

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 8 April 1992

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 11.00 am, and read prayers.

## MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT - SWEARING-IN

*Riebeling, Fred, Member for Ashburton*

The Clerk announced the return of the writ for the electorate of Ashburton.

Mr Riebeling took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance, and signed the Roll.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, I take this opportunity on your behalf to welcome the new member for Ashburton to the House and to wish him well. I hope his future in this place will be long, harmonious and helpful to his electorate.

[Applause.]

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

*Presentation to Governor - Acknowledgment*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett): I wish to announce that, accompanied by the members for Floreat, Geraldton, Merredin, Murray and Nollamara, I attended today upon His Excellency the Governor and presented the Address-in-Reply, as amended, to His Excellency's Speech in opening Parliament, and that His Excellency was pleased to reply in the following terms -

Mr Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty The Queen and for your Address-in-Reply to my Speech to Parliament on the occasion of the opening of the Fourth Session of the Thirty-Third Parliament.

Francis Burt,  
Governor

## INDUSTRIAL LANDS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Lewis, and read a first time.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LAND AUTHORITY BILL

*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 7 April.

**MR CLARKO** (Marmion) [11.10 am]: I had given some consideration earlier to speaking in the debate on the Western Australian Land Authority Bill and, in spite of the rhetorical skills and loquacity of my colleagues, I think it appropriate for me to say a few words. The Joondalup development is an interesting issue and my views on it may not be shared by any political party in Western Australia. When the Joondalup development was proposed by a Liberal Government many years ago, I said it would be similar to the papal city in Rome in Italy, in which the power of the common weal is extracted from the nation. For many years the Joondalup Development Corporation failed to advance the development of that section of the northern suburbs. Much more could have been achieved through a strong relationship between the State Government and the local authority - the City of Wanneroo.

In recent years Joondalup has progressed at a fast pace and very fine suburbs, together with commercial and industrial centres, have been developed. I am very disappointed at the Government's approach to the events surrounding the Joondalup golf course. The Government has not honoured its contract with the people who purchased properties adjacent to the golf course and who were given a clear undertaking about their rights and entitlements. I spoke to someone a fortnight ago who is a member of the golf course committee, and he feels that the Government has sold out those people. There is no doubt that in the early days

development of the Joondalup area was too slow and the subsequent events involving the golf course are neither just nor fair.

Problems have also arisen with regard to the Joondalup shopping areas. Some time ago I spoke to a businessman with an interest in a shopping complex who told me that before development commenced he understood a new road would be constructed in front of the shopping complex in which he had an interest. However, when the shop was ready to be opened, no road had been built and there was no prospect of its construction. He was, therefore, forced to sell the store at a huge loss which has put him in a difficult financial position. That is a case of mismanagement by the Government, bearing in mind that the whole purpose of setting up the Joondalup Development Corporation was that it would operate under its own Act and be cheek by jowl with the Government. It was proposed that the organisation would have the benefit of the greatest planning skills and administrative support in Western Australia. Some of those proposals have not materialised.

The ideal arrangement for that area would be an agreement between the local authority and the State Government, whereby the best brains in this State - and perhaps in this nation - would work together. The City of Wanneroo has had problems, some of which have been exacerbated by the unfortunate investigation in which the Minister for Local Government is involved. Many of those issues were dealt with years ago; they were referred to the police who, after investigation, could find no justification for taking further action. By and large the City of Wanneroo is an excellent organisation. Its personnel are highly skilled. It has a large planning section, in the hands of a first class planning officer. If the State Government and the City of Wanneroo had acted together, it would have been an excellent setup. I am sure the Minister is aware of the scuttlebutt which circulated some time ago that the people involved in the Joondalup development had an interest in a large number of quarries in the area. One of my colleagues suggested that the Joondalup area would have developed at a faster rate, were it not for the quarries. He subsequently received a telephone call from a very powerful man, now deceased, who threatened to take action against him. He said that it would not be legal action, but action against the man personally.

Many interesting developments have taken place at Joondalup over the years. I am not sure that the Joondalup development will reach fulfilment, merely because it is governed by a specific Act. It is an area in which the Government could not go wrong, no matter what it did. It is an oasis in the Perth metropolitan area. However, I am very concerned at the Government's actions with regard to the golf course at Joondalup.

**MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [11.17 am]:** It is difficult to know sometimes when the Orders of the Day will in fact be the order of business for the day.

**The SPEAKER:** From my experience in this place, I advise the member that the one thing she can be absolutely sure of is that one can never be sure of anything.

**Mrs EDWARDES:** I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the benefit of your advice based on your experience. I am pleased to speak in the second reading debate on the Western Australian Land Authority Bill. I indicate that the Liberal Party does not support the incorporation of the Joondalup Centre Act into the Western Australian Land Authority Bill. When this proposal was made in 1990 the Liberal Party indicated that it did not support the proposal. The Joondalup Development Corporation was established as an independent statutory authority to carry out the works and infrastructure at Joondalup, and the Opposition indicated in 1990 that it needed approximately five more years in which to complete its charter. It has not yet completed the first stage of the development, and a number of stages remain to be completed. In 1992 it is on schedule and it will probably need only another two or three years to complete its independent charter.

Those with some knowledge of the area will be aware of the fast growing development of the City of Wanneroo. I understand that it is anticipated the population will be 300 000 by the year 2021. It is interesting to compare that with the population in 1974 when 4 800 people lived in that local authority area. The increase in the number of residents in the Wanneroo area - formerly called Wanneroo lands - is enormous. Likewise, enormous pressure is placed by those people on the local government services provided, such as recreational and civic facilities. Joondalup was intended to be the second largest city in Western Australia outside the City of Perth. In order to achieve that objective, continual massage is needed by the Joondalup Development Corporation to ensure that the necessary infrastructures are put in place.

If the Joondalup Development Corporation and its Act are abolished and replaced by a much larger land authority Joondalup will be one small cog in the great big wheel of land development undertaken by this Government. The people in Joondalup, particularly the business people, and the City of Wanneroo, are concerned that they will not get their share of the money allocated by such a body. They are far better off and more aware of what they are doing with an independent body. The corporation is also far more accountable for the funds it spends. Members of this place should be aware that the Joondalup Development Corporation has paid no rates and taxes to the City of Wanneroo since development commenced, yet it has made millions of dollars from the land it has developed and sold. Local people want those millions of dollars to go back into the area to meet the huge needs and pressures applied to it because of the sheer growth in the number of residents in the area and the ensuing demand they have placed on services provided by the city council.

It is important to the business people that there be an independent corporation because many of them have risked their homes to set up a business in the area. They were encouraged to do that. If the Joondalup Development Corporation does not continue to manage development and put roads and everything else in place to encourage people to live in the area and participate in this second largest growth city in Western Australia the homes that people have put up as security to go into business will be at risk. Delays have already occurred in getting Joondalup up and running. Any further delays will result in many of those people going broke. Already many business people are going broke. I do not believe that even this Government would want to see any more people go broke, especially small business people, and especially prior to an election year.

It is extremely important that the Joondalup Development Corporation is allowed to continue with its task. We are talking about Joondalup being an example of urbanisation and not suburbanisation, which is important. Throughout its history Wanneroo has been badly done by. It took 70 years for Wanneroo to get a road because, having spent three years getting the road to Dog Swamp, convicts were no longer allowed to be used to build roads and private contractors had to be employed. As a result, Wanneroo waited 70 years for its road. In 1901 there was talk about a railway line to Wanneroo. In 1992 we see the prospect of the railway being opened this year; that is, it has taken the area 92 years to get a railway.

