

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 11th August, 1977

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

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I have to announce that the member for Scarborough (Mr Young) has been elected Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and the member for Swan (Mr Skidmore) has been elected Deputy Chairman.

BILLS (3): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Death Duty Assessment Act Amendment Bill.

2. Death Duty Act Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

3. Fertilizers Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and read a first time.

ACTS AMENDMENT (PENSIONERS RATES REBATES AND DEFERMENTS) BILL

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [2.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The principal purpose of this Bill is to provide, from the 1st July this year, a new concession for eligible pensioners by way of a 25 per cent rebate on local government, water, sewerage and drainage rates. It honours an election promise made at the State general elections earlier this year.

At present certain classes of pensioners may defer payment of these rates, which become a charge against their estate or a claim on the sale or transfer of their property.

The Government is very much aware of the strong commitment of some pensioners to meet their obligations in the community and to maintain their affairs unencumbered.

The Bill therefore provides for the existing deferment scheme to be continued and for the new 25 per cent rebate to be introduced for

those eligible pensioners who prefer to pay their rates. The pensioners concerned will be left free to choose between one form of concession or the other.

Currently, under the rate deferment scheme, eligibility for the concession is determined on the basis of two sets of criteria; one applicable to local government rates as prescribed in the Local Government Act, and the other applicable to water, sewerage and drainage rates, as prescribed in the Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act.

Prior to 1974, eligibility conditions were the same for all rates. However, with the introduction of the tapered means test for pensions, the Local Government Act was amended to provide appropriate limits to the availability of the deferment concession. By that amendment, eligibility for deferment was restricted, with two exceptions, to those pensioners entitled to hold a pensioner health benefit card.

No similar amendment has yet been made to the Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act, and so eligibility conditions in that area are out of step with the local government rates deferment provisions.

In introducing the new rebate it seemed desirable for the conditions governing eligibility to be consistent regardless of the type of rate to which they apply. At the same time it seemed desirable and opportune to bring the same consistency to the existing deferment scheme.

The Bill therefore provides for the rebate and deferment of all rates to be granted under uniform conditions. The conditions will be broadly those now applicable to deferment of local government rates, but with some extension to include the two categories of pensioners previously excluded; namely, recipients of sheltered employment allowances and recipients of tuberculosis allowances.

This measure means that in future the rates concessions will be available to those pensioners who are entitled to hold a pensioner health benefit card. It thereby ensures that the benefit of the concessions will go to the group of pensioners classed as being in greatest need. Also it fixes a firm basis for eligibility.

As a further measure of tidiness, the Bill repeals section 561 of the Local Government Act, which section currently deals with the matter of deferments, and incorporates the rebate and deferment of local government rates in the amended Pensioners (Rates Exemption) Act.

The merit of this measure is that it brings all aspects of the concessions under the one Act, regardless of the rates to which they apply.

As stated previously, eligibility conditions for the concessions will be uniform for all rates and will be broadly the same as currently prescribed for deferments in the Local Government Act.

However, the Bill proposes an important change in those conditions, aimed at making the scheme less restrictive in some cases of obvious need.

Under the Local Government Act, a pensioner is ruled ineligible for deferment if the occupation or ownership of the home is shared with a person who is neither a pensioner nor a dependant.

This provision, if adopted as it now stands, would be open to restrictive interpretation; such that the presence in the home of a young wage earner child or a student on an education allowance could preclude a needy pensioner from the rebate or deferment.

The Government does not wish to deny the concessions to pensioners in such circumstances and, therefore, the Bill provides for some degree of latitude in the income of children who may be partially supported at home.

To this end, the Bill incorporates a definition of "dependant", which among others, includes full-time student children up to the age of 25 years and other children less than 18 years, the latter of whom, if working, would generally be in receipt of juniors' rate of pay.

This provision will not only ensure a reasonable approach to the concessions, but will also be helpful in setting guidelines for the various rating authorities on the aspect of dependants.

The Bill provides for the new rebate to apply to rates raised as from the 1st July, 1977. It will not apply in respect of arrears. Eligible pensioners who have claimed deferment of rates in the past and wish to claim the rebate from this year, will be allowed to continue deferment of previous amounts claimed.

Similarly, should there be pensioners who have in the past claimed deferment of water, sewerage and drainage rates and who may become ineligible for the concessions due to the standardisation of eligibility conditions, they may continue deferment of previous amounts claimed.

I would draw the attention of members to some of the more minor provisions of the Bill.

At the request of rating authorities, the first such provision provides that pensioners may not claim the rebate on rates that have already been paid. For sound administrative reasons, this provision aims to remove the need for adjustment in

cases where rates have been paid and, within the same year, the ratepayer subsequently becomes eligible for the concession.

The second provision prescribes penalties for persons who falsely claim the concessions. Unlike deferment, the rebate will represent a cash benefit and the scheme will therefore be more open to abuse than in the past. It is hoped that the penalty will act as a deterrent to false claims.

The Bill sets the penalty at \$200, which is comparable to levels applying elsewhere under similar legislation.

Finally, the Bill embodies in legislation the entitlement of local authorities and the country water boards to financial reimbursement from the State in respect of the rate rebate granted to pensioners and financial assistance in respect of rate deferment.

It is estimated that the benefit to pensioners of this measure in the current year will be in the order of \$650 000 in respect of the rebate on local government rates, \$400 000 for Metropolitan Water Board rates and \$100 000 in country water and sewerage rates.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies.

CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RIDGE (Kimberley—Minister for Community Welfare) [2.31 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. Members will recall that during the last session of Parliament, extensive amendments to the Child Welfare Act were passed. Subsequently, because of the extensive and complex nature of the amendments, approval was given to reprint the Child Welfare Act, incorporating those amendments.

During the process of incorporating the amendments into the parent Act, it has become apparent that some minor adjustments should be made as a further reprint of the particular Act would not be likely for many years. Should the Bill proceed successfully through Parliament, the necessary adjustments can be made in the current reprint.

Five of the proposed amendments relate to minor errors or omissions. Another involves a point of clarification relating to the children's panel and the other seeks to give to police officers powers similar to those available to field officers of the Department for Community Welfare in relation to entering premises where it is suspected a child in need of care and protection resides.

None of the proposed amendments are outside the intention of the amendments passed last year; however, they will tidy up the Act and facilitate its administration.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies.

MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Mines) [2.33 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The principal Act which this Bill proposes to amend relates to the relief of mineworkers who contract certain occupational diseases in the course of their employment in the mining industry, excepting coalmining. Coalmine workers of course are covered by separate legislation.

The Act provides for the periodical medical examination of mineworkers following their entry into the industry on an initial health certificate issued under the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act. It also provides for the establishment of a fund from which benefits are payable to mineworkers who are diagnosed by the Mines Medical Officer to be suffering from silicosis, asbestosis or tuberculosis.

The Mines Medical Officer is a medical officer appointed under the Act and is responsible for the periodical medical examination of the mineworkers.

The fund constituted under the Act is named the Mine Workers' Relief Fund and is financed by subscriptions from the Government, the employers and the employees.

Subject to the Minister, the fund is administered by a board of five composed of one independent chairman and two representatives each from the employers and employees.

The Act provides for all mineworkers who are diagnosed to be suffering from silicosis or asbestosis to be notified of the diagnosis so made, but the mineworker is not thereby prevented from continuing his employment in the industry if he wishes to do so.

A mineworker who is diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis, either with or without silicosis or asbestosis, is prohibited from further work in the industry, unless and until the diagnosis is set aside on appeal or he is subsequently issued with a certificate of freedom from the disease.

In general, a mineworker who has been diagnosed to be suffering from early silicosis or early asbestosis and who leaves the industry, may register under section 50 of the Act. By so doing he maintains his entitlement to continue contributing to the fund and so protect his rights under the Act in the event of a general deterioration of his health in later years.

Subject to certain statutory requirements, fund benefits accrue to a mineworker who leaves the industry upon his being diagnosed to be suffering from advanced silicosis or advanced asbestosis, or who is prohibited from further work in the industry upon his being diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis in association with silicosis or asbestosis, but subject to his first exhausting any entitlement he may have at workers' compensation.

Once again, subject to certain statutory requirements, a mineworker who is prohibited from further employment in the industry upon his being diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis without silicosis or asbestosis, becomes entitled to fund benefits, but in these cases there is no entitlement to workers' compensation as it is not an industrial disease.

However the provisions relating to the periodical medical examination of mineworkers and the resultant notifications and prohibitions have now been incorporated in the Mines Regulation Act, including the regulations. The main object of this Bill therefore is to remove those provisions from the Mine Workers' Relief Act and to relate fund benefit entitlements to diagnoses made under the Mines Regulation Act.

A new concept was introduced by the new regulations under the Mines Regulation Act inasmuch that provision was made for mines to be classified according to their potential health hazard, and this change must be reflected in the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

There are three classes of mines, as follows—

Class "A"—all underground workings and any mine for asbestos, manganese, lead, vanadium, talc, mica or radioactive substances;

class "B"—all quarries or other surface mining operations not included in class "A" or class "C" mines; and

class "C"—all surface mining operations or quarries worked for clay, gypsum, limestone, salt, natural sand or gravel, and any sinter plant, pellet plant, smelter, refinery, blast furnace, privately owned railway built to transport the mine ore or material and wet sluicing and dredging operations.

Whereas previously all mineworkers had to undergo pre-employment and biennial medical examinations, under the present scheme these requirements are applicable only in respect of class "A" mines.

In respect of class "B" mines, a pre-employment examination still is necessary but the periodical examinations are only five-yearly.

In respect of class "C" mines no medical examination is necessary. The reason for this is that medical advice is to the effect that class "C" mines do not present a health hazard, and that the hazard in class "B" mines is less than in class "A" mines.

Accordingly then monitoring is not necessary in class "C" mines and monitoring in class "B" mines need not be as frequent as in class "A" mines.

It follows then that fund benefits may not accrue to mineworkers who are not subject to the pre-employment and periodical medical examination requirements, and therefore as it would be illogical to expect them to contribute to the fund, the Bill proposes to exclude such mineworkers; that is, those employed on class "C" mines, from the provisions of the Act.

It has been estimated that the loss of subscriptions to fund, by the exclusion of mineworkers on class "C" mines, will cause a loss in fund revenue amounting to some \$8 000 per annum.

The Act provides also for mineworkers who are prohibited by tuberculosis to undergo curative treatment, but as the treatment for all tuberculosis sufferers is provided for under the Health Act, the curative treatment provisions have not been availed of for many years and so the Bill proposes to repeal those provisions.

For many years office workers engaged solely on clerical work, and mine managers, have been specifically excluded from the definition of a "mine worker" in the regulations under the Mines Regulation Act. Although the joint legislation has always been interpreted to mean that a person who is not a mineworker for the purposes of the Mines Regulation Act is *ipso facto* not a mineworker for the purposes of the Mine Workers' Relief Act, this has never been specifically stated in the Mine Workers' Relief Act. The Bill therefore proposes to clarify the position by stating specifically that the clerical workers mentioned and the managers are not mineworkers for the purposes of the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

In addition, by the 1976 regulations under the Mines Regulation Act, the exclusion mentioned

in respect of clerical workers and mine managers was extended to persons possessing special professional and scientific qualifications, etc., and so by the Bill this exclusion is likewise being reflected in the Mine Workers' Relief Act.

District inspectors and workmen's inspectors of mines have been mineworkers for the purposes of the Acts, and by the Bill this is being extended to departmental ventilation officers whose duties are primarily on and about mines.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 10th August, on the following motion by Mr Hassell—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR COYNE (Murchison-Eyre) [2.43 p.m.]: I wish to take the opportunity that this debate affords me to bring before the House some matters affecting the future generations of this State. I think it is very important that I mention the matter of the railway system and its future role in the development of the mineral regions of the north and near north of Western Australia.

Mr Speaker, like other members, I would also like to join in and offer you my congratulations on your election to high office. I feel sure you will do a magnificent job in that office. To other office bearers I offer my congratulations and to the new members who have been elected, I hope that they will serve their electorates with enthusiasm and unselfishness.

During the past few weeks, since the intention of the Government to close the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line became known, I have done some research into the underlying reasons for and intention as to why this decision is about to be taken. I have been researching the history of the Murchison transport link. I have read the speeches by the original members of this Parliament when they debated the extension of the railway line from Nannine to Meekatharra, and I found the whole exercise to be a very interesting one.

To deal adequately with the subject one must first study the geographical location of the principal town in the Murchison region which happens to be Meekatharra. This town 475 miles from Perth has been established for something like 80 years as the trans-shipment point and the rail-head for northern regions of the Pilbara and Kimberley.

Meekatharra has also been a distribution point for all the pastoral regions which have enjoyed great prosperity over the last 70 years. It was the linkage from the rail to the road that was so very necessary during the early part of this century. It would seem now that the Murchison region is suffering an economic downturn because of two factors: The pastoral industry is under severe stress at the present time and also the goldmining area, which was originally one of the main supporters of this mining region, has declined to such an extent that it is almost negligible.

As a result of this recession, coupled with the severe drought situation, both woolgrowers and cattle men are experiencing very serious economic pressures which have forced a once very prosperous industry to its knees. There is little likelihood that there will be much relief in sight before 1978, so that the situation must get worse; it cannot improve.

As far as the woolgrowers are concerned, I would say that generally throughout that region the wool clips have gone down by half during the past 12 months; that is the weight of the clip per sheep.

Over the past decade-and-a-half the character of Meekatharra has changed dramatically. What was once a prosperous town, mainly so through the efforts of private individuals who built up services, industries, stores, hotels, and such like has in some ways changed its character. Inasmuch as previously Aboriginal populations were distributed right throughout these pastoral regions and served as the general work force amongst the stations, they have now congregated in the towns.

Coupled with this we find a great upsurge in the predominance of public servants. I believe in Meekatharra itself something like 14 departments are represented and on a quick calculation which I did a few minutes ago, there would be approximately 160 people employed by Government departments in the township of Meekatharra, which is quite a preponderance of officers in a town with such a small population.

One of the balancing factors economically, of course, of that particular region has been the mining that has been developed in, I think they

call it, the Precambrian belt. It has been responsible in recent years for the development of other minerals apart from gold. In the eastern part of the Murchison-Eyre electorate there have been some great discoveries which have changed the outlook of the region.

In Meekatharra itself, however, there is a general downturn. There will be world-wide recognition of some of the communities and the developments that will take place in this electorate over the coming years. I think two of the most important townships at present emerging are the one at Windarra and the recently named one of Leinster at Agnew. I can see that there is an urgent need for planning of the future transportation needs of these areas and I wish to put forward the views that I have adopted as a result of research that I have been doing over the past few weeks.

I hope that what I have to say will influence the Government to take another look at the decision it is about to make in respect of that railway line. I believe that because of its size, Western Australia, more than any other State, needs a good basic transportation system.

From the reading I have been able to do in recent times I have discovered that there is a great resurgence of railway activity throughout the world. Railroads are now competing on their own ground more favourably than ever before. As recently as a couple of hours ago I received some very important information from the United States Embassy. I had read a little article about a Government move in the United States to appoint a Secretary of Transportation. It interested me so much that I telephoned the embassy and I was supplied with some information. I have not had time to research it properly yet, but it shows that this situation is developing throughout the world and I think we should be considering it in this State.

