should make sure those agencies do not get carried away with their own ideologies. As the Hon. Phillip Pental knows, this is something which does occur, but we have to try to solve the problem of violence in our society.

At the present time the general attitude of society seems to be that money is important and if something is bigger it is better. We have to strut around and show off our power. We have a society in which the male is seen as the powerful initiator. This causes all sorts of problems and I shall talk about them some time next year.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Not in the same speech I hope.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members will come to order and refrain from audible conversation.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I mention that matter, because it is something to which we should turn our minds and for which we should try to find a solution.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Is education the ultimate? To make a living, do you think education is absolutely necessary?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: If one wants to earn a living as one of the majority in a highly technological society, the answer is "Yes".

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The answer is "Yes" in any society.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Education will become more and more essential.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: But at what price?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is a matter we are still trying to work out. One of the problems is many people are arguing now that, because there is a surplus of university graduates, one must be a university graduate to perform certain jobs.

Quite often we over-educate people and that is one of the problems we must look at very carefully. We should not educate people merely for the sake of giving them skills they don't need.

The Hon. P. G. Penda: Very good point.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Would the honourable member direct his comments to the Chair and disregard the interjections?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was afraid that members would accuse me of talking through the back of my neck. In response to the interjections, I was suggesting that we have to be very careful that we do not attempt to over-equip people for jobs which do not need such a level of expertise. We must be careful also that we do not under-educate people as far as their own development, their own concerns, and their own leisure are concerned. We should not be using the excuse that we are over-equipping them for jobs. Education is not just for special skills for jobs, it is not just for vocational training, and it would be a good idea if we separated the two aspects of education.

We should attempt to solve the problems which are being produced by a highly technological society. People will in the future have to work for fewer hours because there will be fewer jobs and people will be able to enjoy their leisure. To enjoy their leisure to the full they will have to be properly equipped. This aspect will have to be considered at much greater length.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Employers seem to prefer employees to be more equipped than is really required.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is often nice to have someone over-equipped. We must be careful to ensure—and there is a tendency even amongst some members of this House to knock

people who happen to be educated—that people do not look down on people who are not educated. Some people are just educated in different ways and are educated in different kinds of skills.

It is unfortunate that in our urban society we have approximately two-thirds of our population in the metropolitan area. This has happened in other States also and people are being cut off from rural life. They do not find it as easy to get on their motorbikes and get out into the country and admire rural life.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: That is a danger which education might create.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It may and it may not. If we can ever afford it, we should ensure that we have camps for country students to attend in the city and camps for city students to attend in the country. In that way there will be some cross-fertilisation. If someone tells me we have such camps, then I say we do not have enough of the right kind.

In our rapidly-changing, highly-urbanised, and highly-technological society we will be able to bring about greater equality for people. There will be greater equality of opportunity. However, we will have to recognise the complexities of the problems facing us. It is all very well to look nostalgically at the past. I quite often do that and think of the time when I was a boy living in a country town. I thought I was better off having grown up in a rural area, but we must face the fact that the majority of our children are growing up in a vast metropolis which is increasing in size all the time. We must be able to solve the problems which arise in a highly technological society. Of course, there are advantages in our society, there are fewer dirty jobs to be done, but of course there are fewer jobs.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: There are still dirty jobs to be done.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Employers still cannot find people to do them.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: When looking at our problem we must not over-simplify it and make out that it is easy because we can go back to the past or do things in a simple way. It is a very complex problem.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Could not education create unemployment by making people too proud to do menial jobs?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not know, I will have to look at that aspect. It is perhaps a question which must be looked at. We may reach a stage when we have no really menial jobs, but in the meantime we have a problem of

people not wishing to do them, and that is one we have to think about. I do not know whether, if we had people who were not educated, they would do the menial tasks.

I do not think we should adopt the solution used in 1840 when people recognised that the source of their wealth was the work of the poor. Those people tried to discipline the working class and keep people poor because poverty was the best master to get them to do the jobs which were necessary. That is no longer necessary today and no politician would stand up as they did in the House of Lords during the Poor Law debates 1834 and suggest that that is the solution to our problem.

The problem is a very complex one and family life is changing also when we consider that women have moved into the work force. This move by women has revealed some of the nastiness which was in the nuclear family before. That move has not caused all the problems as some people think. That is another matter which should be looked at very carefully.

I wish now to refer to the situation at the Belmont Senior High School. I will not worry much about the comments made by some people when discussing this matter. For instance, I found that I was one of a small group of people which was conniving to produce a confrontation at Belmont. I also discovered from reports of the debate in another place that the Minister for Education was surprised to learn that I was on the building committee at the school. He said when he made that discovery that he then understood the reason for the hold-up. I can only assume that the statement was made in the heat of the moment.

Certainly, those statements bear no relationship to the truth and my conscience is clear as far as the developments of the Belmont Senior High School are concerned.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: How do you find time to be on the building committee of a school?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I suppose I find the time in the same way that Mr Leon Watt finds it possible to be president of the building committee of the school at Albany. I find time to be on the Belmont Senior High School Building Committee because I became aware of the school's grave problems and I joined the committee in order to help it with its problems. I will probably leave the committee at some stage. The Belmont Senior High School is located in my electorate and after all one has to choose one's priorities in regard to one's electorate. As far as I am concerned the needs of the students at the

school and the children who are growing up in the Belmont area are very important. I have spent some time with the building committee, not as a front runner—in fact there have been three members of Parliament representing the electorate who have been on the building committee—but to help in any way I can. I am not on the building committee of any other school, but if I find there is one in such a parlous position I will probably join.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: Just as well you are not in my electorate, you would never get around it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is an inane sort of remark. If I tried to get around to every school in my electorate I would not be able to do so either. I will tell members how I came to be involved with the Belmont Senior High School. Like all politicians, I tend to react to situations and I reacted to this one.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: And quite proper, too.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Of course it is quite proper.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: He probably runs around his electorate.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I had thought that this session the interjections of the Hon. Neil Oliver would be a little less fatuous. However, I will struggle on just the same.

I would like to make reference to some of the comments which have been made about the Principal of the Belmont Senior High School. It was mentioned that the 300 repairs asked for at this school were due largely to the fact that the principal was away from the school. This principal who it was suggested should have been at the school has been appointed, by the Minister, to the special inquiry into teacher education. Some meetings have been held in school time. The principal is also on the Board of Secondary Education and on the committee monitoring changes in the school area. Apparently, the Minister and the members of the department thought he could afford to be away from the school for a short time.