Governments find it easy when resources are scarce to put Wanneroo last on the list. That is what concerns people in the northern suburbs - that it will come last on the list of priorities of this new land authority. It is great for this Government to say it will establish the land authority at Joondalup and for it to make promises about the amount of money it will spend over the next three to 10 years on Joondalup. However, I could ask many questions about promises made by this Government prior to the last election. Where is the King's Park of the north? We do not have a final report on that park four years after the Government promised it. The public submissions about Yellagonga regional park have been received, but the park still has not been declared. Where do we in the northern suburbs go if we pay any credence to what this Government promises? The City of Wanneroo has called on the Government to put in writing some of the things it would like to see. It would like to see the \$21 million from the Joondalup golf course put back into the establishment of facilities in the area.

I know that the member for Wanneroo has been appointed chairman of the infrastructure working group set up to look into infrastructure and other necessary facilities. We usually refer to it as the "Re-elect Watkins campaign". The member for Wanneroo heads the working group. What will we get from that working group? Promises! I remind members that any funds the Joondalup Development Corporation does not need for infrastructure purposes automatically go into the Government's coffers on the corporation's passing a motion to that effect. Given the fact that any money would be incorporated into this new, large land authority, one sees that there will be no accountability or reassurance to people in the northern suburbs that those funds will not be put into anything other than the promises; that is, just words on paper coming up to an election year.

The people in the northern suburbs are no longer gullible and are not taken in by election promises, which is what we see them to be. The Joondalup Development Corporation is needed to continue its charter for several reasons. Firstly, it has not paid rates and taxes to the City of Wanneroo since its establishment and has an obligation to ensure that funds go back into the City of Wanneroo to complete its charter. Secondly, even if the Minister places his words in writing and says that the election promises about the commitment of funds over

several years to certain infrastructure will be honoured, because we are dealing with this Government they will not be believed. At the moment people are dealing with an independent statutory authority which has far more credence than a Government which has made promises and given commitments about what will be done in the northern suburbs but has not honoured them.

Thirdly, there are people in Wanneroo who cannot walk to their local shop, telephone or post box and who must get into their cars and drive some distance to those facilities. Most people have those facilities just around the corner. It is important that those and the rest of the facilities needed - which were sold to the people who set up residence in Joondalup - be provided for them. Fourthly, it is important that facilities be provided for the business people who has invested huge amounts of capital, sometimes at risk to their homes, to set up in the area because of what the Joondalup Development Corporation told them would be part of a whole city centre. If one goes into the area all one sees is white dirt where the shopping centre should be. We hope the police station, which we were promised in January, February, March, and then April will open soon. The people hope that the courthouse will open some time this year. However, the shopping centre and everything else are not under way - they are just plans. Roads are going in, trees are being planted and pavements are being put down, but there is a lot more to the heart of Joondalup than just those pavements, roads and other signs of development. The provision of infrastructure must continue. The residents of the northern suburbs are concerned that any delay in putting into that area the necessary funds to allow that infrastructure to continue to be provided will cause harm and hurt to the business community and the residents, and particularly to the City of Wanneroo, which has a huge number of people to satisfy. It is also totally unreasonable to expect the City of Wanneroo to carry on with its tasks when it has not received from the Joondalup Development Corporation any rates and taxes for all the years that it has been in operation, and when it has sold land worth millions of dollars. The City of Wanneroo must get some funds to ensure that it can put in place the civic, recreational, sporting and cultural facilities that are required. It is imperative for the survival of those residents and businesses that this part of the northern suburbs be allowed to continue to grow at the rate at which it has been growing.

I am aware that the City of Wanneroo has written to the Minister because copies of those letters have been forwarded to the Opposition. I am aware also that the Minister has responded to the City of Wanneroo. I am not aware, because the City of Wanneroo has not advised us, or perhaps has not yet made a decision, whether it has accepted the Minister's response. It is essential that the Joondalup Development Corporation be allowed to continue to carry out its independent charter. We on this side of the House will not allow the JDC to be dissolved and we will not allow the Joondalup Centre Act to be abolished. We want the JDC to continue to carry out its work with the funds that it has at present. We do not want those funds to be swallowed up by a big new land authority which has made promises only on paper about what will be its commitment to that area. We want to ensure that this independent statutory authority is allowed to carry out and finish its tasks. We are talking about another three years and, at the end of that time, sufficient infrastructure will be in place to allow the area to mobilise itself from then on. If the JDC were stopped now, its funds were cut off and the infrastructure were not allowed to go ahead at the same pace, there would not be sufficient impetus for Joondalup to mobilise itself to carry on, and delays would occur that would hurt the residents and cause real damage to the small business people, with the risk that some of them would go broke. I support the amendments that will be moved during at the Committee stage.

**DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [11.33 am]:** I want to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Western Australian Land Authority Bill because, during the debate last night, I was reminded by the Leader of the National Party that the powers to be granted under this Bill are much wider than I at first recalled. In fact, about six months ago, the Minister's advisers briefed me on this draft Bill, as I recalled last night after I suggested that the Bill did not cover residential land development. I recall clearly now that in fact it does, and I had some concerns on that basis, and on the basis of what the briefing people told me last year. It has become apparent to me as I have read the final version of the Bill over the past 24 hours that we are setting up here an extremely powerful body. While there may be some argument for that, it is one that we must watch very carefully.

I refer, first, to the future role of the Joondalup Development Corporation, which has been referred to by the member for Kingsley, and which I know is of concern also to the member for Wanneroo. Over the last 20 years, the JDC generally, with some exceptions, has done a very good job in promoting the Joondalup centre in difficult circumstances and with minimal assistance from Government. One year when I was in the academic sphere, a group of students and I looked at the development of the northern suburbs, and it became obvious from that study and from interviews that we conducted with residents and others that one of the reasons for the absence of commercial facilities in the Joondalup centre was not so much bad planning on the part of the JDC as bad planning on the part of the then Metropolitan Region Planning Authority. The authority had designated Joondalup as a major regional centre but had then allowed regional shopping facilities to proliferate elsewhere, close to the Joondalup regional centre, such as at Wanneroo and at various northern suburbs, where major centres such as Whitford were allowed to develop perhaps beyond what was a desirable capacity if the objective were to build up a commercial centre early at Wanneroo. It was fairly obvious that the market could not sustain a major commercial centre at Joondalup, as well as at Whitford City, at the Wanneroo centre, and at other minor centres. The MRPA was undercutting its own objectives by allowing the proliferation of shopping centres beyond their designated size.

Mr Lewis: And also the local authority, because it was the proponent from the municipal level.

Dr ALEXANDER: Yes. In this instance, the Wanneroo City Council had a good deal to answer for in the mid-1980s because it was pushing alternative shopping centres or taking on board anything that the developers put in front of it and saying, "Yes, let us have that." Sure, the people needed shopping facilities, but whether they needed them in the locations in which they were constructed is another question. Therefore, both the shires and the MRPA must share some responsibility for allowing the JDC's plans to be undercut or stalled.

The concern in respect of this Bill is that if the JDC were absorbed into the Western Australian Land Authority, it could have even less clout when it comes to matters of this sort. Although the Bill states that the proposed authority will take over all of the existing powers of the JDC, there is some danger that the powers of the JDC will be watered down. The JDC has been a bit ineffective to date, and it may become even more ineffective if it becomes part of a large bureaucracy. The people of the northern corridor deserve a better range of facilities, as the member for Kingsley pointed out, and there is a danger that if the JDC were absorbed into the new authority, the city centre plans for Joondalup, ambitious as they are, may become even more difficult to achieve. I hope the Minister is listening somewhere, and I would like him to tell us in his reply just how will he ensure that the JDC will be able to take action under its charter to build in the northern corridor a major alternative centre to the Perth central area, which is certainly needed now and will be needed even more in the years to come as development inevitably moves northwards towards Yanchep.