The proposal to abandon the Meekatharra-Mullewa rail link was a shock to me, and the startled response I got was, I suppose, generated because of the quiet way the decision was taken. I think most of us should have realised that the situation in the Murchison at this time could not possibly continue. I shall tell the House why later in my speech. The decision to abandon nearly 300 miles of arterial railway that had contributed so much to the development of this State was seemingly casual.

The decision to construct this railway was taken by Sir John Forrest in 1907 at a time when the population of the State was less than 100 000. Such a decision took great courage. I feel it is wrong, that with our modern technology and

when the State is growing so tremendously, we should be considering pulling up an arterial link when other States in the Commonwealth are showing by example that they are more progressive and are putting down railway lines.

This railway coped very adequately during the 1930s and 1940s when there was a goldmining and pastoral boom in the Murchison. Some of the towns along the railway line, such as Yalgoo, Mt. Magnet, Big Bell, Meekatharra, and Wiluna, were very prosperous. Wiluna had a population of about 9 000, and the Wiluna Express was really an express train. I cannot tell the House exactly how long it took to travel from Perth to Wiluna but the train was always crowded. On three nights a week that train used to travel through Yalgoo. I remember as a youth how impressed I was with the crews that manned those trains, particularly the drivers and firemen. I always had a tremendous amount of respect for them because it seemed such a glamorous job. I always used to imagine I was one of those fellows riding the footplates and feeding in the coal, because of course it was all steam in those days. This is why I treat the member for Avon with a special kind of respect, which he might have noticed, because he was one of those people who actually worked the railway line between Yalgoo and Cue.

One of the other matters that comes to mind is a situation of which I have some background knowledge. I refer to the situation that developed in the north-eastern goldfields in 1966 when the Government had made the decision to close the roughly 160-mile rail link with Kalgoorlie. By a united effort the residents of that town were able to convince the Minister at the time, the present Minister for Works, that he should defer the decision for 12 months. They organised themselves in such a way and brought enough evidence to bear to convince the Minister to change his mind, which he did to his great credit. Subsequent developments enabled the line to be almost completely rehabilitated. The third and last stage is due for completion in 1980. Members can imagine that the people of Leonora at that time were grasping at straws because they never had anywhere near as good an argument to support the retention of the line as the people of Meekatharra have now. The people of Leonora at that time had nothing behind them; they had only one train a week and its load tonnage had been reduced to a fairly low level.

One of the things that impressed me about the argument at that time in 1967 was that the only mineral deposit of any significance was the

Kambalda nickel deposit. They persuaded one of these American geophysicists, who happened to be in the area at the time, to give evidence before a meeting.

He was asked whether, in the light of the Kambalda discovery, there was any likelihood of finding similar deposits in the Leonora area. His exact words were, "It is a stone cold nickel-plated certainty that this will happen." What he said then was reported and we now have the Windarra and Agnew nickel projects and the Teutonic bore development. The latter is a significant discovery because it is different from nickel—it is copper, zinc, and silver—and although it is only a small deposit of three million tonnes at the moment, it has added strength to the argument that we should not abandon railroads into mining areas because the export income from minerals will get this State back on the move.

Mr Jamieson: I do not always agree with you but I think I agree with you this time.

Mr McIver: Have you had a talk to the pastoralists in the area? If the Government reopens the line, do you think they would make greater utilisation of it than they have been doing?

Mr COYNE: I am sure they would, and I shall come to that in a moment. I think that is one of the reasons that the traffic has slackened off. The Murchison railway still supports a train a day, and that train cannot cope with the traffic that is waiting to be serviced. At times wagons have to be off-loaded and picked up on the next occasion to distribute their loads. I believe the tonnages that this train is pulling at present vary between 450 and 600 tonnes. That is a very small tonnage when compared with some of the coal trains in Queensland which are pulling 10 000 tonnes at a time with three engines. On one particular route they are transporting 30 000 tonnes of coal a day by a train doing three trips. So it can be seen that we have only a small problem with regard to transportation. I think we will need trains of higher capacity in the future.

Members can also see that if it had not been for the decision with regard to the Leonora railway line being reversed, we might not now have a standard gauge line to Esperance. I think those two railway lines are of great significance to the State. They will create prosperity for Westrail because of the movement of concentrates out of the Agnew and the Windarra areas, and the transportation through to Esperance to link with the national railway grid is of vital importance.

Referring to the matter raised by the member for Avon in respect of the fact that the deterioration of the line has resulted in clients circumventing the system, I wish to state that once Meekatharra was a very important cattle terminal. Most of the cattle from the north were transported to Meekatharra by road and then reloaded and brought down by train. A cattle train from Meekatharra takes 36 hours to get to Midland at the present time.

The cost to take a TA of cattle is \$260. A 40-foot semitrailer would have a similar capacity and it costs \$375 to do the same job. Pastoralists could rail cattle cheaper, but they must take the time lag into consideration. They can get the cattle down in a semitrailer in 16 hours, whereas if they used rail it could take them 36 hours, and they might miss markets. This is why the number of cattle transported by rail has been reduced.

Mr McIVER: Could I point out that that might be all right for a large consignment, but what do they do when they have only one or two cattle to transport? They don't transport them by road. They leave it to the railways to carry the loss.

Mr COYNE: A large number of cattle are being railed out of Meekatharra at the moment because of the drought situation. The week before last there were 14 TAs and last week there were 19. This is on one train. Those trains would require only three men to operate them, but to take the same number of cattle by road would require 28 men and would add to traffic congestion on the roads.

Mr McIVER: I am highlighting a point that if it is good enough for Westrail to shift two cattle, it should be good enough for Westrail to shift 200. The pastoralists should not be allowed to use the railways at whim. It should be either road or rail and they must make up their minds.

Mr COYNE: I hope I can develop that theme as I go along.

I see the move to close the rail link as a deathblow to the transportation system. It will eliminate any future link with the Pilbara. One of the studies I have been relying on for information on this subject is the \$300 000 Pilbara study in which the recommendation was made that Mt. Newman be linked with Meekatharra. Supporting that study was another done by the Federal Bureau of Transport Economics, entitled "Freight Transport to North West Australia 1975-1990". Both documents seem to be a common-sense

appraisal of the need to link the north and southern regions by a dependable and strategic transport mode, bearing in mind that the projected population of the Pilbara and Kimberley regions could be in excess of 100 000 people in 1985.

With the announcement of the development of the north-west gas project—a development which is estimated to cost something like \$3 500 million—it seems logical to accept the fact that the industrial growth in the Pilbara will be unbelievable and incalculable as will the resultant flow-on of prosperity to every nook and cranny in the State. The development will generate a tremendous amount of population growth in the Pilbara because of the highly-skilled employees who will be required on the pipeline. I believe that the welders alone contracted to the development will be earning something like \$50 000 a year. This is because of a necessity to attract highly-qualified people using specialised techniques.

I understand also that all the structural jobs will be done in the south of the State to save costs, and this will have a beneficial effect on the rest of the State and will add to the overall prosperity.

The country will expand tremendously in the next decade, and this is recognised by the Minister for Industrial Development as is evident from recent Press releases. At this stage I must state that some of the Press statements we read generate only a tremendous amount of optimism. This is the wrong time for the State to take such a backward step. We must go forward and have courage. It is inconceivable that in the face of all this industrial growth the Government could proceed to opt out of its responsibilities by abandoning a very important transport link through the heart of the State. Other factors which should be considered have not been studied. One of these is the likely energy problem.

I have some figures here which support the statement that we should be looking closely at this aspect in order to devise alternative means of alleviating our dependence on oil and allied products. We should be examining what will happen in the event of road transport costs being prohibitive. In Australia it is estimated that, in 1985, 900 000 barrels of oil a day will be required in Australia. The projected production of oil for that year is 180 000 barrels a day, leaving a shortfall of 720 000 barrels a day. Today's cost for that shortfall would be \$2 500 billion in today's dollars.

In 1980, just a few years hence, the shortfall will be 420 000 barrels a day.

These figures are taken from a paper presented by R. T. Madigan, OBE, to the ninth general meeting of the Pacific Basin Economic Council in Vancouver.

When we consider these figures is it any wonder that the railways throughout the world are making a remarkable comeback? The new technology used in transport throughout the world does not preclude the use of oil. There is a new technology that is looking at other energy sources such as the utilisation of coal powder, and that is something of which we have stacks of reserves in this State.

According to *Time* magazine, a Czech-born inventor claims that he has perfected a technique to prepare pollutant-free raw coal, and that the resultant product could be burned in conventional diesels, turbines and boilers, or even be mixed with oil and gasoline to enhance burning efficiency. He also says that if full-scale production of what he calls 4-micron coal can be achieved, utility companies alone would save \$9 billion in cleaning equipment and consumers' electricity rates could be cut by 30 per cent. Although 4-micron is still only an idea on paper, its potential is tremendous.

The inventor's name is Stephen Krajcovic-Ilok and the key to his process is the grinding of fist-sized chunks of coal down to ultrafine particles four microns—.00016 inch—in size. By smashing, heating, and then exploding coal in a multi-chambered mill, the organic and inorganic "chaff" or pollutants, would be removed, leaving only "fossil cells" of pure carbon. In reducing the coal to 4-micron size, according to Ilok, we get down to the primordial plant cells as they existed before the coalification centuries ago.

The idea of pulverising coal is not new. In 1910 Rudolf Diesel thought of the same idea, but it certainly needs advanced technology to introduce it. In this country, where we have great reserves of coal, we should be looking at that form of energy to power our transport needs in the years ahead.

Mr Bateman: Are you not taking over from the member for Collie?

Mr COYNE: I am helping him. One of the best reports I have read for a long time was that commissioned by the State Government in 1965 and prepared by the then Commissioner of Railways, Commissioner Wayne. The report was presented to this Parliament in 1966 and

some of the contents of that report certainly were in accord with my thinking. Comments on the report, in part, state—

In 1965, the present Government appointed the then Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Wayne, to draw up a report on the present and future transport requirements of Western Australia, and in June 1966 that report was presented. While it is fairly obvious that not all Mr. Wayne's findings and recommendations have been unanimously accepted, it is apparent that the Government place considerable reliance on this authoritative report.

In his report, Mr. Wayne points out that the railways always have been and still are, an important aid to decentralization. This policy is evident in the method of telescoping freight rates for longer distances and there seems to be no valid reason to deviate from this policy.

In discussing the general financial position of the W.A.G.R., Mr. Wayne stressed, and I quote that "the railways should not be judged by the same financial criteria one applies to industries that are not burdened with Community responsibilities" unquote.

It was further recommended—

...that the railway system should become, to use Mr. Wayne's words, "the trunk and main limbs of the transport tree." Unquote. To close the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line, or for that matter, the Mullewa-Meekatharra line, would be amputating two extremely important limbs, and would seriously endanger the future of the whole system, as the backbone of an integrated transport system in Western Australia."

I think everybody must agree with those comments. What was said then is still true today. A further comment, at page 10 of the report, reads—

Speaking on transport, Mr A. H. Grainger of the London Transport Executive had this to say:—

"No one can do other than reach the conclusion that there will be a continuing need for railways. It is more than a conclusion, it is a fact substantiated by over 100 years of history in peace and in war, in good times and bad. The need has always been there."

Before I refer to the local argument against the closure of the Mullewa-Meekatharra line I would like to illustrate some remarkable differences between the systems which operate in the various

States. A railway is under construction at present between Tarcoola and Alice Springs. It is a standard gauge railway, over a distance of 840 kilometres using 107 lb rails on concrete sleepers. The cost of that line is estimated at \$114 million, on 1976 values.

The total population of the Northern Territory at present is 100 000, and the Northern Territory has nowhere near the same potential for development or export income as exists in the north of this State. Besides the railway which is under construction, a 22-foot highway runs parallel to the line right to Adelaide. The present upgrading is to cost \$54 million.

If we do not do something with regard to integrating our transport system in this State in some way, the railway now under construction in South Australia will be a threat to the development of the north of our State. The distance from Alice Springs to Balgo Hills Mission is roughly the same as the distance from Balgo Hills to Derby. I believe the people living in Kununurra are at present being serviced by this link with South Australia, and if we are not careful we will lose an important part of our trade with the Kimberleys.

Despite the efforts of the State Government and its policy to keep the State Shipping Service operating, I think it is important to point out that it will eventually become untenable. It will become more difficult to keep in operation, and I consider the \$10 million—or whatever the deficit is likely to be—could be much better spent in building up an asset by means of constructing a railway transport system. Such a system would not be under threat at any time, and it would become a national asset. That would be quite different from the present State Shipping Service, which will never become a national asset. We are aware that it is not even economical to ship commodities from the Eastern States to this State; the most economical means of bulk transport is by rail.

The importance of our rail link with the Eastern States was evidenced when the line was closed in 1974 as a result of flooding. I would hate to estimate the cost of the bridge which had to be constructed at Rawlinna when the line was knocked out of commission for some months.

The SPEAKER: The member has 10 minutes.

Mr COYNE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The argument has been advanced that a future rail link with the Pilbara would not follow its present route south of Meekatharra. It could be argued that that is not necessarily so, but I have a lot

of faith in the surveyors who planned the line originally. The line which was surveyed 70 years ago has stood the test of time. The report from which I have been quoting states that the line was laid on the surface of the ground with little regard for grades and curves. That really highlights the fact that the present railway line should be complemented by some improvement to the road bed itself. The fact that the line has lasted for so long means that it would be a fairly easy matter to pinpoint where floods and washaways were likely to occur. It could be said that the area through which the line travels is good railway country.

I would like to compare the situation with a railway which has just been completed in Queensland to connect the nickel project at Greenvale with Goonyella. The distance is something like 150 miles, and the construction of the railway involved three tunnels and 37 bridges. Those items would have involved a tremendous additional cost to that project. Six-inch sleepers were used with 94 lb rails, and the total cost amounted to \$36 million for earthworks, \$11 for bridges, and \$5.5 million for track work. The cost did not include rolling stock.

That illustration shows that the construction of railways in this State is relatively cheap. Perhaps a better example of a railway recently completed in Queensland, in 1976, was the 74-kilometre link between Phosphate Hill and the small town of Duchess near Mt. Isa. By cutting through to Duchess it was possible to link up with the main line. The country is similar to that in Western Australia, and it was over a good grade. The line was constructed of 94 lb rail with an axle loading of 18 tons. A total of four bridges had to be constructed, and 7 ft. 6 in. sleepers were used at a distance of 2 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. apart. That was a high standard railway to withstand axle loadings of 18 tons.

I have some questions on today's notice paper, and the replies to those questions will enable me to make a comparison between the estimated cost of this line between Phosphate Hill and Duchess, and the recently completed Eneabba-Dongara rail, a distance of 94 kilometres.

One thing I do know is that Westrail, in its capacity as a contractor, was able to beat any other form of transport hands down in competing for the contract to shift the sands on that route. Westrail won the contract and built their line of 94 kilometres and at a cost of \$13 million it will be profitable. Later on when the answers are supplied to my question we will find that the costs have been broken down into categories such as track,

rolling stock, communication links, and so on. I would not expect the same high level of railway to obtain to the Meekatharra-Mullewa line. It would need 14 lb. or 15 lb. axle load rating and with sleepers 2 ft. 6 in. apart. This would be ample to cope with the needs of the area at the present time with the intention of keeping the option open to join with the Pilbara which I think must come.

