

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 1st August, 1978

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

## BILLS (32): ASSENT

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

1. The Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act Amendment Bill.
2. Inventions Act Amendment Bill.
3. Cemeteries Act Amendment Bill.
4. Local Government Grants Bill.
5. Community Welfare Act Amendment Bill.
6. Police Act Amendment Bill.
7. Murdoch University Act Amendment Bill.
8. Legal Aid Commission Act Amendment Bill.
9. Legal Practitioners Act Amendment Bill.
10. Alumina Refinery (Worsley) Agreement Act Amendment Bill.
11. Reserves Bill.
12. Rural Housing (Assistance) Act Amendment Bill.
13. Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill.
14. Petroleum Products Subsidy Act Amendment Bill.
15. Alumina Refinery (Wagerup) Agreement and Acts Amendment Bill.
16. Aerial Spraying Control Act Amendment Bill.
17. Audit Act Amendment Bill.
18. Supply Bill.
19. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill.
20. Housing Agreement (Commonwealth and State) Act Amendment Bill.
21. Western Australian Marine Act Amendment Bill.
22. Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Amendment Bill.
23. Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
24. Railways Discontinuance and Land Revestment Bill.
25. Public Trustee Act Amendment Bill.
26. Listening Devices Bill.
27. Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act Amendment Bill.
28. Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill.

29. Liquor Act Amendment Bill.
30. Family Court Act Amendment Bill.
31. Local Government Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
32. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill.

## DEATH OF ALDO MORO

*Message from Italian Consul*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I desire to read to the House a letter I have received from the Consul for Italy. It is as follows—

My dear Speaker,

I wish you to know that I have duly informed my Ambassador in Canberra of the resolution agreed upon by the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia on the 11th May, 1978, for the tragic death of Aldo Moro.

As representative of the Italian Government in this State, as well as of the Italian community, I should like to express my appreciation and ask you to inform the Members of Parliament that, their sympathy, is of great value to us.

I should also like to thank you and the President of the Legislative Council, Hon. Clive Griffiths, MLC, for your personal solidarity.

Yours sincerely,

Stefano Stefanini,  
CONSUL FOR ITALY.

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

*Star Swamp Area: Petition*

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [4.36 p.m.]: I present the following petition from 6 554 residents of Western Australia—

We, the signatories to this petition, strongly urge that the area bounded by Hope Street, Beach Road, Marmion Avenue and North Beach Road North Beach, within which Star Swamp is located, be declared a permanent Flora and Fauna Reserve and that the matter be given your interested

consideration for which your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

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

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

(See petition No. 12).

### TRAFFIC

#### *Noise Emission and Vibration in Melville: Petition*

MR HODGE (Melville) [4.37 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition from 290 citizens of Melville. The petitioners urge the Government of Western Australia to take immediate decisive action to bring about a reduction in the level of noise and vibration caused by the ever-increasing number of trucks using roads in the Melville area.

The petitioners urge the Government to introduce legislation as soon as possible to bring about reform of the laws dealing with traffic noise, and they ask that Parliament deal with the matter with all speed.

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

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

(See petition No. 13).

### QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

### PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### *Second Reading*

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Lands) [5.48 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The provisions of the parent Act, an old part of our State legislation, apply to the activities of boards such as the Kings Park Board and the Rottnest Island Board, the members of which are appointed under the provisions of section 3 of the Act. Other reserves are controlled by local authorities under the Local Government Act, similar to those under the Parks and Reserves Act.

A Bill to amend the Parks and Reserves Act came before the House last year. The Kings Park

Board had, in 1976, requested the then Minister for Lands to seek statutory authority to combat—

- (a) Vandalism
- (b) Speeding and Parking Offences
- (c) Uncontrolled Dogs
- (d) Littering and
- (e) Incendiarism of Bushlands.

The SPEAKER: Order! I request members to keep the level of casual conversation down in order that those who are addressing the Chair may be heard.

Mrs CRAIG: Unfortunately, after the Bill was given a second reading drafting difficulties became evident and the measure in its form as then drafted was permitted to lapse.

Returning to the problems encountered by the Kings Park Board, I must add that they are not unique to that authority alone; so much so, that a meeting was convened between the Kings Park Board, the Rottnest Island Board, the Country Shire Councils' Association and the Local Government Association.

At the meeting discussions were held on the problems of this nature and it was agreed unanimously that existing powers and penalties were inadequate to deal with most cases. Those concerned had also become aware of the difficulties enforcement of by-laws posed and the strain under which staff operated because of the frequent threats of violence by those apprehended. Private surveillance of Kings Park even over certain hours is expensive. The board, however, now employs two uniformed rangers for by-law enforcement and on-the-spot education of offenders with a view to reducing the number of violations, such as damage to plumbing, lighting of fires, the breaking of glass in pools, etc. The reparation costs of this damage and the time involved weigh heavily on the board.

Over the last Easter holidays, at least 10 road signs were damaged or removed, some costing up to \$100 each. The annual bill for vandalism in the park is now in the vicinity of \$40 000.

The board's efforts, however, are hindered by the inadequacies of the Act and the proposals now before the House would give boards better control, not by creating new offences, but by facilitating the enforcement of by-laws.

One aspect of the Bill concerns liability of parents for acts committed by their children. Other provisions seek to set out the power of "authorised persons" and to increase the maximum penalty a board may impose. This of course, would raise the penalties to figures in keeping with today's monetary values.

The Bill also provides for matters relating to the ownership and control of animals and the imposition of penalties by way of infringement notices. A further inclusion in the Bill is a proposal to amend section 5(3) of the existing Act which defines the boundaries of Kings Park as those gazetted on the 27th November, 1942. A new gazetted description was published on the 14th October, 1977, and in view of the proposed amendments in this Bill aimed at strengthening powers of prosecution, it is important that steps be taken to amend section 5(3) of the Act.

Parks and reserves boards face many and varied difficulties in administering the areas under their control and the amendments, if passed, would go a long way towards assisting them in combating a very real social problem.

Another amendment proposed in the Bill is to validate the existence of the present restaurant in the park and permit its continued operation. The restaurant is situated on Perth lots 772, 786, and 801, which are vested in the Kings Park Board with power to lease for the purpose of a tea room site for a period up to 21 years. These lots are all within the boundaries of "A"-class Reserve 1720 known as "Kings Park".

Instead of a tea room, a restaurant has been in operation for many years. An attempt in 1964 to legislate for "a restaurant" was disallowed by Parliament. However, it is believed that public opinion would favour the continued operation of a restaurant and the Kings Park Board has requested appropriate amendment.

I believe that all the amendments proposed in this Bill will be of benefit to the public visiting and enjoying the surrounds of the park, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr H. D. Evans.

## **NORTHERN DEVELOPMENTS PTY. LIMITED AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

**MRS CRAIG** (Wellington—Minister for Lands) [5.54 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Under the provisions of the Northern Developments Pty. Limited agreement as ratified by Act No. 41 of 1969 and subsequently amended by Act No. 97 of 1969, Northern Developments Pty. Limited is developing land by means of irrigation on the Fitzroy River at Camballin for the purpose of cultivating rice, grain sorghum and

other approved crops, and for the associated depasturing of stock.

The company, under the terms of the agreement, has the right progressively to select up to a maximum of 50 000 acres of irrigable land in parcels, the first of which, containing 4 820 acres, 3 roods, was granted to the company in the form of a licence on the 20th June, 1969. Successive parcels of 10 000 acres can be applied for and granted to the company once the immediately preceding parcel has been developed and planted with rice, grain sorghum or other approved crop.

Development, instead of being confined within the boundaries of the first parcel, has extended outside onto other land the subject of the agreement and accordingly it has become necessary to re-define the boundaries of the first parcel to comprise the land so developed which contains 4 693 acres, 1 rood, 31 perches, now surveyed as Fitzroy location 39 as shown on Lands and Surveys Department original plan 13560.

In addition, and when the original agreement was amended in 1969 to increase the area of parcels from 5 000 to 10 000 acres, no provision was made to adjust the price per acre for land in parcels to be granted subsequent to the first parcel. In order to correct this anomaly and to ensure that the State does not suffer a loss, the opportunity has been taken to amend the price structure.

Whilst dealing with the necessary amendments to give effect to these changes, the opportunity has also been taken, firstly to provide a new definition of the term "parcel" which will give a better measure of control over the area of land comprised therein; and secondly, to provide the Minister with discretion to vary the boundary fencing requirements applicable to each parcel.

I will now refer to the amendments in more detail.

The existing definition of "parcel" is deleted and substituted by one giving more control over the area of land contained therein. In future the area of land comprising a parcel must be approved by the Minister rather than the company.

A further amendment gives the Minister discretion to vary the boundary fencing requirements applicable to each parcel of land to permit the removal and re-siting of temporary fencing where deemed necessary, with progressive development of each parcel of land.

When the original agreement was varied in 1969 to increase the area of parcels of land from 5 000 to 10 000 acres, no provision was made to

adjust the price per acre for land in parcels to be granted subsequent to the first parcel. This new agreement provides a new pricing structure for land in the second parcel and details the price per acre applicable to remaining parcels which may be granted.

Provision is made for a change in boundaries of the first parcel of land to be granted to the company, and also for the granting to the company of the land contained in the amended parcel.

Members will observe that I have not quoted metric conversions and in this respect a decision was taken by Parliamentary Counsel in conjunction with the Public Service Board that no amendments would be made to ratified agreements to cover metric conversions. The parties to such agreements may, of course, make the conversions and agree to the changes between them.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr H. D. Evans.

#### *Message: Appropriations*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

### HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 2nd May.

**MR HARMAN** (Maylands) [5.58 p.m.]: One of the most important factors in our community today is the ever increasing cost of health care. It is generally agreed that Government spending in this area is almost like pouring money into a bottomless pit; and the question is often asked by Governments and people concerned with the cost of health care: How can we get best value out of every dollar spent?

Have we reached a situation in Western Australia where we are obtaining diminishing returns for increasing outlays? Have our doctors too much control and influence over health care expenditure? Have our hospitals too much individual autonomy? Have we too many hospital beds in Western Australia? Have we too many doctors in Western Australia? What is the cost of waste and inefficiency in our health care system? Are we concentrating too much on patching up medicine, rather than tackling the matter through preventive medicine? Are we doing enough to ensure that the poor and disadvantaged have equal opportunity to enjoy good health and obtain health services? Are we doing enough in the field

of occupational health? All these questions—and there are many more—are matters for the Government to determine.

I submit that this Government would find it extremely difficult satisfactorily to answer all these questions. Already the Premier has announced that community health programmes and the school dental scheme will be cut back in the next Budget. Our children will be denied the opportunity of free dental care while \$3 million in State funds is to be spent on the 150th year celebrations.

When making those comments, the Premier tried to blame the Whitlam Government for giving our children the opportunity to obtain free dental care at school. Of course, the Premier was right because it was during the era of the Whitlam Government that the school dental system—as we know it—was introduced, and the benefits from that scheme started to flow to the people concerned.

It is interesting to read some of the remarks made by the Premier relating to the school dental scheme. I wish first to quote from the Liberal Party policy for the 1977-1980 period. I would ask members to note these words very carefully. Under the heading, "Dental Health" the following appears—

We will progressively extend our free dental health programme for school children to cover every primary school in Western Australia.

That was announced in 1977.

**Mr Ridge:** From what are you quoting?

**Mr HARMAN:** I am quoting from Liberal policy for 1977-1980, and the statement appears at page 107. That is a gem of sophism for you—"our free dental health programme", when the scheme was introduced by the Whitlam Government in 1973 under arrangements made between the State and the Commonwealth.

**Sir Charles Court:** Are you saying that was the first dental health scheme in this State?

**Mr HARMAN:** I am discussing what the Premier said in his party's policy document.

**Sir Charles Court:** Are you saying the Whitlam dental scheme was the first that was introduced?

**Mr HARMAN:** Of course I am not.

**Sir Charles Court:** Why do you not stick to the facts? You are trying to say Whitlam started it off.

**Mr HARMAN:** The school dental health scheme started in March, 1973, following an arrangement made between the State and the

Commonwealth, yet in 1977 the Premier referred to the scheme as "our free dental health programme". Now the Premier is going to curtail it severely because of the moves made by the Federal Government to restrict money for what I believe is one of the best schemes ever to be implemented in Western Australia.

Mr Davies: That is new federalism.

Mr HARMAN: I tried to find out why the Federal Government was taking this stand, and I consulted the policy of the Federal Liberal Government. It states as follows—

The Liberal and National Country Parties believe that the State Governments must once again become the principal source of health care delivery within the Federal policy framework, to which the States will be expected to contribute. We believe that this is the first step towards the establishment of a localised and community-based health care service that enables us to gain the greatest benefit from each health dollar.

So, there we have it: It is Liberal Party policy at a Federal level to make the States contribute more towards the health care programme.

The first thing which will happen on the introduction of such a policy is that the school dental scheme as we know it, and introduced in 1973, will be curtailed, all because of decisions made by the Federal Government and all because the Government in this State will not stand up to Canberra.

I remind members of what our Premier said in March, 1974. He said, "We need a strong Government to stand up to Canberra." Those words were contained in his policy speech.

Sir Charles Court: Thank goodness we have one.

Mr HARMAN: The Premier does not seem to be doing very well at the moment because not only are the community health services and our school dental scheme to be cut back but also our hospital development programme is to be curtailed. Where is this strong man who is going to stand up to Canberra?

Sir Charles Court: You point out a Government that is doing better.

Mr HARMAN: I also wish to refer to some of the actions of the Federal Government in respect of Medibank. Members might recall that in 1975 the Prime Minister said he would not interfere with Medibank. Since then, of course, he has done quite a lot to interfere with Medibank. Now we have the recently-announced proposal for people to pay more for a visit to the doctor.

We have also been threatened with the introduction of a system called "Front End Deductibles" whereby a person can pay, say, the first \$100 of his medical account in return for which his medical insurance premiums will be reduced. This will mean that the people who are advantaged—those who are wealthy—will be able to afford that sort of insurance, while the people who are disadvantaged will have to pay more for their insurance because, obviously, they are the ones who are going to spend more time going to see their doctor or to hospital. This is the scheme which shortly is to be introduced into this country, again by a Liberal Government.

Statistics show that low income earners have a higher rate of illness and premature death. Today—again, because of deliberate Government economic policies—more and more people are being forced out of work and into idleness through lack of job opportunities. If these statistics are correct, there will be many more people who are disadvantaged and, therefore, who will be requiring our medical services—all because of the economic policies of the Federal Liberal-Country Party Government.

Records show also that reductions in mortality and improvements in health occur when standards of living are raised by the provision of better housing, better sanitation, cleaner water supplies, and improved nutrition. All these aspects are under challenge in Western Australia. Housing is becoming a luxury that many young people in our community cannot afford. Our water supply is in a serious position and deep sewerage is falling behind the rate of building in the community. Improved nutrition is a topic to be found almost weekly in *The Australian Women's Weekly* but is hardly mentioned in our schools.

One of the biggest health problems in Australia is the use of tobacco and alcohol. To put this forcibly before the Chamber I shall quote from the report of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare. I shall quote from page 25 of that report dealing with the question of alcohol as follows—

Alcohol has been a major factor causing the deaths of over 30 000 Australians in the last 10 years.

Deaths from cirrhosis of the liver have risen 75 per cent in the last 10 years.

From 1965 to 1976, the per capita increase in the consumption of beer has been 27 per cent, of wine 122 per cent and of spirits 50 per cent.

Over one-quarter of a million Australians can be classified as alcoholics.

One million two hundred thousand

Australians are affected personally or in their family situations by the abuse of alcohol. One in every five of our hospital beds is occupied by a person suffering from the adverse effects of alcohol.

Two in every five divorces or judicial separations result from alcohol induced problems.

In 1972-73, problems directly related to alcohol, including industrial accidents and absenteeism, cost the national economy more than \$500m.

Some 73 per cent of the men who have committed a violent crime had been drinking prior to the commission of the crime.

Alcohol is associated with half the serious crime in Australia.

Alcoholism among the young is increasing dramatically and as many as 10 per cent of school children between the ages of 12 and 17 get 'very drunk' at least once a month.

On the subject of tobacco the report includes the following—

Tobacco, particularly in the form of cigarettes, continues to contribute each year to the deaths of approximately 8 000 Australians from heart disease and about 3 500 from lung cancer. Smoking is one of the main avoidable health hazards in modern society; yet Australians continue to smoke 2 800 million cigarettes each month. The dangers of smoking have been widely publicised. So much has been written about them, and there have been so many health-oriented programs, that the general public cannot be ignorant of the fact that smoking is a major health hazard. Yet Australia's death rate from diseases related to cigarette smoking continues with little positive outcry or action by the community or governments to change these circumstances.

So from those two quotes we can see just how much effect alcohol and cigarettes have upon the people and their life styles in Australia.

Governments can change our attitudes towards these two drugs but Governments are not doing anything at all to prevent their continued abuse. To reinforce this point I shall draw members' attention to an article in *The Australian* of the 25th July, 1978, headed, "Prevention costs less than the cure". It reads as follows—

A preliminary study back in 1972-73 by Dr L. Drew, from the Health Department, found that while the Government received only \$547 million in taxes, the total cost of alcohol to the community was \$1 177 million.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The level of audible conversation is far too high and I ask members to show more respect to the member making his speech.

Mr HARMAN: On the question of smoking the article said in part—

But the costs associated with smoking—including treating the four main diseases linked to smoking (heart disease, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and emphysema); the cost of importing cigarettes; fire damage caused by smoking and dividends paid by cigarette companies to overseas shareholders—amounted to \$816 million.

Thus, even discounting the pain and suffering and the more than 15 000 premature deaths attributed to smoking each year, there is no longer even an economic argument for the lack of government action.

So it seems to me, if we are to tackle these problems, it is the duty of the Government of the day to be looking at them. As part of the Opposition policy in 1977 we said there ought to be a health commission in this State; a body that would over-view all aspects of health care in Western Australia; a body that would be responsible to the Government; a body that would be able to check hospital expenditure.