The member for Applecross referred to the Western Australian Land Authority as an exercise in socialism. Coming from where I do, that is bound to raise a few eyebrows in this corner of the Chamber, where a couple of people may still be left who, if they would not admit to being socialists, would at least say they have a lot of sympathy with the original objectives of socialist philosophy, which have been so much bastardised over the years and around the world.

Mr Wiese: At least there is some consistency on that side of the House.

Dr ALEXANDER: Even if we are criticised for it, we do try to stick to the point of view that the State has an important role in the economy, particularly when it comes to land development. The irony of criticisms of the sort raised by the member for Applecross is that the Industrial Lands Development Authority, as I understand it, was established and flourished under conservative Governments. Over the years that authority took a leading role in establishing industrial estates around the metropolitan area - Canning Vale is a prime example, and there are many others - and promoting industrial development in those areas. Now people on the conservative side are advocating that it should move its functions into rural areas. I totally agree, but if we do not give that authority some sort of State backing there is no chance of its playing that constructive role. It is a matter of balance, and I recognise that the Industrial Lands Development Authority has been very arbitrary in its use

of power in recent years. Many complaints have been brought to me about the way in which ILDA has pushed ordinary individuals around when it comes to compulsory acquisition of their land, for perhaps legitimate purposes but in a way which has disadvantaged many people, not just in the northern suburbs but right across the metropolitan area. I have looked at many case histories where individuals seem to have been put at an extreme disadvantage by the way in which ILDA has rather inflexibly exercised its power and has arbitrarily pushed people out without adequate compensation and certainly without adequate consultation.

One of the things I am keen to see included in this legislation, and which I know the member for Morley is also keen to see, is a greater degree of accountability in the case of the use of compulsory acquisition powers, so that people at least have some redress if they are forced from their premises by the arbitrary use of State power. Indeed, I have now reached the point where I think compulsory acquisition powers need to be very closely looked at and perhaps much more closely circumscribed than they are at present. That might sound a little strange coming from someone of my persuasions, but I try to balance individuals' rights and liberties against the use of State power and I think even good left-wingers try to do that; because if State power is used in an arbitrary fashion it is no longer to the benefit of either the individual or the community in the long run if ordinary people, as has often happened, are pushed around by unresponsive, bureaucratic State departments. Regrettably, on occasion ILDA seems to have fallen under that label.

Another matter I wish to raise relates to the powers extending to residential land, which I inadvertently overlooked last night; that is, the Western Australian Land Authority will be absorbing the powers once exercised by LandCorp and the Western Australian Development Corporation. Quite apart from the controversial sides of those organisations' operations - which have been referred to by other speakers and which I am sure will be referred to by subsequent speakers - I want to draw attention to LandCorp's original role as a provider of residential land for low income earners. This goes back to the days of the ill-fated Whitlam Government and the setting up of land authorities around the country with the legitimate objective, in my view, of providing low cost land for those who otherwise could not afford to get into home ownership. Over the years the land authority which operated, and which was then taken over by LandCorp, gradually concentrated more and more on the upper end of the market. These days it seems that if one is a customer of LandCorp one is unlikely to be able to buy a low cost block, though that might have been the case a few years ago. Homeswest seems gradually to have taken over the role of providing low cost land for those at the bottom end of the market. While in some ways that can be defended, in other ways it must be looked at carefully; because primarily Homeswest's charter has been welfare housing or housing for those in need of welfare assistance. That is fine, but there is another group of people who are not necessarily eligible for Homeswest assistance or welfare assistance but who still cannot afford to get into home ownership.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I agree with that point. Do you realise that in 1989-90 Homeswest spent more on land acquisition and land development than on building rental accommodation?

Dr ALEXANDER: No, I was not aware it had gone that far, but I was certainly aware of the expansion of its charter in that area. Perhaps it has gone too far, in that case. Another example is the way in which Homeswest's purchasing priorities can sometimes prejudice regional planning objectives. Homeswest recently purchased a huge block of land near Mandurah. I am not sure if the development plans for that piece of land, desirable as the development may turn out to be, really fit in with the regional planning objectives for the metropolitan area.

Mr Strickland: There could be a political objective, with an election coming up in 1993.

Dr ALEXANDER: Never! Never ascribe political objectives to a body like Homeswest! Generally I think Homeswest does an excellent job in its provision of low income housing, but when it is moving into the area of expending many resources in acquiring land we may be going back to a point which was reached in the 1950s when, my studies tell me, Homeswest was developing one out of two residential blocks in the metropolitan area - something which is generally not well recognised. A thesis undertaken at the University of Western Australia by Professor Selwood, as he now is, who is now in Canada, analysed that matter in some detail and came to the conclusion that at that time the State Housing

Commission was a main player in the land market. While that may have been of advantage to customers of the commission in the short term, in the long term it created a good many social problems by congregating huge numbers of people in the northern suburbs in Homeswest housing. That has intensified the social problems affecting those people and those areas. The caution is that Homeswest may now be operating in a way which exceeds its charter and may lead back, if it is not very careful, to the problems of social segregation of low income people to the disadvantage of them and the rest of the community.

Therefore I would like to hear from the Minister what will be the role of LandCorp or the WADC in relation to residential development. For whom is the residential land actually being acquired? Is it for those who cannot afford to get it through the private system, or is it intended to try - and LandCorp does not seem to have been all that successful in this regard - to make extra revenue for the Government? I believe the Government's role in land acquisition and disposal on the residential side should be confined to the lower income segment of the market where the assistance is clearly most needed. I do not believe it should be turned into a money making operation because more often than not, as we have discovered over the last five or 10 years, that backfires on Government and the community in general.

Mr Shave: The correct term is "a money losing operation".

Dr ALEXANDER: In many instances it has turned into just that, although that was not intended. That is the difficulty: When these operations try to become commercially as opposed to socially oriented they seem to run into great difficulties.

Mr D.L. Smith: Are you criticising LandCorp itself?

Dr ALEXANDER: I would be very interested in having a closer look at those accounts. It probably has made a profit on certain transactions, but at whose expense in some instances? Who has provided the infrastructure and who bears the cost there? That is another relevant question.

Mr D.L. Smith interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: I am not so sure. I think it is legitimate that a body like LandCorp, if it is providing land for low income housing, could get some preferential treatment, but when it goes into the open market I do not think it should.

Mr D.L. Smith: It has two roles - in the home buyers' market and the general market.

Dr ALEXANDER: When I look at what it did at St John's Wood I really wonder about its role. It disposed of valuable Government assets at pretty reasonable prices and has done the same at Buckland Hill. How much money did the State make out of that exercise, and is it really the Government's role to help high income people to get into that sort of housing? I have never thought so, and I still do not think so.

Mr D.L. Smith interjected.

Mr Lewis: Are you saying the people at the higher end of the market are dummies?

Dr ALEXANDER: I think those people can generally look after themselves. LandCorp and those agencies should be concentrating on the bottom end of the market.

Mr D.L. Smith: When the middle market and the upper market move out of kilter, the lower end of the market will follow suit.

Dr ALEXANDER: It depends what role it is taking. The South Australian Housing Trust and the land authorities in that State for years have controlled a very large share of the total residential development market. It has been criticised by the private sector for that reason but, as I understand it, it is an outstanding example of successful State intervention; firstly to keep land prices down, and secondly to concentrate on the lower end of the market, which to my way of thinking is good for both equity and efficiency. Once it strays outside that charter it does not seem to be good for either equity or efficiency. That is perhaps a matter for further debate. I would be interested to find out the exact role that the restructured Western Australian Development Corporation will play inside the new Western Australian Land Authority.