With regard to the vandalism at the school when the principal was not away, it should be noted that the caretaker was on long service leave and no replacement or watch service was provided. No doubt, that was because of a lack of funds. I am not blaming the Education Department for this, but I am just highlighting the facts to show that some of the excuses offered were not properly explained.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: The members of the committees are nominees, so the principal was not appointed directly by the Minister. The unions nominate members.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would have thought that if the need of the Belmont Senior High School was so vital then the Minister would not nominate him.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: How many members of Parliament are on the committee?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: There are three, two members from the East Metropolitan Province and Mr Mal Bryce, the member for Ascot. No doubt, now that we have a concerned member of the Labor Party in Swan, we may have a Federal member joining that committee if he sees fit to do so.

The Hon. P. G. Pendal: It sounds like a gerrymander to me.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: Are there any other members on the committee?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have pointed out already that most of the work was carried out by parents and staff.

Members of this House will be very happy to know that the Minister appeared at a very well-attended meeting at the school on Monday night. I was there, and I was pleased to meet him. He announced to the assembled body from the platform that the plans put forward by the building committee were completely acceptable, that they were better than the plans put forward by the department, and that he thought we would have a better school than we would have had if the building committee had acceded to the suggestions put forward by the Education Department and the PWD in 1979.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: Obviously there were no PWD architects on the committee.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is what the Minister said, and he was right on this particular occasion. I was glad he said it. I do not think the Minister realised I was a member of the committee, although I have been on it for a few years now. I met the previous Minister for Education (Mr P. V. Jones) while I was on the committee. The present Minister is not always as well informed as the previous Minister.

I want to pay credit to two groups of people. Firstly, I would like to pay credit to the year 12 students of the Belmont Senior High School who went to see the Minister and who achieved more in a short time than we had achieved in a long time.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Did they talk more sense?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: This could have been for one or two reasons. The students said the kind of things we had been saying for a long time and the Minister listened. Having listened to the children, he found they were talking sense.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I can see now why having been so successful in designing the school, you want to start on St. George's Terrace.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I had nothing to do with designing the school. During 1979 I was overseas and I visited schools in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire in England. These were community colleges, and I mentioned them in this House, although some members may not have been here at the time. However, I came back from my trip with the notion that we needed a community school in Belmont. I have said it before, and I will say it again: with the shire offices across Abernethy Road from the Belmont Senior High School, here is a wonderful opportunity to create a community complex. I know it cannot be done this year, but we can plan, and we can look forward to it. It is a chance to create an imaginative complex which will serve the needs of the community in Belmont.

This leads me to the other people to whom I wish to pay credit; they are the Mayor (Mr Fred Rae) and the councillors of the City of Belmont who made available the city's shire clerk without whose technical knowledge and expertise the building committee probably could not have developed the notions it did, and without whose help the building committee would not have been able to develop the notion for a five-stage plan for rebuilding the school. The other night this plan was accepted by the Minister as a good one.

So the children and the City of Belmont which had the interest of the children of its ratepayers at heart, have managed to foster a community effort. Perhaps we have created a precedent, and if so, it is a good precedent. I pay due credit to the Minister for accepting this proposal.

The community, the PWD, and the Education Department were involved in designing a school based on the needs of the community. We have now set up a working committee, and I hope that this will happen in regard to more schools, and as the techniques of co-operation and consultation are developed—and it takes a while to develop these because sometimes people just do not communicate—it will be to the benefit of the

State, to the benefit of the schools, and to the benefit of the Education Department.

I became involved in this matter on Friday, 14 July 1978, although I had visited the school before that time. The then deputy principal (Miss Norah Watts) was a friend of mine. Unfortunately this lady has since died. She and other people had told me of the sad state of disorder of the school. I said, "Oh yes, that is terrible; we ought to do something about it."

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: How long has the school been built?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I will get to that in due course if members are patient. The school was built about 23 years ago by a Labor Government and I will say more about that in a moment.

Miss Watts, who was a good psychologist, rang up one day when my colleague (the Hon. Fred McKenzie) and I were at a Contact lunch at Belmont. Miss Watts left a message with the Hon. Fred McKenzie's secretary along these lines, "If you want to see the school leaking, come now." So we went and saw the school leaking. However, before I tell members about the school leaking, I would like to tell them of the genesis of the school.

Mr President, if I may, I would like to lay this exhibit on the Table of the House so members can look at it. It is a piece of the timber framing of the Belmont Senior High School.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: I hope the white ants are not still in it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The white ants are out of it. The Belmont Senior High School was built about 23 years ago by a Labor Government as a one-off experiment in cost saving.

The PRESIDENT: Would the honourable member describe what it is that he has just laid on the Table of the House?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry, Sir, I did do that, but perhaps you did not hear me sufficiently. It is part of the timber frame of the Belmont Senior High School. It is, I think, one of the rafters after the white ants got to it.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: Was this school built by a Labor Government?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It was.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: Shame!

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It is a pity that there is only one Labor member in the House to hear you.

Points of Order

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Mr President, is not a motion required to have an object tabled?

The PRESIDENT: A motion is not necessary.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Should we organise it, Sir, that the object can be returned subsequently, or by laying it on the Table of the House, does it go into the archives forever?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It will be included in *Hansard*!

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the House that the honourable member is laying the item on the table for the purpose of members observing it at the moment. I suggest that it will not be there tomorrow.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That or the table will have gone!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am quite happy to take it away, but the House is welcome to it if it wants it. Perhaps we could burn it and keep the ashes.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Cast them on the new playing field.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: As some money had been left over, the Government decided to experiment with a new timber frame and masonite school. It was built on an old swamp in which many trees were buried. The result has been an endless procession of white ants through the timber frames. I think about \$30 000 has been spent in attempts to eradicate the white ants. It does not matter how often the timbers are replaced, more are white anted! It is a hopeless business.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Something like the party system.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: In the last 10 years there have been 70 different infestations of white ants, and \$30 000 or more spent on trying to eradicate them. The original school was built of karri timber and masonite and the walls seemed to have a special attraction to the white ants. It is not a very satisfactory school, and it has a very high maintenance cost.

Later a brick science block was built along Abernethy Road. Since then Abernethy Road has developed into something like a major highway. Over 18 000 vehicles pass this school every day, and the buildings are about 30 to 70 feet from the road.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: A big proportion of those vehicles are heavy duty trucks, I might add.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: To add to what my friend has just said, I report that the Director General of Education was at the school one day, and in a period of about 40 minutes, while he was speaking in one of the lecture theatres, approximately 40 trucks passed by and he had to stop each time because he could not be heard. So there is an additional health problem which is apparent throughout the whole school. Of course the school is not air-conditioned, and I am not claiming that it should be. However, to keep out the noise the windows are kept shut, and in summer many students suffer from heat exhaustion. The number of cases of heat exhaustion throughout the school is very high. So this old dilapidated building had a new building attached to it, but the new building suffers from the effects of noise pollution with the growth of traffic on Abernethy Road.