I think in due course in the long term there should be a standard gauge line constructed south from Mt. Newman to a Meekatharra interchange terminal. In the short term we could construct the Mullewa-Meekatharra line and develop it so it could become profitable. This could be achieved by applying a franchise to the railway for all goods consigned to the north. Anyone wishing to operate in opposition to the railways would need to obtain a permit. If this qualification were applied allowing everything going to the north to be railed to Meekatharra, which would be used as a terminal, such as Kewdale, I think we could support an argument for a profitable railway.

Mr Jamieson: I think the only way the station master at Meekatharra can send anything to Mt. Newman is to send it back to Perth for delivery.

Mr COYNE: I would not be surprised. I appreciate the Premier's commitment to keep the Meekatharra-Mullewa line open until 1979. In a news release the Premier said—

It is now becoming apparent that it is not going to be easy in practical terms to keep the line operating even on a restricted basis so that it can be operated safely, but I have issued instructions that this is to be the objective. For this purpose I have called for an urgent report on the practicability of keeping the line in service without unreasonable expenditure on maintenance costs.

When I first started researching this matter I was not aware of many things I now know. After a conversation with the Deputy Commissioner of Railways I now agree that the existing line cannot be repaired or rehabilitated in any way.

Mr Jamieson: You had better wait until the independent report comes out.

Mr COYNE: No, I prefer to take the deputy commissioner's word on the issue. The line has reached the end of its useful working life as it has exceeded 1700 thousand ton miles, which means that the line has been utilised in excess of 50 per cent of its original estimated life. The fact that it is a 45 lb. rail precludes it from being repaired in any other way. Light rail has a

tendency to buckle and lift at the joints. Furthermore, the line has short rails unlike those used on higher weight systems. I believe the Government has to look at the whole situation in terms of replacing that line and the sleepers.

I do not know whether there is a sufficient amount of 62 or 68 lb. railway line in this State because that is what would be needed. Such a line would be needed to provide a fast service and have a reasonably reliable line.

Mr Jamieson: What happened to the rail on the line from Esperance to Norseman?

Mr COYNE: That has been utilised I believe. The present railway line to Leonora, which is a 62 lb. rail, is too light for standard gauge railway and will be replaced by 90 lb. rail at present being used on the main east-west rail. This work is not due to be completed before 1980 when the Trans-line will be upgraded with heavier rail. Although this line—that is, the Leonora-Kalgoorlie section—is not in a bad physical condition it is still not acceptable because it would not stand up to the dismantling and relaying operation.

Mr Jamieson: Some of the sleepers have so many holes in them one cannot find room to knock in a spike.

Mr COYNE: To create a terminal at Meekatharra and reconsider the idea of removing the free cartage of commodities beyond the town would be a step in the right direction. It would at least enable us to have a worth-while line into Meekatharra and keep the town going. I do not agree with the suggestions proposed by the northern mining group. We have everything to make the railway work: the line; the communication system; the rolling stock; and the necessary personnel. All we need are the sleepers, the rail bed, and the lines themselves. This is what we should be working towards.

Not enough work is being done by Westrail to encourage the employment of a higher class of labour. I saw an article in a *Time* magazine asking: Why do road transports go by rail? It is a container service and brings greater efficiency to railways. It streamlines the transporting of goods. There should be more advertising in the manner we saw 20 years ago encouraging people to make a career with the railway services. Our railways at present seem to have a lower level of employees than elsewhere.

I notice that Melbourne and Sydney have attracted a large number of migrants into their rail systems and they extend greater courtesies to travellers than their counterparts in Western Australia. However, this is not so on the *Indian*

Pacific, which is a terrific system. Those are some of the thoughts I have on the need for a railroad system.

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

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [3.29 p.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new members for Gosnells, Dianella, and Melville on their maiden speeches made in the last few days. They have shown unmistakably that they have the ability to marshal facts and deliver them effectively. By reason of a prior commitment I did not hear the address given by the member for Dianella, but I will make it my business to read his speech in *Hansard* at the first opportunity.

I did however hear and endorse without reservation everything the member for Melville said. His was a very real contribution on the most important matter which will come before this Parliament in the present session and for a long time to come, I should think.

The member for Melville—and, I hope, other members of the Chamber—will be interested to hear this quote—

It is hard to understand in retrospect why we were so reluctant to drop the rocks of past years. To think about going back to segregated schools and public places, or, as was the case in Georgia, to a county unit system which deliberately cheated for generations both black and white voters of our state, is almost inconceivable. To circumvent the one man-one vote principle would now be considered a terrible violation of the basic principles of justice and equity.

I was not quoting from some left-wing or right-wing person whom members of the Government would like to attack but from none other than the President of the United States of America (Jimmy Carter). I will repeat the last portion of it—

To circumvent the one man-one vote principle would now be considered a terrible violation of the basic principles of justice and equity.

Because it is an absolute truth, that is what we on this side of the House say and will continue to say until ultimately we win that battle. I am by no means confident it will be won within a decade or two but I am absolutely confident we will win that battle. I will digress from that matter and return to it later on.

At the moment I want to speak about a small junior primary school situated in my electorate; namely, the Tuart Hill Junior Primary School on the corner of Banksia, Cape, and Lawley Streets. That junior primary school has a school population exceeding 250, and I suppose half of those children are currently housed in what is known as a Bristol type structure. I visited the school yesterday following further complaints, which are coming to me regularly, and observed evidence of water coming through the ceilings of each of the six rooms onto the cupboards and floors below. That is quite an unsatisfactory situation.

I would have the gravest doubts whether any Bristol type school units exist in the electorates of Floreat and Nedlands.

Mr O'Neil: There are plenty of them in East Melville.

Mr BERTRAM: I would say it is highly improbable.

Mr P. V. Jones: You are wrong.

Mr BERTRAM: If that is so, I will be pleased to hear about it in more detail.

I mentioned the fact that the people in my electorate of Mt. Hawthorn pay their share of the taxes. I have the gravest doubt that they get back their share of the taxes they contribute. It is an old-established electorate where this kind of situation should not exist. My constituents probably have a very substantial credit tax balance and they should not be neglected. In fact, they should be given priority on occasions when they make a legitimate claim, as they do in respect of this Bristol unit which they want to have removed as quickly as possible and replaced by buildings which are suitable and essential in this year 1977.

I ask members to place themselves in the position of the parents of those children. They see other schools being constructed all around the metropolitan area, many of them completely new schools, while they and their children wait for a reasonable school to be built.

Dr Troy: That would be better than spending \$50 000 on an America's Cup challenge.

Mr BERTRAM: Prime Minister Fraser makes no bones about pouring money into schools which are far superior to the school about which I am speaking—very rich schools which are already well established and developed and have extremely good facilities. This school is left waiting.

Further, the parents are placed in a very real dilemma because, as they have shown by their performance during the years, they are quite prepared to work hard and raise funds to provide

equipment, floor coverings, and so on for their children to use, enjoy, and take advantage of at school. What can they do about these classrooms? If the ceilings drip with water in wet weather, no responsible parent could be expected to put decent coverings on the floors; and perhaps in the not-too-distant future they will be told the buildings are to be knocked down, so they do not want to go to this expense in relation to a temporary situation.

Furthermore, I noticed some of the stumps supporting the Bristol buildings are in bad condition. I think the time has clearly arrived when something must be done about this school.

The Minister has not been in charge of his portfolio for very long, so I bring this matter to his attention in a gentle manner at this stage because it is proper that I should do so. It is true that last year I was told by way of an answer to a question that, in effect, there was no chance of this Bristol unit being replaced; but in more recent times the Minister has written to another member of Parliament a letter the last few lines of which read—

Those concerned with Tuart Hill Junior Primary School may be assured that if additional funds should become available the needs of the school will be given every consideration.

I do not really understand what that is supposed to mean, although I have a rough idea. But, as I say, the Minister is new to his portfolio. I think he is probably a fair Minister and that what the parents were inclined to understand from this letter may eventuate. At all events, that letter was written six or eight months after I asked the question to which I referred and it appears there has been a slight change for the better.

I urge the Minister to have a good look at this particular problem. More children attend this junior primary school, and have done so for many years, than attend, for example, the Wandarra Primary School where new buildings are being constructed. So if population is any sort of guide, these parents have a good case.

It is quite unsatisfactory and distracting to a teacher at this school to close a door only to find that it blows open again if the wind happens to come from a certain direction or at a certain pressure. Therefore, as I have said, I urge the Minister to look closely at the position because I do not believe the main problem is finance.

If a computer were put to work, it would show clearly that the people in my electorate contribute very much more in taxes than they receive back

in benefits. So these people are doing very badly on balance. The Government should give these parents a good hearing—although what they really want is action. Certainly they are entitled to action, and if I did not hold this belief I would not be putting the case forward in this place.

Mr Shalders: I think your school principal is allowed a certain amount of funds which he can spend on maintenance if he so desires.

Mr BERTRAM: Many attempts have been made to repair these doors and many attempts have been made to improve the building. The fundamental problem is that the building is inadequate and unsatisfactory. By attempting to maintain it, we are really throwing good money away. As members know, once a certain stage is reached maintenance is not the answer but replacement is. This is a classic case and I urge the Minister to look into the problem.

The parents are entitled to a fair go; they have been very patient. The school has an extremely good parents and citizens' association. These people do not just sit back and beg for improvements; by their performance they have shown that they can contribute their fair share. All they ask is that the Government respond in an appropriate manner to their own level of endeavour.

I would like to leave that matter at this stage to refer to the speech made by the member for Melville. This member said that Parliament is a farce, that we are all play actors, and so on. Of course he is right. It is most desirable that we recognise that fact. Down through the years I believe that we, on this side of the Chamber, have not performed as well as we should have in this regard. The battle of one-vote-one-value was won in the United States the best part of a decade ago. We should have won the battle here and let the United States follow us. Unfortunately that did not happen, and so we are in the position to which the member for Melville so eloquently referred.

The substance of his speech was very impressive, and if readers of *Hansard* refer back a few pages in this week's volume, they will be very well informed. When the people of this State come to comprehend the warped voting system and the rigged electorates in this State, they will do something about it.

I have spoken to many people who have no political bias and when I have explained the system to them—and it is simple enough to explain, heaven knows—all have been staggered at the present state of affairs. Without exception they expressed dismay that we should have a

situation in this State with such an obvious imbalance of voting rights. In my particular electorate of Mt. Hawthorn, the imbalance is as high as 15 votes to 1 compared with some other electorates.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.

Mr BERTRAM: It has been written that it was the fact that the Senate of the Australian Parliament was tainted that made it possible for the Whitlam Government to be overthrown on the 11th November, 1975; and, of course, that is a fact. I do not propose to go into the detail of that situation, but members will recall how two Senate vacancies were filled in a manner unorthodox; that is, in respect of senators from New South Wales and from Queensland.

What I put to you, Mr Speaker, and to the House, is that this Parliament of Western Australia is a polluted Parliament. It would be one of the least democratic Parliaments in the western world; and since Parliaments are fundamental to our laws and regulations, it means that all of the laws and regulations that are produced by this Parliament are either polluted or at great risk of being polluted. As the member for Melville pointed out last night, there is a terrible imbalance of voting, and he pointed out how a very small percentage of voters can produce a most unfair imbalance of representation in this place.

Mr Speaker, I feel for you because from time to time during your period of office you will have to entertain people from all over the world who will no doubt inquire from you a little bit about the system of voting here, and how this parliament is made up. You will be obliged somehow to explain to them, without being embarrassed, the fact that in this State we still do not have one-vote-one-value at elections. You may rest assured, Sir, that we on this side of the House will be doing something during the term of this Parliament to save you that embarrassment; and it will be up to your fellow members in your party—in this Parliament known as the Liberal Party, which it is not—to do something about it. We will not let you down. It will be of interest to watch how members opposite vote, although you, Sir, might already have a rough idea of the likely outcome when that situation arises.

When one considers the imbalance of voting—as I have pointed out, some Western Australians have a vote of only one-fiftieth the value of the vote of other equal Western Australians—one finds that never in the history of representative

Government in this State have the people represented by the Australian Labor Party had a Government in power in this State; that is, since 1890 not once have the people whom we represent—roughly half the population of Western Australia—had a Government in power.

As the member for Melville said, Labor Governments in this State have only been in office; not once in 87 years have they been in power. When one considers that and the fact that the great preponderance of local governments are controlled by conservative people, and when one observes that rarely is there a non-conservative put on committees, boards, or other things which are set up under Acts of Parliament or by administrative direction, one comes to realise just what a raw deal is given to the people we represent. They do not get half of the representation to which they are entitled; they do not get anywhere near half of it. I would suggest at best they might get 5 or 10 per cent; and that is a disaster.

Members opposite should not strive to place the blame for this on their leader, who is the Premier for the time being. Each member opposite is culpable; they are all blameworthy. Certainly those who were here in the last and previous Parliaments are all blameworthy; they have all had the opportunity to do something about the situation, and not only have they done nothing about it, but they have rejected legislation aimed at doing something about it. During the life of this Parliament members opposite will be given another opportunity; and if they reject the opportunity they will be personally to blame. Each one of them will be culpable, even the member for Beirut—or wherever it is—who was speaking the other night and who comes to us via the polar route.

Each one is culpable. Members of the Opposition and reasonable thinking people might say, "This condemnation of unionists is largely nonsense." It is true that from time to time they make mistakes and grave errors of judgment and perhaps worse, very often because they do not have knowledge of the facts. However, this thing which the Government is perpetrating upon the people of Western Australia through malapportionment and gerrymandering in this State is far worse. The Government is polluting the whole political system which goes to the very basis of all the laws made in this place.

Mr Clarko: You are just trying to win seats.

Mr BERTRAM: I am not worrying about winning or losing seats. I am talking about one-vote-one-value in Parliament.

Mr Clarko: That is all you are worrying about—winning seats.

Mr BERTRAM: I have already quoted the actual words of President Jimmy Carter on the question and they are the words which the Opposition adopts without reservation. It is the personal responsibility of each and every member opposite; do not blame the Premier, or the Minister, or somebody else.

This Government will go down in posterity for what it is, if it continues to perpetrate this thing, and that is what ought to happen. Those people who follow the Government will in due course have a look at its performance and they will wonder about it. The Government will get no credit for its performance; make no mistake about that. Nor should the Government receive any credit for a performance of this kind.

The Government is perpetrating a moral crime. Members opposite spend a lot of time on this matter, and it is mooted that a motion is to be moved on law and order. I suggest members direct their attention a little more to the question of justice, and do not confuse law and justice. Sometimes law and justice happen to be the same; but very often they are not.

It may well be that a strike is illegal in this State. However, the Government's action in respect of the electoral laws is not illegal but thoroughly unjust and bad; rotten in fact.

Mr Tonkin: Immoral.

Mr BERTRAM: I would say it is amoral.

Mr Shalders: Is it not a fact that Tasmania had as many delegates as New South Wales at the last national ALP conference?

Mr BERTRAM: That is tremendous. The member over yonder has been reading *The West Australian* newspaper—the unbiased epistle that we are confronted with every morning! A reference was made by a writer, I think it was Miss Clarko—

Mr Clarko: It was the member for Karrinyup.