Finally, I come to the question of infrastructure. This too is not clear, at least to my way of

thinking. The Bill will give the Western Australian Land Authority the ability to provide infrastructure in certain circumstances but, as one of the speakers last night pointed out, it is not clear where the authority's functions finish and those of bodies such as the Water Authority of Western Australia, the State Energy Commission, and other service providers start. Those distinctions are crucial because one of the problems when a number of different Government bodies operate in the area is an overlap of powers and a build up of unnecessary bureaucratic red tape, to everybody's cost. I am in favour of Government intervention in the land market and in the provision of infrastructure but I am also in favour of some rational provision of infrastructure, so that the different bodies operate in a coordinated manner. One of the problems we have had, and of course the classic criticism of Government authorities when providing infrastructure, is that one authority comes along and digs a trench and then fills it in, followed by another authority which digs up the first trench or one next door, and so on - raising the cost of the provision of infrastructure to a great and unnecessary degree. Again, it appears that we could learn from the interstate experience where the practice of common-trenching in Adelaide has been operating successfully for a number of years. I would like to hear the Minister's comments about whether the land authority here will in any way seek a supervisory role in the planning and provision of infrastructure and, if not, who will undertake that role.

Mr D.L. Smith: The Government will pursue that task; it will be partly performed by the metropolitan development program.

Dr ALEXANDER: That brings me to another point which relates to the role of the Department of Planning and Urban Development and its metropolitan development program. While it is a good idea to coordinate the program - essential, in fact - I am not sure why the Western Australian Land Authority is separate from the Department of Planning and Urban Development. One could argue that we do not want to create an even bigger bureaucracy, but one of the problems of the Department of Planning and Urban Development is that other authorities are set up and go in different directions. Coming from a town planning background I tend to take the point of view of town planners who often say that they have the plans but no-one follows them. There are two reasons for that: One is that often the plans are inappropriate, and they need to have another look at them, but the other reason is that we give too much power to competing Government departments.

Here is perhaps another classic example. The Western Australian Land Authority apparently has no links - or none that I can see from reading the legislation - to the Department of Planning and Urban Development and yet the Department of Planning and Urban Development will, I assume, set up the framework under which the land authority will be operating. Why is it necessary to create a separate authority - if we are amalgamating authorities - outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Planning and Urban Development? As the Minister for Lands and Planning, the Minister should be in an ideal position to answer that question. From my observation of the way in which different authorities have failed to coordinate activities over the years, I believe one of the main reasons why the metropolitan region planning objectives - such as the development of the Joondalup Centre - have not been achieved is a lack of coordination between different Government departments, particularly between land providers, planning departments, and infrastructure providers. Perhaps we have missed the opportunity to either provide closer links between land development and planning or to amalgamate the land development functions under the Department of Planning and Urban Development.

Mr D.L. Smith: At present LandCorp is responsible to the Minister for Microeconomic Reform. This Bill will bring it under the same ministerial control as the Department of Planning and Urban Development. A voice in the planning and land development industry says that that is unwise; that the Minister for Planning should not be responsible for land development agencies.

Dr ALEXANDER: I cannot understand where that voice is coming from or why it is put that way. I can see the potential danger of too much concentration of power but the opposite danger is so much fragmentation that the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing - and then the objectives are not achieved.

Mr Strickland: The Government cannot even sort out access-way closures.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is at the opposite end of the spectrum. The member may be right.



I support the legislation in general but I have a number of questions regarding the operation and functions of the proposed land authority.

**MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [11.55 am]:** I am very keen to become involved in debate on the Western Australian Land Authority Bill. The House should be aware that I serve on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. Some things are happening within that committee about which I cannot speak today because the committee's report has yet to be processed. However, I am amazed, as the member for Avon sitting on the outskirts of the metropolitan area, and having the opportunity to sit on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and look at some of the issues north of the city, to discover the extreme smell of corruption north of the city.

Mr Shave: You do not have to go north of the city.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** In this instance, I am amazed. The Auditor General brought out a damning report on marinas which was presented to this House some time ago. Part of the report dealt with the Smith Corporation and its actions at Mindarie Keys, and other inquiries which members will be able to read about in a few months. In the northern areas there is a direct link between certain corporations and entities - all being well looked after by the Government -

Mrs Watkins: Is that why the City of Wanneroo is being investigated?

**Mr TRENORDEN:** I have no idea why the City of Wanneroo is being investigated. That should be an issue for the member for Wanneroo.

Mrs Watkins: It is. I am wondering whether the member for Avon is aware of it because he appears to be au fait with what goes on in the northern suburbs.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** I am au fait with the issues that the report of the Auditor General has raised.

The SPEAKER: I assume the member will link his remarks with the Bill shortly.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** Mr Speaker, the point is that this pulls together a group of Government entities that have been involved in certain activities.

**Mr D.L. Smith:** Do not use the privilege of this House to raise allegations without providing any evidence at all. The member should not use his position on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee to justify his comments. If the member has evidence he should bring it to the attention of the Parliament and to the Minister involved. I do not believe there is any evidence.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** I suggest that the Minister read the Auditor General's report on marinas. It is very interesting reading, and it is certainly not an allegation. It is a report by an officer of this Parliament.

**Mr D.L. Smith:** The member is using the privilege of this Parliament.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** Read the report, Minister! It is enlightening reading.

The Western Australian Land Authority will be created but it will deal with less than one per cent of the land mass of Western Australia. This is another piece of Goebbels-speak. This Western Australian entity will look after the metropolitan area; it will totally exclude rural Western Australia. I have a fair bit to say about that.

Mrs Watkins: There is a fair bit of rural land in Wanneroo.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** The Industrial Lands Development Authority will be involved in this new organisation.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

## GRIEVANCE - GERALDTON REGIONAL HOSPITAL

### *Expenditure Cuts*

**MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.01 pm]:** I grieve to the Minister for Health, who I trust is listening to me elsewhere in the building. He is probably aware of what I will say, and I will be interested to hear his response.

My grievance concerns the cuts in expenditure for the Geraldton Regional Hospital. I speak with a feeling of déjà vu because one of my first political acts as a member of Parliament was to address a march of people in Geraldton at the beginning of 1990 following cuts in the Budget allocation to that hospital. I quote to the House a statement issued by the then Administrator of the Geraldton Regional Hospital, Mr Stephen Jones, relating to the 1989-90 Budget. I would like to quote the entire statement, but I refer only to parts of it -

The Geraldton Regional Hospital has been experiencing demand-driven pressures which, coupled with a decline in private patients, has led to an unacceptable projected Budget overrun for 1989/90. Basically, over-expenditure of about \$400 000 coupled with under-revenue of \$300 000 was leading to a Budget blow-out of about \$700 000.

It is worth reflecting on those figures, which have three differing aspects: Firstly, they involve an overexpenditure of about \$400 000, and although it may be argued that at that time a certain amount of fat was within the system, in 1992 no fat is left to trim - certainly not within the bounds of the hospital itself. Secondly, the hospital experienced an under-revenue of approximately \$300 000. Thirdly, the hospital suffered a decline in the number of private patients, a problem which is evident around the State.

Mr Wilson: It is worse in other States than it is in Western Australia.

Mr MINSON: True, but I am interested in Western Australia.

Mr Wilson: Me too; I understand the situation to which you refer.

Mr MINSON: I realise that I am telling the Minister what he already knows, but I would like to know what he will do about it. There are private hospitals in operation with the ability to take patients on half an hour's notice - they only need to make up the beds. However, the private patients are being attracted to Government hospitals.

Mr Wilson: Some of them may choose to go to those private hospitals.

Mr MINSON: That is true. It was true in Geraldton, I grant that, because the facility at the St John of God Hospital was such that it could not handle many of the operative procedures. Therefore, the Minister's comments have some merit. However, following the construction of the new St John of God Hospital, it may be possible to attract more patients to that hospital. This would, firstly, free up more beds for public patients, and secondly, result in fewer private, fee paying patients for the public hospital.

Mr Wilson: With less revenue generated.

Mr MINSON: I will not debate all the cuts made in the 1989-90 Budget, but suffice to say that following the Budget blow-out of around \$700 000, a 24-bed surgical ward was closed. A number of other cuts were also instituted, but no staff were retrenched and essential services were maintained.