This was the school I was called to see during a very heavy rain storm on 14 July 1978. Mr McKenzie and I visited the school together, and we were quite dismayed at the condition of the verandahs. Lights were let into the lining of the verandahs and the water was running through the light fittings. The roof was leaking very badly and water was running into the rooms.

Because of the water on the floor one student had slipped and gashed his head badly. Water was running down the walls into the students' lockers, and many of the students' books had been ruined. Art work in the art room had been ruined.

Water was coming through the roof covering the walks between the classrooms, and these walks were slippery and dangerous. The ceiling in one room had partly collapsed.

The principal referred to the area set aside for the students' bicycles as the underwater bicycle park. It was completely covered in water to a depth of four to six inches. As I said, the school had had the white ant problem for years. Multiple adaptors had been added to the electrical system so that appliances could operate. The general appearance of the school was very poor.

As the Hon. Fred McKenzie said the other night during the adjournment debate, he rang up the SEC and said, "This school is dangerous." He was told by the public relations officer, "You should not say that; that is a very strong statement." The SEC agreed to send out some maintenance men, and at 3.00 p.m. on the Tuesday these men switched the power off. The school was dangerous.

Because we have a division of labour on this matter, I then rang up the Secretary to the Minister for Education. I said, "This school is

leaking badly. Something needs to be done about it." The secretary said it would be very difficult to do anything and that the PWD would have to be contacted. I have sometimes since regretted the remark I then made. I said, "Mr Jones might have a better chance of getting it fixed than if I rang *The West Australian*." I have often wondered whether I ought to have gone public then instead of trying to work through the Education Department. Perhaps I did the right thing.

I would like to give the then Minister due credit. He got in touch with the PWD and parts of the school were reroofed over the weekend.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Does it have a flat roof?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: No, it is slightly sloping. It is very uninspiring.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Is it one of those imported English units?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: No, it is made of karri. It is good, Western Australian junk—not that I think karri is junk; however, the school is.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Karri is a beautiful timber.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Yes, it is a marvellous timber. I have karri rafters in one of the rooms in my house. However, Karri is not a good timber to use for framing in a swamp situation; it does not work terribly well.

What the school committee did, and what I as a member of that committee did was to invite the then Minister (Mr P. V. Jones) to visit the school, which he did on 21 September 1978. He was accompanied by Mr Stan Cann of the Public Works Department, and the Director of Planning in the Education Department (Mr James Quinn). The visit was arranged by the member for Ascot (Mr Bryce). When three members of Parliament represent an area, they do not all make representations to the Minister. Naturally, we allowed the lower House member, who was in the same House as the Minister for Education, to make such representations as were required.

The Minister received submissions from the school building committee, or the parents' action committee, as it was then called. The committee consisted of members of the parents and citizens' association, the staff, the three State members of Parliament for the area, and the Town Clerk of the City of Belmont.

We were delighted when the Minister told us that the school would be rebuilt, and that the planning for the new building programme would begin immediately. In addition, we were told the

building committee would be consulted in the planning process.

On 28 September the Minister wrote to the principal of the school confirming this statement. I have already quoted this letter in a previous debate, so I do not intend to quote it in great detail on this occasion. However, in fairness to all, I think I should quote for the record that section of the Minister's letter which refers to rebuilding. The then Minister for Education (Mr P. V. Jones) wrote as follows—

As I indicated before leaving the School, discussions would commence immediately between the Education Department and the Public Works Department to prepare a long-term plan for the replacement of the school.

In considering all aspects of such a plan, immediate attention would be given to the safety of all students and teachers, and in considering the long-term future, regard would be given to alternate design and layout of buildings, alternate educational uses for some of the existing buildings, and the likely pupil numbers in the coming years.

When some concrete proposals have been received, they would be discussed with you, your teaching colleagues and the parents, and I am confident that over a period of years and as economic conditions permit, an institution will be created of which the district can be justly proud.

So, there was no commitment to rebuild the school immediately; there was a commitment to work on the whole problem.

In November 1978, because people were wondering where they stood—people do get a little worried; they are not always sure they have the exact message—the member for Ascot (Mr Bryce) asked a question of the Minister for Education. The question and the Minister's answer can be found at page 4548 of *Hansard* for Thursday, 2 November 1978. Mr Bryce asked the following question—

- (1) Has money been allocated for repairs and renovations at the Belmont Senior High School?
- (2) In the light of his undertaking to the parent action group and the staff buildings committee of the Belmont Senior High School on 21st September, 1978 to "rebuild the Belmont Senior High School", is it intended to proceed with routine repairs and renovations?

The then Minister (Mr P. V. Jones) replied in the following terms—

- (1) and (2) Yes. Limited funds will be provided this financial year for the more urgent repairs only, not for renovation. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were here, I would tell him the reason for the reduction. As he is aware, due to the programme we have entered into to rebuild part of the school over a period, there will not be the need for such extensive repairs and renovations.

On 20 November 1978 we received a letter from Mr Jones in reply to a letter written by Mr Whitton, the president of the school building committee. The letter states as follows—

Thank you for your letter of 1st November 1978.

I would like to assure you that a number of Public Works Department officers have been engaged in assessing the requirements of the Belmont Senior High School and making proposals for the upgrading/replacement in their own particular responsibilities. When these reports are all received and collated the Public Works and Education Departments will be able to advise me of their findings and recommendations. At that time I will be able to consult with your Committee and the school about alternatives available.

In April 1979, some members of the committee reported that they were not able to obtain specific information about the rebuilding programme from the Education Department's planning section, and expressed fears that the Minister did not in fact intend that the timber-framed and asbestos sections of the school would be rebuilt.

So, on 7 April I asked the following question of the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Education—

As doubts have arisen in some people's minds on the question, will the Minister confirm that it is the intention of the Minister for Education that the timber framed buildings at Belmont Senior High School will progressively be replaced by new buildings?

Members will note I was not trying to exacerbate the problem; I was simply giving the Minister a chance to confirm what he said earlier. I was very pleased that the reply was a brief "Yes". Once more, the members of the school building committee were fairly satisfied.

On 25 June 1979 the committee wrote to the then Minister for Education (Mr P. V. Jones) in the following terms—

Dear Mr Jones,

At the last two meetings of our Parents' Action Committee a great deal of discussion took place regarding developments which have taken place over recent months, concerning the re-building of Belmont Senior High School. The Parents were naturally delighted to hear that construction is due to commence in January 1980, and I would again thank you for your personal effort and support.

The parents however are concerned over several points and I would be pleased if you could assist me in this regard. I believe it is imperative to support parents in their concern. The following is a brief outline of the matters in question.