Mr BERTRAM: I am sorry, I thought it was Miss Clarko.

Mr Clarko: I was being kind to you.

Mr BERTRAM: It sounded rather feeble to me in any event. It is a lot of twaddle. The proposition in effect was that if a certain company gives a shareholder with certain shares 10 votes, whilst another gets one vote, if I happen to have one share in that company then I have to agree with unequal voting because there are 10 votes against one vote in that company. This might be all

right for the general public who do not give the matter a lot of thought, but members opposite should not try it out here in this Parliament.

Mr Shalders: Do you agree with it?

Mr BERTRAM: It is unworthy.

Mr Shalders: I repeat: Do you agree with it?

Mr BERTRAM: I do not intend to continue with that any further.

Mr Laurance: You are in support of it, that is why.

Mr BERTRAM: I do not intend to continue with that matter other than to say, Mr Speaker, I am greatly impressed with the manner in which members opposite seem to cling to the things that we do in our party, more than they are inclined to cling to the things that they do in their own. It is wonderful, is it not, that they have so much knowledge about what goes on in our party whilst we have very little knowledge of what goes on in theirs?

Mr Watt: You profess to know a lot.

Mr BERTRAM: Yes, because we are not completely without eyes and ears and we hear the rumbles.

Mr Watt: You are not completely without imagination either.

Mr BERTRAM: Our State Executive, as members well know, meets once a fortnight and the Press is permitted to go in, listen, take notes, and report upon the meetings.

Mr Clarko: And it is not one-vote-one-value either.

Mr BERTRAM: What I would like to know is when the so-called Liberal Party Executive meets and why it excludes the Press.

Mr Nanovich: The Press is not excluded.

Mr BERTRAM: The member for Karrinyup perhaps will explain that to us when his turn comes along. Perhaps he will explain when the so-called Liberal Party State Executive or its equivalent meets and why it is that it meets in secret. I have been asking that question here for a long time and have never received a satisfactory answer. That is what I want to know. However, we look forward now with bated breath and much interest to hearing what the member for Karrinyup will have to say about that.

Mr Shalders: Are your Caucus meetings open to the public?

Mr Watt: Of course they are not.

Mr BERTRAM: I have observed the new members here on the Government side, bright and shiny and enthusiastic, who believe that they are in a pretty good team. Well they are not.

Mr Watt: A good big team.

Mr BERTRAM: I would say that the last Parliament was the greatest disaster from the Government benches that I in my term as a member have witnessed. That is unmistakably so, and the Government's performance itself was no better.

Therefore, we on this side urge the new faces opposite to do something about it and not just follow their leader in the one man band tradition which has developed. Members are elected to represent their respective electorates and to deliver the goods, and not just bow and scrape to a leader who happens to be too strong for them. I will now give members a rundown, not necessarily in chronological order—

Mr O'Neil: Nor accurate.

Mr BERTRAM: It will be accurate enough.

Mr O'Neil: Yes, accurate enough. I did not think you could qualify the word "accurate".

Mr BERTRAM: Do not worry about that. The Deputy Premier always took umbrage as members will remember, but I always insisted that some facts came from the Government. He has even snarled about it when he has been in a bad mood. Usually the Deputy Premier is very gentle and delightful. I will reveal some facts now.

Mr O'Neil: Delightfully inaccurate.

Mr BERTRAM: Let us just have a look at some of the things that went on last time—facts. The fuel and energy Bill was introduced. This Bill was so reprehensible, and so unsatisfactory that I think even the upper House amended it. The Law Society, that "bastion of left-wingers", rebelled against it. That was one of the Government's major blunders.

On another occasion the Premier, without so much as even asking the electorate for a mandate, without even mentioning it to the people, and after putting on a performance here similar to that of a kindergarten child, came over and with a great flourish unveiled or whatever it was, a map which depicted crooked electoral boundaries.

The Government did not ask the people's permission. It did not seek a mandate. The Government just altered the boundaries and gave no good reason for doing so. An amendment of the Constitution was involved in that procedure.

I notice now in the Governor's Speech that substantial alterations to the Constitution will require a referendum. Apparently he is afraid of himself; or is he following the same precedent set by the conservatives, when having tainted the Senate they then brought out a referendum requiring the people to determine whether it should be continued; whether the conservatives should in the future be allowed to taint the Senate in the same way? The people said, "No, you most certainly shall not."

So it would appear—I am not confident of this of course—that in the future Governments will require a referendum before tampering with the State's electoral boundaries. Perhaps the Premier will explain to us in due course that that will not be regarded as a substantial alteration.

Whilst the boundaries were being altered—in this Parliament instead of having 51 members in the Assembly we have 55 and instead of having 30 members in the Legislative Council we have 32—the National Country Party members sat there mute. The Country Party did not seem to grasp the fact that, amongst other things, the amendment was aimed at their ultimate extermination. Four new seats were created and the Country Party could not have hoped to win one of them and, in fact, it did not. Yet its members sat mute in this House and allowed that to be put over them. So much for electoral boundaries legislation.

Mr Clarko: Obviously, they supported the principle and were not interested in base self-interest.

Mr BERTRAM: On another occasion we had the greatest strike ever pulled off in this State, without reason given. Every person in Western Australia—certainly, every person with a vote—went on strike. One fine day the Premier announced by motion or some other procedure, without justification, that not one member of this State would attend at the Constitutional Convention to be held shortly thereafter in Melbourne. Without reason given, the whole of the representation from this State was withdrawn. That is a strike; our services were withdrawn. Every member from this State was withdrawn from that conference, the idea being of course to see to it that the conference did not go on. That attempt was yet another failure.

Mr Clarko: You cannot call that a strike.

Mr BERTRAM: It was a strike; it was very close to being a statutory strike.

Mr Clarko: How can you say that simply by not attending a conference, our services were withdrawn? I'll bet you get invited to many conferences which you do not attend.

Mr BERTRAM: I wonder if members have ever given a moment's thought to what would happen if the Premier were not the Premier but in fact were the secretary of a leading union. How would he go down on the strike front when he saw the sorts of things being done to him and his trade union that this Government does to trade unions? Do members believe the union would go on strike? After all, we have seen the Premier's performance in Parliament. We all know the answer to this hypothetical question; Cowles would be a babe in arms compared to the Premier.

Sir Charles Court: My goodness, your imagination is running riot.

Mr BERTRAM: The Premier has arrived, has he? He talks about imagination.

Sir Charles Court: You will be writing books next.

Mr BERTRAM: Then of course there was the split in the coalition. This event reflects great discredit on those who currently call themselves the Country Party.

Mr Stephens: You wish to be correct do you not?

Mr BERTRAM: I do.

Mr Stephens: Then it is the National Country Party.

Mr BERTRAM: I have the greatest difficulty with keeping up with the current nomenclature of that party, which once upon a time was known as the Country Party.

Mr Barnett: That was last week.

Mr BERTRAM: At least the Liberal Party sticks to its name, even though it does not mean anything.

Mr Tonkin: What about the Nationalists and the UAP?

Mr BERTRAM: What happened was this: As you well remember, Mr Speaker, the member for Mt. Marshall, then Deputy Premier, and the member for Stirling, then a member of Cabinet, stood up to the Premier. I think it was the President of the Country Party—or whatever its name is—who said that the Premier was bloody minded.

Mr B. T. Burke: He did not!

Mr BERTRAM: He did.

Mr B. T. Burke: I demand a retraction. I find the Premier offensive; will he withdraw?

Mr BERTRAM: I did not say it; it was the President of the Country Party who made the remark. Having stood their ground, in due course

they were torpedoed, left out on a limb, and two of their colleagues came in to replace them.

A king-sized blue went on at that time. This is a classic case for the new members of Parliament to study, and to observe what happens to people who stand up to the Premier. The ultimate result of this episode reflected complete discredit on the Country Party, because two of their team did what they were expected to do and, having done that, they were penalised for taking a stand and today they are still on the back benches as a consequence of their actions. If this incident had occurred in any other walk of life, members can well imagine the classification which would be given to those people who came in and stole their colleagues' positions.

Mr O'Neil: I wonder what Jim Cairns and several other Federal members whose names begin with "C" think of their positions?

Mr BERTRAM: Then of course there was the episode at Tresillian. I do not propose to go into the details of what occurred on that occasion. I simply wish to remind members opposite that throughout this episode the Government's performance was so poor that two or three, or more of its number came out and protested. I do not propose to reflect on just how genuine those protests were; the fact of the matter is that they did protest about the Premier and his performance. This was another demonstration of a poor effort.

Then we had the case of the legislation relating to land settlement agencies. I suppose this could be termed a relatively minor matter. The Bill was introduced for the alleged purpose of controlling the land settlement agencies. After a relatively short time, and because an election was due, the Government decided to withdraw the Bill. In other words, the Government decided the legislation was unsatisfactory, and therefore withdrew it.

It was called a "control" Bill, but the land settlement agencies called it an extermination Bill. All I can say to the land settlement agents is, "Beware", for in the near future there will be another "control" Bill brought before this Parliament to deal with them.

A few nights ago, I listened to my leader speaking about some of the treatment meted out to him by the Premier during the election campaign. However, with great respect, it seemed to me that he was not really going to get very far with his complaint. The Premier is a professional politician. When I think of him, my mind also turns to a fellow who was a well-known

football coach. It is alleged he used to say to his team, "If there is a ball out there, kick it, and if it has two ears on it, kick it harder!" In other words, "Let us go out and win the game; it does not matter how." That is the Premier's philosophy.

Sir Charles Court: People on your side should be the last to throw stones after the way you referred to the Premier.

Mr BERTRAM: I will come to the Premier in a moment, if he would like me to. So we had this delightful position where, during the heat of summer, the entire voting population of Western Australia was given a couple of days in which to enrol. As a consequence of that restricted time limit, on one steaming summer's night many people crammed into the Electoral Office. I was there personally to observe what went on, and I saw people crowding into the Electoral Office in steaming heat, with crying babies and all the rest of it; it was a proper shambles. However, the Premier happens to be a professional politician and has a rough idea—which happens to be true—that the clamping down of an early closing date for enrolment is disadvantageous to our side; he was not concerned about the embarrassment and inconvenience through which he put the people of our State.

Mr Sibson: Are you saying that people who support the Labor Party are more tardy than others in getting on the electoral roll?

Mr BERTRAM: Is the honourable member having difficulty in following my argument?

Mr Sibson: That is what you said.

Mr BERTRAM: Let us consider another piece of the malperformance of this Government. During the term of the Tonkin Government Mr Justice Heenan was asked to inquire into certain aspects of the State Government Insurance Office, and he brought in a report. For months thereafter, notwithstanding requests from this side of the House, that report was suppressed. It was held back from not only the Parliament but also all the people of this State. The Minister for Labour and Industry, unlike Prime Minister Fraser, said that he was concerned that a few people might lose their jobs if the report were published—a sudden concern about unemployment which is not obvious to us these days and has not been so for the last couple of years.

Ultimately the report was brought down. Of course, nothing has been done about it, and the people in the National Country Party, who are supposed to represent rural interests, as far as I

can observe have done and intend to do nothing at all about it, notwithstanding that their people are mostly concerned that the SGIO should have a better franchise than it already has. That suppression of a report was not an isolated case. There were plenty of instances of things being held back. Secrecy, it has been said with accuracy, is the badge of fraud.

The SPEAKER: The member has four minutes remaining.

Mr BERTRAM: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for that intimation. I could continue with item after item and I wish the time was available to me. But what I shall say is this: I hope the new faces on the Government benches will take up the task and ensure that a better performance comes from the Government on this occasion. We in the Opposition are going to bring in a considerable amount of legislation. We have a fairly good idea, judging by the last Government's performance, of what will happen to it. I urge those opposite not to hide behind the Premier but to be prepared to have a go themselves and to be accountable to their electorates. When we bring in good legislation, deal with it, and see that it becomes law.

Members opposite have a duty to bridge the gap—and it is a huge gap—between justice and the law. We shall be doing our bit in this Parliament in that direction and members opposite have a very real duty to contribute from their side.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Laurance.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from an earlier stage of the sitting, on the following motion by Mr Hassell—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [5.15 p.m.]: May I commence, Mr Speaker, by adding my best wishes and congratulations to you on your elevation to your new office.

I would also like to congratulate the member for Cottesloe for the able manner in which he moved the Address-in-Reply.

I welcome the new members who have joined the Parliament since the recent election. I will miss some of the old faces which are not here, some on this side of the House to whom I was very close and some on the other side of the Chamber. One is the former member for Boulder-Dundas; I will miss his ready wit and keen mind. The member for Clontarf was a personal friend of mine and I am sorry to see him go. The member for Mundaring often took the opportunity to remind me I was a very temporary member here; I find it rather strange that I have returned and he is no longer with us.

I would like to refer briefly to the former member for Melville. I admired him because of his political longevity. He was a skilful debater and had a very retentive memory. It is disappointing that his successor could not find time in his speech to mention him at all.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr Jamieson: He mentioned him at the end of last year when we were given the proper time for that.

Mr LAURANCE: I am glad he did that because otherwise he chose to ignore the traditional niceties of this place. It is obvious the new members we have in this Chamber—

Mr Bryce: You are ignoring one right now by referring to his maiden speech.

Mr LAURANCE: I will come to that point in a moment. It is quite obvious—

Mr O'Neil: Members on your side quite often ignore the niceties by referring to maiden speeches.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin: You talk about tradition!

Mr LAURANCE: It is obvious that some of the new members in this Chamber will bring new talents into the House but some will also bring the old dogma and prejudices. A great deal of the dogma and socialist claptrap has been paraded already, and in a very provocative way which amounts to an abuse of the traditional privilege members have when making their maiden speech.

Mr Jamieson: Both sides have done that this year but I have not interfered because they were maiden speeches.

Mr LAURANCE: Will the Leader of the Opposition allow me the privilege of continuing?

Mr Jamieson: It is not my maiden speech.

Mr LAURANCE: We have already heard all the old clichés, such as—

Mr Tonkin: "Socialist claptrap".

Mr LAURANCE:—"Parliament is a fraud", "The electoral system is dishonest", "Democracy is dead", and so on.

Mr Tonkin: It is not dead; it does not operate here.

Mr LAURANCE: I do not intend to take the traditional conservative role of attempting to defend the status quo but I will attack the nonsense which has been coming from the benches opposite. We do not have to defend the present electoral system.

Mr Tonkin: It is sad to see one so young and so reactionary.

Mr LAURANCE: We can be tremendously proud of it.

Mr Tonkin: That is why you got your promotion over others.

Mr LAURANCE: If there is greater disparity within the electorates in Great Britain and Canada than within those in Western Australia, we have every reason to be proud. When we look at countries like Canada, Great Britain, and Australia, we find they are countries which are envied by the world because of the democratic freedom they provide for their citizens.

As far as democratic rights and political stability are concerned, we are envied. These political freedoms I referred to, which Australia has in large number, are the freedoms or the basic rights to read, to write, to speak out—

Mr Skidmore: The Industrial Arbitration Act and the fuel and power legislation!

Mr LAURANCE:—the right to assemble, the right to protest, and the right to vote in secret. Australia is a free enterprise democracy, and its people enjoy all those rights.