A number of actions were taken which led to some savings: Reductions were made in the average length of a patient's stay in hospital; an increase occurred in day surgery, which was an ongoing process around the State; a reduction was made in accident and emergency pressure and costs, about which I cannot comment; and a reduction occurred in the number of nursing home-type patients dealt with by the hospital. It is difficult to know where these patients went because certainly no facilities have been built by the Commonwealth to handle those patients.

Mr Wilson: The demand for that service fluctuates all the time.

Mr MINSON: Yes, but demand is growing, especially in Dongara, a problem to which I will refer another time.

The hospital instituted a new theatre booking protocol, which was a reduction in the number of cases handled using a broad brush approach. Therefore, it is with some regret that I noted further cuts were to be made in services at the Geraldton Regional Hospital. The Director of the Mid West and Gascoyne Health Region of the Health Department said in a Press statement of 18 March 1992 -

... since virtually all the "fat" and areas of discretionary expenditure have been eliminated at the Regional Hospital.

He then expresses concerns, and continues -

In line with the general reduction in budget allocations to country health regions for the 1991/92 financial year, Geraldton Regional Hospital was allocated a budget 3.6% below its 1990/91 budget, in constant dollar terms. This is on top of the expenditure reductions at Geraldton Regional Hospital and other public hospitals in the 1989/90 and 1990/91 financial years. Overall, Geraldton Regional Hospital has experienced a net reduction in expenditures of approximately 8%, or about \$1 million, over the past three financial years, taking into account inflation and past activity and staffing levels.

I cannot quote all the Press release because I will run out of time; I must indicate some of the ramifications of these cuts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is also against Standing Orders. I believe we discussed this matter previously in that it is not desirable to quote a whole letter or statement. Members must quote selectively.

Mr MINSON: A problem for members of the Opposition is that they cannot table papers; it is possible to lay papers on the Table for the rest of a day's sitting, but I have never seen anyone pick up and read such a paper.

I now refer to the ramifications of these budgetary cuts to the Geraldton Regional Hospital.

Mr Wilson: Which ones?

Mr MINSON: All of them, but mostly the latest round of cuts.

Mr Wilson: What do you mean by "the latest round"?

Mr MINSON: I must return to my speech.

Mr Wilson: I need to know what you mean so I can respond.

Mr MINSON: It took a long time to attract specialists to the Geraldton region, and nobody knows more about that than I; I have lived in the area since I was two and a half years of age. When I first went to the area, two or three doctors serviced Geraldton and the entire region from Three Springs to Carnarvon. Also, we must consider the reputation of the Geraldton Regional Hospital. Once it receives a reputation of cutting services to the point where it is not viable for doctors or specialists to stay in the area, obviously they will leave. Also, it is obvious that waiting lists will grow to unacceptable proportions unless we can ensure that no further reductions in allocations, in real terms, occur at the hospital. The Government should make an ex-gratia payment - not from the 1992-93 Budget - to make up for the cost cutting from which the hospital has suffered from 1989 until today. The hospital needs assurances of continued funding, and until that happens we will see a further cut in services. I suggest to the House that the priorities of this Government are wrong when it promises a swimming pool in the Ashburton region and cuts services to the Geraldton Regional Hospital.

[The member's time expired.]

MR WILSON (Dianella - Minister for Health) [12.11 pm]: I am sorry I was not here for the beginning of the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and did not hear to whom that letter was addressed.

Mr Minson: It was an issue statement.

Mr WILSON: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I note from his comments that it was dated 18 March. A little has happened since then and I thought the member for Greenough would be aware of that because I am sure he reads the local media. Whether he was aware or not, he failed to mention the announcement that was made as a result of that statement and the public attention that was given to it. The matter was drawn to my attention following its publication. It is my clear understanding that concerns about adequacy of funding of services at Geraldton Regional Hospital in the previous year, having been drawn to the attention of the Commissioner for Health and myself, were further scrutinised and funding to the hospital was increased by \$500 000.

Mr Minson: That will take care of the amount the hospital is short. Is that going to come off its next year's budget allocation? That is the point I am getting at.

Mr WILSON: If the member for Greenough would let me finish he would hear the truth.

Mr Minson: That would be a change.

Mr WILSON: That may be the member's opinion but what I am telling the member now is the truth. The statement that was issued in March seemed to indicate a different understanding to that of the commissioner and myself about a prior decision to address the issue of a shortfall in funding to the hospital. As I recall, the statement seemed to indicate that somehow or other that augmentation of funding would be soaked up within considerations for the funding of the total region as opposed to funding for the hospital services per se. As a result of that, and I understand that this has been reported publicly, I asked the Commissioner for Health to review the situation with the regional director to ensure that there was no mistaken understanding about the previous decision that had been made, that augmentation of funding to the hospital would not be altered in terms of that decision with respect to the funding issue for the total region. That is under way. There is no intention that there will be any further cuts of that nature which do not take on board the prior decision to augment funding for the hospital as per that decision last year.

Mr Minson: I would like to have one point made clear; this is not mischievous. I want an assurance that the shortfall will not be funded from next year's allocation. That has been an ongoing problem that has been presented to me.

Mr WILSON: If the member for Greenough had listened clearly to what I had to say, I have already answered that question. As a result of a prior decision resulting from the assessment last year it was decided to augment funding for the hospital to the order of \$500 000. There has been no change to that. As far as I am concerned that funding remains and it seems that the statement made in March did not take that into account. Therefore the review by the commissioner will ensure that no decision made since then, including this statement, should be confused with the real funding situation for the hospital. I was concerned when I saw that report because my clear understanding was that funding for that hospital had been reassessed a year ago and as a result a decision had been made to increase funding for the hospital. That increase must stand and there is no question about any review of that decision because that was my clear understanding of the situation. As far as I am concerned that is the truthful situation.

Mr Minson: That will make my life a lot easier.

Mr WILSON: It may not make the lives of other people any easier.

Mr Minson: I think it will.

Mr WILSON: I am thinking of everyone concerned, and decisions made to that effect must stand and they will.

## GRIEVANCE - McIVER RAILWAY STATION

### *Access Problems to Royal Perth Hospital*

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [12.17 pm]: My grievance is directed to the Minister for Transport and concerns access from the McIver railway station to the Royal Perth Hospital. McIver railway station is situated near Perth on the Perth-Midland line. This grievance arises because my electorate tends to have an older population on average and as many people would know elderly people tend to have more ill health than younger people and with the ageing of our population this problem is likely to increase. In my electorate a lot of people use the tertiary health services at Royal Perth Hospital so they need access to Royal Perth Hospital either to attend the outpatients clinic - in some cases regularly - or alternatively to visit relatives hospitalised there. In my electorate many of these older people either do not own cars or have disabilities that mean they can no longer drive and they find that train transport is the best means of getting to Royal Perth Hospital. However, the problem is that when they alight at McIver station, which is the closest station to Royal Perth Hospital, it is quite difficult to get from there to the hospital. They are faced with having to walk quite a long distance either towards town and back to Perth in a more easterly direction and then across. It is a significant problem in the Maylands electorate because the suburbs in my electorate are effectively bisected by the railway line. In fact there are six railway stations in my electorate. As well as that the present policy of constructing houses around railway stations and the continuation of this policy means that use of public transport is encouraged. With the electrification of the rail system I am hoping that construction in my area will increase because undoubtedly we will have a first class train system and people should use it. In grieving about this problem I am not talking only about the railway stations

where people catch the train from my electorate but also about all stations out toward Midland.