1. Comments from PWD and Education Department Officers indicate that there will be a long period of construction involved in this project, with completion terms of 5-10 years being indicated.

The present indications are this is how long it will take. The letter continues—

A building period of this time span would seriously affect the efficient working of a great many students and teachers, due to the general noise, distraction and disruption during construction work.

2. We are hopeful of obtaining a school that will incorporate facilities that will allow the inclusion of adult education, training and participation. This will enable re-training of unemployed persons, make use of adult skills in student education and other important areas of adult student communication.
3. Due to (2) and other important considerations, the parents are very anxious to see a total area layout and copy of the brief, as currently proposed by the PWD.
We feel that if, as proposed by the PWD, tenders for initial construction will be out by December, this will allow us little time to bring forward any ideas of our own, that could be of value and still enable changes to be made to the plans.
4. Our survey of some recently constructed schools, has revealed some areas of design and material use that we feel

could have been better employed, without involving additional costs.

5. The City of Belmont has recently completed a well laid out and attractive group of community buildings on the block opposite to our school. We are hopeful that our new school will be designed so as to blend in with these structures so as to achieve a total area concept that will effectively involve parents and the community in many aspects of education and training.
6. An overway between the City of Belmont and Belmont Senior High School is a future project of the City and although this would not necessarily involve the PWD it is important that it be considered so as not to affect any of the new school constructions proposed.

It is worth mentioning at this stage that the City of Belmont has a modern computer installation and together with other areas of interest, can greatly assist students in some areas of practical education.

In writing this letter, I fully realise that it is your intention to consult with our committee but in view of the time frame now involved, the parents felt that the matters mentioned above were important and should be raised directly with you.

The next meeting of parents is set for Tuesday 24th July and if it is possible to review these queries and advise us of your comments prior to this date, it would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
R. J. WHITTON
Spokesman Parents' Action Committee.
Belmont Senior High School.

This produced a reply from the Minister on 10 July in the following terms—

Dear Mr Whitton,

Your letter of the 25th June, 1979 concerning the upgrading programme at the Belmont Senior High School is acknowledged.

The planning study upon which rebuilding activities at this school will be based has reached the point at which the Public Works Department is preparing preliminary sketches. This follows submission by the school of an Educational specification which incorporated ideas provided by teachers and parents for changes required. The specification was ready in early May and since then has been subject to further inquiry by officers of the Education and Public

Works Departments to ensure they fully understand the requests made.

When the preliminary sketches are ready, possibly by the end of July, the school will be asked to convene a meeting of all interested groups at which the Public Works Department will explain its proposals and the various options available.

As this time and the date set for your next meeting are in the same week, I suggest that yourself, the Principal and the Director of Planning should consult to select a date for the joint meeting. At this time the ideas put forward in your letter can be brought up for discussion.

The one matter which needs particular comment here is that concerning how the rebuilding programme will be staged. If possible, a new section will be provided in each of three successive financial years,—

That was the hope. The letter continues—

—but adherence to this timetable will be governed by the availability of capital works funding to the Education Department during those years.

That was the reality. The letter concludes—

Every effort will be made to involve parents in final planning of the rebuilding programme, and I look forward to a satisfactory conclusion to this combined effort.

Yours sincerely,

P. V. JONES
Minister for Education.

In July 1979—at a time when I was overseas—members of the school building committee met with representatives of the Public Works Department and the Education Department and line sketches of plans of the proposed new building were submitted. However, the committee raised the question of noise levels. The Director of Planning (Mr Quinn) asked the committee for a more detailed educational specification. A month later this specification was completed after a great deal of hard work by members of the committee.

In August 1979, the school principal (Mr Carlson) presented it. It had in it a statement of the school's objectives with an outline of the building requirements which flowed from this, and a copy of the building layout sketch for the rebuilding of the school which suggested that the school be rebuilt on part of the present school oval and the present timber-framed school buildings be

eventually knocked down and become a new school oval.

At no time was the committee told the plan was unacceptable until recently, and since then it has been accepted again. The committee was informed by the director of planning that the Public Works Department was advanced in its ideas with regard to a schematic plan for all stages of reconstruction and that a major discussion would take place early in the third term.

In September 1979, because of the Budget for that year, there was the suggestion that there would be a cut-down of capital works. So once again I asked a question of the Government. I asked the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Education the following question—

Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Schools Commission for cuts in funds for capital expenditure, can the Minister assure me that the rebuilding of Belmont High School will begin in 1980?

The answer was "Yes." So at no time was the Minister ever less than forthright in his promises that he was interested.

Finally, in November 1979, over 12 months after the visit by the Minister in September 1978, a plan for a year 8-year 12 block was presented to the school. This bore no relation to the educational specification set out by the school. It was a single-storied building instead of being two-storied. I asked a question about this matter. Perhaps I had better explain that the teachers had had a questionnaire put around to the students about their attitudes to what they required. One of the things which the year 12 students said was that they felt they had some responsibility for year 8 students, and they desired that they be in close proximity to the year 8 students. This was an innovation by the committee. It was one about which I was dubious, but I accepted it because the students wanted it and the staff at the school thought it was a good idea. They wanted the year 8 students in a block where they could enter the school and get used to it before they broke up into a faculty school. They wanted a year 12 block which gave the year 12 students proximity to set an example for the year 8 students. The year 12 students at Belmont have been the kind of students that do set an example. It is a very fine school from this point of view. It was believed this made year 12 a bit special. The students would start off in the year 8 block and finish upstairs.

The only other two-storied building was to be the administration block with the staff room above it. But when it was suggested by people

who came to discuss the matter with the school building committee that the department was not building double-storied buildings this year, that it used to do so but not any longer, the committee was not very happy. Of course, what was asked for was not a two-storied school, but two two-storied buildings for specific and carefully thought out reasons.

There was a meeting, but no information was given to the school about further stages of construction. There was a meeting with the director of planning, the head of the Education Department building plans branch, and representatives of the Town of Belmont. After a final discussion it was agreed that there be a two-storied building and the committee was told that it would be noted on the file that it had been advised against it. Consistently, although the building was promised specifically—although somewhat regretfully and reluctantly—at that meeting, the two-storied building was never put in plan.

There was an apparent desire somewhere in the bureaucracy to make sure that because it was not building two-storied buildings that year, these people at Belmont would not get what they wanted. It was also expected that the Education Department would either approve the layout in principle or present alternatives for the school's decision. In fact, there was a further meeting of the committee with representatives of the Education Department and the Public Works Department; but it was left quite unclear as to the future plans for the school; nothing specific was presented.