A Public Accounts Committee report—that august body I have often had a few words to say about—presented on the 8th May, 1975, and dealing with the subject of hospitals, had the following to say—

On the other hand, we have been concerned by opinions expressed in evidence that there exists between the two larger teaching hospitals (Royal Perth and Sir Charles Gairdner) an unco-ordinated rivalry which could result in excessive expenditure of public monies.

Evidence suggests that this rivalry can, and already has, led to excessive expenditure of public monies by unnecessary duplication of expensive buildings and equipment.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr HARMAN: Prior to the tea suspension I was reminding the House of the policy of the Australian Labor Party as announced at the last State election. At that time we said that, if we were elected to Government, we would set up a health commission. That health commission would have had the responsibility for over-viewing all the health care services in Western Australia.

It would have had responsibility also for allocation of priorities and so forth.

At that stage I was quoting remarks made in support of such a commission by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. In the committee's report on page 6, the chairman says as follows—

All witnesses, except three, were of the opinion that a body separate from the Medical Department should be responsible for the overall planning of hospitals' expenditure priorities.

Most witnesses favoured the setting up of an autonomous Commission along the lines of the Victorian Hospitals and Charities Commission.

We are of the opinion that the final decision on planning for expenditure of such huge sums of taxpayers' money should remain with the Government of the day. However, we strongly recommend the formation of an advisory committee with real investigative powers. This committee would act directly as the Minister's consultant on expenditure priorities and at the same time collect and analyse financial and statistical information for such use as the Minister and Committee think fit.

I should like to remind members that the people who gave evidence at that inquiry by the Public Accounts Committee were administrators of our major hospitals. They included the person in charge of the School of Medicine, people representing the General Practitioners' Society of Australia, the person in charge of the Department of Neuropathology of Western Australia, the principal education officer of the Nurses' Board of Western Australia, the Director of Administration of the Public Health Department, and so on. These people are all eminent, key specialists in the field of health care in Western Australia. All except three of these men and women recommended there should be some form of over-view by a commission of our hospital and medical expenditure.

The Health Act Amendment Bill sets out to achieve six objectives. These are, firstly, that the penalties for offences relating to the sale of foods, drugs, therapeutic substances, and disinfectants will be standardised and simplified by the introduction of a single penalty which can be varied according to the number of offences. Secondly, a health laboratory service will be established to incorporate the existing State laboratories and it will be part of the Public Health Department. The Bill provides also for a

committee to be appointed to advise the Minister on the rationalisation of laboratory services.

In his second reading speech the Minister said that, "By this machinery"—that is, the appointment of this committee—"the Minister will be informed of all points of view. He will be informed of the ability of the private sector to provide a service, thereby saving expenditure of public funds."

Does the Minister intend this to mean that a system will be gradually promoted whereby private laboratories will take over the major work which will mean people will be channelled into the private laboratories and subjected to the payment of costs charged by those laboratories? In other words, is the Minister hoping to build up a system which will mean ultimately an increase in fees for people using the laboratories services?

Thirdly, the Bill will repeal sections relating to the responsibility of local authorities to provide financial assistance for hospitals. Fourthly, the Bill will provide the legal machinery necessary to allow local authorities to assist the State Health Services. It will remove any legal inhibitions which may be contained in the Act at the present time. Legal machinery will be provided also for local authorities to make facilities available for doctors and dentists to practise.

Fifthly, a committee will be established. This committee will audit perinatal and infant deaths. A second committee will be established to audit deaths under anaesthetic.

I should like to sum up the points I have endeavoured to make in my contribution to this debate. The Government must ask itself a number of questions in relation to health care in Western Australia. The expenditure on hospitals and medical care is rising to a high level and the question must be asked, "How can we get the best value out of every health dollar spent?"

I suggested also that the Government ought to be giving more attention to preventive medicine, particularly to the effects of the misuse of the main drugs in Australia which are alcohol and tobacco. Finally, I suggested that the Government ought to think seriously about establishing a health commission which will have the responsibility of over-viewing all of the health care services. This commission would establish priorities also and carry out ongoing research into the number of doctors and hospital beds required in this State. It should look also at the waste and inefficiency that arises within our present hospital system.

**MR TAYLOR (Cockburn)** [7.38 p.m.]: I should like to enter this debate by making one or two comments with respect to clause 32 only. This

clause allows local authorities to enter into agreements with other local authorities, medical practitioners, or dental practitioners in order that funds may be raised by the local authority to enable the erection of premises so that those medical practitioners or dentists may set up practices.

Generally the provision is a good one. The Minister introduced the provision in the Bill for the first time on the 1st November, 1977. The Leader of the Opposition replied to the Minister's second reading speech. General endorsement was given to this clause.

Most members know that many local authorities, particularly those situated in rural areas, have real problems trying to attract medical and dental practitioners to their localities. People living in rural areas experience great difficulties obtaining the facilities they need. There is no reason for opposing a provision which enables a local authority to raise funds so that dental and medical practitioners may establish practices.

In his second reading speech, the Minister covered adequately the reasons for including this particular clause. His arguments were endorsed by the Opposition.

Some of the comments were relevant and the following is from page 2834 of *Hansard* No. 3 of 1977—

In more recent years those servicing the more remote areas have expressed concern at the absence of medical and dental facilities. A number of municipalities have provided facilities both residential and otherwise to attract and hold doctors and dentists.

Recently the Government had need to ascertain the limit of legal powers under which such local authorities had acted. It was revealed that the powers were not as extensive as previously had been believed.

The Minister is pointing out that local authorities, in acting in the best interests of ratepayers, may have gone a little far in what they were legally allowed to do and that the provision was necessary to legalise those proceedings in order to put them beyond doubt. The Opposition has no quarrel with that, but I draw the attention of the House to the words, "the more remote areas". Further on on the same page, the Minister said—

Members may ask: What is the justification for the use of public funds to support private medical practice or similar facilities? The answer of course is that life is more comfortable, and higher incomes are earned in the cities.

Few doctors or dentists today are prepared to commit themselves to a lifetime of country service, and therefore they are unwilling to enter into heavy capital expenditure in country towns.

Again, the reason was very clear, and the Opposition is not concerned about that aspect. In fact, in terms of general philosophy the Opposition does not object to any local authority anywhere making such a move provided it is within certain limits. However, it is that aspect which worries me.

The provision applies to outer country areas which are in need. However, an instance has arisen in my own electorate which indicates that the provision will be used in a way which was not intended by the Government and possibly not by the Minister.

Very briefly, a situation arose in the town of Kwinana where two medical practitioners arranged with the council for a motion to be submitted under which the Kwinana council would guarantee funds for a new medical centre. Something like \$350 000 was to be guaranteed by the local authority so that this medical centre could be built on condition that the legislation was passed.

Certain aspects worried some of the residents and some of the councillors. One councillor walked-out from the council meeting. Obviously the residents were perturbed, because at an election in May the councillor who moved the motion was defeated and basically the reason was that he had moved the motion the previous year.

The majority of the members of the council as presently constituted appear to indicate they are opposed to the move, but the council passed the motion last year and therefore is tied by it.

A public meeting has been held protesting against the move by the council, and the interesting point is that a motion of no confidence was passed in the council because it allowed the motion to go through. The motion of no confidence was moved by the president of the Liberal Party branch and was seconded by the president of the Labor Party branch, indicating broad democratic opposition to the move.

The local authority agreed to raise funds and guarantee a loan for a medical practice, but not to attract doctors. At that time in Kwinana there were two major practices with at least four doctors. So the move was not with the idea of attracting more doctors to the area although there was certainly a shortage of medical practitioners.

The second point was that one group of doctors some months previously had purchased the old



council chambers and had spent something like \$200 000 in upgrading their facilities which appeared to give them a competitive advantage over the second group. It was the second group which then, by contacting the local authority, took steps to establish a second medical practice with facilities similar to or better than those of the first group.

So there were two major groups of doctors in competition with facilities which were similar. One group of its own volition had moved to establish larger facilities with specialists and a chemist shop, thus attracting greater patronage and placing the other group at a disadvantage.

The council passed a motion authorising the loan, providing the legislation was passed. This would allow the second group to build larger premises and establish a one-upmanship in that area.

I want to emphasise two points. The first was that this move did not attract any more medical practitioners to the area and, secondly, it was a competitive move to upgrade facilities in line with those which had already been developed.

The third point which caused concern was that it was not just that the second group of doctors were unable to obtain further facilities. The major shopping centre in the area was owned by the superannuated staff of A.V. Jennings who were planning at that stage another building adjacent to the major shopping centre. There was talk that, in that building, facilities would be made available for medical practitioners, dentists, and others. Even at this stage, the motion remains on the books of the council that the loan will be raised for the group of doctors. There is a tentative plan before the council from a private developer for the establishment of a building right across the road and that building will contain facilities for medical practitioners.

Therefore it is not a matter of the council raising money to provide facilities for medical practitioners, because a private company is said to be prepared to build the premises.

The fourth point which is causing concern is that it has been said by one of the medical practitioners—and there were people present when he made the point—that the group of practitioners had not approached the local authority so much to obtain a loan guarantee, because they could raise the money themselves independently. The idea of obtaining the loan guarantee was that the interest rate on money borrowed by the council would be lower than the interest rate they would have to pay if they raised the money themselves.

This indicates again that the council was using its loan provisions in a way which I am sure was outside the intention of the Act.

I have placed on the notice paper two amendments, either one of which would be acceptable to the Opposition. As I mentioned, we are not opposed to the principle in the clause, particularly as it relates to country shires or those areas trying to attract medical or dental practitioners. However, we wonder whether the Minister has foreseen what may occur if the situation is left as it is. In other words, any local authority—even the City of Perth—would be able to guarantee loans to provide dental or medical facilities if it so desired.

The clause should be passed to validate any past actions of councils which may be in doubt and it will also facilitate the development of medical and dental facilities in areas where they are needed.

Therefore we would like the clause to remain as it is, but we would like the Minister to agree to the inclusion of a clause limiting the facility to country areas. A problem could arise in large country centres like Bunbury or Albany. Alternatively—and perhaps this would be better—a clause could be included making the provision subject to ministerial review. In other words the Minister, through his department, would be able to vet each application by a local authority to ensure that a real need and not an abuse of the provision was involved. The Minister would be able to say, “Yea” or “Nay”. I will deal with the amendments in Committee.

**MR YOUNG** (Scarborough) [7.49 p.m.]: I want to speak for a moment or two in respect of the comments made by the member for Maylands in order that I might clarify a point. I am sure the member for Maylands read exactly from the report No. 11 of the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, dated the 8th May, 1975.

However, perhaps he may have given the impression to the Chamber and to the Press that the Public Accounts Committee agreed with the people who expressed the opinion that an autonomous commission along the lines of the Victorian Hospitals and Charities Commission should be established in Western Australia.

I want to make the point that that committee, of which I was chairman, did not agree with the suggestion of all those witnesses who appeared before the committee. In fact, we came down in favour of something different from that expressed: the opinion that the final decision on planning, and the expenditure of such huge sums of the

taxpayers' money should remain with the Government.

Mr Harman: I said that.

Mr YOUNG: I know the member for Maylands quoted that, but I want to make it clear, which I do not think the honourable member did: We did not agree that an autonomous body should be set up. What we did in fact suggest was that an independent body should be set up—which I know the member for Maylands also read out. But I want to strengthen what the committee tried to achieve; that was, to have the best body possible which could act, in fact, as an auditor between the Minister and his Medical Department officers.

The great bulk of witnesses—all except three—were of the opinion that a body separate from the Medical Department should be responsible for overall planning. We said we could not see any reason that departmental officers should take offence at having an independent body looking on and researching planning any more than they would in a situation where the Auditor-General came in and checked the figures they were responsible for preparing.

Therefore, in effect we refuted the suggestions of the majority of witnesses who thought an autonomous body should be set up—which I understand the Opposition would prefer to see. We wanted an independent advisory body to advise the Minister in respect of his own departmental findings; not to interfere, but to allow them to go ahead with their work—which is quite proper—and to have someone else who could give an independent view based on a professional over-view of the situation.

I want to make it clear that if any impression was gained—and I do not say it was given deliberately by the member for Maylands—that the committee went along with the suggestion of an autonomous health commission, then it was gained falsely.

**DR TROY (Fremantle)** [7.52 p.m.]: In speaking to the amendments to the Health Act I would make the following comments: The amendments amount to a hotchpotch, a ragbag body of amendments; this in the face of some fairly serious circumstances with regard to our health care system.

I believe the Government, in bringing forward such a ragbag of amendments is holding this place in contempt and it can only bring this place into disrepute, so far as the community is concerned.

We are faced with a number of problems in relation to our health care system. One of them is the absolute skyrocketing of health costs, and

another is, in an individual sense, the increased lack of capacity by individuals, at the point of delivery of services, to pay.

We have no rational hospital programme and we have some very serious health problems. One problem which confronts us in this State concerns the distribution of acute illness beds. A total of 90 per cent of the acute illness beds are situated within a three-mile radius of the Perth GPO. Those beds, in many respects, are located in that circle not for the convenience of patients, but rather for the convenience of medicos. I believe that is a very serious situation when we consider the health services are provided for a whole community.

In 1972 it was projected that if the current rate of increase for health care costs was to continue, by 1985 it would take up 25 per cent of the gross national product. That seems to be something we have to investigate very seriously, and do something about. The Federal Government has already indicated, in its statements preparatory to the coming Budget, that there will be a cut-back in the funds for hospital development programmes. That cut-back is estimated to be 88 per cent, which is very large indeed. One might ask which of the current hospital programmes will suffer: Will it be the Fremantle Hospital, the Royal Perth Hospital, or the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre? It is clear that one or two of those hospitals must suffer.

There is another area that this Government has done little for, and nor has anybody else—that is, the distribution of primary health care. In that I refer to the level of GP-type health care. Some initiatives that the current Federal Budget is taking can only adversely affect the distribution of such care, in particular doctor-initiated care—the initiative of bulk billing allowed the setting up of a practice where a doctor does not have to be concerned about a guaranteed income. The threat to that process is, in fact, a threat to a health care unit; in this case, a GP unit. To reduce the bulk billing component to 75 per cent is a penalty against doctors who actually work in such areas. I believe that to be a retrograde step.

Much has been made of the huge increase in health care costs, but in the period we have just been through—the last four or five years—the main increase in costs has been doctor initiated, not as is often said from over-use of the system by anxious patients. The facts show that to be the case. The main area of increase has been doctor initiated, and I think that bears some analysis.

I believe we face a serious situation in health care areas. The amendments now before us do not

treat these matters with the seriousness they deserve.

**MR RIDGE** (Kimberley—Minister for Health) [7.58 p.m.]: I express my appreciation to the members who have spoken to this measure. Very little was expressed by anybody in opposition to the measure. The member for Maylands spoke for a considerable time and I was worried as to whether he would get around to the Bill, but finally he did. He discussed in minute detail one point, and I will refer to that point also.

Most of the other matters raised were not mentioned in the Bill. Many of them concern the Federal Government, rather than the State Government. Nevertheless, I would like to comment on some of those points raised, particularly by the member for Maylands.

I think the honourable member started off by asking where we were going, and whether we were getting value for our dollar in the provision of health care in Western Australia. Quite honestly, I do not know whether we are getting value for the money we are spending, but certainly I believe we are guided by the right people—some very dedicated people. They have taken some initiatives in recent times to help us get our bed averages down.

I believe that if we were able to turn the clock back a few years we would not have done some of the things we have done. I refer to the question, "Have we too many beds?" Perhaps we have, but as I say, if we were able to turn the clock back, we might have adopted a different attitude. Perhaps instead we would be spending money on preventive health measures rather than on the provision of the facilities we have now.

I believe also that costs must be kept under extremely close scrutiny, and we are doing that, but it stands to reason that when the Commonwealth decides it will reduce the amount of funds to be made available to the States, the States will likewise have to determine where they will effect some savings. The member for Fremantle asked a moment ago whether a reduction by 88 per cent in the hospitals fund by the Commonwealth would have any effect on the Fremantle and Royal Perth Hospitals and the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre. In fact, I believe in 1976-77 we were receiving something in the order of \$12 million from the Commonwealth for these particular programmes. Last year the amount was reduced to \$4 million and in the current financial year it will be reduced to nil. So the State has to make up this money, or it certainly has to keep going the programmes that

have been initiated in the past—it is necessary for us to continue with these projects.

As I mentioned in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition this evening, we may not be able to continue with them at the rate we would have liked or at the rate which has prevailed in the past, but the other feature is that in endeavouring to keep these programmes going the State has not been able to initiate one new hospital project in the last 12 months. We have been able to provide a new operating suite here, a new wing there, and so on, but we have not been able to commence the building of a new hospital in the last 12 months, except for projects which were under way before this happened; and I refer particularly to the Wanneroo Hospital.

As to whether we are getting value for our money, where do we go? In country areas do we put up transportable buildings or do we build in bricks and mortar? I would like to build in bricks and mortar in country areas because I am sure such buildings would last longer than the transportable buildings and so on. We could take a multitude of things; for instance, some of the sophisticated devices for keeping people alive, when a few years ago, without them, they would not have survived, but because they can do the job it is probably necessary for hospitals to have such types of equipment. It is an area which is causing the medical profession some concern and we are looking at it very closely. In the future we might have to introduce a form of legislation in relation to that matter.

The member for Maylands spoke about the necessity to curtail the community health and school dental service programmes. He said the Liberal Party or the present Government referred to the school dental service as being its programme. I do not care which Government is in power; it is its programme; and as far as I am concerned it is our programme. A dental service has been operating for many years and I do not know which Government got it off the ground. I believe the former Minister for Health (the Hon. Graham MacKinnon) was the person responsible in the first place.