Interestingly some anecdotal evidence has been presented to me that certain groups of people with health problems prefer, or find it easier, to catch a train; one such group is people with schizophrenia. People from the Schizophrenic Fellowship argue that evidence in the Eastern States indicates that train travel is the preferred mode of travel because somehow being able to go to one spot to catch a train and knowing that the train stops at every station at which it is easy to alight is conceptually easier to understand. All of this adds up to quite a significant number of people using the train to gain access to health services in particular to Royal Perth Hospital.

A problem which no-one has brought to my attention, but which I think exists, concerns Royal Perth Hospital staff using the train to travel to work. No doubt they encounter the same access difficulty. I am sure that when the station was built access to the hospital was in mind because it is one of the largest facilities in the area and one of the closest facilities to the station. I am sure that the late Ken McIver, as a former Minister for Works, would have wanted to ensure that access was available. He was a former member for Avon and, I understand, called "killer". Apparently, when he was a train driver he ran over a steer belonging to the Lee Steeres. However, I am not sure of the truth of that.

Mr Wiese: It comes from a good source.

Dr EDWARDS: Yes, it does. I have been concerned about access between Royal Perth Hospital and the McIver railway station for more than a year. At the risk of sounding a little like the member for Marangaroo, I have contacted a number of persons and agencies in an attempt to have the matter resolved. They include the Health Department, Westrail, the Minister for Services and the Minister for Transport. These agencies have a part to play in the resolution of this problem. They gave me a sympathetic hearing and were quite understanding. Nonetheless, it seems to be difficult to have the problem physically solved. At the behest of one of my constituents - a member of the McDonough family - I took the opportunity of catching the train to McIver station to study the area. When one alights from the train one sees the Royal Perth Hospital complex and the car park which it would be nice to walk through to reach Royal Perth Hospital. Unfortunately, as I said earlier, one must walk a long way east or west to get into the Royal Perth Hospital grounds.

In summary, my grievance is about what I think is a fairly major problem for the people involved. It is a nagging, nuisance problem causing elderly constituents to have limited access to Royal Perth Hospital when they want their health seen to. The solution seems obvious, but its final implementation is proving to be more complicated. I ask that this problem be tackled and a solution found as soon as physically possible.

MRS BEGGS (Whitford - Minister for Transport) [12.22 pm]: I thank the member for her grievance. I agree that it is a problem; it has been brought to my attention several times and it has existed since the earlier stages of planning for McIver station. The difficulty in providing the access has arisen since a committee was established which involved the Office of Government Accommodation. The OGA was very reluctant to consider pedestrian access through the car park. However, late last year agreement was reached between the Office of Government Accommodation, Wilson Parking Australia Limited, Westrail and Transperth to construct a ramp from the nearest station platform - the upper Armadale platform - to the second level of the car park. The Office of Government Accommodation insisted that access for pedestrians be segregated from the car park so that a pedestrian walkway can be constructed along the west wall of the car park. That will involve relocating the car bays further inside the car park; room exists for that process. A barrier will be constructed to keep cars and pedestrians separate. However, at the lift end of the car park, pedestrians will enter the car park area. The cost of the work, at \$95 000, is quite expensive. I have some doubts about the need for the rigid segregation. However, I accept that when access is to be provided for pedestrians, particularly those referred to by the member for Maylands - the elderly who in many cases are ill and using the McIver station to reach Royal Perth Hospital - it is very important that we consider potential hazards. On that basis, the Government is prepared to cooperate with the Office of Government Accommodation in order to provide the desired connection. The funding has been provided through the Westrail suburban rail system capital works budget to be financed through Transperth. The details of the proposal are at a stage where we are almost ready to commence work.

The decision to build the McIver station resulted from the Royal Perth Hospital's involvement in a committee to determine whether a need existed for the station. It was decided in 1987 that the station should be built where it stands because of the number of people involved. I think about 1 250 people visit Royal Perth Hospital throughout the day and early evening, and about 4 000 people work there. It is also important that people who use the station are able to travel safely to Royal Perth Hospital and to the surrounding areas. The justification for a station is certainly evident. I thank the member for her cooperation in working through the issues and for representing the needs of her constituents very well. The work will commence shortly.

### GRIEVANCE - CERVICAL CYTOLOGY REGISTER PROPOSAL

**MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [12.28 pm]:** I have a grievance with the Minister for Health about which I advised him last week. Following our conversation, the Minister invited me to have briefings with his staff, one of which I had yesterday afternoon. The rest I will have this afternoon. Notwithstanding the briefings, the nature of this issue is so important it is right to bring it to Parliament so that at least some information will be aired about a Government proposal. The Government is proposing to establish a cervical cytology register. It is commendable that such a register is to be established, given the education needed to encourage women to have pap smears on a more regular basis than is presently done. We are all aware of, and concerned about, the increase of cervical cancer. The question I have for the Minister concerns duplication, privacy, confidentiality and active consent. Each woman who has a pap smear will have her name, address and the results of the test entered on a register which will be held by the Commissioner for Health. It will be incumbent upon the commissioner to provide notification to women whose results are normal. If the test results are abnormal a follow-up or other appropriate procedure will be implemented. This proposal will involve the intervention by the Commissioner for Health between a doctor and patient. Even if the commissioner refers to the doctor so that he can advise the patient of the results of the test, a duplication of the process will occur because the doctor will have automatically notified the patient. Why do we need the register? Is it for educational purposes; to ascertain demographically which women are not having tests; because of the large number of migrants; or because women change their doctors or places of living? That can be done without the name, address and test results being forwarded to the Commissioner of Health. If the results are needed for only scientific data or research to learn more about cervical cancer and its consistency, that information could be obtained from the laboratories. There is a need for some active research into and educational programs on this cancer. However, the cost of the duplication will be enormous. Laboratories already provide statistical information and recall systems are or are being put in place. A majority of doctors have recall systems. In fact, as stated in the newspaper recently -

seven out of 10 GPs either already had an established recall system to help remind their patients when they should have a smear or planned to set up such a system.

Therefore, if the Commissioner of Health is to advise the doctor, who will advise the women? There is no consistency in the argument that the Commissioner of Health needs the names and addresses of women who have these tests. What will happen when a woman changes doctor and has not given her forwarding address to her doctor? The doctor will not be able to trace her. All the doctor will be able to do is send that information back to the commissioner. It would be an absolute waste of money to set up this register along those lines.

I can be convinced of the need for this register - because I am concerned about the increasing incidence of this cancer - if it is established on the basis that the women must consent to their names, addresses and test results, be they normal or abnormal, being recorded. If consent is not given by the women to have their names included on the register, it will be a negative consent. Under the proposed arrangement, if a woman does not want her information to be recorded she can fill in a form. However, problems may arise over the practices of doctors in their surgeries and the information they provide to their patients. What happens to those women who are illiterate? What happens to migrant women? Many questions must be answered about how women will be advised that they do not have to consent and can object to having their names and the results of their tests forwarded to the Commissioner of Health.

I would prefer a system involving active consent. If a woman is to have a pap smear and if the register is to be established she should be able to consent to the results being referred to the register. It may well be that the names and addresses are not required. Perhaps only the results of the test and suburb would be needed to assist in the compilation of demographic information. All of the other identifiable information may not be necessary. Similarly, some women may like the idea of the Government sending out a notice informing them or their doctors that their next test is due. It is essential that if this register is to go ahead we ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of women is absolute. We must ensure that the Government, in setting up the register, is not creating duplication and wasting funds. Above all we must ensure that women will be informed and will be able to agree to their names, addresses and the results of their tests being sent to the Commissioner of Health. Presently, that will not happen under the proposed regulations because women will be able to only say no. Therefore, active consent is essential if this register is to be established because we are talking about not only a notifiable disease but also the instances in which results of tests are normal or abnormal.

**MR WILSON** (Dianella - Minister for Health) [12.37 pm]: I confirm that the member for Kingsley has been in touch with me on this matter and has been offered the opportunity to be briefed on the proposals for the introduction of a cervical cytology register. The regulations are before the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, which will be addressing the matter this week.