The school committee had presented a proposed layout, rightly or wrongly, for the whole school. It was argued that at least the department should provide an alternative layout so there could be discussion because, after all, before the first building is constructed, there should be some idea of the direction of development at the school. This has been one of the arguments which has been going on from then until recently, when finally they were resolved.

On 29 November 1979, the school committee wrote to the director of planning as follows—

Dear Mr Quinn,

Members of our Building Committee, which included a representation of school parents, teaching staff and local Council met yesterday morning with Gail Bonser and Malcolm Parr from your Department, together with Mr S. Blackbee of the PWD Architectural Division.

Following initial discussion of the Departments drawings for the proposed year 8, English and Social Studies building, it was agreed by our Committee and the Departmental officers that further progress could not be made without a clear commitment from your Department.

In order to clarify the position and to enable meaningful discussions to proceed we need to have a written statement from your Department, concerning the following matters:—

1. We need to have your approval of the educational specifications as submitted in August, 1979.
2. Approval of the concepts we have submitted in our building layout which includes the relationship of the Resource Centre (Library) as central to the other buildings.

As our Building Committee is anxious to proceed with discussions, we have scheduled our next meeting for December 12 and would be pleased if you could advise us concerning the above points, by that date.

The Minister wrote a letter in reply which was hand delivered on 13 December 1979, and it reads as follows—

Dear Mr Whitton,

I refer to your letter of the 29th November, 1979 to the Education Department concerning the upgrading of the Belmont Senior High School.

I note that your Building Committee considers that further progress cannot be made until you have approval for the building layout which you have submitted. In my letter to your Principal on the 28th September, 1978 in which I set out guidelines for the redevelopment of the Belmont Senior High School stress was made on alternate design and layout of buildings, alternate educational uses for some of the existing buildings and the long-term nature of the plan. The very considerable demolition of existing buildings, some of which are suited for upgrading and alternate uses, was not envisaged when I gave permission for planning to commence.

The general principles of your educational specifications are acceptable and will no doubt be of great use in setting the pattern for school development and management over the years to come. They do not require approval or disapproval by the Education Department but rather will be subject to

critical evaluation by the school itself as time goes by.

A commitment has been given to your Committee that the Year 8 block, with English and Social Studies teaching areas above have been offered as Stage 1 of the rehabilitation programme. Both your Committee and the Education Department agree on its location and consequently it can be proceeded with forthwith without compromising flexibility in planning for the other teaching and service blocks.

Unless documentation of this building can take place in the next few weeks very little of the works will be achieved this financial year.

Your Committee is urged to give a clear indication on 12th December that Stage 1 of the rebuilding programme is accepted so that delays can be minimised.

This letter was not received until 13 December.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I hope you will record a motion of thanks to members of your party who have taken turns in listening to you.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not care very much if no-one listens to me except you, Mr President; I know you are interested. I am recording the facts in *Hansard*, and I will explain why later.

Oddly enough, until quite recently we had no real quarrel with the Minister and I think we now have no real quarrel with him again. We did have a bit of a bust-up in the middle of things, but perhaps it has helped to clear matters and we have now begun to communicate, which I think is a good thing. Whether my colleagues are behind me or not is irrelevant.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: It is very relevant because it is the Government members who are keeping the numbers in the House for you.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is not our job to keep up the numbers in the House.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member should ignore interjections.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: In *The Belmont Vic. Park Times* of Wednesday, 16 January there was a news report which read as follows—

Work to start soon on Belmont school

Work is due to start fairly soon on the first stage of a new group of buildings at Belmont High School.

The director of Planning at the Education Department, Mr Jim Quinn, said the department was waiting for final agreement

from the school committee, which has worked closely with the department on planning the buildings.

Once the committee said it was in agreement with what was to be done, final specifications would go out to builders.

In fact, there did not seem to be any plans, and a further letter was written. I referred to this matter fairly briefly in my Budget speech last year. I was much briefer on that occasion. I received a letter from the Minister for Education which reads as follows—

The Leader of the Government in the Legislative Assembly, Hon. G. C. MacKinnon has referred a number of matters to me arising out of your speech during debate on the Appropriation Bill in the Legislative Council.

I have noted your remarks concerning the rebuilding programme at Belmont Senior High School and can assure you that the project is proceeding. Planning is advanced for the replacement Year 8 and upper school block and I am hoping that work will proceed early in 1980.

That was the assurance I received on 7 February.

There was a meeting with the Minister and arrangements were made for him to make a further visit to the school, but he could not manage it because it was after an election. He wrote a note of apology to Mr John Witton which read in part as follows—

My note is to confirm that the meeting will still occur and has in no way been abandoned but just deferred.

It is a subject which I wish to get resolved as quickly as possible and I have asked the Buildings people to still keep working so that perhaps we might even be in a better position when we finally come together.

The Minister then ceased to be Minister after the elections and a new Minister was appointed. We wrote to the new Minister on 25 June 1980 because we received no further report on plans.

The letter to Mr Grayden said—

Dear Sir,

I received a letter concerning the rebuilding of Belmont High School from your predecessor Mr P. V. Jones on the 13th December 1979. This letter contained statements that were both contradictory and in some cases impossible to comprehend, bearing in mind the negotiations that had taken place since 1978. When contacted, the Minister agreed at short notice (6 days) to

meet with our representatives and your Mr Quinn, in order to bring the comments in the letter in line with his undertaking to the Parliament.

At this meeting we were able to point out to the Minister at least four major areas where there was deviation from previous agreement and his undertakings.

Mr Jones was concerned with the delay in getting the job started and decided to visit the school on the 26th February 1980.

I arranged, at his request, for the parents group to be in attendance and some of the white ant infestations, together with other matters considered primary in the argument for replacement of the buildings, to be inspected. This meeting was cancelled by the Minister although he gave a written undertaking that the meeting would still occur.

As the matter was considered urgent by the Department I contacted your Secretary after your appointment to the Portfolio, and arranged a meeting with you for March 21, 1980.

You will recall at the meeting having called for Mr Jones answers to questions on this matter and it was our understanding that you intended to follow the course of action set by Mr Jones. Your immediate decision was to visit the school in the week commencing 31st March, 1980. As you are aware this meeting has not taken place, no doubt due to other commitments.

Of course, the Noonkanbah situation flared up at this time and the Minister was otherwise busy and otherwise occupied. To continue—

You will appreciate however, that the Department required an urgent answer to the overall planning in December 1979 and my Committee has put in a tremendous amount of time and effort in coming up with a practical, workable solution to the whole problem before that date.

We are now approaching the end of June 1980 and we have not been advised of a meeting date as yet.

For your information, I have attached key statements in relation to this matter as they clearly indicate that this meeting is essential and urgent.