If we are talking about the present dental therapy programme, it might be a different situation altogether; but we have undertaken to provide every primary school child in Western Australia with this dental therapy service in the foreseeable future. At the end of this year we will have covered 70 per cent of the primary school children in the State, and we are streets ahead of any other State in this direction at the present moment. I believe in two years' time we will have completed our programme with the primary

school children. We have no intention of stopping it. Perhaps we will have to wind it down slightly. Nevertheless we will achieve that objective.

Mr McIver: I hope Wundowie is on the list.

Mr RIDGE: There are a few places I would like to see on the list but I do not have the influence.

The member for Maylands also spoke of its being Labor Party policy to have a health commission. I accept that, and perhaps it is a good thing. The present Government has adopted the attitude that it is prepared to keep its options open. We will see what happens in Victoria where a commission or something similar has been established. We are not particularly enamoured of what Victoria has going, and I do not believe Victoria thinks it is the ultimate answer either.

Mr Davies: I am not particularly enamoured of what they have in Victoria.

Mr RIDGE: I am suggesting the Victorian commission does not particularly suit us. That is why we will keep our options open and see what happens in other States where they might not have a commission but might have a similar body.

Mr Davies: New South Wales is different. It has established regions and things like that, unless it has changed its system in the last 12 or 18 months.

Mr RIDGE: We are keeping our options open and if at some time in the future we believe there is a necessity to have a hospitals commission in Western Australia we will do something about it at the appropriate time.

In referring to a report, which I believe was the report of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Maylands mentioned unco-ordinated rivalry between the major teaching hospitals. If that ever was the case I do not believe it is now, because in recent years we have had a body of top level officers within the Public Health Department overseeing the responsibilities, aspirations, and requests of the various teaching hospitals, and I believe we have now reached a situation where we are keeping them under close scrutiny and maintaining a good degree of order.

Mr Davies: Who makes up that committee?

Mr RIDGE: It comprises officers of the Public Health Department: the Commissioner of Public Health, the Director of Administration, the Director-General of Medical Services, the Director-General of Mental Health Services, and some people from the teaching hospitals. I am somewhat embarrassed because I cannot think of the name of the committee. They are top level people from the department, and any major

requests by the teaching hospitals are studied by the committee, which determines whether they are reasonable and in turn makes recommendations to the Minister. I believe it has had a salutary effect in reducing any competition which may have existed between the major teaching hospitals.

The only query the member for Maylands raised in relation to the legislation was in connection with the rationalisation committee which has been formed in regard to laboratory services, and he particularly wanted to know how this would save funds. He referred to my second reading speech.

I point out that the prime function of the committee would be to advise the Minister on any proposal to expand existing laboratory services or to set up a new service. The committee will advise the Minister whether it is desirable to expand an existing service or whether it would be preferable to establish a new service. If, for argument's sake, the committee says private enterprise is prepared to provide a service to a section of the community and there is no need for us to establish a service in the hospital because a facility will be provided by private enterprise, that is how it will save us money. It is not intended to save money by transferring people out of the existing service; and as far as fees are concerned, under the agreement we have with the Commonwealth we are obliged to charge a fee but the State Health Laboratories have confined the charge to the amount patients are able to recoup from their hospital insurance funds, so the charges have been kept at a very reasonable level.

The member for Cockburn raised a query in relation to clause 32. I am not quite sure what he was getting at because, as he pointed out, this was introduced to give local authorities the opportunity to provide facilities such as a doctor's surgery, a doctor's house, or perhaps a medical centre as such. Local authorities have been providing these facilities for many years but it was only recently that somebody determined that they did not have the right to do so. They did not have the right at law, and so this amendment was introduced to clarify the situation and to give local authorities this particular right. However, it is of interest that the local authority that came forward with the specific request was one in the area that the honourable member represents. He said that some of the ratepayers in his area were unhappy at the council's proposal to raise loan funds for a medical centre in that particular area.

I cannot quite see what the area of concern is, because surely to goodness if the majority of the council members have now changed their minds,

as I think he indicated they have done, there is available to them the opportunity to rescind the motion that was moved in council. There is available to the people in the local authority the right to conduct a poll to determine whether or not the council should raise the loan and take the various other actions referred to.

Mr Taylor: I believe the council can be sued if it withdraws the motion. Having committed itself, and action having been taken by the medical practitioners, if the council now rescinds the motion, legal proceedings could ensue for the recovery of the expenditure involved.

Mr RIDGE: If the council is so silly as to enter into arrangements and commit itself to some sort of agreement without the legislative measures to do so, it has only itself to blame for any problems it now faces. I must say I do not see it as being a problem.

At this stage I indicate that I am opposed to the amendment foreshadowed by the member for Cockburn.

Mr Davies: Why is that?

Mr RIDGE: The member for Fremantle described this legislation as a hotchpotch and a ragbag, and I must say he surprised me, when, as a medical practitioner himself, he said that if this legislation is passed we will bring the House into contempt and disrepute. I would like to know why he says this; what is wrong with the legislation? He suggests that other steps could be taken, and of course this could be correct. However, does he mean to say that he is opposed to the formation of a perinatal and infant mortality committee, and is he opposed to the formation of an anaesthetic mortality committee?

Dr Troy: No.

Mr RIDGE: Well then, what is wrong with the legislation? The member for Fremantle said it was a hotchpotch and a ragbag, but he never told us what particular points he disagrees with. It would have been far more constructive if he had made firm suggestions rather than simply describing the legislation in the way that he did.

Mr Davies: This is the second time you have brought this legislation to the House.

Mr RIDGE: That is correct, but that does not make it a hotchpotch and a ragbag. Probably it makes it better legislation.

Mr Davies: I am just reminding you that the first time you had to let it go.

Mr RIDGE: That is right, but it probably makes for better legislation. The Bill has been subjected to closer scrutiny, not only by

politicians, but also by members of the medical profession.

Mr Davies: All I was going to say—

Mr RIDGE: I have no apology whatsoever for bringing this legislation before the House for the second time.

Mr Davies: You are too sensitive! I was going to say that it came back without any substantial changes.

Mr RIDGE: It came back with a couple of changes.

Mr Davies: They were not substantial.

Mr RIDGE: They were substantial to the people concerned. Anyway, we have rectified that problem and we have satisfied the people in the profession. Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Watt) in the Chair; Mr Ridge (Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 31 put and passed.

Clause 32: Section 330B added—

Mr TAYLOR: The Minister said that he did not quite see what I was getting at. Perhaps I did not put my points as clearly as I should have. I am rather concerned about the purpose of this clause as it stands, and I believe the Minister should explain it to us a little more fully rather than my having to explain why I wish to have it amended.

When the Bill was first presented in 1977, the tenor of the Minister's remarks—and these appear on page 2834 of *Hansard* of the 1st November, 1977—was that the reason for this clause was to make valid, if necessary, actions taken by local authorities to secure medical and dental facilities in their area when there was no other way to achieve this end. The Opposition agreed with that proposal. I am sure anyone reading the Minister's second reading speech would agree that that is the purpose of the clause; there appears to be no other reason for it. If Governments are anxious for local authorities to enter into development, surely they would give them the right to raise money to build shops, factories, or anything else. However, local authorities will only have this ability to raise funds and guarantee loans for medical or dental facilities.

It seemed very clear to me, from the Minister's speech, that local authorities would be given the

right to raise money to provide these facilities where there was a real need and where there was no other opportunity to provide them.

In the instance I quoted it appears that if this legislation is passed the local authority will have used its powers—albeit by a majority of one vote—to guarantee a loan for medical practitioners who are already in the area and who are in competition with others in the area. Despite the fact that a large national organisation is prepared to build facilities, the local authority will use the funds in this way, and the sole reason for this is that the money is cheaper than that available elsewhere. I cannot see how the Government can use this argument to justify the inclusion of the clause.

The amendment I would like to move is a simple one. It will not take away from local authorities in country or outback areas the right to use this power if a need for the facilities exists. However, it would limit local authorities in the metropolitan area where it appears that already there is ample competition between practitioners in both the medical and dental fields. I move an amendment—

Page 8, line 13—Insert after the word “a” the passage “non-metropolitan”.

Mr RIDGE: As I indicated earlier, I am opposed to the amendment. I do not see why the member for Cockburn thinks that local authorities in remote areas should be the only ones with the right to utilise funds in this way. If we are to provide this service, it should be provided to local authorities right throughout Western Australia, and the inclusion of metropolitan local authorities is of great significance to me. I believe we have a right to encourage the provision of a universal health service right throughout our State, and I cannot see why this right should be restricted to country and remote areas. Despite the fact that the local authority to which he is referring is comparatively near to Perth, I believe it should have the same right as any other local authority in Western Australia. Accordingly, I oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr TAYLOR: I intend to move a further amendment to the clause, for the same reasons as mentioned twice already. I still believe there should be some remedy against an action of a local authority which may for some reason appear to be using ratepayers' funds in a way which is unnecessary. I do not say that is necessarily happening in the Town of Kwinana, but I do say it is conceivable that a local authority could so guarantee funds for a project which could result

in the ratepayers being required to meet a loss. Therefore, I move an amendment—

Page 8, line 13—Insert after the word “may” the words “subject to approval by the Minister”.

Mr RIDGE: I oppose this amendment also. It seeks to make the action of a local authority subject to the approval of the Minister, and I am unable to see why that should be so. This part of the Bill proposes an extension of the powers of a local authority to promote the health of the inhabitants of its district, and, if the local authority's plans involve the raising of funds, it is bound under the Local Government Act to seek the Governor's approval. The amendment proposed by the member for Cockburn could be seen only as an exercise in increasing the level of bureaucracy.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 33 put and passed.

Clause 34: Part XIIIB added—

Mr WILSON: I wish to draw the Minister's attention to what I consider to be an omission in the provisions for the setting up of the perinatal and infant mortality committee. I consider this to be a very good measure; however, I feel it leaves out an area of consideration which is vital to a sector of the population of Western Australia. I refer to the Aboriginal population. Although non-Aboriginal Australians have one of the lowest mortality rates in the modern world, particularly at young ages, Aborigines are much less fortunate. Depending on where he is born, the probability of an Aboriginal infant dying before his first birthday is four to eight times greater than the probability of a non-Aboriginal.

Unfortunately it is very difficult to obtain reliable statistics relating to infant mortality rates amongst Aboriginal children in Western Australia. I have sought this information from the library of the Public Health Department and from the community health section of the same department, but have been unable to obtain any such statistics of a recent nature. I understand that it may be a policy these days not to keep separate statistics for Aborigines—that is, since the referendum of 1967.

However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the differential between infant mortality rates of non-Aborigines and Aborigines is still quite significant. The best information I could obtain was from a survey conducted in 1969 when an attempt was made to trace Aboriginal deaths in New South Wales, Western Australia, and

Queensland. The survey showed that in the early 1960s the proportion of total Aboriginal deaths was 44 per cent in the Northern Territory as opposed to 20 per cent in Western Australia. However, the conclusion of the person conducting the survey was that this was not so much a difference in the level of mortality rates as a differential coverage in the study of adult and child death rates, and that in fact mortality rates at that stage in Western Australia and the Northern Territory were much the same.

The statistics showed there was a minimal decline in infant mortality rates amongst Aboriginal children between 1958 and 1967 to something like 131 deaths per 1 000 live births. In 1968 this was down to 81 per 1 000. However, it seems that decline did not continue, because in the Federal Parliament in 1971 Dr Richard Klugman stated that whereas the infant mortality rate in central Australia was 89 per 1 000 in 1969, in 1970 it had more than doubled to 182 per 1 000; and in 1971 the rate was even higher at 200 per 1 000.

Of course, the conclusion we must draw from that is that, unless a large number of infant deaths were unrecorded in previous years, such a reversal in trends indicates that the causes of infant and childhood mortality amongst Aborigines are not under control, and that health and nutrition standards are far below what would be tolerated by white Australians.

What I want to say, therefore, about the provisions setting up this committee—which I think is a very admirable move—is that the omission from the committee of a direct representative of the Aboriginal people is indeed a sad omission. This is something which has been recommended many times, and it has been shown many times that the best conveyors of medical care to Aboriginal people are Aboriginal people. I consider, therefore, that it would have been a very wise measure on the part of the Minister and the Government to have included on this committee a person representing Aboriginal medical services, that person himself being an Aboriginal. I believe, from statistics that are available, that we have every reason to believe that the differential between mortality rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in Western Australia is still a significant one. Therefore I would ask the Minister whether consideration was given to such a proposal; and, if not, whether he feels consideration should be given to it in the future.

Mr RIDGE: Perhaps I could answer the last part of the question first. No, consideration was not given to the inclusion of a representative of the Aboriginal people on this committee. I point

out it is a technical committee which is to be made up of representatives from various hospitals—particularly hospitals such as St. John of God—and will include such people as gynaecologists and various others associated with childbirth. The other point I would make is that this committee will generally operate in the metropolitan area. It is not one that will extend its net right throughout the State, because the people involved in it will just not be available to travel great distances.

Mr Davies: But they have to receive a report; it does not matter where the death occurs.

Mr RIDGE: Okay; it is being restricted for the present time, and the member will notice that the Bill refers to the metropolitan area. In any case, consideration was not given to including a representative of the Aboriginal people. If we were looking for a medical practitioner, I do not know whether we would find an Aboriginal medical practitioner.

I wish I had the figures in connection with infant mortality amongst Aborigines. Unfortunately, I do not, but I believe the figures to which the member for Dianella referred—I know they were not substantiated in any way—would be well out of date. He quoted figures relating to 1968. Some of the best things that have happened to the Aborigines from a health point of view have happened since that time, because we have seen the Community Health Services expand greatly from about that time to the degree now where it is very proud of its record of achievement among the Aboriginal people. The Community Health Services is involving the Aboriginal people as much as it can; it is training Aboriginal girls so they can take over health care amongst the local Aboriginal communities. I am quite positive figures could be produced which would demonstrate there has not been a reversal in that trend.

Mr Wilson: I would appreciate seeing them.

Mr RIDGE: I can well understand that. I do not know why the honourable member was told the figures were not available. I agree it is possible the department does not keep separate statistics relating to Aboriginal people, but I am quite positive that somebody over there could say, "Let us take a community like Fitzroy Crossing, Looma, or One Arm Point, where there is a significant Aboriginal population, and see what has happened."

If the honourable member cares to take this matter up with me by dropping me a note setting out what he seeks, I will see what can be provided. I think this information should be generally

available. I believe it would demonstrate that the Community Health Services in Western Australia has done a wonderful job in reducing the infant mortality rate amongst Aborigines to a level which would be very close to the rate amongst non-Aborigines.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 35 and 36 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

### *Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

## **SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 22nd March

**MR SKIDMORE** (Swan) [8.34 p.m.]: This Bill seeks to amend the Small Claims Tribunals Act in only two ways. Firstly, it seeks to amend section 20 of the Act, which will benefit the consumers; and, secondly, it will amend section 25 by giving the Small Claims Tribunal the power to summon persons before it after the initial hearing has commenced, where it is considered that the evidence of such persons is relevant to the proceedings.

This amending legislation will allow a great degree of control to be placed upon those lecherous types of dealers who see fit to take consumers' money on the ground that they are purchasing articles in good order and condition. The Minister's second reading speech gave the typical example of a motor vehicle purchase, where a consumer was sold an unsatisfactory engine. His only recourse was in common law, and even then he would be able to recover only the difference in cost between a good engine and what he had paid for the unsatisfactory engine. This places the consumer at a definite disadvantage, because even if he wins his case and recovers money, he is still left with an engine of no value.

The Opposition supports the amendments to the parent Act because they will enable the consumer to ask the Small Claims Tribunal to look after his interests

**MR T. D. EVANS** (Kalgoorlie) [8.35 p.m.]: I should like to express my support of this measure, with some mixed feelings. The mixed feelings are that, already, this Act, which was enacted in 1974, has been amended twice, once in 1976 and again on this occasion, only some 18 months later.

These are healthy signs that the Act is experiencing growing pains or troubles.

I was interested to read an article in a recent issue of *The West Australian* by a well known journalist, Helen Trinca, touching upon the operation of the Small Claims Tribunals Act. She pointed out that the operation of this Act had been referred by the Minister to the Law Reform Commission for report, and that the commission in fact had submitted a working paper. I expect I am still on the mailing list of the Law Reform Commission, and I look forward with some interest to reading the working paper which has been submitted.

However, according to the tenor of the article appearing in *The West Australian*, the Law Reform Commission has pointed out that the Act in its present form, in defining what is a small claim and what is a claimant, is 100 per cent consumer oriented, and that if a small claim initiated by a small businessman is at issue, at present—even if it concerns a consumer—the small trader's only recourse is through the local court.

I thought the whole purpose of the Small Claims Tribunal was to cut away the legal red tape inherent in the Local Court system, thus enabling relatively small claims to be heard more effectively. I understand from the tenor of the article that the Law Reform Commission, in its working paper for review and consideration by those here, has submitted that a special section should be set up in the Local Court system whereby those matters emanating from claims on behalf of small traders should be heard. This proposal fills me with some mixed feeling. This Act has been amended twice in four years and the demands on the tribunal's time and the number of cases heard are growing.

I believe the Government should consider widening the jurisdiction of the tribunal so that it includes all small claims, no matter whether they emanate from a consumer or a small trader. It is unfortunate that the Minister who is now steering the Bill in its passage through the debate in this Chamber did not introduce it, because I would like to speak in some detail on the amendments I have suggested.

The amending Bill seeks to repeal subsection (2) of section 20 of the parent Act. I wish to ask the Minister a question in relation to the proposed amendment, although I realise, of course, he is not the Minister who originally introduced the Bill. Subsection (2) of section 20 of the parent Act deals with the sorts of orders the Small Claims Tribunal can make, depending upon the



nature of the claim and the evidence brought before it.