I share many, if not all, of the concerns raised by the member for Kingsley about the confidentiality of statistical information and personal details. I will be happy for the register to be established if the committee is assured, after briefings from experts and research people who have been involved in examining this matter for 18 months, that this register is the proper way to proceed. If the committee cannot be convinced of that, obviously we will have to reconsider the mode of its implementation. Notes on the Health (Cervical Cytology Register) Regulations state under the heading "Rationale" -

Establishing cervical cytology registries as the most important single strategy to achieve a more systematic approach to cervical cancer screening was a recommendation of the AHMAC Cervical Cancer Screening Evaluation Steering Committee in their report entitled "Cervical Cancer Screening - options for change".

This report and its recommendations grew out of two years of pilot projects around Australia. In Victoria, a cervical cytology registry has been operating successfully for nearly three years with community and professional support.

The Western Australian registry will be based on this model. The rationale further states -

In Western Australia each year, more than 100 women develop cervical cancer, and about 30 women die from this essentially preventable disease. Current screening efforts result in preventing only half of the potentially preventable cases of cervical cancer. There is convincing evidence that cervical cancer screening is more effective in reducing the morbidity and mortality from this disease when it is combined with a systematic recall facility for women.

The regulations which are currently before the Parliament were developed, as I said, over an 18 month period by the cervical cytology register implementation working party. This group consisted of representatives from gynaecology, general practice, pathology, epidemiology, consumer representatives from the Women's Advisory Council and the Country Women's Association, the Cancer Registry and the legislation branch of the Health Department. These representatives consulted widely among their organisations through their newsletters about the proposed registry and the response was overwhelmingly supportive. My recent discussions with the Australian Medical Association indicate that it strongly supports this and it has reassured me on the issue of informed consent.

I agree with the member that if the principle of the register is to be a deliberate decision to opt out of the recording of personal information, the onus rests on the practitioner to correctly inform the patient of her right not to have that information recorded. I understand, for instance, that, included in the material that has been prepared to inform patients and medical practitioners, is a pad with very large print on the front reminding the practitioner that it is his or her responsibility to inform the patient of her right not to have that

information recorded. Everything rests on that. I know that some people believe that the medical profession does not have a good record on informed consent mostly because its members are very busy people and to go through the process of informing people about their rights with respect to consent for care can be prolonged and to explain that right to people carefully can take up precious minutes in a consultation.

I understand the concerns. The Australian medical profession held a special meeting in Melbourne last weekend to discuss this issue because it is so supportive of the introduction of registers on this model that it believes that it must make a special effort to insist on its working according to informed consent being practised with particular care. That is the issue about which the member expressed rightful concern. Having been briefed about the plans, I am assured by all of the people concerned that, unless we go this way, we will continue to have less than maximum effect in giving women, particularly disadvantaged women and Aboriginal women who are the most impacted by cervical cancer, the opportunity to maintain contact for testing and follow-up testing.

New Zealand, which opted some years ago for a positive consent system is now reviewing its decision because it failed. It is about to adopt the sort of model that we are considering here. I am told that in Victoria there was a 95 per cent success rate with women and under five per cent opted not to have that information recorded. A recent publication of the *Bioethic News* from the centre for human bioethics at Monash University refers to privacy concerns and, in relation to the ethical basis for privacy protection in health information statistics, researchers reported that they could recall only one such complaint about privacy concerns. In a 1991 study of recruitment strategies in encouraging cervical cancer screenings, a letter campaign was conducted inviting women to call the Anti Cancer Council on a toll-free line for further information about local services. No privacy complaints were received from the 4 000 women contacted by letter. The 12 calls received were general inquiries. I can only conclude from the briefings that I have had from expert researchers, from the medical profession and from the organisations representing the Country Women's Association and the Women's Advisory Council that, while there is a danger in relation to personal information, in this case the benefits of having this program instituted far outweigh any negative aspects. On the other hand - to address the member's reference to duplication - there is no duplication. This sets up an umbrella organisation under which the medical practitioners and the private laboratories will cooperate to ensure maximum exchange of information on a confidential basis again to ensure follow-up and the success of the screening program.

## GRIEVANCE - BARRISTERS BOARD

### *Benari and Co - Mistaken Identity Case*

**MR THOMAS (Cockburn) [12.47 pm]:** The authority I wish to grieve about is the Barristers Board, for which the Attorney General is responsible. He is represented in this House by the Minister for Justice. My grievance arises from a concern that was brought to my attention by a constituent who was the subject of an action by a law firm, Benari and Co. This matter arises from a case of mistaken identity. I do not think my constituent would want to be named and I will therefore refer to him as Mr T as a person in another matter yesterday was referred to; that is the first letter of his surname. His name is not uncommon but there are only four of them with his initials in the telephone directory.

The law firm, Benari and Co, was owed several thousand dollars. It took out a praecipe for a warrant of execution against land owned by my constituent because it believed my constituent, who was unfortunate enough to have the same name as the firm's debtor, owed it money. My constituent owns two properties, one being the family home in Spearwood and the other being a holiday home in Mandurah. Being a holiday home, the family does not visit it all that often. The warrant was served not on the Spearwood home, but on the Mandurah home. The family went down there one long weekend in October last year and found that a warrant had been nailed to the door stating that the property was liable to be sold to satisfy the debt owed to the lawyer Mr Benari. These people were mystified and very upset by this action. Not being lawyers and not being familiar with these procedures, it ruined their weekend.

They returned to Perth and sought legal advice. Their lawyer got in touch with Benari and Co and when it was discovered that the law firm had taken out a warrant against land owned



by the wrong person, it withdrew the warrant and regarded the matter as closed. By then, my constituent had incurred over \$100 in legal costs to have the warrant removed. His lawyer wrote to Mr Benari and asked him to pay the legal costs. He wrote back and said that he had no intention of paying them and that he did not believe he had acted negligently. My constituent asked also for an apology because one of the consequences of the warrants being issued is that it is reported in some circles that the defendants have a dubious credit rating. An apology was given but there was no admission of negligence by the lawyer concerned.

My constituent went to his lawyer and asked what he could do to recover the money. The only advice he could give him was to sue, which would have involved further legal costs; it was something he did not want to do. He came to me and I wrote, on his behalf, to the Barristers Board stating that I believed the law firm had acted negligently in not taking the proper steps to ensure that they were taking out a warrant against the correct person. The ease with which that could have been done is demonstrated by the fact that my constituent was able to locate the correct person of the same name by using the telephone directory and making two telephone calls. Mr Benari certainly did not have to be Sherlock Holmes to locate the correct person.

As I said, I wrote to the Barristers Board on behalf of my constituent asking it whether it could be of assistance in having his legal costs recovered. The Barristers Board wrote to Mr Benari and he acted in a most cavalier manner and took almost two months to reply to its letter. In his reply he said it was a case of mistaken identity which he regretted, but he did not feel that there was any fault on his behalf. I will quote from his letter which is dated 19 December.

Mr Shave: You have lawyers in your party. Don't you know that lawyers are always right, you only have to ask them?

Mr THOMAS: The Liberal Party has a few lawyers also. They are not always right and in this case the lawyer was wrong. Mr Benari's letter states -

Our procedure in relation to these matters is to issue a praecipe for Warrant of Execution, wait upon advice from the bailiff as to the response and thereafter, to register a certified copy of the Warrant as against the land of the execution debtor.

Basically, his procedure is to send out the warrant to ascertain whether there are any problems and if there are no problems he proceeds to have the encumbrance registered on the title of the land. It is up to the person to prove he is not the person who owes the money. At the end of his letter Mr Benari states -

As to the complaint made by Mr Bill Thomas in his letter of the 29th October 1991, we advise that we are seeking legal opinion as to whether or not the contents is defamatory.