We understand that you have many other pressing commitments however, I have been requested by the parents group, to invite you

to visit the school at your convenience, if possible, in the next two weeks.

Mr Bryce, Mr McKenzie, and I decided that we would go in to the Education Department and in particular to the architects' section to see what the plans were looking like. When we did this the department had no plans to show us; plans did not exist. The planning had not reached any stage at all. This, of course, was when we started to get a little bit irritable, but we hoped all would be well when the Minister visited us, and he visited us on 9 July 1980. We had a summary which we presented to him and which I have here, but I will not read it out because I would be repeating in shorter form all the things I have said already tonight.

I might say, at that meeting of the school building committee with the Minister, that Mr Bryce, Mr McKenzie, and I were present as members of the committee. We were not hiding that fact. We were there as members of the committee. Then the Minister seemed a little taken aback at just how much had been promised and said he could not really go beyond a year 8 block at that particular stage. Later we had a further meeting to have a look at the year 8 block proposal with members of the department and we found that in fact the sketch plan still incorporated none of the things for which we had asked. Nobody it seemed had read the Education Department specification which had the building facing in a direction which would have made the further development of the school, according to our plan, impossible. We had received no other plan. I will read here to put on record and to make it quite clear, the minutes of the Belmont Senior High School Building Committee when it sat in September 1980. The document reads—

Minutes of the Belmont Senior High School Building Committee held in the staff room at Belmont Senior High School on Monday, 29 September, 1980.

Present: J. Whitton, D. Carlson, F. McKenzie (M.L.C.), R. Hetherington (M.L.C.), J. Scrivener, J. McLay, M. Price, L. Price, F. Robinson, P. Hallahan.

Apology: T. Henderson, V. Smith, G. Bray, M. Bryce.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the sketch plan for the building programme as presented to the committee by the P.W.D. architect, Mr Ron Hewitt and Education Department representative G. Bonser on Monday, 22nd September, 1980.

Mr Whitton reported that—a meeting had been held on Friday, 26th September, 1980,

chaired by J. Whitton attended by D. Carlson, J. Scrivener and P. Hallahan, that examined the sketch plan and made some comment for discussion.

The following points were agreed to by the Building Committee, to be forwarded to the Education Department Planning Branch as a firm response to the sketch plans as presented.

1. The Building Committee was given the opportunity to propose the kind of school it wanted.
2. The Building Committee will continue to be involved in the determination of the school to be developed, e.g. NO science rooms in Year 8 area and that the Enrichment Centre be provided in the Year 8 area.
3. That Year 12 students should be so closely located to Year 8 students that they are able to exert an influence by example.
4. That there be provision for the future self-development of an upper school social/recreation room.

Additional information on items 3 and 4—

- (a) Teaching staff were happy to see a building design for Years 11 and 12 that provided an area of covered space (an undercroft), so that at a later stage, it could be developed as a social function area.
- (b) Such an undercover area could overlook the redeveloped playing fields, provided the building was oriented correctly.
- (c) An elevated Years 11 and 12 area would provide an important status for these students.
- (d) If items 3 and 4 can be achieved in building designs without a doublestorey block, then the committee would agree. The committee felt that this could not be achieved from plans so far presented and felt that there was importance to the school's future as contained in items 3 and 4, and so would insist on these requirements.
5. That the Year 8/12 block be so oriented as to allow for the central placement of the Resources Centre.
6. That Resources Centre (the library plus all teaching resources), as central to the ethos of the institution, should, for effective use, be located in the geographic centre of the complex.

Additional information on item 6—

- (a) The present building as shown on the plan is inadequate as a total resources centre.
- (b) A Resources Centre needs to be a central hub in the school to maximise its use by all subject areas.
- (c) There are important physical and psychological reasons that should be considered so as not to isolate such a building from students, staff and community.
- (d) Modern design of tertiary institutions and schools, place the Resources Centre as the central focus of design.
- (e) Modern education demands a self-help situation in learning and the Resources Centre is the key to promote this process.
- (f) Complementary learning experiences should be dovetailed into the Resources Centre, e.g. computer terminal, media, photography.
7. The present library should be converted to alternative use; e.g. business education, including accounting, etc. (N.B. V.B.S. could become the special educational thrust of this school.)

Additional information on item 7—

- (a) The present library building with an absence of windows, makes it a very suitable space for development into a modern office layout.
- (b) There has been over a two hundred percent increase in student numbers who have indicated enrolment in V.B.S. at this school in 1981.
- (c) The local area has a high office orientation with many commercial, financial and manufacturing establishments.
8. In the present proposal, the administration block is being built too soon. The priority should be with students; classrooms should be the first priority to be built.
9. Because of the noise/heat problem, alternative uses for the mathematics and science block on Abernethy Road should be found, e.g. canteen. If part of the present science block were converted to a canteen, the opportunity would be given for the self-help development of a student lunch area which could also be used as an area to attract parents to the school. Other alternative uses could be a performing arts complex and a C.Y.S.S. Centre.

Additional information on item 9—

- (a) The critical factors of noise, heat and exhaust fumes in this area make these buildings completely unsuitable for academic subjects.
 - (b) It would be expensive to overcome the problems and a consideration could be for the development of change rooms and toilet/shower accommodation in this area for the nearby tennis and basketball courts, in heavy use in out-of-school hours.
10. Undue disruption to the students' educational programme is strongly opposed.

Resolution: The committee agreed to the following—

- 1. A copy of these minutes be forwarded to G. Bonser of the Education Department Planning Branch with a covering letter from the Chairperson.
- 2. That if, after a three week time span had elapsed without a reasonable response, then the committee to meet to consider its position.
- 3. A copy of these minutes to be forwarded to the "Belmont Times" and the South Suburban Supplement of the "West Australian".

While the committee was awaiting a response from the Minister, a year 10 student—bless his initiative although it caused things to be rather warm for a while—went along to Terry Willessee who then visited the school. I did not see the television show. I do know that as the chairman of the building committee and the chairman of the school council were not there, the principal found that he was willy-nilly forced to go public, and away things went.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: They sure did.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I will not go into that, except to point out what is public knowledge. The staff met in support of their principal. Also in support of the principal I went public on radio and in the newspaper, the students had a meeting on the oval in support of their principal, and the students said they would like to speak to the Minister. The school council had a meeting of about 170 people who supported the principal and the building committee.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: There were over 230 people.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have my figures wrong; I was being conservative—230 members were there. At this stage I am glad to say the Minister seized the opportunity to talk to

the students from the school. They informed him of certain things of which he had not been aware before and two days later he met the building committee at a conference room in the Education Department's building. Most of us were there and we had a most amicable discussion, because what had happened in the meantime was that the people who were good for these sorts of things had taken the plan worked out earlier—the rough sketch plan—and they showed how it could be built in five stages with a minimum disruption to the school, allowing physical education to continue on what would remain of the old oval and allowing for a period of 12 months to two years for the old oval to be used before a new one would be constructed. It was a good plan, and this plan which had been refused earlier and to which none of the branches in either of the departments seemed to be able to work, was then accepted completely by the Minister and by the people at that meeting. That was why on Monday night we could welcome the Minister sincerely to Belmont Senior High School and thank him for his announcement about what would happen to the school.