The jurisdiction of the tribunal, in terms of the various orders that it can make, are set out in paragraphs (a) to (d) appearing in subsection (2) of section 20. The Bill proposes that this subsection shall be repealed and re-enacted. It thereupon sets out to re-enact paragraphs (a) to (d) as they are now in the Act. It seeks to add one new paragraph, (e), which gives the tribunal the right to make an order so that goods, appliances, or property, even though they might have passed to some other person, can be recovered and made over to a party to the proceedings.

I would like the Minister to explain why the Parliamentary Draftsman chose to take out paragraphs (a) to (d) and then add a new one, (e), rather than add (e) to the existing subsection (2) of section 20. This seems to be unnecessary drafting and printing and, on behalf of those who read the changes in law, so much unnecessary reading.

The other major amendment in the Bill deals with the manner in which the tribunal may bring other persons into the proceedings. A claimant is defined in the parent Act as a consumer. A small claim is defined and then the jurisdiction is vested in the tribunal to hear those matters coming from a claimant being of a small claim.

Apparently, it has become obvious that in the course of proceedings other persons who are not respondents or claimants sometimes become involved and do not come under the ambit of the tribunal. This is a growing and healthy sign of the improvement and growth of the small claims tribunal and the amendment will overcome this difficulty.

Finally, another sign that growing pains are being experienced is the provision whereby the method for serving notices upon parties to the proceedings and to others who may become involved is being extended. The parent Act provides for notices to be served and received in the due course of post. The amending Bill provides that the prescribed method only of service by mail will be repealed and the wider provisions encompassed in section 31 of the Interpretation Act will apply in future. This is a healthy sign that demands are growing and that difficulty has been experienced in delays where mail has not always been received. Under the terms of section 31 other methods of service can be adopted.

I support the amendments contained in the Bill.

**MR O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Works) [8.45 p.m.]: I thank members for their

general support of the Bill and I will endeavour to answer the questions raised by the member for Kalgoorlie.

As the member for Swan pointed out, these amendments will be of benefit to the consumer generally. They cover consumers who may have been in a position to be taken for a ride.

In reply to the member for Kalgoorlie, if one looks closely at the Bill one might see that it would have been necessary for two or three changes to be made and perhaps the draftsman, when drawing up the legislation, preferred to have the changes made in one go rather than have two or three amendments which would have been necessary, because at the beginning of the clause there is a slight variation and a new paragraph (e) was to be added. While it is achieving the result we want I can see the point made by the honourable member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

### *Third Reading*

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

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

## **SECURITY AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 22nd March.

**MR T. H. JONES** (Collie) [8.48 p.m.]: This is a small Bill to amend section 34 of the parent Act. The original Act was introduced in 1976 to protect security agencies in Western Australia. This Bill assists banking corporations in Western Australia by relieving them of liability when they have been authorised to make available a person's accounts. The Opposition does not oppose the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

## CENSORSHIP OF FILMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 21st March.

**MR B. T. BURKE** (Balcatta) [8.52 p.m.]: The Opposition has no objection to this measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Neil (Chief Secretary) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7 put and passed.

New clause 3—

**Mr O'NEIL**: I move—

Page 2—Insert after clause 2 the following new clause to stand as clause 3—

Section 10  
amended.

3. Section 10 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the words "appropriate fee specified in the Schedule to this Act" in lines four and five and substituting the words "prescribed fee".

The amendment seeks to insert a further clause which will stand as clause 3 in the amending Bill. By an examination of this, members will realise the amendment simply deletes the words "appropriate fee specified in the Schedule to this Act" and inserts the words "prescribed fee".

The Bill before the Committee has a provision to delete the schedule to the Act which assesses the appropriate fees under the Act. The provision indicates that all those fees will now be prescribed. This is purely a drafting amendment. It was a matter which was missed when the Bill was drafted.

**Mr JAMIESON**: I can see no great objection to this new clause; but I should like the Minister to confirm that all such fees will be subject to tabling when they are altered.

**Mr O'NEIL**: Yes, that is the case. The Bill provides a regulation-making power which ensures the fees shall be prescribed fees. Each time the fees are changed, the change will be by regulation and will be subject to the normal tabling procedures.

New clause put and passed.

New clause 6—

**Mr O'NEIL**: I move—

Page 2—Insert after clause 5 the

following new clause to stand as clause 6—

Section 22  
amended.

6. Subsection (3) of section 22 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the words "appropriate fee specified in the Schedule to this Act" in lines one and two and substituting the words "prescribed fee".

New clause put and passed.

New clause 7—

**Mr O'NEIL**: I move—

Page 2—Insert after clause 6 the following new clause to stand as clause 7—

Section 23  
amended.

7. Subsection (2) of section 23 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the words "fee prescribed in the Schedule to this Act" in lines six and seven and substituting the words "prescribed fee".

New clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

## SUITORS' FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 6th April.

**MR GRILL** (Yilgarn-Dundas) [8.58 p.m.]: There are certain people in our community who do not have the ability to take part in legal actions in their own right and those people can be indicated generally as persons who are under a disability. There are two categories of disability; namely infants and persons who, generally speaking, because of mental illness or through some other disability, are unable to manage their own affairs. Those people have either to sue by their next friend or defend by a guardian *ad litem*.

In all the cases where a matter comes before the court involving a person under a disability, and a compromise or settlement is offered, and the party suing is prepared to accept that settlement or compromise, it must be approved by the court. The court must inquire into the adequacy and fairness of such a settlement. That is only right.

However, as the Minister has pointed out in his second reading speech, there are occasions when the court is not prepared to agree to a settlement.

There are further cases where the court, failing to agree, makes the parties go to trial and the person suffering the disability does not obtain judgment in a sum as great as that offered initially by the defendant. Under those circumstances and under the present law, the person suffering the disability, be he an infant or be he a person of unsound mind, almost automatically pays the costs.

As pointed out by the Minister, that is an unjust and unfair situation. For those reasons, the Opposition is happy with this Bill and raises no objections to it. We support the main proposition, namely that those costs, whether in the first instance or later, on appeal, may be paid out of the suitors' fund. We commend the fact that the court is given flexibility in that regard. We agree to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

## LAND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 4th May.

**MR JAMIESON** (Welshpool) [9.01 p.m.]: I can see no great objection to the Bill which deals with a modern requirement in land drainage. The Minister's second reading speech dealt with some sophisticated changes with regard to water. Not only must an area be drained, but also often the water involved must be used to fill aquifers to adjust levels and establish compensation basins and the rest of it so that we may effectively use the water available. When the Act first came into operation, many of these techniques were not developed. However, more and more in the future we will find it necessary to use them. This became quite obvious to many people during last summer when scores of people with home reticulation systems experienced a great deal of trouble because the water table was lowered. However, most of the aquifers have been recharged and the swamps which provide the water are overflowing.

The legislation is necessary. It also deals with rates which can be charged. It seems to be absurd in this day and age to have some limitation which cannot be readily adjusted by regulation. If legislation must be brought before Parliament constantly for amendment, this involves expense in itself and causes unnecessary delay. Obviously

rates must be increased in order that the existing systems might be maintained and new ones established.

Perhaps the only other point which I could make is that the Act, in view of modern trends, requires review at the earliest opportunity. The Minister should set the machinery in operation in his department to ensure that a new Bill dealing with land drainage and underground water conservation, in a decent and modern form, is introduced without delay.

I think that is about all I need say. My colleague who took the adjournment may have some other remarks to make. However, in the main, this Bill is necessary because of the effluxion of time, the change of circumstances, and, indeed, the change in financial arrangements necessary to keep our present drainage system in operation. I support the Bill.

**MR B. T. BURKE** (Balcatta) [9.05 p.m.]: I wish to add only briefly to the comments of my colleague, the member for Welshpool, to emphasise one or two points he made, and to make one or two others.

Firstly, this measure is symptomatic of what has happened to that body of law which governs the State's water supplies. It seems to me and to the Opposition that it has taken a crisis of unprecedented proportions to bring home to all of us the need to keep a very careful eye on the conservation of our water supplies. It has become most evident that the legislation, under which those bodies charged with the responsibility of conservation operate, is hopelessly outdated. It is no tribute to any Parliament or to the laws of any State that legislation such as the measure we are now agreeing upon is necessary. What is needed is a complete overhaul of those laws to which I have referred.

The water crisis we have experienced and against which we should be on our guard, regardless of the rains which have recently fallen, has given rise to many undesirable practices, and to the need for knowledge previously not many of us have sought. We need to know much more about underground water supplies, about their conservation, and about their judicious use.

It is not good enough to dismiss underground supplies as having been present since time immemorial, and likely to remain so. It is a fact that drains on the resource of underground water resulted during the last summer in quite serious depletions of stock in underground reservoirs. At the same time we heard constant and quite absurd statements about underground supplies which, if not used, were likely to drain off into the ocean.

Among the undesirable practices which have been wrought by the crisis which has caused, in some measure at least, this legislation is what I would call profiteering by firms involved in the provision of domestic reticulation systems. I will touch briefly on this. There is one firm operating in Perth which charges in excess of \$60 for a well lining which it obtains delivered to the site by manufacturer, and for which it pays the manufacturer less than \$45.

Mr O'Connor: What has this to do with the Bill?

Mr B. T. BURKE: It has to do with the general rising concern which the latest crisis has caused within the community. These are the sorts of things which our laws, which are hopelessly outdated, need to be updated to contend with. Members will agree that there is no room in our society for profiteering by sections involved in that service.

As my colleague, the member for Welshpool, has said, the Opposition does not oppose the legislation. It does not see its necessity as a compliment to the Government, but certainly agrees on its essential nature and therefore supports it.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Water Supplies) [9.08 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for its general support of the legislation. The member for Welshpool would know a great deal about the subject, as he has been Minister for Works and Water Supplies. He knows the problems which have existed and he would be very much aware of the problems which arose last year, not so much in drainage, but as a result of lack of water for drainage.

He mentioned, as did the member for Balcatta, the need to review the Act and certain matters in connection with water supplies. I can assure members this is already being done. As a matter of fact, the Water Resources Commission has submitted two reports and we expect some legislation to be introduced within the next five or six weeks. As members know the council has been operating for eight or nine months now and has done extensive work not only in the metropolitan area, but also throughout the rest of the State. I am sure its recommendations will, when implemented, achieve the desired results.

I again thank members for their general support of the Bill which I commend to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee, etc.*

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

## WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 4th May.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [9.10 p.m.]: The Opposition supports this measure but members will notice that there is an amendment standing in my name on the notice paper which I will move at the appropriate time. Prior to that I wish to make one or two comments.

First of all, the legislation makes very clear the undesirability which the Opposition sees in the multiplicity of authorities controlling water supplies in this State. I know country members will argue that local water-controlling authorities are best suited to control, at local levels, supplies used in their particular areas. However, the Opposition disagrees with that proposition. It disagrees that we should have as controlling authorities the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board, the Public Works Department, and then a great number of country water supply boards.

We believe that in 1978 it is much more appropriate for water supplies to be controlled by one authority. It would be much more efficient were this to happen and, certainly, when talking about a State-wide authority to control such a vital resource as water we would need to know that that control was as efficient and judicious as possible.

The other point we want to make clear at this stage is that safeguards written into legislation of this type were obviously deemed to be desirable at the stage when they were incorporated. But it is true that with the passage of time some of the restrictions, particularly with regard to financial involvement of members of country water boards, can lead to all sorts of anomalies.

At the same time, the Opposition would hate to see the situation degenerate into the American type of patronage system where the country water boards, or any other authorities responsible under legislation passed by this Parliament, would be seen as "jobs for the boys", or a "landing place for friends and colleagues".

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [9.13 p.m.]: In line with my colleague, I support the Bill and, in doing so, I will enlarge a little upon certain of his comments. I think it is time we probably did look at the number of authorities we have to supply water, particularly as some of them are growing

into quite big entities. I refer to the Bunbury Water Board, the Busselton Water Board, and the Harvey Water Board. Of course, there are others.

We have seen over the past few years the take-over of many small SEC undertakings and the formation of a unified type of charging system. That has probably been to the benefit of people in country areas. I think that system could be emulated in water supplies. We would probably find that the whole organisation would need to be restructured right throughout the State into a water conservation and supply authority.

It seems somewhat stupid to me that we have the Metropolitan Water Board buying water from the Mundaring Weir at one time of the year in order to supply the metropolitan area, and at another time of the year pumping water back to fill the Mundaring Weir. Both water supplies are controlled by Government departments, and those departments should be one entity.

I know that Harvey used to have a very good crack of the whip and the people in that area did not pay very much for their water. I think that was the only country water board which could break even; it was able to obtain its water cheaply and supply it at a minimal cost. In that situation charges should be increased to offset the cost of water supplies in other areas which are not so fortunate, as is the case with the grid system and the uniform charge for electricity by the SEC. There would be some difficulties and some people would have to pay a little more, but other people would find that they would be far better off. I suggest that before very long we will be looking at the possibility of achieving that object, rather than having a multiplicity of boards.

My colleague, the member for Balcatta, has an amendment on the notice paper to which we will speak presently and indicate our reasons for it. I do believe, as possibly my colleague does, that some provisions can be too restrictive. If a member of a local water board happens to have the only stationery store in the town, and he happens to sell a few biro pens to the authority of which he is a member, that should not place him in jeopardy. However, there are limitations which need to be explained more to our satisfaction, and that is the reason for the proposed amendment.

What is proposed in the Bill is more in line with modern thinking than what has transpired in the past. I think it was *The West Australian* which recently propounded the theory that all water supplies in the State would be better controlled under one authority in view of the vastness of the State. The problems involved could then be better dealt with as a result of experience gained in

other areas. For that reason I hope the Minister will give consideration to the suggestion.

**MR O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Water Supplies) [9.17 p.m.]: I thank members for their general support of the Bill. As has been pointed out, I think this proposal will permit members of boards to operate under a much better system. The member for Welshpool and the member for Balcatta mentioned that we should move in the direction of bringing our water supply services into closer liaison. I agree. As a matter of fact, we have already done six or seven months' work in this regard. I have received representations from people, and I have had discussions with the Manager of the Metropolitan Water Board, representatives from the Public Works Department, and also with the Director-General of Engineering. I have also had discussions with various other people including some from the Treasury.

While it does seem desirable to move in this direction, some anomalies do exist and we are investigating them. However, consideration has been given to the points put forward. I thank members for their support of the Bill, and I commend the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Minister for Water Supplies) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Section 10A added—

**Mr B. T. BURKE:** The Opposition treats the amendment which stands in my name with some seriousness, and we urge members and the Minister to look at the amendment and to decide for themselves whether or not it is desirable to have some sort of sanction or prohibition on the flagrant actions of some board members in the financial affairs of the board to which they belong.

It may be that the Opposition's amendment errs on the side of restriction or severity and that there is a more desirable way to ensure members of boards do not unduly use their position to gain financially or in other ways. In his second reading speech the Minister referred to members of a country water board at Busselton who were disqualified. They were businessmen who conducted transactions with the board in the normal course of business. It is possible that people will be disqualified for doing absolutely nothing wrong and that the participation for

which they are disqualified will be beneficial to the board, but at the same time the Parliament needs to take notice of the possibility of undesirable participation of board members by virtue of their position. The safeguards included in the Bill are simply those of good faith and ordinary business. The Opposition wants more precision about the way those matters are interpreted and greater precision in the sanctions spelt out for undesirable participation.

I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 16—Insert after the word “Board” the passage “to a value of less than \$500”.

The amendment provides for a restriction of the participation to an amount of \$500. We believe it will cover the day-to-day requirements which may be provided by businessmen who are members of a board while carrying on business of a certain type in a country area.

When we move beyond the \$500 limit, or any other limit the committee deems desirable, there are dangers, and the Act needs to be more specific and precise about the participation of board members. There is very real danger and temptation for people to do the wrong thing where money is involved. Whereas people who provide \$20 or \$30-worth of first aid equipment to a board would not be disqualified, some people could take advantage of their membership of a board to benefit financially. For that reason we regard the amendment as being of more than passing importance and urge acceptance of it or of another alternative.

Mr O’CONNOR: I do not propose to accept the amendment in its present form. It would mean that a member of a board who did \$50-worth of work a year for 10 years would be automatically disqualified.

I can see the point put forward by the member for Balga and am quite prepared to give consideration to the insertion of other words to the effect that no-one may do more than \$500-worth of work in one year without reference to the Minister. If the honourable member would like to leave the matter with me I will give an undertaking to do something along those lines in another place.

Mr JAMIESON: This compromise on the part of the Minister is encouraging. I think as the Bill stands the matter is a little open. In his second reading speech the Minister mentioned the supplying of trucks and that kind of thing by members of boards. If in the normal course of his business a board member is the only person in the town who deals with trucks, the board may not

gain the advantage it would gain by calling outside tenders, and I suggest if there were no restriction a board would be inclined to give the local fellow a go and not bother to look further afield. We should discourage this kind of thing because it could lead to complications, as the Minister readily acknowledges by suggesting a compromise.

Perhaps the better way to deal with the matter is for the Minister to have his officers look at it to see if there is some way in which a restriction can be imposed so that if something is bought the Minister will know about it, which will discourage board members from going too far. The amendment we suggested seemed to be a proper one in that it would allow anybody to trade in the normal way to supply fuel or other goods but would not encourage people to supply items which would normally be subject to the calling of tenders.

Mr O’Connor: What do you think of the suggestion that anything over \$500 a year be referred to the Minister?

Mr JAMIESON: I think that would be a fair thing, and if the Minister gives that undertaking we will be happy.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 9 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

#### *Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

### **AGRICULTURE AND RELATED RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the 3rd May.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [9.27 p.m.]: The reorganisation of the Agriculture Protection Board and measures controlling vermin and noxious weeds has apparently been quite successful in most areas as far as I can ascertain from my inquiries. It would seem there are no problems at all with the five agricultural zones and the one metropolitan zone. The Farmers’ Union, the shire councils, and the Agriculture Protection Board all agree that the system is working fairly well.