Mr Pearce: Except the right to equal votes.

Mr Bryce: This man has to justify himself—he represents 4 000 people.

Mr LAURANCE: These rights are not available in any country that has turned to socialism. Members opposite know that those basic rights do not exist in a country which has turned towards socialism, yet they try to tear down the system we have here.

Mr Jamieson: What about the West German Republic?

Mr Bryce: Austria?

Mr Jamieson: Yes, Austria and Sweden.

Mr LAURANCE: Members opposite are talking about a strange animal called socialised democracy. It is about as relevant as an immaculate conception! We can have either socialism or free enterprise democracy.

Mr Bryce: Perhaps we should give you a round-the-world ticket—

Mr LAURANCE: I accept!

Mr Bryce: —because we have not got free enterprise, and we have not got democracy. We have more restrictive trade practices—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: I refer again—

Mr Skidmore: We will buy you that round-the-world ticket!

Mr LAURANCE: Members opposite are taking up my time, Mr Speaker, and I object to that.

The SPEAKER: The member for Gascoyne will proceed and ignore the interjections.

Mr LAURANCE: I would like to refer now to the previous member for Melville.

Mr Tonkin: He is a good bloke now he has gone.

Mr LAURANCE: I enjoyed the clashes I had with him.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are just far too many interjections. The member for Gascoyne.

Mr LAURANCE: Thank you, Sir.

Mr Tonkin: When he is dead you will say even nicer things about him.

Mr LAURANCE: In 1965, when electoral representation was under discussion in this House, the previous member for Melville said this—

I do not quarrel with that basis of representation in Western Australia because this is a vast State; the people in the outback have communication difficulties; their community of interest is different; and therefore I have no objection to their having a louder voice in the government of the country than the person in the metropolitan area.

Mr Jamieson: Do not take it out of context. Continue the quote or I will complain to Mr Speaker on that one, because it is out of context.

Mr LAURANCE: I am quite entitled to quote from *Hansard*, and the quote is from *Hansard*.

Mr Jamieson: It is out of context.

Mr LAURANCE: While speaking of that same member, I well recall his speech—

Mr Jamieson: You stopped a little bit soon.

Mr Harman: What page is it?

Mr LAURANCE: I will find it for you.

Mr Harman: You should be able to give the page if you quote from *Hansard*.

Mr Bryce: It is the act of a charlatan to do a thing like that—to say that something is a quote from *Hansard* but not be prepared to name the page where it appears.

Mr Harman: University training should have provided him with that knowledge.

Mr Tonkin: He isn't university-trained is he? Come off it.

Mr LAURANCE: I well remember the speech to the House—

Mr Harman: You would not think so.

Mr LAURANCE: —when the previous member for Melville had served 41 years and became the longest serving member in any Parliament of Australia. I well remember on that occasion he told the House that of the 41 years he had been in this House, 23 had been spent on the Government benches. That statement made quite an impression on me. I thought it was an indication that the previous member for Melville had been in Government for more than 50 per cent of the time he had spent in the House.

Mr Tonkin: And frustrated by the Legislative Council.

Mr Jamieson: You are not even right in the period of his service—it was 43 years.

Mr Tonkin: And he was never once in power, because of the Legislative Council.

Mr LAURANCE: One of the reasons that in 1965 the previous member for Melville made a reference to the weighting system was that for a great many years the Labor Party in this State had not been worried about the weighting system of electoral distribution—it held all the remote seats.

Mr Taylor: It was balanced. I made a speech recently about this.

Mr LAURANCE: It was balanced when the Labor Party held the seats, but it is not balanced now!

Mr Taylor: The seats were equally held then, but it isn't balanced when you hold the lot.

Mr LAURANCE: During the 1960s, this situation began to change, and now the boot is definitely on the other foot. The pendulum has

swung full tilt the other way. I might say with pride that I had a great deal to do with the taking of that eighth seat. I remember during the debate on electoral distribution last year, I told members opposite that they were stabbing the Hon. S. J. Dellar in the back. I was right; that was the last seat in any remote area of the State which was held by the Labor Party, and now it has gone.

We were told just recently—I think yesterday—that country people do not suffer disadvantages today—

Mr Skidmore: Who said that?

Mr LAURANCE: —and that though this system may have been acceptable some time ago when the Labor Party—

Mr Bryce: Are you going to continue in that vein—quoting something without even having the reference at your fingertips?

Mr LAURANCE: He said that it is not relevant today to talk about the disadvantages of country people.

Mr Bryce: It is palpably untrue to suggest that the member for Melville said that.

Mr LAURANCE: That is arrant nonsense!

Mr Skidmore: It is arrant nonsense you are talking.

Mr LAURANCE: I hope that the member continues to make such statements for a long time. The Labor Party in this State is in a political wilderness and while its members make such statements it will stay there.

Mr Bryce: You are a charlatan of the first order.

Mr LAURANCE: We will see the number of Labor members in this Chamber dwindle even further.

I want to assure the House that the disadvantages suffered by country people today are relatively just as bad as they were years ago.

Mr Carr: Worse than they ever were, the way your Government is performing and treating the country people.

Mr LAURANCE: My lonely friend will have to speak a lot louder than that if he wishes to be heard!

The facilities enjoyed by people living in the suburbs today have increased out of all sight. Members opposite know about this, because they live in the suburbs.

Mr Skidmore: The person who made that statement did not make it about the people, but rather about the representatives of the people.

Mr LAURANCE: I am answering that. The situation for people living in the country has improved a great deal—

Mr Skidmore: You have nothing between your ears.

Mr LAURANCE: —but, relatively speaking, country residents are just as isolated and just as disadvantaged today as they ever were. In fact, because of the technological advances from which people living in the cities have benefited, country residents are probably even more disadvantaged.

Several members interjected.

Mr Pearce: Read the quote now.

Mr Harman: Give me the page number—that is all I ask.

Mr LAURANCE: So while country people have better conditions now, they are still disadvantaged compared with city people. Their life style does not compare with the sophisticated living offered to individuals in the metropolitan area.

Mr Carr: That has nothing to do with their representation.

Mr Pearce: I represent five times as many people as you do.

Mr LAURANCE: The honourable member's previous leader told me that he had no quarrel with the system.

Mr Bryce: You should be ashamed.

Mr LAURANCE: Members opposite do not understand that. I would like to tell the member opposite who made that last statement that many of my constituents do not have television sets, and many of them do not have telephones.

Mr Skidmore: No-one on this side said that all your constituents have television sets.

Mr LAURANCE: Many of my constituents have telephones that frequently do not work. Often one has to ring a person several times during the day, and if one is lucky, one can eventually get through. If one is unlucky, one does not.

We have heard so much about the weighting of votes, and about one vote in an electorate being worth 15 times that in another. If one of my constituents wishes to ring my office in Carnarvon, it costs him \$2.80 to pick up the phone before he says even one word.

Mr Bryce: Why are you not big-hearted and let your constituents reverse the charges?

Mr LAURANCE: That is 28 times the amount it costs for a metropolitan resident to ring his representative.

Mr Bryce: Why don't you explain to your constituents that the Government pays three-quarters of your phone bill and suggest to them that they can reverse charges?

Mr Tonkin: Money is his god.

Mr LAURANCE: Who makes the first phone call? I do not ring up all my constituents to ask them whether they have a problem. I have to wait for them to ring me.

Mr Bryce: Let your constituents know that they are welcome to ring you and reverse the charges.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the member resume his seat. It sounds like a school yard at playtime. The member for Gascoyne.

Mr LAURANCE: I am pleased with the interjections, Mr Speaker, because it shows the depth of misunderstanding of members opposite. They simply do not understand. The minute some of my constituents pick up the phone to contact me it costs them \$2.80.

Mr Skidmore: Why don't you ring them back?

Mr LAURANCE: Sure I could ring them back, and it would cost another \$2.80. Members opposite do not understand. Little wonder members opposite do not represent country people from Midland to Wyndham. The member for Geraldton must feel very lonely. He must feel as lonely as Mr Kim Beazley when he goes out to the airport to fly to Canberra. Members opposite are so out of touch, Mr Speaker, that it is ludicrous for them to talk about more telephones, more offices, and so on to make country constituents think they are being represented adequately. That does not work. Country constituents want representation. They desire representation and they deserve it.

Mr Tonkin: They are not getting representation at the moment the way taxes and charges are being increased.

Mr Bryce: You do not represent them.

Mr Tonkin: You just vote the way the Premier decides.

Mr Bryce: How are they represented? From Midland?

Mr LAURANCE: The Government is about people and people's welfare.

Mr Bryce: Listen to the boy with the vested interests talking.

Mr LAURANCE: The basic principle of representation is that it must have some regard for where the wealth is produced. The Government

spends the people's wealth, largely in the metropolitan area, but it has to have some regard for where the wealth is produced. As I said earlier, I do not intend to defend the *status quo*. I want to attack this business of the electoral distribution that we have heard maligned so much. The remote areas of this State have very few people but they produce a great amount of the country's wealth.

Mr Tonkin: So that is it; it is wealth, not people. It is the wealth that is represented. Nothing to do with people; it is wealth.

Mr LAURANCE: Until the latest boundary change, the remote areas of the State, and I am talking about the four statutory north-west seats, elected eight representatives out of a total of 81—just under 10 per cent. We must remember, of course, that they represent 85 per cent of the land area of Western Australia and a great deal of the State's wealth. They were entitled to 10 per cent of the representation in this Parliament. That is hardly enough, Mr Speaker, and I know you agree.

Mr Bryce: Since when was democracy about representing land, wealth, or iron ore?

Mr LAURANCE: It is people's money.

Mr Bryce: It is people's money; that is where your priorities are wrong. It should not be people's money; it should be people.

Mr LAURANCE: Then there are taxes; and where do the taxes come from? Members opposite are not concerned about that; they do not consider it. After the latest redistribution the situation has changed. We still have eight members representing those remote areas of the State and we have 79 representing the tiny portion of the south-west of the State.

I am sure members have heard the phrase that was coined by the early American colonists who said, "No taxation without representation". These people are determined to have the representation that is rightfully theirs because of the contribution they make to the coffers of the State and to the country. Because of the land area that is contained, because of the wealth it produces, the representation I believe should be restored more closely to the 10 per cent that previously applied up until 12 months ago.

Mr Bryce: If your theory is accepted by your Government, why doesn't it grant the people of the Pilbara an extra representative, because surely they are entitled to it?

Mr LAURANCE: This means having another representative in the north. There is a strong case for another Assembly seat to bring the total

from eight to nine. That would give us five Assembly seats and four Council seats, and would bring the total to nine. The city will expand no doubt, and we will have more seats in the metropolitan area. By bringing the total to nine seats, we will restore the representation only up to about the 10 per cent mark. One obvious area for extension will be, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has suggested, in the Pilbara.

Mr Speaker, I believe that history has now turned.

Mr Bryce: That incidentally is on the basis of your approach.

Mr LAURANCE: We have heard so much hard talking from the other side, particularly from the member for Geraldton, about decentralisation, but I would like to tell him that if he looks at the Borrie report on the demography of Australia he will see that only once has the movement of people from the country to the city been reversed, and that was in the 1960s in the Pilbara.

Mr Tonkin: By accident?

Mr LAURANCE: By very clever design.

Mr Bryce: Did you put the iron ore there?

Mr LAURANCE: And so history has turned. If we go back to very early—

Mr Bryce: The great man changed his mind in 1969.

Mr LAURANCE: Under the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1893, 33 districts were set out to be represented in the Legislative Assembly, and I just want to run quickly through the ones that were in the north—East Kimberley, West Kimberley, Roebourne, De Grey, Pilbara, Ashburton, Gascoyne, Murchison, and Nannine. That is a total of nine. Then the number declined and it was in 1929 that a redistribution of seats took place. If we have a look at the Act we find we have the seats of Kimberley, Mt. Magnet, Murchison, Pilbara, Gascoyne, and Roebourne. So that brought the number back to six. That situation existed until the Electoral Districts Act of 1947 brought the number back to four. We have had four seats ever since.

I maintain that because of what has happened since 1947 it is high time that these people were given not less electoral representatives but, in fact, more. An extra seat would give greater electoral justice to these remote areas and fairer representation to those people who suffer the handicaps and disabilities whilst producing a great deal of the wealth of the State.

I would like to draw attention, to assist the *Hansard* record and the member for Maylands, to page 1570 of the 1965 *Hansard*. This records the second reading debate on the Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill.

The technological age has smiled favourably on my area. The growth in the last decade has come to a large extent from communication facilities, and I speak mainly of the space tracking station at Carnarvon and the United States Naval Communications Station at Exmouth. History records that the Carnarvon tracking station closed after 10 years. The town of Exmouth celebrates its 10th anniversary this year and fortunately the future of the United States naval communications base seems to be assured. The provision of modern communications is still playing an important part in the development of Exmouth.

There is a weather-watch radar station being erected at Exmouth. Construction has just begun. In addition, it is my belief that a joint United States-Australian solar observatory is to be established at North West Cape. This has been under investigation for some time. No announcement has been made, but I am hopeful that an announcement is imminent. If this observatory is established in this area it will bring further employment to the area and some diversification which is badly needed.

At Carnarvon history records that the space tracking station has been replaced by a Radio Australia facility, and I want to congratulate again the Premier for the assistance he gave me in having the Federal Government decision reversed, because this Radio Australia facility which was built as a temporary measure to replace that facility, was destroyed at Darwin by Cyclone Tracy. It had been decided to replace this facility with one at Gnangara, just north of Perth, on the outskirts of the metropolitan area. After discussion and consultation with the technicians involved, and thankfully with a reprieve granted by the Federal Government, this facility was erected at Carnarvon to replace the tracking station, rather than having it built in the metropolitan area. It cost \$2.5 million. It was built in a great hurry to replace the Darwin facility knocked out by Cyclone Tracy. It went on air, if my information is accurate, on the 20th December, following Cyclone Tracy at Darwin, and was in full operation on Christmas Day which was the first anniversary of that event.

The reception in the target areas—mainly Indonesia, South-East Asia, and Japan—from the Carnarvon station has been particularly good.

Just recently the Federal Government commissioned an independent inquiry into Radio Australia, which was chaired by Sir Keith Waller. The report is known as the Waller report, and it suggested that Radio Australia should be upgraded right throughout the country, the main station at Shepparton should be increased, the station at Darwin should be replaced, and that a new station in the north-west of Western Australia should be constructed to replace the temporary station at Carnarvon.

Mr T. J. Burke: The Federal Government decision to fund the installation in your electorate was a Labor Government decision.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, fortunately that Government listened to reason from myself and the Premier. Having made a decision to site it at Ngarara—which was a silly decision—it listened to reason and finally decided to position it at Carnarvon.

There is a suggestion in the Waller report that the major facility for Radio Australia should be placed in the north-west of Western Australia at a cost of well over \$30 million, and that the investigatory phases should be commenced now, continuing for the next several years.

Mr T. J. Burke: So it is a case of whether the Federal Liberal Government sees reason?

Mr LAURANCE: I do not think so. The station at Carnarvon was built to last for five years, and it had two transmitters. We in Carnarvon always felt this radio station would become a permanent base, anyway, even though we were not given to believe that. The technicians and authorities involved in the construction of that radio station were delighted at the response they received from the local authority and the people of Carnarvon. They were welcomed with open arms because this was an extremely important development for the town. The local authority, in particular, bent over backwards to supply power to the site in an effort to ensure the facility would be erected as quickly as possible.