I have read all these documents into *Hansard* because I think it is important that people know what happened, at least, from my point of view, I may not have filled in everything, but I hope everything I have said is accurate.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It was a very accurate description.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not think anything I have said is wrong, even though I may have left one or two points out. One of the things that perturbs me—and this is one of the important things as a general principle so far as modern government is concerned—is that there was a reluctance by people within the Public Service—I will not pinpoint the department; I am not chasing scalps—to do away with the wooden-framed buildings and to improve the school.

They wanted to keep the basic concept of the old school. This is what happened throughout the negotiations. The members of the building committee offered plans and specifications, which were ignored. They were given sketch plans which bore no relation to what they asked for, and finally when they got the plans for rebuilding, those plans destroyed the concept of a central resource centre. They gave a facelift to the old wooden buildings, which did not suit. So, the committee rejected the plans.

The matter went public before anybody wanted it to. We did not particularly want it to go public at all. It flared up, and the result of the flare-up

was that we managed to get our points across, and people began to communicate. The Minister began to listen, and having listened he has promised that the Belmont Senior High School will be rebuilt, and that the timber-framed buildings will be replaced completely as soon as possible. He said that the school will be rebuilt as soon as possible.

As far as I am concerned, my interest in this project has not finished because it is possible that in two or three years' time people will come along who will forget the promises that have been made and who will decide it is not a good idea to get rid of the timber-framed buildings. I will go back to the promises, if that happens, and I will present the people concerned with a copy of *Hansard* and point out what was promised. I will try to hold them to that promise. I hope that will not be necessary.

I am worried because if we had not on that committee an engineer with technical expertise we might never have reached this situation. The rest of us could not argue with the departmental expert who came to the meeting. However, we did have the engineer who was able to show that the arguments put up on some matters were fallacious.

How we make sure the great Public Service departments really do look at the needs of the

communities—the communities they are there to serve—and how we make sure that some of our quite dedicated public servants, who are trying to save money, do not force on the community something not good for the community, and something which is bad for the community, is something we have to set out to solve.

The Hon. Robert Pike has suggested we look into the matter of Government agencies and that we might examine the possibility of setting up a Standing Committee. But what do we do with the huge Public Service departments? One of the things I think we can do is to give more thought to the devolution of decision-making. What has happened at the Belmont Senior High School is the result of people being motivated to find a solution, and they have found that solution. Having found it, the Minister said it was better than the solution put forward by his department. The Minister is happy, and we are happy. I hope we will remain happy, and nothing further goes wrong because somebody at the centre knows better than the people actively concerned.

Mr Deputy President, I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon.

House adjourned at 11.04 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HOSPITALS

Interpreters

374. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are interpreter services made available to non-English speaking patients in all public hospitals in Western Australia?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what procedures are taken to provide such services; and
 - (b) how frequently are they available to the patient?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) With the exception of a number of teaching hospitals, there is no formal interpreting service provided at public hospitals. All hospitals, however, maintain a register of staff who are able to speak a foreign language and who can be called upon to interpret as the occasion arises.
In the event that hospital staff are unable to interpret, the services of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security—Community Liaison Services—and also the telephone interpreting service are called upon.
- (2) (a) In hospitals where an interpreter is appointed, it is normally a part-time appointment with various administrative duties attached; that is, medical records or welfare officer;
(b) the need for the service varies from hospital to hospital.

ANIMALS

Production Industries

375. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Is it the Government's intention to take action to exempt the animal production industries from the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

The committee formed to review proposed amendments to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has not yet submitted its report to the Government.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Surcharge

376. The Hon. J. M. BROWN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) When is the proposed 1 percent surcharge on workers' compensation to take effect?
- (2) Will the surcharge attract stamp duty, or will it be applied only on the premium?
- (3) How much is the proposed surcharge expected to yield in a financial year?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) A surcharge on workers' compensation premiums will take effect when and if authorised by legislation or by the premiums rates committee.
- (2) A surcharge would normally be applied to premium only. All premium is subject to stamp duty.
- (3) If a surcharge of 1 per cent is levied it should yield approximately \$750 000.

HEALTH

Amoebic Meningitis

377. The Hon. J. M. BROWN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What effective proposals are being implemented for the prevention of amoebic meningitis in the water supply to country areas?
- (2) Are there any earth dams incorporated in the goldfields water scheme?
- (3) Will there be daily checks on the water supplies in country areas?
- (4) Are the country storage dams or storage tanks to be covered?
- (5) If "Yes", when will this be completed?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Measures are being taken to accelerate the programme to provide roofs to all open storages and to chlorinate all water supplied from storages which, for practical reasons, cannot be provided with a roof.

During the 1979-80 financial year, service reservoirs at Sawyers Valley, Northam, and Worsley—near Collie—were provided with roofs and work commenced on the installation of chlorination equipment at the Cunderdin pumping station and three minor installations in the Merredin area. The cost of these facilities was \$180 000.

- (2) Yes.
- (3) No. Tests are carried out monthly.
- (4) Yes, unless their size precludes roofing, in which case water will be chlorinated as it leaves the storage.
- (5) The work is estimated to cost \$6.3 million based on January 1980 costs and completion is dependent on the level of funding available and at current levels will take a further five years.

HOUSING

Lockridge

378. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many—
 - (a) (i) one bedroomed;
 - (ii) two bedroomed;
 - (iii) three bedroomed;
 flats; and
 - (b) (i) two bedroomed;
 - (ii) three bedroomed;
 - (iii) four bedroomed;
 houses;

are vacant in Lockridge at the moment?

- (2) What is the anticipated occupancy rate for the above for 1981?
- (3) Is it possible to estimate the additional number of school-age children that may move into Lockridge next year with families who will occupy accommodation which is presently vacant?
- (4) If "Yes", what is the estimated total number of children?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) (a) Apartments—

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| one bedroomed— | 2 |
| two bedroomed— | 99 |
| three bedroomed— | 106 |

Total 207

(b) Houses—Including duplex and town houses—

two bedroomed—Nil
three bedroomed—4
four bedroomed—Nil.