The system of district committees dealing through zone committees and making recommendations to the board is a comparatively recent innovation, and it is only now that the

results can be evaluated and the success or otherwise of the fairly sweeping changes can be ascertained. It appears that the five agricultural zones and the metropolitan zone have achieved the intended result. The four pastoral zones have different problems and it seems some difficulties have been encountered. It could well be that some modification of the system in the pastoral areas will ultimately be desired, and I have no doubt it will be devised.

The operation of the district committees through the 10 zone committees has involved farmers and shire councillors and has resulted, naturally enough, in more measures being initiated from the grass roots—from those who are actually involved in the problems caused by vermin and noxious weeds.

It is my understanding that a number of initiatives have been coming forward through this local output, and in almost every case the suggestions for changes of policy have been acceptable to the board. To me this suggests a quite healthy situation.

The Bill contains seven amendments, and each amendment is there for a particular reason. As I see it all the amendments are acceptable.

The first amendment provides for the appointment of deputies for zone controlling authorities and regional advisory committees. In most organisations the appointment of deputies has long been accepted and standard practice. It is only natural that situations can arise where deputies are necessary, particularly where people have to cover considerable distances and to meet commitments on a regular basis. This provision is very desirable and necessary.

The second amendment is to change the date of the appointment of members to the 1st August to coincide with local government elections provided for under the Local Government Act. Shire councillors are part and parcel of the system, and as frequently they are members of the various committees, it was necessary to ensure a meshing of the two sets of elections.

In the past it was required to publish the names of the people appointed to the various committees in the *Government Gazette*. Because of the number of people involved in district and zone committees, and the fact that the membership of these committees is changed frequently, this can no longer be seen as a reasonable requirement and we are quite agreeable to its deletion.

Again no-one will cavil at the payment of allowances to committee members from the central control fund. People who devote considerable time in a voluntary fashion for the

general well-being of those concerned in their industry and in their community should not be disadvantaged financially, and it is fairly obvious nobody will disagree with the inclusion of a provision for the payment of allowances to participating members to cover their expenses.

The fifth amendment deals with the provision of funds for the general control of vermin and noxious weeds, and it is proposed to defer for two years the increase in rating from 3c in the dollar to 4½c in the dollar on the annual valuation of pastoral holdings which is provided for in the Act, and which would have come into effect as from the 1st July, 1978. The reasons for the deferment are sound. In his second reading speech the Minister indicated that the contribution from the Government will not be decreased and that the level of protection activities will be maintained; in other words, the Government is picking up the tab. This could be a very desirable move in the drought-affected pastoral areas, although probably the period of deferment of two years may not be long enough because it will take considerable time to correct the ravages caused by the drought on most stations.

The Act prohibits the taking of animals when poison is being used—the word “taking” is the word used in the Act—and the amendment proposes to allow the trapping or shooting of rabbits to take place, at the discretion of the Agriculture Protection Board, while poisoning is being carried out, with the stipulation that the animals are not to be used for human consumption. The committee is allowed a reasonable amount of flexibility in its operation against rabbits so this provision should provide some benefit to it in carrying out its responsibilities as they are envisaged under the Act.

The powers to make regulations regarding the payment of bonuses and to prevent fraudulent practices in respect of bonus payments are covered in a further amendment. The penalty suggested is between \$200 and \$1 000 for the first offence and between \$1 000 and \$2 000 for the second and subsequent offences. One of the zone committees in the pastoral area suggested a bounty of \$50 a head on dogs, but had this suggestion been accepted, it could possibly have led to fraudulent practices.

I believe the bonus payment of \$20 a head has been retained, and even at this figure the possibility of fraudulent practices cannot be completely excluded.

Reference has not been made to the total cost to the Government—and I suppose one could say

to the community—of maintaining vermin protection services in the pastoral areas. This cost has increased in recent years but the problem has not diminished.

On tomorrow's notice paper I have asked a question of the Minister for Agriculture in regard to the number of active pastoral holdings for the past five years. I am certain the Minister's reply will show a decrease in the number of sheep operations in the Gascoyne, the Murchison, and the goldfields areas, although I do not know the extent of this decrease. We will be faced with an increasing problem of vermin control as the number of pastoral holdings decreases because gaps will develop in the protective barrier upon which those pastoralists in the inner reaches depend. Most of the stations are operating with a decreased work force and this means that dogging activities are not carried out at their previous level. The appointment of Government doggers is a reasonably costly exercise, and, because of the limitations of this programme, it can be seen readily that the wild dog problem will become increasingly severe in the pastoral areas. These areas have been affected by drought for quite some time, and the ability of the individual pastoralists to provide the necessary manpower to maintain effective dog control must lessen as the situation continues.

It would be an interesting exercise to determine the cost to the Treasury of each pound of wool produced in that area in the light of increasing costs of vermin control.

This is a very serious problem, and the reply I received from the Minister for Lands to a question I asked just prior to the recess suggested that the report which has been received and is being evaluated at the moment should give an indication of what policy will emerge towards the end of this year. That is something which will attract a great deal of general interest, for the reasons I have indicated.

However, superimposed also upon the problem of wild dogs is the vermin question with regard to kangaroos and goats. Bear in mind that it is a fairly fragile type of flora which is found in this area; it is very prone to erosion and has not the stability of the clays further south. Large tracts of the station country can be eroded in a single downpour, and over considerable fronts as the effect of the water recedes.

Where once drought would have acted as a normal check on the numbers of kangaroos, this is no longer the case as water points have been provided over large tracts of land. The control of kangaroos by drought no longer strictly applies,

and the animals are in a position to compete with sheep for the remaining vegetation in drought years. This, of course, is part and parcel of the problem, because as the vegetation is reduced, especially through drought, the effect of erosion is felt.

Goats present their own particular problem; and, having a much greater survival capacity than most other animals and far less respect for fences, they are able to fare in a much more hardy fashion and their numbers tend to build up very rapidly. I sought by way of a question last year to ascertain the number of goats that come into the various abattoirs. As soon as there is a market for goats the question arises in respect of the enthusiasm and sincerity of the individual pastoralists who eradicate goats for vermin control purposes.

Fairly large numbers of goats do come down to the abattoirs, and it would appear that some degree of drafting could well take place. From the inquiries I have made it seems there could be some form of selection of the goats that are sent down. It is not just an open face with various ages and sizes, and with both sexes. It seems as though there could be some degree of drafting, which suggests that advantage could be taken of the situation by the farming of goats, if that term could be used. This is something which needs to be kept under constant surveillance, because in the ultimate it is certainly not in the interests of that particular country.

At this stage it would be difficult to elicit any sort of reply from the Government, other than that the results of the inquiry currently being evaluated are not available. I accept that, but hopefully those results will be available without undue delay, and from there some decisions will be made as to the future.

Mr Old: You are referring to the pastoral industry inquiry?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes. When it is available some decisions as to the policy and methods to be adopted, involving the entire future of the pastoral industry, will have to be determined; and this is something about which I know many people are concerned, and of which we on this side of the House are indeed most conscious. That is an aspect of the matter that is perhaps difficult to include strictly in the terms of the amendment, but nonetheless it is more than peripheral; it is an integral part of vermin control aspects for which the parent Act seeks to accept responsibility.

So as far as the amendments to the Act are concerned we on this side of the House have no objection to them. Each of the seven proposals



contained in the Bill is of value to the administration and the effectiveness of the protection of the various agricultural industries. Without that protection the position would certainly be chaotic. Therefore, to that extent we support the Bill.

**MR LAURANCE** (Gascoyne) [9.46 p.m.]: I would like to make a few comments in support of this Bill, particularly as it affects the pastoral areas, as the previous speaker has indicated. Therefore it is of great concern to me. Also, it follows on the amendment to the parent Act which came in for a considerable amount of discussion in this House some two years ago because it altered the system of vermin control in this State which had been in force for many, many years. A great deal of soul searching occurred in the pastoral industry at that time, particularly as to whether the change would be for the good of the industry. I think generally speaking it has been.

I congratulate the Government on its move to defer for a further two years any increase in the ceiling of 3c in the dollar on the rental value of pastoral leases.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** Do you reckon that is long enough?

**Mr LAURANCE:** I take the honourable member's point, but certainly we set the period at two years initially, and now an increase has been deferred for a further two years, initially, and we will have to see how the situation stands in the industry at the end of that time. I think the period of two years is the minimum, because we have a serious situation in my area—in fact in most areas of the pastoral industry—as a result of the drought. Therefore I believe we will need at least two years to see how this deferment will affect the industry. I want to make the point that it is of assistance to have this deferment, and it is one of the recommendations made by the Jennings committee which was appointed by the Government to produce short-term solutions first of all. This was one of the short-term solutions recommended to the Government, and now it is being given legislative force.

Perhaps the major recommendation of the Jennings committee in the short term was that of seeking access to Federal funding for carry-on purposes. I think that was a major breakthrough, because the Federal Government actually came to the party and provided access to this finance. So I believe the Jennings committee did well for the industry in the short term and as has already been mentioned in the debate it has now been

requested by the Government to look at longer-term solutions for the pastoral industry.

We realise that the suggestions made so far were not designed to overcome all the problems of the pastoral industry, but were designed more to try to alleviate some of the immediate problems of the drought. The Government has given the same committee the task of looking at longer-term solutions to the underlying problems facing the industry; and I for one am very hopeful and confident that the committee, particularly after its short-term success, will be able to come back to the Government within a few months from now and give us an insight into some longer-term solutions. Hopefully we will then be able to act on those and give some help to what is a very depressed industry at the moment.

The whole idea of the original measure was to find a new approach and to alter the organisation of vermin control in this State, mainly to provide a much greater degree of local control. When I say "local control" I mean control by local pastoralists.

**Mr Pearce:** You can keep it short; the Premier is not here.

**Mr LAURANCE:** This matter is extremely important to me and to the people in my area, so I intend to continue despite the interjection.

It was felt that under the previous scheme, this local influence was lacking, with the vermin control boards run by local authorities, and the Agriculture Protection Board acting independently of each other, and those people who were paying vermin rates having no say or control in the operations of the APB and its staff.

The new method of funding, and the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act gave the hope, particularly for pastoralists, that the farmers and pastoralists would be able to have some local say in the management and control of vermin in their own areas. I believe this has been successful to a considerable extent. Pastoralists have been involved through these regional committees and control authorities, so they feel they have a greater say at local level as to the vermin control within their own areas.

Unfortunately, I believe the real battle is being lost, because the vermin situation in the pastoral areas has not improved and is still a matter of great concern, and is one of the problems still affecting this industry. Therefore, whilst improvements have been made, to my mind the real answer has not been found.

The member for Warren mentioned the number of difficulties being experienced. He pointed to the lack of labour on pastoral properties as being

one of the reasons; it means there are not enough hands available to put towards the dogging operations on individual properties. He mentioned also the abandoned stations. These put pressure on adjoining properties. As the pastoral industry has been declining and shrinking, those properties which are viable face greater difficulty in maintaining vermin control in their own areas if there are no neighbours around them who are controlling the dog problem within their boundaries.

I make a request to the Minister that we maintain flexibility in the control of the APB and in the control which is exercised in the various areas, because the main battle is being lost. Perhaps there are better ways of organising vermin control. The Minister is well aware of attempts which are being made, particularly in my area, to change the method of operation slightly, and to organise dogging by a small group of pastoralists who have banded together to employ their own dogger. I request the Minister to give me an assurance that he will retain flexibility in allowing these attempts at overcoming a particular problem in the industry to continue by at least giving these methods a try to see whether they can be more effective than the system which is in operation generally.

I would also like the Minister to consider changing the current management programme. As I say, we are losing the battle to control vermin in pastoral areas. The dingo is not the only problem; we also have the problem of kangaroos. These are controlled by a management programme which, really, does not favour the industry. A fundamental conflict exists here, particularly in catchment areas where on the one hand we have the Lands Department under its land management control scheme telling pastoralists they must destock, conserve the fodder on these properties, and keep sheep numbers down, while on the other hand the pastoralist is faced with a strictly controlled management programme which allows kangaroos to multiply. This fundamental conflict is not going to be resolved under the current programme.

I have voiced my criticism of this programme previously and I believe I have been able to gain some improvements in the programme. Two departments are involved in the management programme in this State, but it would be fair to say that the whip hand is held by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. The department has assured me that, as a result of my representations, improvements have been effected in that the department has allowed a greater number of tags

so that an increased number of kangaroos can be taken.

However, that is not the problem; in fact, those tags are not being used. So, even though it is said an improvement has taken place, in fact the whole system is not organised to allow those increased tags to be effective and the kangaroo remains a great problem in the pastoral areas. There is also a difficulty with goats. Whilst an improvement in organisation has been achieved, the problem of satisfactorily controlling vermin remains.

Mr Blaikie: You probably need a few feral cats up there to control your vermin.

Mr LAURANCE: It would probably upset some of our vermin. I believe we must recognise the problem. Despite all the pretty names we give to these animals to satisfy the ecologists and environmentalists, in the pastoral community they are considered as vermin.

There is a fundamental conflict here, and if we want the pastoral industry to survive we must realise and appreciate that the continued existence of vermin is a problem and a threat to the survival of the industry, and it will become a much greater threat. Most people in my area tell me that the numbers of dingoes and kangaroos have increased alarmingly in recent years. That may be so; these people are on properties, and know the position. It may well be that the economic effect of vermin is much more detrimental at a time when the industry is at a low ebb.

Mr Pearce: Would you not expect them to die out in a drought?

Mr LAURANCE: No, they move around and in fact, survive remarkably well. As has been pointed out, we have helped them to survive by putting water into areas which, traditionally, they would not feel were very favourable. By putting in water, the pastoralist encourages the kangaroo and helps it to survive. However, the pastoralist then has management programmes imposed upon him which prevent him from controlling the problem he has helped to generate. We must appreciate this problem and implement a much more effective programme of keeping vermin numbers down.

There is no way we are going to conserve pastoral properties and increase the number of cattle and sheep in those areas if we have a system which allows vermin to multiply. I know I am not in conflict with the Minister on this point, and that he agrees with my argument. The pastoral industry is beset with high costs and labour problems, as well as a host of other problems, and we should not place it in the

position of not being able to overcome the problem of vermin. I support the Bill.

**MR OLD** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [9.57 p.m.]: I thank members for their support of the Bill. As was pointed out by the member for Warren, it really is a series of small amendments which will rectify some anomalies within the Act.

There is no doubt that we have a problem with dogs in the pastoral areas. I assure the member for Warren and the member for Gascoyne that the Agriculture Protection Board is very conscious of this fact. Indeed, in the last few weeks a top-level meeting was held in the Wiluna area to discuss the problem, which has been exacerbated by the drought, which has enabled dogs to come in and water at points used by sheep. The sheep are fairly weak as a result of the drought, and the dogs are having a Roman holiday.

There are several ways in which controls can be more effectively implemented, and these will be put in train fairly quickly. The regulations to which the member for Warren referred in fact are necessary because bounties are being paid within some areas, and the bounties vary from area to area. As the honourable member said, there was talk of putting it up to \$50 in one part of the Murchison. Had this happened, I believe we would have had a fair bit of over-the-border trading in dog scalps, which would have been good for the dogger, but not so good for the authority paying out the bounty.

**Mr Skidmore:** There are some other scalps being traded at the moment.

**Mr OLD:** There are always scalps being traded. The Jennings committee, which is investigating the pastoral industry, should be reporting on its long-term recommendations shortly.

I might add that recently it took a sub-committee to the Eastern States to look at their methods of dog control. The subcommittee visited South Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland with a view to finding the best methods used in those States to apply in our own pastoral areas. I can assure members that there is activity and there is a consciousness of the problems that have been pointed out.

The kangaroo problem has been very well covered by the member for Gascoyne so I do not intend to say anything more about that. There is only one point I would take issue with and that is I consider the only way to farm goats is to shoot every one in sight, because they are certainly a problem as the member for Warren would know. In some of the more fragile parts of the pastoral

areas they can do a tremendous amount of damage and I think they have been a contributing factor in some of our more denuded country.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

*House adjourned at 10.02 p.m.*

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### IMMIGRATION

#### *Number Returned to England*

808. **Mr BATEMAN**, to the Acting Minister for Immigration:

- (1) How many British migrants have returned to England so far this year?
- (2) Can he give their reasons for returning?
- (3) (a) How many returned in the year 1977; and  
(b) for what reasons?

**Mr O'CONNOR** replied:

The information required by this question is being obtained from Canberra. I will inform the Member when it arrives.

### EDUCATION

#### *Technical School: Thornlie-Maddington Area*

809. **Mr BATEMAN**, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact a technical school is to be built in the Thornlie or Maddington area in the near future?
- (2) If "Yes", will he further advise the location of this school and when it is anticipated it will be built?

**Mr P. V. JONES** replied:

- (1) and (2) A submission has been made to the Commonwealth Technical and Further Education Council for capital funds to enable this college to be built. A decision will be made later this year in regard to funding during 1979. The proposed location is adjacent to public open space fronting on to Canning River. Initial access will be from

Spelhurst Terrace but will be from Olga Road once the extension of this proposed dual carriage way is finalised.

I might add that "1979" is not fiscal year; it is calendar year. Commonwealth funding for capital works for education is calculated calendar year, not fiscal year.

### TRAFFIC

#### *Overpass and Bus Stop: Albany Highway, Cannington*

810. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is he aware of the possibly dangerous pedestrian situation currently existing at a bus stop in Albany Highway, Cannington, opposite the Waverley Carousel Shopping Centre?
- (2) If "Yes" will he have installed immediately an over-way, similar to those constructed over the Mitchell Freeway, before a fatality occurs?
- (3) If "No" to (2), why not?
- (4) Will he further have this particular bus stop moved six metres closer to Perth where a vacant bus bay exists in order to free the outside busy lane of traffic while passengers alight?
- (5) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) It has not been brought to my attention that there is any undue hazard at this site.
- (2) and (3) The provision of pedestrian facilities is the responsibility of the local authority. However, in this case since a declared highway is involved the Main Roads Department would give consideration to providing some financial assistance if requested by the Cannington Town Council.
- (4) and (5) The location of the bus stop will be reviewed by officers of the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust and the Main Roads Department to determine whether any variation is warranted.