I believe Radio Australia will be looking hopefully to build this new station at Carnarvon also. However, there is one difficulty, which is that the radio aerals at the present temporary facility have suffered some effects from salt; so probably it will be necessary to move the aerals inland from Carnarvon. I believe this problem is not insurmountable, and that the new radio station can still be constructed at Carnarvon.

I would like to incorporate in *Hansard* a brief statement from the Waller report, because it is

of great importance to my area. I quote as follows—

During the first three years forward planning and civil construction works for this Station would be undertaken, comprising the selection of a site; preparation of an environmental impact statement; parliamentary standing committee on public works processors; acquisition of the site; forward ordering of equipment and contracting and commencement of civil engineering works.

Expenditure over this period is estimated as— This is for a three-year period commencing immediately. The estimated expenditure is as follows—

				\$
1st year	....	....	....	nil
2nd year	....	....	....	.22 000
3rd year	....	....	....	1 232 000
				<hr/>
				\$1 254 000

Commencing from the 4th year of the project, nine (9) new 500 kw transmitters would be installed and the 250 kw transmitter from the temporary station at Carnarvon would be transferred to the new station. (The other 100 kw transmitter at Carnarvon, which was never intended for use by Radio Australia until Cyclone Tracy wrecked the Darwin Station, would then be returned to the Inland H.F. Service for which it was originally designated.)

Nine new aerial systems would be installed. The estimated expenditure for the North West Australia Station from the 4th year is:

	\$
4th year	7 172 000
5th year	13 750 000
6th year	7 722 000 (installation completed this year)
7th year	2 942 000 (carry-over payments)

So from the fourth year to and including the seventh year it is estimated the expenditure would be \$31.5 million. The report continues—

On completion of the development phase and of the project as a whole, Radio Australia would have available to it the full complement of 22 high powered transmitters recommended by the Inquiry comprising:

- 7 at Shepparton
- 5 at Darwin, and
- 10 at the new North West Australia Station.

I make my plea that this permanent radio station be located at Carnarvon.

I am happy to say that in the last few days the Federal member for Kalgoorlie (Mr Cotter) arranged with myself and the Carnarvon local authority to take a deputation to the Federal Minister (the Hon. Eric Robinson) and we are hopeful that the station will be constructed at Carnarvon. We are hopeful it will be put there because of our record with the temporary station, and because the geographical situation is ideal. We believe we can overcome any problems that may arise in respect of staff and housing.

This is a most important decision for the Gascoyne area as a whole, and we look forward with interest to a favourable announcement.

That radio station is not the only modern facility we are to see. A European space-tracking facility is also to be constructed in conjunction with the Overseas Telecommunications Commission facility at Carnarvon. Therefore, space age communications are still of great importance to my area.

I would like to conclude by drawing to the attention of the House the drought situation that pertains in my electorate at this time. This matter has been referred to previously by other members who represent wheatbelt electorates, and also by my colleague, the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr Skidmore: Also by the member for Swan.

Mr LAURANCE: In my electorate we are experiencing the worst drought since the late 1950s, and it is having a tremendous effect on both the plantation industry at Carnarvon and the pastoral industry in the surrounding area.

Mr Jamieson: I can't understand that when the urea has such a wet member.

Mr LAURANCE: That is about the level of the Leader of the Opposition—that of a buffoon. I expected that; in fact, it is probably better than most of his interjections.

Mr Skidmore: I thought it was quite good, actually.

Mr LAURANCE: For a buffoon, it was very good.

Mr Bryce: Let the *Hansard* record show that your quote from page 1570 of *Hansard* was intellectually dishonest. You should read the next two paragraphs.

Mr LAURANCE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will have plenty of opportunity to do that. Is he denying that was said?

Mr Jamieson: No, but he said it was intellectually dishonest.

Mr LAURANCE: I am pleased the Leader of the Opposition has confirmed that it was said.

I want to place on record the plight being suffered by the plantation industry and the pastoral industry in the Gascoyne area as a result of the present drought which, as I pointed out, is the worst since the late 1950s. The Gascoyne River has flowed at least once every year since 1960, except for the past year; in fact, it is now 15 months since it flowed. This of course, is indicative of the very serious situation in my electorate.

Fortunately the Government has dramatically increased its expenditure in this area since 1974, and this year the Budget allocation was just under \$1 million. I thank the Premier for the important assistance he has given by way of an additional \$400 000 to provide some drought relief.

Extra bores were brought on stream up the river almost immediately—in a matter of weeks—as a result of the Government's assistance. Those bores have provided additional water for our ground water supply scheme. Whilst these bores are not providing as much water as we would like, at least this action has enabled the industry to struggle through the drought.

We have had a little local rainfall which has been of some assistance also, but the scheme which the Government has been working on for many years—and we are thankful that it was being prepared during the good years—is still a long way from being the final answer. However, it has had a very good effect in helping the industry to overcome the worst drought in something like 18 years.

Naturally the river has not flowed, because the pastoral areas have not received any rain; and the pastoralists are also in a very serious situation. They have lived through droughts before; but unfortunately they have not experienced droughts along with conditions such as those which pertain in their industry at the moment. Therefore, they are faced with a two-edged sword at the moment; on the one hand there is the drought, and on the other hand there are the very adverse economical conditions—low prices for their products, and rapidly increasing costs.

The Government is doing a great deal. It is viewing the situation sympathetically. Finance is being made available. In fact, from information provided to me in this House only yesterday, several sources of finance are being made available.

I should like to record my concern at the seriousness of the drought situation. It may be that even what is being done to date is not enough. I look back over the history of the industry and I find there have been other times when fairly dramatic measures have had to be taken in order to ensure the survival of the industry, and it may prove necessary to adopt fairly dramatic measures once again. Hopefully, the situation will not come to that although one must appreciate that for the pastoral areas, rain is not a likely possibility at this late stage of the season. Therefore, we are looking towards the possibility of an early cyclone, perhaps in January or February next year as the next realistic hope of breaking the drought.

When I look back through the history of this industry, I am mindful of the Royal Commission which was appointed during the latter part of the 1930s to examine this problem. It was found necessary at that time to have a very close look at the debt structure of this industry. God forbid that a similar situation prevails on this occasion; I certainly hope it does not. I hope we can combat the present drought under the means now being adopted. However, this may not be the case and in that event I would hope that further help would be quickly forthcoming.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Crane.

House adjourned at 5.52 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CATTLE AND MEAT

Importation

214. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many head of cattle have been imported into this State since 1st June, 1977?
- (2) Of that number, how many were brought in for slaughter under form 6 and 6A respectively?
- (3) Since 1st June, 1977, how much beef, mutton and lamb has been imported in—
 - (a) carcasses;
 - (b) boxed; and
 - (c) processed form?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 13 119.
- (2) Form 6, 6 026.
Form 6A, 6 973.

(3) Public Health Department advises as follows—

Beef estimated 2 669 tonnes; carcasses, forequarters, hindquarters, and sides, 9 434; cartons, 12 152; other, 7 tonnes.

Veal estimated 10 tonnes; carcasses, 198.

Lamb estimated 2 524 tonnes; carcasses, 15 868; frozen racks, 2 032 tonnes; cartons, 10 165.

Mutton estimated 13 tonnes; carcasses, 517.

TEACHERS

Number and Surplus

215. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Can he say what will be—
 - (a) the possible number of teaching vacancies in Government schools at the end of 1977; and
 - (b) the number of teachers likely to be competing for these positions?
- (2) Does the Government anticipate that the number of "excess" teachers will grow over the next three years.
- (3) If the answer to (2) is "Yes" what are the Government's estimates of surplus teachers for each of the next three years?
- (4) What practical programme does the Government have for dealing with this foreseeable situation which will possibly worsen?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (a) As teachers are obliged to give only one month's notice of resignation, it is difficult to predict the number of vacancies which will occur at the end of a year. However, estimates indicate that the number of new graduates needed for Government schools in 1978 will be approximately 1 200.
- (b) Not all of the students currently in their final year at training institutions complete their courses satisfactorily and, in addition, some of the outcoming students will apply for vacancies in non-Government schools. Currently, the eight tertiary institutions have a total of 1 878 students in their final year who, if successful, would be eligible to apply for teaching positions.

Indications are that a total of about 1 700 will be applicants for teaching positions in both Government and non-Government schools.

(2) No.

(3) and (4) Not applicable.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Turnover

216. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:
What has been the turnover rate of State Housing Commission four-bedroom rental accommodation during the past 12 months?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

50 units throughout the State.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Construction

217. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:
How many four-bedroom houses for rental accommodation are presently under construction for the State Housing Commission?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

26 units throughout the State.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELFARE

Funding

218. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health and Community Welfare:

- (1) Can he say what is the latest information he has in relation to any decision by the Commonwealth Government on the Bailey Task Force Report?
- (2) In the case that no recent information is available and in view of the critical bearing this report will possibly have on increased State responsibility for health and welfare funding, will he agree to get an up-to-date progress report from the Commonwealth Government and make it available to the Parliament?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No information has been received that would indicate the Commonwealth Government has reached any decision in relation to specific recommendations of the Bailey Task Force.

The follow-up group of the task force held discussions with the States in May/June, 1977, and I understand that they either have, or in the near future will be, presenting a detailed report on matters arising from those discussions to the appropriate Federal Minister.

The task force itself is now resuming its activities in order to present a second report. The report will contain recommendations in relation to consultative arrangements with the States and other bodies and machinery for co-ordination of social policy development at Commonwealth level. For this purpose the task force will be holding discussions in each State during August/September. The further report is likely to be presented to the Commonwealth Government some time in September.

- (2) In view of the fact that the task force has not yet completed its work it would be premature to seek such advice from the Commonwealth Government.

Also, following a preliminary discussion at the Premiers' Conference on 1st July, the next Premiers' Conference—convened by the Prime Minister for 21st October—has the Bailey/Holmes report listed on its agenda for further consideration—hopefully with the benefit of the follow-up group's report on discussions with the States.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Apprentices

219. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What is the number of apprentices currently employed by Government departments?
- (2) Are the quotas for all departments currently filled?
- (3) If the answer to (2) is "No"—
 - (a) what is the number of unfilled positions; and
 - (b) in what departments and trades do they exist?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) As at 30th June, 1977, 1 345 apprentices were registered with Government departments and instrumentalities. In addition a number of young persons were also employed on probation with a view to entering into an apprenticeship.
- (2) and (3) There are no departmental quotas set down in respect to the employment of apprentices. The Government continuously encourages its departments, and industry generally, to employ apprentices. It is interesting to note that

in this State apprentices employed in Government departments and instrumentalities represent between 11-12 per cent of the total apprentices in training. This proportion is considerably higher than any other State in Australia.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Apprentices

220. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Were there any Government departments which did not take their full quota of apprentices during 1976-77?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what was the shortfall; and
 - (b) why was it allowed to occur?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) There are no departmental quotas set down in respect to the employment of apprentices.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Young Persons

221. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

How many young persons in the 15-19 years age group, including school leavers, is it estimated are at present unemployed in Western Australia?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

As at the end of July, 1977, 6 060.

School leavers—

Male ..	....	....	419
Females ..	....	....	629

Age 15-18 inclusive—

Males ..	....	....	2 522
Females ..	....	....	2 490
Total			6 060

Source: Verbal advice from the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

PENSIONERS

Water Rate Concessions

222. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

Further to my question 153 of Tuesday, 9th August, 1977, in which he advised the Metropolitan Water Board does not utilise the services of banks as payment agencies for water rates:

- (1) Does the board intend to give this service to its customers in the near future?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) The matter is currently the subject of an investigation which, in addition to the cost involved, embraces the compatibility of the banks' systems with the board's computerised system.

MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCE FEES

Other States

223. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Will he please advise the vehicle licence fees now applicable in other States of Australia?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Western Australia has sixteen classifications of vehicles, each of which contains a number of tare weight groups. The other States have a similar number of classifications containing weight groups. The requested information would take some time to obtain and collate. However, comparable licence fees for certain popular light, medium and heavy cars are as follows:

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Queens.	S. Aust.	Tas.	Average	W. Aust.
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
LIGHT CAR							
Datsun 120Y	31.70	33.90	33.00	26.00	21.84	29.29	24.07
MEDIUM CAR							
Ford Falcon 500 XC250	48.05	69.10	54.00	59.00	48.36	55.70	48.97
Holden HX 3300							
Kingswood	45.30	64.70	54.00	59.00	45.24	53.65	47.31
HEAVY CAR							
Ford Fairlane 5.8 litre							
V8	49.40	95.50	78.00	90.00	67.86	76.15	68.06
Holden Kingswood 5							
litre V8	47.35	90.00	78.00	83.00	63.18	72.31	65.57

License fees were last raised in—

- Western Australia on 1st October, 1974;
- New South Wales on 1st November, 1976;
- Victoria on 1st January, 1977;
- Queensland on 24th September, 1976;
- South Australia on 1st August, 1976.
- Tasmania on 1st December, 1975.

PRE-PRIMARY CENTRES

Mt. Tarcoola School

224. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it intended that a pre-primary centre will be built as part of the new Mount Tarcoola Primary School?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) will it be a single or double unit;
 - (b) how does he justify the expenditure when the new community operated pre-school still has vacancies and when other education facilities are needed in the town?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) A single unit which will serve the same intake area as the school.
- (b) Community operated pre-schools do not restrict their admissions to a particular intake area and, with a rising school population in Geraldton, this centre should have little difficulty in filling its vacancies.

TOURISM

Geraldton Visitor Survey

225. Mr CARR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Has the report of the Geraldton visitor survey been completed?
- (2) If "Yes" will he please table a copy?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes. A copy will be tabled when printing is completed in approximately four to six weeks' time.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Food Retail Prices

226. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) With reference to the index of relative retail prices of food in certain localities as prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, are any figures available more recent than 15th March, 1976?
- (2) If "Yes" will he please table a copy?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) The Bureau of Statistics has advised that the index for March, 1977, will not be available until approximately the end of September.

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

Centres

227. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Do other regional centres have regional concept plans similar to the Geraldton region planning study?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) which centres;
 - (b) will he please table copies?
- (3) If "No" to (1), is any action under way to produce such plans?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), will he please provide details?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Albany, Bunbury, Esperance and Kalgoorlie-Boulder. A regional advisory planning committee has recently been formed for Carnarvon.
- (b) Yes, plans are tabled herewith for seven days. It should be appreciated that these are nonstatutory concept plans in process of being evolved by advisory planning committees.
- (3) Answered by (1).
- (4) Answered by (3).

The plan was tabled (see paper No. 164).

HIGH SCHOOL

Geraldton

228. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Government committed to providing a new classroom block at Geraldton Senior High School for the 1978 school year?

- (2) If "Yes", how many classrooms are involved?
- (3) If "No" to (1), will he please advise the present position?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) Documentation of a building comprising six classrooms, two seminar rooms, and student toilets is proceeding. Tendering and construction will depend upon availability of funds.