- (2) The anticipated occupancy rate for 1981 is difficult to assess and will depend upon the impact of factors such as economic market forces caused by increased housing demand in the metropolitan area and resulting from resource development. The commission has also embarked upon a programme to increase the occupancy rate in Lockridge by allocating these units to applicants outside the normal eligibility criteria; that is, income, under-occupation, and pensioners. Considerable attention has been given to improving the environment of the apartments with landscaping and child playgrounds. There is already an indication that these initiatives are beginning to show some effect with a reduction of 31 in the vacant units as from 30 June 1980.
- (3) Because of the uncertainty of the position it is not possible to make a positive forecast on the increase in school-age children. It is thought there will be some increase, but only small in number.
- (4) Answered by (3).

WATER RESOURCES

Agaton, Mt. Hampton, and Westonia

379. The Hon. J. M. BROWN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) What proposals are before the Government to extend the comprehensive water scheme to Mt. Hampton and Westonia, as detailed in the 1973 Department of Agriculture recommendations?
- (2) What proposals are now before the Government in relation to the Agaton report?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) No consideration is being given to the extension of the comprehensive water supply scheme to the Mt. Hampton and Westonia districts.

It should be noted that various reports compiled by the Department of Agriculture, including one entitled "Farm Water Supply Surveys 1973 and 1974", pointed out that the development of on-farm water supplies is likely to cost much less than extensions of the comprehensive water supply scheme.

- (2) The State Treasury currently is co-ordinating a cost benefit study to determine the relative merits of the Agaton project and the alternative of augmenting on-farm water supplies. Further consideration of the project is therefore in abeyance pending the receipt of the study report.

Full details of the present situation are included in a Press statement released by the Premier on 22 October 1980. I have forwarded a copy of this release to the member.

RAILWAYS

Freight Rates: Grain

380. The Hon. J. M. BROWN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) As the Commissioner of Railways states in the pamphlet *Westrail's Highlights of the year*, "Given the freedom to price its services in accordance with normal commercial practice", will further consideration be given to the freight rates on grain haulage over long distances, particularly from the Yilgarn area?
- (2) If "Yes", will consideration be given notwithstanding the criteria of 75 per cent of total grain haulage by Westrail?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) Westrail and the grain industry have been negotiating a rebate incentive scheme for grain hauled over 200 kilometres to apply to transport of this year's harvest and this could lead to contractual arrangements for future grain seasons with benefits for the grain grower, the industry as a whole, and Westrail.

MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY

Intervention in Nurses' Wage Case

381. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has the Minister noted recent Press reports in which Commissioner Johnson of the Industrial Commission commented adversely on the fact that, in spite of generalised claims by the Government to a public interest, adverse to a wage increase for nurses, the Minister had not sought leave to intervene, to make submissions, or to provide evidence?
- (2) I ask the Minister why he did not intervene as the commissioner apparently anticipated, and in particular, was this for lack of sufficient grounds or evidence to justify his intervention?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The respondents in this matter, including the Minister for Health, are subject to financial and staff constraints imposed by the Budget. Submissions were put on behalf of the respondents that such constraints may have an effect on health services in this State and that the commission has obligations under section 26 of the Industrial Arbitration Act to have regard for the interests of the community. The incapacity of the respondents to pay was supported by evidence in the form of the 1980-81 Budget speech which clearly outlined the constraints referred to. The commissioner in his decision stated that the question of public interest had not been ignored. However, in view of the commissioner's comments, the question of the future presentation of arguments concerning capacity to pay, the public interest, and supporting evidence, is under consideration.

WAGE INCREASES

Government Policy

382. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Premier:

Given the collapse on its first trial of the Government's announced policy of

reducing the State's work force to the extent necessary to meet any wage increases in excess of indexation, can it now be taken that the policy is no longer operative?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

As the member is probably aware by this time, there has been no collapse of the Government's policy in respect of wage and salary increases in excess of national wage case indexation.

The policy announced with the Budget for 1980-81 is still operative.

I invite the member's attention to an answer on this subject given by the Premier in another place yesterday in response to a question without notice.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

INSURANCE BROKERS

Legislation

119. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Can the Minister bring up to date the position in respect of the proposed regulation of insurance brokers?
- (2) In particular, is there any firm decision by the Government as to whether it will legislate on this matter?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I thank the Hon. J. Berinson for notice of this question. The answer from the Chief Secretary is as follows—

- (1) and (2) The legislation will be introduced as soon as possible. The Parliamentary Counsel has been requested to prepare a draft Bill.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

EPA: Dissatisfaction

120. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Conservation Council of Western Australia has expressed the view that—

- (a) the proclamation of the Environmental Protection Act in 1971 received widespread public support, and the Act has served the State relatively well over some nine years. The role of the authority has been that of an adviser to State Government, with the Government retaining the decision-making powers;
- (b) the strength of the authority has been in the impartial advice it has proffered and despite considerable pressures, it is generally agreed that the authority has retained this impartiality;
- (c) the wisdom of the legislation which laid down the status of the authority has proved itself. The EPA has been able to consider conflicting interests and mediate in the most difficult circumstances. Although its recommendations have not always been popular, the authority is respected in the community;
- (d) proposals to change the Act may endanger this independence and destroy the respect which the authority has built up over many years. Whilst conservationists have not always agreed with the authority's recommendations, it is acknowledged that the powers contained in the Act have been fairly used; and
- (e) action by the Government to weaken the powers of the authority could be justified only if there were demonstrable widespread community dissatisfaction with the authority?

(2) Is it a fact that—

- (a) no evidence exists that there is any widespread dissatisfaction with the authority; and
- (b) if not, what is the evidence, and by whom is or has the dissatisfaction been expressed?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) and (2) No intimation has come to my notice that dissatisfaction exists with the Environmental Protection Authority.

CONSERVATION AND THE
ENVIRONMENT

EPA: Structural Changes

121. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

Why is it proposed that there be changes to the structure of the Environmental Protection Authority?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am continually answering these questions. The sort of comments that are generally made indicate people are just guessing at what changes, if any, will be made. Again I say that if any changes are proposed to the structure of the Environmental Protection Act or to the operation of the Environmental Protection Authority, they will come before the member in a proper manner. He is assuming there will be changes. I suggest he wait until the time comes when he can make a proper comment.

CONSERVATION AND THE
ENVIRONMENT

EPA: Structural Changes

122. The Hon. PETER DOWDING, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

Does the Minister not agree that the public is entitled to know whether changes are proposed? I ask specifically: Is it a fact that draft legislation presently exists to change the structure of the Environmental Protection Authority?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

The Hon. Peter Dowding will find out in due course when and if a Bill making any amendments to the Environmental Protection Act will be introduced to this House.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why not tell us there is a draft in existence?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Be patient.