### TRAFFIC

#### *Maddington and Gosnells: Congestion*

811. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it a fact that a massive traffic build-up has developed in Albany Highway between Victoria Park and Gosnells, and in particular, through Maddington and Gosnells?
- (2) If "Yes" will the Beechboro by-pass relieve this traffic pressure?
- (3) When will the Beechboro by-pass through Gosnells be commenced?
- (4) If no date can be fixed, will the Minister give an assurance that all possible avenues are explored in an endeavour to expedite this work?
- (5) If "No" why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) There has been a continuous increase in traffic in this area, as a result of rapid development of the south east corridor.
- (2) Only a relatively small proportion of the traffic on Albany Highway could be expected to divert to the Beechboro-Gosnells Road when constructed.
- (3) No date for this work has been fixed.
- (4) The Government is well aware of the need for road capacity to match the increased demand brought about by urban development and rising car ownership. However, the degree to which this demand can be met is limited by the availability of road funds.
- (5) Works will be carried out as soon as funds and other road priorities permit.

### LOCAL COURT

#### *Armada*

812. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister representing the Attorney-General:

- (1) Is it a fact that a large volume of business is being transacted by the Armadale local court which at present sits only one day a week?
- (2) Will the Minister consider increasing the number of days per week on which the court sits in order to eliminate the possible backlog of cases and satisfactorily cope with the weekly volume of cases?

- (3) Will the Minister have his department investigate the feasibility of appointing a full-time magistrate to the Armadale local court which services a large and rapidly expanding outer suburban area?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The establishment of a local court at Armadale coincided with the appointment of a full-time Clerk of Courts to that centre on the 19th July, 1976. An examination of court statistics shows that there was a 27.6 per cent increase in the volume of local court business transacted in the recently completed second year of operation and for the like period petty sessions charges decreased by 31.3 per cent. The court is visited by the Fremantle magistrate one day in each week.
- (2) At present, the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate is undertaking an examination of magisterial circuits with the view to establishing the need and frequency of visits to all courts, including Armadale.
- (3) The need for the appointment of a full-time magistrate to the Armadale court will be investigated at the appropriate time. Current case loads would not justify such an appointment at this stage.

## TRAFFIC

### *Pedestrian Crossing and Traffic Lights: Spencer Road*

813. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has his department considered placing a light-controlled pedestrian crossing on Spencer Road in the vicinity of Thornlie Square Shopping Centre?
- (2) (a) Has his department considered placing traffic lights at the intersection of Thornlie Avenue and Spencer Road, Thornlie;
- (b) if so, what was the result of these considerations?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) A light controlled pedestrian crossing was considered at the request of the Gosnells City Council but rejected as not being appropriate in the circumstances.
- (2) (a) and (b) The installation of traffic control signals in the metropolitan area is programmed on the basis of priority according to traffic volume and degree of hazard. There are numerous sites in the metropolitan area which rate prior attention to Thornlie Avenue-Spencer Road.

## EDUCATION

### *University of Western Australia: Faculty of Medicine*

814. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

Is there any fact in the rumours now circulating in the faculty of medicine in the University of Western Australia that a disproportionate number of students currently in their third year will be failed in order to cut down the number of students entering their clinical year in 1979?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

There is no fact in the rumour.

The rumour was brought to the knowledge of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and on the 19th July he caused the following message to be posted on the Faculty of Medicine notice boards:

To all Medical Students.

It has come to my attention that rumours are circulating suggesting that a certain number of students will be deliberately failed in the third year of the medical course in order to reduce the load in the clinical years because of the Government's economic policies. This rumour has no foundation in fact. No such policies have ever been discussed by any committee of which I am aware, and if such was the case, they would be rejected outright. The University and its Medical School are determined to maintain teaching standards despite the difficult financial climate.

—B. A. Kakulas.

## DISASTER RELIEF

*Lord Mayor's Appeal Fund:  
Amount and Distribution*

815. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

- (1) What was the total amount of contributions received in the Lord Mayor's appeal fund following cyclone Alby in April of this year?
- (2) Of this amount, how much has been distributed to applicants?
- (3) (a) How many people received payments from the Lord Mayor's appeal fund in cash of the—
  - (i) Boyup Brook;
  - (ii) Bridgetown;
  - (iii) Manjimup;
  - (iv) Nannup, Shire Council areas?
- (b) What was the total amount of finance received by successful applicants in each of the four shire areas referred to?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) \$811 420.
- (2) \$559 152.
- (3) (a) and (b). It is not the practice of the board of management of the Lord Mayor's distress relief fund to release details of payments in the form requested. The Member will appreciate that the Lord Mayor's appeal and the related funds are quite independent, and not under the control of the Government.

## MEAT INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

*Members*

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

Who are the members of the W.A. Meat Industry Authority, and what organisations or interests does each one represent?

Mr OLD replied:

Mr R. Trevaskis—representing the interests of private abattoirs;  
 Mr I. Flack—representing the interests of Government abattoirs;  
 Mr J. Ware—representing the interests

of the wholesale and retail meat industry;

Mr J. Samson, Mr O. E. Butcher—representing the interests of producers of meat

Mr K. C. Watson-Bates—representing the interests of persons directly employed in the processing of meat at abattoirs;

Mr J. Craig—as an officer of the Department of Agriculture nominated by the Director of Agriculture.

## STOCK

*Live Sheep Committee*

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

- (1) Does he propose to call a meeting of the live sheep committee and/or other bodies involved in the live sheep trade?
- (2) If "Yes" when is it proposed to call such a meeting?
- (3) If "No" to (1), Why not?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The member is no doubt aware that this matter has become a Commonwealth issue. It is understood that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations will convene a meeting of the involved parties at Canberra next week to discuss the tripartite mission's report and the report by the Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

## ABATTOIRS

*Southern Western Australia*

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

- (1) What abattoirs in the southern portion of Western Australia closed a quarter or more of its operation of its beef and mutton section for a period over four weeks in—
  - (a) 1977;
  - (b) 1978?

- (2) Did the W.A. Meat Industry Authority refuse to grant a permit to Pope Exports Pty. Ltd. to construct an abattoir at Baldvis on two occasions in 1977?
- (3) (a) Did the W.A. Meat Industry Authority approve of the application of this firm to build an abattoir at North Dandalup; and  
(b) if not, on what grounds did the Government issue a permit?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) This precise information is not available to my department. It is known however, that export abattoirs have been operating below their potential slaughtering capacity at various times during 1977-78. The abattoirs particularly affected were Geraldton, Katanning and Albany. Geraldton ceased slaughtering cattle from December, 1977, and sheep from February, 1978. Katanning did not slaughter sheep or cattle in May and June, 1978. Albany ceased to slaughter sheep in June and July, 1977, and also in June, 1978.

Cattle slaughtering ceased at Robb Jetty from April, 1978, and sheep slaughtering at Midland Junction from January, 1978.

- (2) Yes.
- (3) (a) Yes.  
(b) The Government is not involved in any decision taken by the authority except where an applicant lodges an appeal, to me as the relevant Minister, against the decision.

## MEAT MARKETING

### *Referendum Results*

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

- (1) (a) Adverting to the reply given to question 667 of 3rd May, 1978, has the divergence of opinion of the two producer organisations towards the form of meat marketing change desired been resolved;  
(b) if so, in what way?

- (2) (a) What changes to the composition of the W.A. Meat Industry Authority are intended; and  
(b) what organisations and interests, will be represented on the commission?
- (3) What powers is it proposed to give the W.A. Meat Commission?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Following consultations with the producer organisations it was decided that the West Australian Meat Commission would be appropriate as a vehicle for meat marketing change in accord with the results of the livestock marketing referendum.
- (2) (a) No changes are envisaged since the authority is not actively involved in marketing.  
(b) Two additional members will be appointed to the commission to represent the interests of producers of meat; and I have asked the Farmers' Union and Pastoralists and Graziers Association to provide me with the names of persons whom they consider would effectively represent the interests of meat producers.
- (3) The present powers of the Abattoirs Act under which the meat commission is established, are adequate to implement the marketing changes envisaged.

## ENERGY

### *Electricity Supplies: Demand for 1990*

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

What is the estimated demand for power for Western Australia at the year 1990?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The demand depends almost entirely on the growth rate of energy sales over the 12-year period. It is currently estimated

to be approximately 2500MW requiring about 3000MW of installed capacity.

## ENERGY

### *Nuclear Power Station:*

#### *Decision to Investigate Establishment*

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

Who made the decision to investigate the possibility of building a nuclear power station in Western Australia, i.e., the State Government or the Fuel and Energy Commission?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The decision was made by the State Government acting on the advice of the State Energy Commission.

## ENERGY

### *Nuclear Power Station:*

#### *Estimated Capital Cost*

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

What is the estimated capital cost of a nuclear energy State power station compared with a coal-fired station on the basis of megawatts?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

As no recent detailed work has been carried out on nuclear power station costs in Australia, only very approximate figures can be given.

- (a) Based on overseas estimates for a first off 1 000 MW nuclear power station the capital cost would be in the range \$600-\$800 KW.
- (b) For coal fired plant of a similar size the cost is estimated to be \$400 KW.
- (c) In addition to capital costs it is necessary to consider operating costs, mainly fuel, to give an objective comparison. Nuclear fuel costs are well below most coal costs and nuclear power stations produce power more cheaply than coal and oil stations in most parts of the world.

## ENERGY

### *Power Stations: Generating Capacity*

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

When the extensions at Kwinana and Muja are completed, what will be the capacity of the State Energy Commission generating system in Western Australia?

Mr MENSAROS replied:  
1837 MW.

## ENERGY

### *Nuclear: Cost per Kilowatt Hour*

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

What is the comparative cost per kilowatt hour for nuclear power?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

No figures are available for Australia, but recent USA results for 22 utilities operating both nuclear and conventional power plants give average figures of:

#### *Generation Cost US Cents/KWH*

Nuclear .....	1.1
Coal .....	1.7
Oil .....	2.7

## CROWN LAND

### *Kangaroos and Pigs*

825. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the complaints I am still receiving regarding the damage being done to properties by pigs and kangaroos, which it is understood come from Crown land, will he advise what positive action will be taken to overcome this problem?

Mr OLD replied:

#### *Feral Pigs:*

Poisoning: Trial poisoning on private properties in the Lowden area will be undertaken in November and December.

Trapping: A trap has been constructed and is in use at Wilga. This trap and one on loan from the Department of Agriculture are



available for use by farmers. Three additional traps will be constructed.

Trials involving the establishment of feeding areas of crops such as lupins, turnips, melons and oats are being carried out at two sites on Crown land. If successful, pigs may be destroyed or captured on these areas.

**Kangaroos:** The grey kangaroo management programme provides for control of kangaroos. Farmers are able to obtain damage licences from the local Department of Fisheries and Wildlife officer.

Australia to recycle newspapers and periodicals?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd., Spearwood recycle waste newsprint and periodicals for use in the manufacture of brown wrapping paper, fibre board and cardboard.

Insul-Fibre Insulation (W.A.) Pty Ltd, Kewdale also have a small pulping facility which utilises wastepaper for the production of "cellulose"—an insulating material.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### Mandurah

828. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) From what source or sources do residents of Mandurah obtain their domestic water?
- (2) How many samples of this water were taken in the past 12 months?
- (3) Where were the samples taken?
- (4) In terms of total dissolved solids, what were the results of the samples tested?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) From bores in the Paterson Road, Ravenswood area.
- (2) Five.
- (3) One sample was taken from each of the three bores and the reticulation in September, 1977 and one sample was taken from No. 1 Bore in May, 1978.
- (4) Government Chemical Laboratories test results were as follows—

Sample from	TDS in mg/litre	
	September 1977	May 1978
Bore No. 1.....	770	850
Bore No. 2.....	780	
Bore No. 3.....	780	
Mandurah Reticulation.....	790	

## HEALTH

### Encephalitis

826. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many cases of illness resulting from encephalitis have been reported since 1st January, 1978 in the Kimberley region?
- (2) What steps are being taken in respect of—
  - (a) eradication of the virus in known habitats; and
  - (b) on-going research?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Seven cases of arbovirus encephalitis have been reported.
- (2) (a) By virus I presume the member refers to the encephalitis arbovirus group. The virus cannot be eradicated. Local health authorities have been asked to increase mosquito control.
- (b) Research and monitoring is currently in progress and applications for further funds have been made to support ongoing research and monitoring.

## NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

### Recycling

827. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Is there any facility in Western

### Metropolitan Water Board: Midland Office

829. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

In view of the fact that only a small number of clients can be accommodated at the office of the water board in

Midland and the fact that many clients are therefore forced to queue up outside that office whilst waiting to pay their rates, would he give consideration to—

- (a) moving the office to more spacious premises; or
- (b) making some provision so that people are not forced to wait outside in the weather?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) and (b) The position is being kept under continuous review. As occasion demands, additional staff are provided to deal with seasonal surges.

## ENERGY

### *Solar: Research*

830. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Would he indicate to the House all of the present research being done into the use of solar energy for the purpose of space heating, heating and cooling, and solar energy collection to produce steam?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The Commonwealth Department of National Development has recently published a Directory of Solar Research Projects. One hundred and forty-three projects are described, most of which deal with the subjects mentioned. It is thus not possible to provide full details of all projects.

The Solar Research Institute of Western Australia is supporting 10 projects in the above areas and details can be made available if desired.

## TRAFFIC

### *Motor Vehicles: Electric*

831. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the present position regarding the development into the possibility of the future use of electric vehicles in this State?

- (2) What funds have been allocated either by the State Government or the Federal Government to ensure on-going research into this project.

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The State Energy Commission has had two electric vehicles under test for the past nine months and is seeking to test two further vehicles for possible use in their vehicle fleet. The commission has also played a major role in a recent report prepared by the national energy advisory committee on electric vehicles.
- (2) No State Government funds are directly involved apart from those of the State Energy Commission. The present degree of Commonwealth funding is not known but increased support is known to be under consideration at the present time.

## FISHERIES

### *Australian Trade Mission to Japan*

832. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

Arising out of the recent visit of the Australian fishing industry trade mission to Japan, has a report been received on that visit, and if so, will the Minister table same?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

A report has not as yet been received. A copy of the media release is attached to the member's answer.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

### *Saunders "Falcon" Hunting Sling*

833. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Acting Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Federal Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs has taken action under the Trade Practices Act and the Customs (Prohibited Imports) regulations to have the wrist-brace catapults, known as the Saunders "Falcon" hunting sling, prohibited from sale?

- (2) If "Yes" will he advise what action, if any, he has taken to ensure that these slings are removed from sale in this State?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.  
 (2) The Trade Practices Commission is responsible for enforcing the ban in this State on corporations from selling or supplying these slings.  
 It is proposed to introduce amending legislation to the Consumer Affairs Act in this session of Parliament which will enable the Minister to appoint a products safety committee. This committee will examine and make recommendations to the Minister for the banning in this State of any goods (such as these slings) considered to be dangerous or unsafe.

#### ABATTOIRS

##### *Midland: Closure, Report, Employees, and Charges*

834. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Would he provide the following information regarding the Midland Abattoir:

- (1) (a) Is it the Government's intention to close the abattoir; and  
 (b) if so, what are the reasons for this proposed action?  
 (2) Will he table the report that he has been considering for some weeks regarding the operation of the Midland and Robb Jetty abattoirs?  
 (3) How many employees are at present employed at the Midland abattoir and in what categories?  
 (4) If the abattoir is to continue its operations, what is the estimated number of workers who will be required for the various killing seasons in 1978?  
 (5) What method has been adopted by the management of the abattoir to arrive at a charge for the use of the facilities at Midland by wholesale butchers, i.e., chiller space, killing costs and any others?  
 (6) What are the rates charged for the years 1970 to 1978?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) The matter of the rationalisation of the operations of the two divisions of the commission to cater for estimated throughput is receiving close examination by the Government, and it is expected that a decision will be made at an early date.

(2) No.

(3) Office and administration staff	63
Supervisory staff (operations)	41
Other operational staff	435
Total	540

- (4) Similar to that in question No. 3 for the rest of 1978 but additional operational labour may be required depending upon the numbers of lambs and cattle coming forward.  
 (5) Slaughtering fees have been based on cost increases having regard to estimated availability of livestock for slaughtering relative to throughput capacity, and the anticipated realisation from the sale of by-products.  
 (6) The member's attention is drawn to the slaughtering fees published from time to time in the *Government Gazette*.

1972 page 2200;

1973 pages 2959-2960;

1974 pages 1462-1463;

1975 pages 211-212;

1976 pages 3393-3394;

1977 pages 2711-2712.

The fees were not changed during 1970 and 1971 from those applicable during 1969 (page 2079 of the *Government Gazette*.)

#### VAPECH HOUSE

##### *Evacuation*

835. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Health:

In view of the stated claims by the medical profession that even a short exposure to asbestos dust could cause asbestosis at some future date, will he make arrangements for the complete evacuation of Vapech House during any

proposed removal of the present asbestos ceilings?

Mr RIDGE replied:

No, but the member may be assured that the strictest precautions will be taken to protect the health of every employee, including the men removing the asbestos.

## EDUCATION

### *Westfield Park School*

836. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that during the recent heavy rains the grounds of the Westfield Park primary school were subjected to considerable flooding?
- (2) If "Yes" will he consider installing deep drainage at this school in the near future?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) There was flooding of the Westfield Park School grounds during exceptionally heavy rains recently. This is an area problem which is not confined to the school.