NORTHERN BARRIER FENCE COMMITTEE

Proposal

229. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has he received a proposal compiled by the northern barrier fence committee seeking a realignment of the fence beyond the agricultural limit?
- (2) Has any assessment of the cost of the proposal been made?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), will he please provide details?
- (4) Has the Government made any decision on this matter?
- (5) If "Yes" to (4), will he please advise the House?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Yes. Proposals have been made by the northern barrier fence committee in relation to the area north of Ajana, and from the north midlands emu prevention group in relation to the area east of Perenjori.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) North Ajana extensions, \$363 000; East Perenjori extension, \$271 000.
- (4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AND PROVINCES

Enrolments and Quotas

230. Mr CARR, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) What is the present enrolment in each—
 - (a) electoral district;
 - (b) electoral province?
- (2) What is the present quota for each—
 - (a) metropolitan electoral district;
 - (b) rural, pastoral and mining electoral district?

- (3) Which seats, if any, are outside the prescribed quota limits?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) The present enrolment for each Legislative Assembly district is as follows—
 Ascot 15 914, Balcatta 18 172, Canning 17 922, Clontarf 16 623, Cockburn 16 230, Cottesloe 16 209, Dianella 17 587, East Melville 16 886, Floreat 16 153, Fremantle 17 265, Gosnells 17 881, Karrinyup 17 342, Maylands 17 726, Melville 16 599, Morley 17 148, Mount Hawthorn 17 091, Mount Lawley 16 802, Murdoch 19 973, Nedlands 15 552, Perth 15 583, Scarborough 16 139, South Perth 15 442, Subiaco 16 206, Swan 17 128, Victoria Park 16 363, Welshpool 16 658, Whitford 21 401, Albany 8 463, Avon 7 888, Bunbury 9 285, Collie 8 632, Dale 8 137, Darling Range 8 128, Geraldton 8 993, Greenough 8 855, Kalamunda 9 425, Kalgoorlie 8 086, Katanning 7 936, Merredin 8 247, Moore 9 581, Mount Marshall 8 158, Mundaring 8 625, Murray 9 741, Narrogin 8 061, Rockingham 10 929, Roe 8 744, Stirling 8 552, Vasse 9 194, Warren 8 874, Wellington 8 759, Yilgarn-Dundas 8 408, Gascoyne 3 789, Kimberley 4 943, Murchison-Eyre 2 226, Pilbara 15 209. Total 695 863.
- (b) The present enrolment for each Legislative Council electoral province is as follows—
 East Metropolitan 66 857, Metropolitan 79 703, North Metropolitan 90 145, North-East Metropolitan 86 391, South Metropolitan 66 980, South-East Metropolitan 69 919, Central 24 107, Lower Central 25 442, Lower West 28 807, South 25 759, South-East 24 741, South-West 27 238, Upper West 27 429, West 26 178, Lower North 6 015, North 20 152. Total 695 863.
- (2) On the above figures the quotas would be—
 - (a) Metropolitan area, 17 036;
 - (b) Agricultural, mining and pastoral area, 8 737.
- (3) Whitford, Rockingham.

SCHOOLS

Geraldton

231. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will a system of zoning be enforced for Geraldton primary schools in 1978?
- (2) If "Yes", have details of the zones been completed?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), will he please provide details, including any changes involving school buses?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) The principals of the primary schools are yet to be formally advised of the details which are currently being prepared.

As soon as the information on the boundaries for primary schools in Geraldton has been prepared, details will be provided.

TEACHERS

Courses for Higher Certificate

232. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

Further to the announcement that the Teacher Further Education Centre in Subiaco is to be closed, are any changes planned to courses for the teachers' higher certificate?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

There are many courses which may be used to satisfy the academic requirement of the teachers' higher certificate. Additional postgraduate courses which will be acceptable are being submitted to the appropriate authorities for accreditation by teacher training institutions within the State. There will thus be numerous acceptable courses available when the centre closes at the end of 1980.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Tendering

233. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) What is the percentage tolerance given to local firms tendering against metropolitan firms for Public Works Department contracts in country areas?
- (2) Does this apply in all cases?
- (3) If "No" will he please advise the exceptions?

(4) Is there a limit to the size of contracts subject to this concession?

(5) If "Yes" to (4), will he please advise the details?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 5 per cent preference allowance is given to country building contractors tendering for Government works up to a value of \$20 000 within their respective regions or outside those boundaries but within an 80-kilometre radius of the contractor's premises.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) and (5) Answered by (1) above.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Country Firms

234. Mr CARR, to the Treasurer:

- (1) How many country firms receive exemption from pay-roll tax?
- (2) How many country firms receive concessions concerning pay-roll tax?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) All firms with an annual pay roll of less than \$48 000. The exact number is not readily available.
- (2) Assuming the member refers to the Assistance to Decentralised Industry Act, 1974, under which decentralised businesses may be assisted in respect of pay-roll tax paid—in 1976-77, 28 firms received assistance to a total value of \$99 992.54.

HIGH SCHOOL

John Willcock

235. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is a map available showing—
 - (a) proposed road developments adjacent to John Willcock High School;
 - (b) finalised school boundaries of John Willcock High School;
 - (c) proposed future accessways to John Willcock High School?
- (2) If "Yes" will he please table a copy of such map?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) No such map is available.

BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT*Extension of Scope*

236. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Does the Government have any plans to extend the scope of the Builders' Registration Act during this session of Parliament to—

- (a) major regional centres;
- (b) the State as a whole?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The Builders' Registration Act has recently been transferred from the control of the Minister for Works to that of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. The Act applies to the metropolitan area only. Proposals to extend the jurisdiction, which have emphasised some major country areas, are being considered, but the position is not sufficiently advanced at present to indicate when or what course of action will eventuate.

TERTIARY EDUCATION*Building Projects*

237. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Education:

Adverting to his answer to part (1) of my question 62, will he advise whether Senator Carrick outlined why a review of all tertiary education building programmes was being held?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

Senator Carrick did not give reasons in his telex for requesting a review. Furthermore, the "guidelines" tabled in Parliament by Senator Carrick on the 3rd June did not give a specific reason, but said that the review was "to ensure that the total capital expenditure in 1978 is contained within the total funds allocated."

It is, however, understood that any review is to ensure that no duplication of facilities and other capital resources is undertaken.

TERTIARY EDUCATION*Building Projects*

238. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Education:

Adverting to his answer to part (4) of my question 62 concerning tertiary building programmes, will he advise the

financial value of each of the projects in Western Australia referred to?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

December, 1976, cost levels—Churchlands Teachers' College business studies building—\$915 000.

Western Australian Institute of Technology—Health sciences—\$2 311 000. Therapy—\$287 000. Applied science—\$1 625 000.

NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS*Federal Funds*

239. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

Adverting to his reply to my question 158 in which he stated that there are no level one private schools in Western Australia, is he aware that the proposed Federal funding guidelines involve transferring funds from the poorest non-Government schools which are level six schools to level one schools throughout Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I am familiar with the nature of the guidelines which I have already indicated are currently the subject of a review.

EDUCATION FUNDING*Representations to Federal Government*

240. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Education:

As his answer to parts (2) and (3) of my question 159 concerning education funding guidelines and the Press release attached give no indication of the Government's attitude to Federal funding for primary and secondary schools, is it correct that the Government has not yet adopted an attitude towards these funds?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

No. In my reply to question 159 I stated that the Government was concerned at any reduction in the funds being made available for recurrent and capital purposes in Government schools.

COCKBURN SOUND NAVAL BASE*Delays*

241. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

As his answer to part (2) of my question 140 concerning delays to the final stage of development of Cockburn Sound

naval base does not appear to give an indication whether he ascertained if the report referred to in part (1) of that question was correct, could he now supply this additional information?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

There has been no advice of deferment of elements of the project already approved beyond Press reports.

As previously advised—answer to question 140—the Commonwealth Government understands our views.

I cannot add anything further at this stage until the Commonwealth Budget is introduced next week.

COCKBURN SOUND NAVAL BASE

Delays

242. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

Adverting to his answer to parts (2) and (3) of my question 140 concerning delays to the final stage of development of Cockburn Sound naval base, would he advise how the State Government's views have been made clear to the Commonwealth Government, and when?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

By representations to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence on a number of occasions this year.

DRY DOCK

Establishment

243. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

As his answer to part (3) of my question 141 concerning the building of a dry dock and ship repair facilities in Western Australia does not indicate when he made approaches to the Prime Minister seeking establishment of a dry dock, will he now provide that information?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

When the Whitlam Government showed little interest in the dry dock proposal, we decided to look at a rationalisation of the Jervoise Bay area, which might accommodate ship docking, survey and repair facilities, and a small ships' building and servicing facility, so as to assist the future recreational use of the Woodman Point area.

There has been correspondence with the Prime Minister in April and August, 1976, with a view to developing an overall plan which provided for the aforementioned, and the possible progressive development of facilities.

There have also been general discussions on the matter.

We are still considering various proposals.

DRY DOCK

Establishment

244. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

As his answer to part (4) of question 141 concerning the dry dock and ship repair facilities in Cockburn Sound states there has been no change since the Whitlam Government expressed little interest in supporting a dry dock in Western Australia, is it correct that the Fraser Government has adopted the same attitude?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I explained when answering question 243 what steps the State Government has taken following the Whitlam Government consideration of the dry dock proposal.

The Commonwealth Government is responding to some degree but with considerable understandable caution, due to budgetary and other considerations.

The possibility of a dry dock without substantial Government capital and operating assistance has not improved.

CASINOS

Government Action

245. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

Adverting to his answer to my question 157, is it correct that the Government does not propose to take action on the motion passed by the Liberal Party State conference this year calling on it to change its present policy of tolerance and containment and to decide whether casinos should be banned or accepted?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Unlike the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party in Government is not bound by decisions of any outside body.

It has proper regard for views expressed by any reputable and democratically constituted groups.

CASINOS

Government Action

246. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is it correctly reported in *The Sunday Independent* of 7th August, 1977, in an article entitled "Casinos—Government to blame", that a seventh casino has opened in Perth?
- (2) Is he aware that the Commissioner of Police, Mr Leitch, is reported as having said that unless the courts got tougher on gaming house owners or the Government legislated to close down casinos, gambling would continue to flourish in Perth?
- (3) Does the Government intend to act on the Commissioner's suggestions?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) I have never found the newspaper referred to as being a particularly reliable source of information.
- (2) This may be so, but I am not personally aware of what the commissioner is reported to have said.
- (3) In formulating policy the Government has regard to more than one point of view.

ABORIGINES

Tribal Land

247. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) When does he expect to make a decision in respect of granting tribal land to the Pitjantjatjara people?
- (2) Will he advise the House of that decision when it is made?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) No formal request has been received in relation to this matter.

STATE FINANCE

Specific Purposes

248. Mr JAMIESON, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What recurrent grants for specific purposes did Western Australia receive from the Australian Government in—
(a) 1974-75;

(b) 1975-76; and

(c) 1976-77?

(2) What capital grants for specific purposes did Western Australia receive from the Australian Government in—

(a) 1974-75;

(b) 1975-76; and

(c) 1976-77?

(3) What loans for specific purposes did Western Australia receive from the Australian Government in—

(a) 1974-75;

(b) 1975-76; and

(c) 1976-77?

(4) In (1) to (3) above, what was the increase and decrease in money terms and percentage terms between—

(a) 1974-75 and 1975-76; and

(b) between 1975-76 and 1976-77?

(5) What percentage of the national total did Western Australia receive for each of the years mentioned in each of the categories from (1) to (3)?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

It will take a considerable amount of time to extract the information requested. The information will be made available as soon as possible.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Job Training Scheme

249. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

Adverting to his answer to part (2) of my question without notice of Tuesday, 9th August, concerning the federal Minister for Employment's attitude to the State Government's job training scheme, as his answer does not appear to indicate whether he ascertained from Mr Street whether he was correctly reported in the *Sunday Times* of 7th August as having said: "It would be too late for provision to be made in the 1977-78 budget for a new scheme", will he provide that additional information?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

At my request, the Minister for Labour and Industry discussed the matter of the submission to the Prime Minister with

Mr Street well before I read the statement in *The Sunday Times* on 7th August.

The discussion with Mr Street was of a general nature to alert him that a detailed submission had been forwarded to the Prime Minister.

We were well aware that the Federal Budget proposals were fairly advanced at this stage.

Nevertheless, all State Premiers have endorsed an urgent request to provide funds—by transfer or otherwise—for the type of industrial training as outlined in the letter.

HEALTH

Polio Fund

250. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Can he say whether the polio fund set up to assist the people handicapped by past polio epidemics has been wound up?
- (2) If "Yes" can he say:
 - (a) when this occurred; and
 - (b) whether any on-going provision is to be made to assist people formerly dependent on this fund?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No. There is not and never has been a fund known as the "polio fund". Each year since the poliomyelitis epidemics of the late 1940s, the Government has provided funds to assist persons handicapped by poliomyelitis. These covered many items such as orthopaedic appliances and wheelchairs. Some of these are now provided free by the public hospitals and there are less frequent requests for assistance to the department.
- (2) Not applicable.

ABORIGINAL JUVENILES

Prison Inmates

251. Mr WILSON, to the Chief Secretary:

How many Aboriginal juveniles are in prison in Western Australia?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Ten.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Administrative Structure

252. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

With respect to a report on the future administrative structure of the technical education division presently being undertaken by the Western Australian Post Secondary Education Committee:

- (1) Has a date been set for the presentation of the report?
- (2) If "No" when does he anticipate receiving the report?
- (3) Is the report to be tabled in Parliament?
- (4) To which persons, organisations and/or institutions is the report likely to be made available?

Mr. P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) By October or November, 1977.
- (3) Tabling will be considered.
- (4) The report will be made public, and available to all interested parties.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Purchase of Schooner

253. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

With respect to the purchase by the Education Department of a 16-metre schooner (reference question 92 of 3rd August, 1977):

- (1) What all-up price was paid for the vessel?
- (2) Was the vessel examined for seaworthiness prior to purchase, and if so, by whom?
- (3) What amount may have to be expended to outfit and make the vessel completely seaworthy?
- (4) What additional amount may have to be expended to modify her for use by schools?
- (5) For how many persons is she presently fitted to sleep?
- (6) What are the estimated slipping costs per year?
- (7) What are the estimated salaries of the master, sailing master and any other crew?

(8) Under what section of the Education Department is the crew employed?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) \$35 000—provided by schools' commission funds. Innovations grant.
- (2) Yes. Harbour and Light Department.
- (3) \$8 000—provided by schools' commission funds. Innovations grant.
- (4) \$2 000—provided by schools' commission funds. Innovations grant.
- (5) Twelve.
- (6) \$150.
- (7) Master—\$12 000
Sailing Master—\$11 000
No other crew.
- (8) Staff non-teaching within Education Department.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Plants and Potted Flowers

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

Will he please advise the amount paid annually by the State Energy Commission for the hire of plants and other potted flowers used in State Energy Commission buildings?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The use of pot plants in the State Energy Commission's head office, which accommodates over 850 people, serves two purposes.

One application is in the open plan office areas where movable screens and potted plants are used in lieu of rigid partitioning. For areas where office requirements vary it has been found both an important approach to improve the environment and thus the working conditions of employees and also cheaper and more flexible to use this arrangement.