Much of the water which was on the school site is believed to have come from a nearby road and to have flowed through an underpass on to the school site. The lawn areas at the school were raised above normal water levels some time ago. Discussions between the Public Works Department and the local authority have already taken place with a view to preventing a similar future occurrence.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Rates: Pensioners*

837. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

Will he give details of categories of persons entitled to a concession on water rates and charges because they are receiving a pension or benefit?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Under the terms of the Acts Amendments (Pensioners Rates Rebates and Deferments) Act, 1977, pensioners as defined under the National Health Act, 1953, of the Parliament of the Commonwealth may make application for 25 per cent rebate or deferment of rates provided—

- (i) they are in occupation of land as owner;
- (ii) the land is not partly owned by a person who is neither a pensioner as defined nor a dependant as defined;
- (iii) the land is not also occupied by any other person who is neither a pensioner as defined nor a dependant as defined.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *Rates: Pensioners*

838. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Local Government:

Will he give details of categories of persons entitled to a concession on Local Government rates and charges because they are receiving a pension or benefit?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Persons eligible for the rate concessions are pensioners who are entitled to hold a Pensioner Health Benefit Card and who are in the following categories—

- Age pensioners;
- Invalid pensioners;
- Widow pensioners;
- Service pensioners;
- Blind pensioners;

Recipients of a sheltered employment allowance;

Recipients of a tuberculosis allowance;

Recipients of a rehabilitation or training allowance, who would otherwise be qualified to receive an age, invalid or widow's pension or a sheltered employment allowance.

**STATE INCOME TAX***New Federalism Tax Plan: Stage 2*

839. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Is it the Government's intention to proceed with its undertaking to legislate for Stage 2 of the "new federalism" which would enable the State Government to impose a surcharge on the personal incomes of Western Australians?
- (2) If "Yes" when does the Government propose to introduce the legislation?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes. However, I would point out that the State legislation would relate to the power to grant a percentage rebate or make a surcharge on Commonwealth personal income tax. The proposed legislation would not itself grant a rebate or impose a surcharge; it would simply establish the power to do so. The actual application of a rebate or surcharge would require a separate Act of Parliament.
- (2) The legislative programme is currently being finalised.

**STATE INCOME TAX***Revenue from 1% Surcharge*

840. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

How much revenue would a surcharge of 1% upon all personal incomes in Western Australia produce for the 1978-79 financial year?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Based on current Commonwealth Income Tax legislation, a 1 per cent surcharge on the personal income tax payable by residents of Western Australia in the 1978-79 income year is estimated to yield \$10.9 million.

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES***Specific Purpose Grants*

841. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Which State Government departments or agencies received funds during 1977-78 financial year from the Commonwealth as a result of specific purpose payments?

- (2) In each case, what was the name of the Commonwealth programme?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

As the question requires a lengthy reply I seek leave to table the information requested.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 271).

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT***Middle East Study Group*

842. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) When was the "Middle East study group" established?
- (2) What qualifications does each of the members of the group have?
- (3) How often has the group met?
- (4) What has the group achieved to date?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) 11th April, 1978.
- (2) Mr H. Clough B.E. (Hons) M.Sc M.I.E. (Aust.);  
Mr P. King B.Sc. (Agric);  
Mr D. H. Fraser B.E. F.I.E. Aust., M Cons E Aust;  
Mr W. W. Lyons;  
Mr H. G. Neil B.Sc. (Agric);  
Mr F. Greenwood A.P.A.A., A.A.I.A.  
Each member was selected for the experience and knowledge of the market possessed.
- (3) The group has met on 12 occasions.
- (4) The study group has a commitment to report to Government by 1st December on the support considered desirable to broaden marketing opportunities for Western Australian organisations in the countries of Iraq, Iran and the Arabian Peninsula as covered within the study terms of reference.  
Already initiatives taken include recommendations to the Prime Minister for relay to the Australian Meat and Livestock Authority, on classification of meat for export and meat packaging standards; a questionnaire circularised to industry sectors to elicit information on problem areas in the market, individual meetings with industry personnel and a seminar on the Middle East market attended by in excess of 330 local delegates.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Rates: New System*

843. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

In the light of the Government's announced intention to introduce the new system of Metropolitan Water Board rates from 1st July, 1978—

- (1) Is it a fact that the new rates will apply from the last meter reading (which can in some cases be retrospective by as much as five months)?
- (2) In fairness to consumers, will the Government review this decision and apply the increase from the first meter readings after 1st July, 1978?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) I would refer the member to my statement issued earlier on this matter.

The Metropolitan Water Board's rating year is from 1st July to 30th June and is identical throughout the whole metropolitan area. However, the allowance and charge for consumption beyond allowance apply from the commencement of the consumption year, which varies from district to district and by law may start at a time from January to June prior to the rating year. Obviously it would be adding unnecessarily to expense to be borne by the public to endeavour to read all meters on the one day.

The amended charging system does not involve any alteration from what has been the situation over past years. Very early notice was given that a changed system was proposed. Also water consumption had had to be very closely controlled to a minimum throughout the time concerned.

If any serious anomalies occur, they will be considered.

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

### *Mitex International (Australasia) Pty. Ltd.*

844. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has the Department of Industrial Development provided a guarantee or any other form of financial assistance to a firm known as Mitex International (Australasia) Pty. Ltd.?
- (2) If "Yes"—
  - (a) What form of assistance was provided;
  - (b) how much assistance was provided;
  - (c) when was the assistance provided;
  - (d) is it a fact that the firm is now insolvent;
  - (e) if the answer to (d) is "Yes" what is the extent of the insolvency?
- (3) Who are or were the principals of the firm?
- (4) What was the company producing?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Government guarantees to the Banque Nationale de Paris;
- (b) \$300 000;
- (c) June, 1977, \$200 000;  
January, 1978, \$100 000;
- (d) Yes;
- (e) \$504 960.
- (3) Directors—Giancarlo and Mario Antoinetta Mariotti;  
Manager and Secretary—Giancarlo Mariotti.
- (4) Swimwear—mainly female.

## OFFICIAL SECRETS

### *Qualification of Law*

845. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Attorney-General:

- (1) Is the Attorney-General aware of the views expressed in a recent court decision by the Justices of the State Full Court, concerning the need for confirmation or qualification of the law relating to the disclosure of official secrets?
- (2) If so, does he intend to act on the justices' suggestions?
- (3) If "No" to (2), why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The matter has been and will be further examined by the Public Service Board if and when new regulations are prepared.
- (3) Not applicable.

## GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

### *Circular Regarding Trade Unionists*

846. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he table a circular issued approximately 16 months ago from the Public Service Board to senior personnel in Government departments which instructs employees not to talk with trade unionists about certain matters like wages and conditions?
- (2) Does the instruction still bind Government employees?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Public Service Board Circular to Departments and Authorities 13/77 dated the 24th August, 1977, is tabled.
- (2) Yes.

*The circular was tabled (see paper No. 272).*

is not within the Parliamentary Commissioner's jurisdiction.

I am advised by the Parliamentary Commissioner he has authority only to investigate matters of administration and for this reason even if the board was within his jurisdiction his powers to investigate would be extremely limited. Where Parliament has granted powers to the Taxi Control Board the commissioner cannot substitute his judgment for that of the board and would be limited to determining whether the powers had been exercised fairly and impartially.

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

### *Jurisdiction over Taxi Control Board*

847. Mr DAVIES, to the Speaker:

Why does the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations have no jurisdiction over the Taxi Control Board?

The SPEAKER replied:

The jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner is conferred by section 13 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971-1976. It is provided the Act shall apply to Government departments and other authorities specified in the schedule to the Act and to any other Government departments or other authorities to which this Act is declared to apply by Rules of Parliament. The schedule gives jurisdiction over all departments of the Public Service (with two irrelevant exceptions), over local authorities and some 70 named instrumentalities.

The Taxi Control Board is not a department of Government and is not one of the authorities listed in the schedule. It therefore follows this body

## EDUCATION

### *WA Institute of Technology: Radio Station 6NR*

848. Mr DAVIES, to the Acting Minister for Immigration:

How much have the State and Federal Governments committed in funds in 1978 to ethnic broadcasting through the Western Australian Institute of Technology station new radio (6NR)?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The State Government provided a grant of \$4 685 in March, 1977 to equip a studio for preparation of ethnic radio programmes.

The Federal Government, through the special broadcasting service, has agreed to pay transmission costs to radio station 6NR at the rate of \$20 per hour for a six-month trial period from the 1st May, 1978. It is anticipated that the present arrangement will continue beyond the 31st October, 1978. Special broadcasting service is considering leasing premises to establish two studios in Perth to assist ethnic groups in the preparation of programmes and is also prepared to consider a request for assistance for purchasing of tapes and records.

(Information from Acting Director, Special Broadcasting Service, Sydney.)

## CULTURAL AFFAIRS

*WA Opera Company*

849. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) In view of the Federal Government's decision to cut off basic annual subsidies to State opera companies, is it the Government's intention to increase its assistance to the Western Australian Opera Company to offset the loss of Federal funds?
- (2) In view of the restraints placed on State Government funds as a result of possibly inadequate Federal funding for Western Australia from the recent Premiers' Conference, will he protest to the Federal Government over its actions in phasing out subsidies to opera companies, thus forcing further financial burdens on the State Government?
- (3) If "No" to (2), why not?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The decision to phase out subsidy for State opera companies was made by the Music Board of the Australia Council. The original decision to withdraw Federal funding for State companies over a three year period has been modified in a series of changes.

As a result, the Music Board has now agreed to maintain the existing levels of funding for State companies, until at least June, 1981, when a four year phasing-out is proposed. The WA Arts Council and the Government are continuing to oppose this policy. I have pursued the question of financial assistance with the Federal Government and will be continuing to do so.

The WA Arts Council will again be putting Western Australia's case at a meeting of all State arts authorities to discuss opera in Australia later this month.

- (3) Not applicable.

## LOAN COUNCIL

*Submissions*

850. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Has he placed any submissions for overseas borrowings for development projects before the Loan Council?

- (2) If so, for what purposes are funds being sought?
- (3) Have any submissions from the Western Australian Government been considered by the Loan Council?
- (4) If "No" to (3), why not?
- (5) Have any other States placed submissions before the Loan Council?
- (6) If "Yes" to (5), which States have placed submissions and what is the nature of the submissions?
- (7) Have any of the submissions been considered by the Loan Council?
- (8) If "Yes" to (7), which submissions have been considered?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Submissions have been made seeking special borrowing allocations. Whether or not overseas borrowings would be required would depend on the capacity of the Australian market to provide the funds.
- (2) For (a) the construction of the Dampier to Perth and Pinjarra natural gas pipeline;  
(b) the provision of infrastructure relating to the Worsley alumina project;  
(c) the integration of power supplies in the Pilbara.

It should be noted that the new arrangement is a continuing one and other applications will be made to Loan Council as projects in prospect reach the stage where infrastructure requirements are known and which party should be responsible for providing them is determined.

- (3) and (4) All submissions to Loan Council are currently being considered by a working party of Treasury officials established to assist the Loan Council in deciding which projects should be selected for support.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) This information is confidential to Loan Council.
- (7) and (8) Answered by (3).



## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Rates: Domestic and Commercial*

851. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Now that most of the assessments have been sent out for the current year by the MWSS&D Board, by what percentage have the average domestic connections been increased in cost to consumers?
- (2) What are the comparative costs to consumers in each of the other State capitals and Canberra during the current financial year for domestic supply?
- (3) Have the average assessments to commercial ratepayers shown an increase or decrease in total yearly cost to these consumers?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Last year's average domestic water rate in Perth was \$42.39. This year a uniform charge of \$36 is paid by each residence.
- (2) With an annual consumption of 300 kilolitres in each case, comparative costs to average domestic consumers for the current financial year are as follows—  
 Perth—\$61.50.  
 Adelaide—\$65.82.  
 Melbourne—\$58.13.  
 Canberra—\$61.00.  
 Sydney—\$56.44.  
 Brisbane—\$80.70.  
 Hobart—\$80.00.
- (3) An increase.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Dams: Canning, Mundaring, South Dandalup, and Wellington*

852. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) In respect of—  
 (a) Mundaring;  
 (b) Canning;  
 (c) South Dandalup; and  
 (d) Wellington Dams,  
 how often are samples taken to determine total dissolved solids per litre?
- (2) In respect of each dam above, what were the results in terms of total dissolved solids per litre?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) Weekly;  
 (b) Weekly;  
 (c) Weekly;  
 (d) Monthly.
- (2) Mundaring for period 1-7-77 to 30-6-78:  
 Maximum 510 mg/litre  
 Minimum 410 mg/litre  
 Canning for period 1-7-77 to 30-6-78:  
 Maximum 320 mg/litre  
 Minimum 260 mg/litre  
 South Dandalup for period 1-7-77 to 30-6-78:  
 Maximum 200 mg/litre  
 Minimum 170 mg/litre  
 Wellington for period 1-7-77 to 30-6-78:  
 Maximum 900 mg/litre  
 Minimum 680 mg/litre.

## POLICE

### *Assaults on Policemen*

853. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) (a) In the metropolitan area in each of the last three years, how many assaults on policemen have occurred; and  
 (b) how many charges have been laid in respect of these assaults?
- (2) Of the various charges laid—  
 (a) how many were for common assault;  
 (b) how many were for aggravated assault;  
 (c) how many were for other alleged offences?
- (3) Of each of the classifications of charges laid how many of the defendants were—  
 (a) convicted;  
 (b) imprisoned;  
 (c) fined?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) 1975-76—31.  
 1976-77—71.  
 1977-78—48.  
 Total—150.  
 (b) 149.
- (2) (a) 3.  
 (b) 137.  
 (c) 9.

(3)	Common Assault	Agg. Assault	Other Alleged Offences
(a)	2	116	9
(b)	Nil	30	4
(c)	2	65	4

undemocratic procedures relating to the treatment and trial of critics of the USSR Government such as Scharansky, Ginsburg, and Pyatkus, and many others, was specific and not related to participation in the Moscow Olympic Games.

## MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (MR GRAYDEN)

### *Resignation and Reappointment*

854. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (a) Is it a fact that his Minister for Labour and Industry has resigned since this Assembly last met?
- (2) If "Yes" has he since said that that former Minister may possibly become a Minister again?
- (3) Is he using the Garland case as a precedent for this policy?
- (4) How long does he intend to consign the said former Minister to the back benches before reappointing him to his Cabinet?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The words I used were—"This unhappy incident in no way precludes the possibility that he may return to ministerial responsibility in the future."
- (3) It is considered inappropriate that such a comparison be made.
- (4) I did not "consign the said former Minister to the back benches" and it is improper of the member to say so. The said former Minister requested, in a very responsible and dignified way, that I accept his resignation.

## OLYMPIC GAMES

### *Australian Contingent: Withdrawal*

855. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Is it a fact he is urging or giving consideration to urging the Australian Government to withdraw the Australian contingent from the Olympic Games to be held in Moscow?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

My protest to the Ambassador of the USSR in Australia about the unfair and

## CASINO

### *Mandurah Area*

856. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Is it a fact that he is giving consideration to the establishment of a casino in or near Mandurah?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

No.

## STATE FINANCE

### *Federal Payments*

857. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the total of Commonwealth payments to Western Australia in 1977-78 as—
  - (a) personal income tax sharing entitlements;
  - (b) special revenue assistance;
  - (c) general purpose capital grants;
  - (d) specific purpose payments for recurrent purposes;
  - (e) specific purpose payments for capital purposes?
- (2) What is the estimated total of Commonwealth payments to Western Australia in 1978-79 for—
  - (a) personal income tax sharing entitlements;
  - (b) special revenue assistance;
  - (c) general purpose capital grants;
  - (d) specific purpose payments for recurrent purposes;
  - (e) specific purpose payments for capital purposes?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) (a) An amount of \$519 891 030 was received after allowing for the adjustment of the overpayment of \$3 285 018 in 1976-77.
- (b) Nil.
- (c) \$44 223 000.

- (d) and (e) The information requested is contained in the answer tabled to question 841.
- (2) (a) \$581 400 000.  
(c) \$44 223 000.  
(b) (d) and (e) This information will not be known until the Federal Government's Budget is presented to Parliament.

## STOCK

*Cattle: Blue Tongue Control Measures*

858. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

- (1) Has he received a letter from the Prime Minister seeking agreement on sharing the cost of new measures to assist cattle producers affected by blue tongue control measures?
- (2) If so, has he replied, and on what terms?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. There has been a further exchange of correspondence and final details are now in the process of being resolved.

## ROADS

*Funds: Federal and State*

859. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the total of Commonwealth payments for roads to Western Australia in 1977-78?
- (2) How much did Western Australia receive in 1977-78 for—  
(a) construction of national highways;  
(b) maintenance of national highways;  
(c) national commerce roads;  
(d) rural arterial roads;  
(e) rural local roads;  
(f) urban arterial roads;  
(g) urban local roads;  
(h) minor traffic engineering and road safety improvements?
- (3) What was the annual quota for expenditure on roads to be met from State sources in 1977-78 in accordance with the Roads Grants Act 1974?
- (4) What was the actual expenditure of funds raised from State sources on roads in 1977-78?

- (5) What is the estimated total of Commonwealth payments for roads to Western Australia in 1978-79?
- (6) How much is Western Australia to receive in 1978-79 for—  
(a) construction of national highways;  
(b) maintenance of national highways;  
(c) national commerce roads;  
(d) rural arterial roads;  
(e) rural local roads;  
(f) urban arterial roads;  
(g) urban local roads;  
(h) minor traffic engineering and road safety improvements?

- (7) What is the annual quota for expenditure on roads to be met from State sources in 1978-79 in accordance with the Roads Grants Act 1974?
- (8) What is the estimated total expenditure of funds raised from State sources on roads in 1978-79?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) \$63 263 712.  
\$
- (2) (a) 15 230 000.  
(b) 4 200 000.  
(c) 1 590 000.  
(d) 9 410 000.  
(e) 14 400 000.  
(f) 11 200 000.  
(g) 2 370 000.  
(h) 1 800 000.
- (3) Quota for 1977-78 in accordance with the State Grants (Roads) Act 1977—\$39 800 000.
- (4) Actual road expenditure from State sources designated acceptable by the Federal Government for 1977-78—\$44 013 000.
- (5) \$65 275 000.  
\$
- (6) (a) 16 288 000.  
(b) 4 492 000.  
(c) 1 700 000.  
(d) 10 064 000.  
(e) 15 400 000.  
(f) 11 978 000.  
(g) 2 535 000.  
(h) 1 925 000.
- (7) Estimated quota for 1978-79 in accordance with the State Grants (Roads) Act 1977—\$42 565 000.