A number are used for decorative purposes and are concentrated in areas commonly used by staff and customers. The requirements for pot plants varies with office layout, however the cost of hire for a typical month, July, was \$460.00.

I trust the member does not object to this improved approach and consideration towards employees.

In any event I would be happy to arrange for him to inspect the commission's head office building to satisfy himself that the conditions under which State Energy Commission staff work and customers are attended to are reasonable.

RAILWAYS

Eneabba-Dongara

255. Mr COYNE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Could the Minister itemise the capital costs in the following four categories listed in respect of the Eneabba-Dongara railway:
 - (a) in terms of the permanent way;
 - (b) rolling stock, including prime mover;
 - (c) communications network, including office space and equipment;
 - (d) staff housing, etc?
- (2) (a) Could the Minister indicate if there has ever been consideration given by this Government to providing a rail link with the Pilbara region; and
(b) if so, what general route would it follow?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) \$8 580 500.
(b) \$3 970 000.
(c) \$210 500.
(d) \$196 000.
- (2) (a) and (b) No. The feasibility of construction of a standard gauge link to the Pilbara was explored by the Commonwealth Bureau of Transport Economics in a study entitled "Freight Transport to North West Australia 1975-1990" issued in 1973 and "The Pilbara Study" commissioned by the Commonwealth and W.A. State Governments and issued in July, 1974. The route on which the studies were based was Perth/Geraldton via Eneabba/Meekatharra via Weld Range/Mt. Newman.

TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION

Radio Equipment at Wundowie

256. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Since he stated in the debate on the amendment to the Address-in-Reply on Tuesday, 9th August, that the operation of radio equipment in the Transport Workers' Union caravan at Wundowie placed the security of the whole of Australia at stake, will he please advise:

- (a) how Australian security was threatened;
- (b) whether he has taken the matter up with the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and/or any other Federal Government agency or Minister;
- (c) whether similar radio equipment can be purchased across-the-counter in Western Australia and/or other parts of Australia;
- (d) if the answer to (c) is "Yes" will he take steps to ban the sale of such equipment because it poses a threat to security?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) (a) to (d) The Leader of the Opposition has, in the first instance, based his question on incomplete information by talking of the TWU caravan in particular.

While I did use the words "the security of Australia is at stake . . ." I went on to say, as reported in *The West Australian*, that security is at stake . . . "through the operation of caravans of this kind".

Because of the interjections of members opposite it was not possible for that part to be recorded in *Hansard*, even though it was reported in *The West Australian*.

The member has been in this Parliament long enough to know that questions of national security are the responsibility of federal authorities so he should direct his inquiries to them.

I will say, however, that in expressing in debate the views I did, I was pointing out that powerful

radio equipment of any kind—operated illegally—is capable of transmitting messages to overseas countries . . . information which could be harmful to the security of this country.

TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION

Radio Equipment at Wundowie

257. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Referring to his statements during the debate on the amendment to the Address-in-Reply on Tuesday, 9th August, that the Transport Workers' Union caravan at Wundowie had been under scrutiny for 12 months, will he please advise:

- (a) on whose instructions it was placed under scrutiny;
- (b) for what reasons it was placed under scrutiny;
- (c) who undertook the scrutiny;
- (d) what form the scrutiny took;
- (e) since allegedly illegal activity was taking place there, why was it 12 months before action was taken?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The Leader of the Opposition has once again directed his question both to the wrong Minister and the wrong Parliament. The member should therefore direct his question to the appropriate federal authorities.

TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION

Radio Equipment at Wundowie

258. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

What is the source of his information that the Transport Workers' Union caravan at Wundowie contained equipment worth \$20 000?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

This information was given to me on a confidential basis so I am not in a position to divulge the source. However, as the equipment has been confiscated by federal authorities its value could easily be determined by an approach to them.

EGG MARKETING BOARD

Resignation of Officers

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

- (1) Have any officers in the W.A. Egg Marketing Board resigned in 1977?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what are the names of any such officers;
 - (b) what position did each hold;
 - (c) what was the reason for each resignation?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) E. K. Lindorff—General Manager; R. A. Michel—Secretary.
- (c) The Act does not require officers of the board to inform me of their intentions to resign, or reasons for resignation. The officers did not provide me with detailed reasons for their resignations.

BASIC WAGE

Minimum

260. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What is the present minimum wage as declared by the Western Australian Industrial Commission for—
 - (a) males;
 - (b) females?
- (2) (a) Does any differentiation exist between the minimum wage rates in any other state in Australia; and
 - (b) if so, which state; and
 - (c) what is the amount of difference?
- (3) (a) Is there any difference in the federal minimum wage rate which is paid to males and females; and
 - (b) if so, what is the amount?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

This information can be found in the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication "Wages Rates and Earnings", May 1977, reference number 6.16.

- (1) (a) \$108.80 as at 11th August to become \$111.40 as from 15th August.
- (b) \$106.00 as at 11th August to become \$108.60 as from 15th August.
- (2) and (3) No.

ROBB JETTY ABATTOIR

Processing Plant

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

- (1) Is it correct that a plant to process meat meal or some other derivative will commence operation at Robb Jetty in the near future?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) who owns the plant;
 - (b) under what tenure is the land upon which the plant built held, by whom and at what cost;
 - (c) what material will this plant use for its operation?
- (3) What amounts of material will be obtained from—
 - (a) Robb Jetty abattoirs;
 - (b) Midland Junction abattoirs; and
 - (c) what percentage of the material from each of these works does the stated quantity represent?
- (4) What price per tonne will be paid for this material?
- (5) By how much each year is it expected that the by-products returns will be reduced at—
 - (a) Robb Jetty abattoirs;
 - (b) Midland Junction abattoirs because of the requirement to supply material to the processing plant referred to in (1)?
- (6) What was the cost of constructing the plant?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Bonestock Pty. Ltd.
 - (b) The land has been leased by Bonestock Pty. Ltd. for a 25-year period commencing on 1st December, 1976, at an annual rental of \$5 000 for the first three years, the rental to be re-assessed at three-year intervals.
 - (c) Edible beef bones and fat.
- (3) to (5) It is understood that Bonestock Pty. Ltd. is presently negotiating with suppliers of raw material but no direct approach has been made as yet to the commission.
- (6) Construction costs are not known.

WASTE DISPOSAL
Advisory Committee

262. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:
- (1) When did the advisory committee appointed to deal with disposal of waste, first meet?
 - (2) How many meetings have since been held?
 - (3) (a) Will the committee's recommendations be made public; and
(b) if so, when, and in what form?
 - (4) On how many occasions has the technical committee met since it was appointed?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) 2nd March, 1977.
- (2) Four.
- (3) (a) Yes;
(b) Because of the complex nature of the committee's deliberations, I am unable to say when the committee's recommendations will be made public, but it will be by public announcement and correspondence with appropriate authorities.
- (4) Four.

ROBB JETTY ABATTOIR
Leasing of Facilities

263. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:
- (1) Has the Government discussed the prospect of leasing Robb Jetty abattoirs or any portion of the abattoir facilities or cool storage facilities?
 - (2) If "Yes"—
(a) with what firm or with whom were such discussions held;
(b) what was the nature of any propositions discussed; and
(c) with what results?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

TRESILLIAN HOSTEL
Transfer of Children

264. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:
- (1) Do the arrangements made regarding shifting of children from Tresillian hospital, as detailed in writing to a deputation of parents, still apply?

- (2) If not, what changes will be made?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.

POLICE STATION
Greenbushes

265. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Is it proposed to retain the police station at Greenbushes or is it intended to transfer the resident officer without replacement?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

No decision has as yet been made.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

URANIUM MINING AND PROCESSING

Deaths

1. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

- (1) Have people died as a result of their work as uranium miners and yellow cake processors?
- (2) Are people still dying as a result of their work with uranium and yellow cake?
- (3) Would the Premier care to assess the number of people so afflicted to date?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) In the time available I have been unable to find evidence of any deaths or specially related sickness or disease as a result of mining uranium and producing yellow cake.
- (2) and (3) In the light of this and other ill-framed questions asked by the honourable member on the subject of uranium mining and export, I have to assume that his questions are not asked in a genuine desire for information and are merely part of a campaign to try to generate fear and apprehension rather than informed comment.

Mr Barnett: I think the Premier is hiding the truth.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is about time the member got a bit of sense.

MR R. COWLES*Radio Equipment***2. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:**

Did the Minister attend a party some months ago in a flat occupied by Mr Rob Cowles at which he—

(a) saw high-powered radio equipment, and

(b) saw and heard the equipment operated?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, the answer is, "No". However, I would like to give some explanation at this time because of the comments made by Mr Cowles. The Leader of the Opposition has asked whether I attended a party some months ago in a flat occupied by Mr Rob Cowles at which I saw high-powered radio equipment, and saw and heard the equipment operating. The situation came about in the following manner: I was representing the Premier at an annual function of Bell Bros at the Civic Centre at Cottesloe. At about 10 o'clock in the evening it was suggested to Mr Cowles, by a representative of Bell Bros, that he should have a ride in the helicopter recently purchased by Bell Bros at a cost of approximately \$175 000. The helicopter was parked in the grounds of the Civic Centre. Mr Cowles replied—and I agree he obviously said these words facetiously—that because of the trouble he had caused Bell Bros he would not go in case they pushed him out of the helicopter—and I again stress that the statement was made facetiously—unless the Minister for Labour and Industry went with him!

As a result of that statement, I had no alternative but to accept the invitation and arrangements were made for a flight at 6 o'clock the next morning. The helicopter took off from among the pine trees in a howling gale.

We were subsequently dropped on the bank of the Swan River in the vicinity of the Causeway. A senior officer of Bell Bros—the man in charge of industrial relations—undertook to pick us up and take us back to our cars parked

at the Civic Centre. The representative met us between 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock in the morning, and set off to take us back to our cars.

Mr Cowles requested that we stop at his flat because, apparently, he wanted to transact some sort of business of his own. At 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock in the morning we therefore visited Mr Cowles' flat. There were several of us present when we visited the flat.

I would mention that it was a maximum security situation and that a television camera monitored anyone standing outside the door. Mr Cowles was able to scrutinise people who visited him. After the chains were taken off the door we were permitted to enter.

Mr O'Neil: Was the Alsatian dog there?

Mr GRAYDEN: When we entered the flat I saw the radio equipment. I would not normally have made any statement, because I was a guest in the flat, but Mr Cowles has already made the statement. There was a wall of the most expensive high frequency radio equipment; the equipment stretched from the floor to the ceiling. We certainly did not see the equipment working, but it was obvious that as all that equipment was in a property almost within 100 yards of Parliament House, if the equipment was operating illegally Telecom would have taken some action.

Mr Cowles made the statement and the inference was that I attended a party at his flat. The party consisted of a visit to Mr Cowles' flat at his request on our way back to pick up our vehicles. That is a very different matter. I have not complained about the equipment in the flat because it is in a fixed situation. I imagine that if the equipment was used illegally Telecom would pick up the operator in those circumstances.

My complaint was about the highly technical equipment situated in a caravan parked illegally in some isolated bush area of Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: I would comment I was extremely lenient with the Minister for Labour and Industry in allowing him to answer the question at length. The answer was longer than I hope will be necessary to questions asked in the future. However, because of the highly

technical nature of the reply which the Minister was providing, I did allow some leniency.

URANIUM MINING AND PROCESSING

Deaths

3. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

- (1) In view of the answer to my last question without notice, would the Premier like me to give him more time during which to research the question I asked, and also would he like me to rephrase it so that it can be asked again next week?
- (2) Would the Premier undertake to give more reasonable information than he gave tonight?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) In answer to the member for Rockingham, he does not ever seem to learn.

Mr Barnett: The Premier will learn.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member asked a question, and he has been given an answer. If he does not appreciate the answer, he has a right to ask that further information be provided.

Mr Barnett: I intend to do that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the member wants to ask questions with regard to uranium and its processing, he should ask them in a sensible manner, not in the way he has been asking them. It is difficult to answer questions which are asked with mischief in mind.

Mr Barnett: The Premier is withholding facts.

The SPEAKER: Order!

AMERICA'S CUP

Alan Bond's Comments on Fremantle

4. Dr TROY, to the Premier:

In view of the scurrilous remarks made by Alan Bond about Fremantle, which appeared in tonight's issue of the *Daily News*, what does the Premier intend to do about those remarks? The taxpayers of Fremantle have helped to subsidise the challenge at Rhode Island.

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Nothing.

CASINOS

Government Action

5. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

With reference to question 246 on today's notice paper, would he draw the attention of the Commissioner of Police to the article to find out whether it is a correct statement of what the commissioner had to say on this subject?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

In reply to a similar question by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday I indicated it was not my intention to interrogate the Commissioner of Police about matters he might have been reported on in the newspapers. That answer still stands. I will not allow the Leader of the Opposition to denigrate the Police Force through its commissioner.

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Clarification of Legislation

6. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

The Government's proposed legislation in relation to pre-schools appears to be misunderstood by many people. This is evidenced by a letter to the editor in today's issue of *The West Australian*. To clarify the position in relation to the proposed amendments to the Education Act relating to pre-schools could the Minister answer the following—

- (1) Is it the intention of the proposed amendments to the Education Act to encourage pre-primary centres to be built and to operate in direct competition with parent-run kindergartens?
- (2) What has experience shown to be the case with respect to parent participation in currently operating pre-primary centres?
- (3) Has experience in pre-primary centres given any indication that parents are not approaching teachers freely to discuss problems and matters of concern to them?

(4) Under the proposed legislation is it true that children in the 0-4 age group will not—

- (a) be allowed to enrol in any pre-primary centre;
- (b) come under the control of the new department of early childhood;
- (c) be given any consideration by the Education Department in any way?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No. The extension of the pre-primary programme is being directed into areas where insufficient places exist to cater for known needs.
- (2) Continuing parent participation has been welcomed and has proved effective in advancing the interests of the children.
- (3) No. Good parent-teacher relationships prevail in pre-primary centres.
- (4) (a) to (c) The pre-primary programme is designed for children one year below school age and in most cases enrolment is restricted to children of this age. Exceptions to this policy are permitted in some small country centres and in those cases where the Education Department is honouring the waiting lists of centres which transfer to the department.

Any responsibilities the Education Department assumed with regard to younger children—that is, children more than one year below grade 1 age—would be temporary and would be handed over as soon as a new agency became available for the purpose.

As the honourable member may be aware, children younger than five are admitted to centres where vacancies exist provided five-year-olds have priority.

URANIUM PROCESSING

Experimental Work

7. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Mines:

Adverting to his answer to my questions without notice last night relating to experimental work on uranium treatment at Kwinana, could the Minister advise—

- (1) What building at the Kwinana plant was used for the testing?
- (2) During which dates was the work undertaken?
- (3) How many personnel were involved?
- (4) Are their names on record anywhere?
- (5) Who has the records referred to in (4)?
- (6) Is any medical check being kept on the people involved with the testing?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) A building erected for the purpose within the plant site but separated from other activity.
- (2) Intermittently during the period July, 1973, to July, 1974, for some 33 days.
- (3) A number of different testing programmes were run involving a total of 16 men.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Western Mining Corporation.
- (6) The operations and operators were closely monitored by State Government authorities including X-ray laboratory. No further health tests were required by the authorities due to shortness of exposure and the very low levels of radiation.