- (8) Estimated road expenditure from State sources designated acceptable by the Federal Government for 1978-79—\$53 975 000, including balances carried forward from the previous year.

authorities borrowing in excess of \$1 million—\$69 309 000.

Aggregate borrowing by State authorities under the programme for authorities borrowing up to \$1 million—\$14 475 000.

### LOAN COUNCIL

#### *State Government Borrowings*

860. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What is the value of State Government Loan Council borrowings for 1978-79?
- (2) For what programmes are these borrowings authorised?
- (3) What is the value of borrowings for each programme?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) Borrowing programmes for Western Australia in 1978-79 approved by Loan Council are as follows:

Loan Council programme including Commonwealth capital grant—\$132 669 000.

Semi-governmental programme for authorities borrowing in excess of \$1 million—\$105 500 000.

There is no limit on the aggregate borrowings of State and local authorities borrowing up to \$1 million during the year.

### LOAN COUNCIL

#### *State Government Borrowings*

861. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the value of State Government Loan Council borrowings for 1977-78?
- (2) For what programmes were these borrowings authorised?
- (3) What was the value of borrowings for each programme?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) Borrowing programmes for Western Australia in 1977-78 approved by Loan Council were as follows:

Loan Council programme including Commonwealth capital grant—\$132 669 000.

Semi-governmental programme for

### FIRE BRIGADES BOARD

#### *Salaries of Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers*

862. Mr DAVIES, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is it a fact that a chief fire officer employed by the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board receives an annual salary applicable to an assistant chief fire officer?
- (2) If "Yes" when is the disparity in salaries expected to be removed?
- (3) (a) If the annual salary applicable to a chief fire officer is to be increased, will the new salary be retrospective;  
(b) if so, to what date?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes. On advice from the Public Service Board, the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board awarded an interim increase to the chief fire officer to make his salary not less than that of an assistant chief officer.
- (2) Any further increase is dependent upon the chief fire officer establishing that there is an increase in the "work value" of his position in accordance with the indexation guidelines of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.
- (3) (a) Yes.  
(b) 26th August, 1977.

# GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

## *Industrial Accidents*

863. Mr DAVIES, to the Acting Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What are the Government departments and instrumentalities for which the Department of Labour and Industry records the working days lost through industrial accidents?
- (2) What are the Government departments and instrumentalities for which the Department of Labour and Industry does not record the working days lost through industrial accidents?
- (3) What was the nature and incidence of injury and the resulting working days lost through industrial accidents, in each of the departments and instrumentalities identified in question (1) for—
  - (a) 1976-77;
  - (b) 1977-78?
- (4) What are the Government departments and instrumentalities to which the Minister referred as having "poor performances" in a Press statement reported in *The West Australian* on 29th June, 1978?
- (5) Does the Government plan to reduce the number of working days lost through industrial accidents in Government departments and instrumentalities in 1978-79?
- (6) If "Yes" to (5), by how much in percentage terms?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The W.A. Meat Commission;  
Fremantle Port Authority;  
Mental Health Services;  
Westrail;  
Harbour and Light Department;  
Public Works Department (Engineering and Architectural);  
State Energy Commission;  
Metropolitan Transport Trust;  
Main Roads Department;  
Metropolitan Water Board;  
Agriculture Department;

Corrections Department;  
State Housing Commission;  
Government Printer;  
Public Health Department;  
Forests Department;  
Community Welfare Department;  
Mines Department;  
Education Department;  
Lands and Surveys Department.

- (2) Government departments and instrumentalities not identified in (1) above are not required to submit returns to the Department of Labour and Industry as the number of their employees in the industrial workforce is small. Ninety-three per cent of man-days lost in Government departments through injury are lost in those departments which submit returns.
- (3) The nature and incidence of injury is not required to be notified to the Department of Labour and Industry and only details of man-hours worked, man-days lost and number of lost-time injuries are notified.  
The statistics are maintained in order to keep the Government informed of safety performances in its own departments.  
I am not prepared to provide information which will permit comparisons to be made between departments.
- (4) As indicated in the Press statement reported on the 29th June, 1978, the Government is not prepared to name departments and instrumentalities which have a poor record.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) A percentage reduction cannot be forecast but the Government plan is aimed at obtaining a significant overall reduction in industrial accidents.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### HOSPITALS

*Royal Perth, Fremantle, King Edward Memorial, and Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre*

1. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

This is a question which, perhaps, I should have handed to the Minister. However, I am sure he will be able to answer it.

In view of the Federal Government's decision announced at the Premiers' Conference to cease providing funds for the hospitals development programme and the Premier's subsequent comments that some of the hospitals and schools projects we were anxious to get on with will have to be cut back severely, can he inform me whether the major development projects on Royal Perth Hospital, Fremantle Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre will proceed as planned?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that work on those projects will proceed. At this stage it would be improper for me to pre-empt what might be in the Budget. The level of expenditure at the various sites will depend on the availability of funds, as indicated.

### ABORIGINES

#### *Housing: Lockridge*

2. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

Prior to Parliament rising for the recent recess I asked a series of questions regarding housing for Aborigines and, in particular, those Aborigines who were living in tents at Lockridge. Would the Minister advise the House of the action which has been taken to house those Aborigines, and would the Minister indicate how many Aborigines still have to be housed?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I suggest for the purpose of accuracy that the member for Swan place the question on the notice paper.

I can advise him that the Department for Community Welfare, together with some people associated with housing homeless Aborigines in the district, have been making an effort to get these people into State Housing Commission homes, and into other areas. Unfortunately, I cannot indicate clearly how many have been provided with accommodation. I suggest the question be placed on the notice paper.

### ENERGY

#### *State Energy Commission: Charges*

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

- (1) Is it a fact that some of the charges levied by the State Energy Commission in recent years have been found to be levied illegally?
- (2) If so, which charges and for how long have they not been legally enforceable?
- (3) What action does the Government propose to take to refund illegally collected money to the public?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (3) In reply to the member for Collie, it has been alleged that certain service charges were levied by the State Energy Commission without having the authority in the respective Acts which empowers the commission to levy the charges.

There were two allegations. One was that the Act, being fairly specific in description, did not include certain charges and, secondly, the Act required the promulgation of altered charges which, in some cases, has not happened.

I asked the Crown Law Department to ascertain whether or not those allegations were correct.

Similar to most cases, the answer was not 100 per cent clear cut but it indicated that the Government would be better advised to legislate to make absolutely sure that the tariff structure as it is composed now, and as it might be composed in the future, should have no question about its legality.

Consequently, legislation is being drafted and will be introduced during this session as early as it is possible.

In order to prevent malicious litigation by people who, on a purely legal technical ground, might think they can reclaim charges already paid or, alternatively, stop paying charges, I have publicly warned consumers in statements made on the air and in newspapers that the Government will make it absolutely clear that these charges would be validated if it is necessary. I have warned everyone that no litigation should go on; no one can claim that he took action in good faith after the statements I have made.

## TROTTING

### *Inquiry by Select Committee*

#### 4. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

In view of growing concern over the administration and control of trotting in Western Australia and the recent resignation of the Chief Steward of the Western Australian Trotting Association, will he reconsider his opposition to my proposals for a Select Committee of inquiry into trotting in Western Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In answer to the honourable member, the Government has already made it clear it has an inquiry in process in respect of the Western Australian Trotting Association. I think sufficient unto the day that we make a determination on the result of that inquiry before any other decision is made.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Mandurah*

#### 5. Mr SHALDERS, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) When is it anticipated that Mandurah residents will be using water from the South Dandalup Dam?
- (2) Is it a fact that had the Mandurah-South Dandalup Dam pipeline been completed last year Mandurah residents would have had water restrictions placed on them similar to those imposed on residents in the metropolitan area?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The pipeline to Mandurah will be completed in December, 1978.
- (2) If the pipeline had been completed last year restrictions would not have been imposed as there was sufficient capacity in the bores supplying Mandurah to permit unrestricted use.

## TRANSPORT

### *Southern Western Australia Transport Study*

#### 6. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Would the Minister make available to me the 28 technical papers relevant to the SWATS report?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

As the member for Avon has been co-operative, I will be also.

The honourable member will appreciate that the SWATS report consists of 31 documents, which are very expensive to reproduce. The Minister has already distributed copies of the main report to all members of Parliament and deposited two full sets, including the technical papers, in the Parliamentary Library. However, on this occasion, he will accede to the member's request and provide a set of the 28 public technical papers for the use of the Opposition.

## ENERGY: GAS

### *North-West Shelf: Doubt about Project*

#### 7. Dr TROY, to the Premier:

I refer to page 7 of the annual report of the Rural and Industries Bank, which he tabled. With reference to the economy of the State, it is stated on that page that, "There can be no doubt that the project"—the North-West Shelf Gas project—"if proceeded with will bring immense benefits to Western Australia and Australia". In the light of his visits overseas can he give a statement as to the state of affairs in that regard and whether the project is in any doubt?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I have publicly made it abundantly clear on many occasions, as has my colleague, that all the work that is to be done in connection with the current assessment phase is running on time and the Government is completely confident that the project can and will proceed. I do not know why the honourable member has any doubt.

## EDUCATION

### *Teachers' Registration Board*

#### 8. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Teachers' Registration Board is to be abandoned without ever having registered a teacher?
- (2) If so, what consultations were there with the Teachers' Union before a decision was made?
- (3) How much taxpayers' money has been wasted by the establishment and disbandment of this body?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) As the honourable member is well aware, the answer is "Yes".

- (2) The decision was made and announced some months ago, in November of last year. However, at that time the Act provided for deferment, in sections 19 and 20, and they were brought into vogue pending consideration of some of the problems which had brought about the Government's decision to repeal the Act. While they were being looked at on one hand, in addition I appointed a committee comprising Dr Neal, Mr John De Laeter of the Institute of Technology, and Mr Slade Drake-Brockman of the Teacher Education Authority, to have a look at the Act and other matters. They have subsequently submitted a report and made several recommendations, one of which was to repeal the legislation; and we are proceeding to do that. The other matters contained in the report require considerable consultation and I have referred them to the Teachers' Union and the Education Department. I discussed them for 1½ hours this morning with the General Secretary, and Senior Vice-President of the Teachers' Union.
- (3) I do not have particulars of the funding at my fingertips but if the honourable member writes to me I will find that out for him.

### ABORIGINES

#### *State Administration and Land Rights*

9. Mr PEARCE, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has indicated his disagreement with proposed changes to regulations governing the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act as they relate to entry onto Aboriginal reserves?
- (2) Does the Premier interpret this as a lack of confidence by the Federal Government in his administration of Aboriginal affairs in this State?
- (3) Is the Premier aware that this lack of confidence is also shared by the Pitjantjatjara people and by the Kimberley Aboriginal people (35 Aboriginal communities as represented by the Kimberley Land Council)?
- (4) In view of this general lack of confidence is the Premier considering—
  - (a) abandoning the proposals to amend the regulations relating to entry onto Aboriginal reserves;
  - (b) taking measures to bring this State's administration of Aboriginal affairs into line with Commonwealth policies, in particular in regard to the recognition of Aboriginal land rights;
  - (c) taking measures to ensure that the position of State Minister with responsibilities for Aboriginal affairs is occupied by a person trusted and respected by Aboriginal people throughout the State?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The honourable member has just sent this question to me across the Chamber, so I have not had a chance to do any research on it. I will answer it according to the information available to me at this moment.

- (1) It is provided in the legislation that the State Government will consult with the Commonwealth Minister, and that has been done. To the best of my knowledge, the last time I spoke to him—and I spoke to him personally on the matter—the proposal we had was one which he felt would meet his wishes, although there may have been some aspects of it which he would have liked to be dealt with in a different way. I feel he was satisfied that we had shown great patience and tolerance in our negotiations and were proposing something which would be satisfactory in a practical way, even if he did not agree with the actual detailed verbiage of it.
- (2) We do not need their confidence but in point of fact I would be amazed if the Prime Minister did not think we administered our affairs here better than any other State administers its affairs.

Mr Bryce: You are easily amazed.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Members should stop to think before they barge into this one.



- (3) I cannot speak for either of those groups but I want to say that no Government in Australia has shown more patience and tolerance and a greater desire to try to reach a sensible arrangement than has this Government.
- (4) We reject the premise on which this part of the question is based but I will go on to deal with the three parts of the question.

(a) The answer is "No", because the Government has a responsibility to the whole community, including the Aborigines.

(b) I remind the honourable member and his colleagues that we have granted Aboriginal land rights. When one thinks of the prodigious millions of hectares of land under reserve in this State, one can see how far the Government has gone. If the honourable member does own a freehold property, I remind him that the title possessed in respect of these reservations is a more secure title than he has on his freehold property, because if we wanted his house in order to put a road through we could resume it and give him compensation, without reference to Parliament, but none of these reserves can be touched without the matter coming to the Parliament.

Mr Bryce: It is strange that they do not agree with you.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not have to get them to agree with me. All I have to do is state the facts, and it hurts members on the other side when they hear the facts. They might stop talking about granting land rights and realise that land rights have been given over a long time.

(c) The present Minister has my complete confidence. He is a very good Minister. He administers his portfolio with integrity and impartiality, and it is not for me to vindicate him from these critics, because he does his job properly, and he does it to my satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the Government.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Swanbourne-Nedlands Area*

10. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

Has his attention been drawn to a Press report in the *Daily News* on the 31st July headed "Salt content peak", wherein it is disclosed by the Metropolitan Water Board that in the Swanbourne-Nedlands area the total milligrams per litre of dissolved salts were at a peak of 925; and does he recall his statement previously in *The West Australian* on the 21st July a Press statement that the peak reading for the same area in 1977-78 was 580? If the Minister's attention has not been drawn to this discrepancy, which is obvious, can he make some inquiries and advise the House the correct figure for the Swanbourne-Nedlands area?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I am quite happy to do so and I suggest that the honourable member should put the question on the notice paper.

## FISHERIES

### *Whaling*

11. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

In the light of the decision to close the Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. Ltd. which, in the words of the company management, was made because of the difficulty in selling crude whale oil overseas, can he indicate to the House what his Government proposes to do to alleviate the difficulties and the suffering that will be encountered by the employees whose jobs are about to disappear?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The crocodile tears of the Deputy Leader of The Opposition—

Mr Bryce: Empty rhetoric!

The SPEAKER: Order! I want to establish quite firmly at the outset of this part of the session that I will not tolerate members interjecting while questions without notice are being answered. The Premier.

Sir CHARLES COURT: In replying to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I wish to say that his crocodile tears do not move me at all. I remind him of this morning's Press report of the remarks which were made by his colleague who is the spokesman for the Labor Party on this issue, and I remind him of the attitude adopted by his party generally on these environmental matters. The simple fact is that the Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. Ltd. disaster—and it is a disaster—is the direct result of a public inquiry; the day that inquiry was appointed, the death knell for the company was sounded.

Mr Bertram: Who appointed the inquiry?

Sir CHARLES COURT: After the inquiry commenced to take the course it did, no-one in his right mind would commit himself to be a customer of that company indefinitely. So the purchasers of the sperm oil product swung over to synthetics and pulled the props right out from under this project. I wish the tears of the honourable member were sincere. I can tell him this: The Government has indicated already to the company and to the public that if the company wants to submit a plan for an alternative development through the conversion of the plant it has, we stand ready to talk to it immediately. We have also told the Prime Minister that we believe he has a responsibility in the matter, because it was the Commonwealth Government that initiated this inquiry against the wishes of the State Government.

Mr Bryce: So much for the company—what about the employees?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Those are the ones we are concerned about.

## ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

### *Contributory Extension Scheme: Increased Charges*

12. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Has the Government yet made a final decision as to whether the 100 per cent increase in charges for connecting rural properties to State Energy Commission supplies is to be proceeded with, and if so what is the decision?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

As I understand it, an announcement has been made about the final scheme in regard to rural connections. The main aim of the scheme was to connect all the outstanding applicants for electricity either by direct connection to the supply or through the establishment of booster generating plants in the area, and to supply the very remote prospective customers with individual generating units. Not only would the State Energy Commission supply these units at a reduced rate, but also it would maintain them periodically.

Mr Carr: I am sorry to interrupt, but my question is about the charges. Has the decision to increase the charges for rural connections by 100 per cent been proceeded with or reversed?

Mr MENSAROS: The honourable member is talking about a 100 per cent increase, but actually the increase in the charges for these connections is much less than the increase in the charges for other services. The charge for such connections was last altered a long time ago and this increase of 100 per cent represents a smaller increase—

Mr Carr: Is the 100 per cent increase to stand?

Sir Charles Court: The honourable member should consider the alternative proposal.

Mr Davies: Who is answering the question?

Mr MENSAROS: An alternative proposal has been put forward. I have received a number of deputations and I have spoken to many people about this matter. In my experience more complaints were levelled about the lack of connections than about the charges. Under the original proposal many applicants would not have been

connected, whereas under the alternative proposal every potential applicant for connection under this scheme will be connected within the next three or four years.

### OLYMPIC GAMES

#### *Australian Contingent: Withdrawal*

13. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

I would like to ask the Premier a question further to what purported to be his answer to question 855. I wish to inquire whether in fact the actual answer is "Yes" or "No"?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I inform the honourable member that Ministers are entitled to answer questions the way they want to, and if the honourable member does not like the answer, he may ask another question. However, the question has been answered factually and fairly.

Mr Bertram: I was only trying to help you out.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I thought that the reply given was the answer the honourable member was wanting.