Not only did Mr Benari not believe that there was anything negligent in his taking out a warrant against the wrong person, but also he believed it was defamatory of me to write on behalf of my constituent to the Barristers Board requesting that he make good the costs to my constituent. The board continued to pursue the matter and early this year it advised Mr Benari that it considered it appropriate that he should pay my constituent's costs which totalled \$105. He duly did that and the board closed the matter by saying that as the money had been paid it did not believe there had been any unprofessional conduct.

My grievance is that I do not believe that the payment of money in this circumstance completely righted the wrong. It does not take into account the inconvenience and the distress caused to my constituent and it does not take into account the very great wrong which could have been perpetrated against him. What would have happened if my constituent had not visited his holiday home for five or six months? He could have found that his holiday home was someone else's holiday home because it had been sold.

As the amount of money involved is not all that great my constituent does not wish to take the matter any further. However, the Barristers Board, which I understand consists entirely of lawyers, should have a greater consumer protection role in protecting members of the public from actions of lawyers and of law firms. No other profession could act in such a cavalier manner by threatening to take people's property and when it was discovered that a mistake had been made refuse, for months on end, to pay the costs incurred to right the wrong. When it was pointed out that he did have to pay the costs it was regarded as

sufficient action to correct the error. No other profession would be able to treat the public in such a cavalier manner and it is appropriate that the legal profession and the bodies which regulate it, in this case the Barristers Board, should ensure that the public is protected to a greater extent than they are.

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell - Minister for Justice) [12.55 pm]: The member for Cockburn has properly used the grievance mechanism for bringing a matter of importance to the notice of the Parliament. The use of the legal process is one which should be very measured by any member of the community, and certainly by any member of the legal profession. The legal process, when it is implemented, not only causes distress and cost to the person involved but in these days of summons lists, writ lists, credit reports and the like it can do enormous damage to the reputation and credit of the person in receipt of the summons. I have no truck at all with people who seek to collect debts or use the processes of the court in a reckless way. It would seem, if the facts of the matter are as indicated by the member for Cockburn, that Mr T has been subject to a gross injustice in terms of the impact on his reputation and certainly the legal process was allowed to proceed down a track where an innocent citizen could have been deprived of his property through the court process because of the lack of proper investigation by the creditor before commencing his action. As a general statement, creditors have to avoid being cavalier in their approach to ascertaining the name and address of the person they want to sue. Simply using the first and last name of a person and comparing it with electoral rolls, telephone books and other mechanisms to find the address of people who they think owe them money is not an appropriate course because it can quickly lead to the sort of problem which eventuated in this case.

Clearly, when a person is sued improperly with no just cause, that person is entitled on the discontinuance of the action to seek the payment of costs through the courts by the person who has sued him wrongly. In that sense there was both a legal obligation on the legal practitioner involved in this case, as well as a moral obligation on him to understand the wrong he had done and to rectify it by paying the costs of the person defending the matter. As a lawyer he should be aware that a right of action arises where the courts are used in a malicious or reckless way to the detriment of someone else. I have some concern that a person who is meant to protect the standing and reputation of the legal profession and the judicial process should have made the response that appears to have occurred in this instance. In relation to the response by the Barristers Board to the complaint, I am concerned that the limit of the action taken seems to have been simply to tell the practitioner that he should pay the cost involved. It was an occasion where, at the very least, some form of severe reprimand should have been issued to that practitioner and he should have been encouraged, in the interest of the reputation of the profession and the integrity of the judicial system, to meet the person concerned and to apologise and make sure that that person was properly satisfied that he had in effect got some justice from that practitioner. In addition, it would seem to me to have been a situation in which the board might have considered requiring the practitioner to publish some form of apology, either with the credit agencies responsible for the writ list and other credit reference agencies or, alternatively, if the defendant wished it to happen, to have some form of apology published in a local newspaper.

It is certainly a matter which is properly raised by the member for Cockburn and it does raise some concerns which should be addressed. I will refer them to the Attorney General who, although it is not usual for him to sit, is the *ex officio* Chairman of the Barristers Board. I will ask him to discuss the matter with the board and if need be to take it up with the Law Society of Western Australia to ensure that barristers and solicitors are mindful of the proper way to approach debt collection. In this case it was very badly handled and it caused real distress and cost to the person affected.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Grievances noted.

## **FREMANTLE EASTERN BYPASS CONTROLLED ACCESS HIGHWAY RESERVATION BILL**

### *Second Reading*

**MR LEWIS** (Applecross) [2.04 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to restrain the Government from improperly using the so-called minor amendment provisions of the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959 to delete an integral four kilometre section of a controlled access highway, known as the Fremantle eastern bypass, from the metropolitan region town planning scheme. More specifically, the Bill will restrain the Government from finalising amendment No 880/33A to section 33A, which will delete from the metropolitan region scheme that part of controlled access highway reservation known as the Fremantle eastern bypass between High Street and Roe Highway until the actual revocation has been submitted and passed by a resolution of each House of this Parliament. It should also be understood that the Bill is retrospective to the extent that if minor amendment No 880/33A, for which submissions close on 13 April, is finally approved by the Minister without a resolution of both Houses of Parliament, and if this Bill is subsequently passed, the deletion of the road, as provided by the amendment, will be null and void.

This Bill, therefore, effectively brings to a head for debate in the Parliament what the Opposition regards as the last straw in town planning matters, in that the Government has unashamedly used the minor amendment provisions of the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act to satisfy its political imperatives. Of course, members must all be well aware of the widespread public disquiet, particularly in recent years, at the Government's use of minor amendments when clearly many changes to the metropolitan town planning scheme have been anything but minor. The Government will no doubt argue that its procedures have been in accordance with the Statutes which, of course, is not correct, considering the initial successful court challenges by concerned citizens in the Hepburn Heights and Cedar Woods controversies. Although in time the Government had its way, it did so by flying in the face of the original spirit and the intention of the way in which the metropolitan region town planning scheme would be amended. The question of what constitutes a major or minor amendment has been the subject of much debate, particularly in recent times. However, the original intent is quite clear in the Stephenson/Hepburn report, and particularly in section 177 of the metropolitan region scheme report in 1962 which states on page 41 -

The Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act provides that amendments to the Scheme shall follow the same procedure as for the initial Scheme. There is, of course, no question that major amendments to the structure of the Plan and its principles must follow this course. It would, however, be entirely impracticable, and indeed unacceptable to landowners, if every minor adjustment or delineation depended upon the protracted procedure culminating in Parliamentary concurrence. The Authority believes that the legislative intent was to secure that the interests of property owners and others are adequately safeguarded by opportunities to object against proposed planning restrictions, and that in the broad sense, Parliament can oversee the Regional Plan.

It is quite clear that major amendments must follow the structure set down to create the scheme, minor amendments/adjustments should follow an easier course, but that the Parliament should oversee the regional plan, vis a vis the major amendment.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The level of background conversation prevents anybody passing judgment on anything contained in the Bill, so I ask members to tone down their level of conversation so that this speech can be better heard.

Mr LEWIS: As the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass from the region scheme will have a significant impact on many roads within the municipalities of East Fremantle, Melville and Cockburn, and in the longer term Kwinana and Rockingham as well as Fremantle, and as the eastern bypass is an integral part of the south west transport structure designed to meet the land use provisions as planned for the south west corridor, the amendment can only be considered as having a major impact and therefore should be considered as a major amendment.

The metropolitan region scheme report 1962 continues in paragraph 197, 198 and 199 as follows -

The importance of land acquisition for regional open space and regional transport

needs, the decision to delete the work previously undertaken in acquisition and reservation of land is again clearly a major metropolitan region issue.

To emphasise that point I refer members to comments made by the Leader of the House when Planning Minister; he is recorded at page 4783 of *Hansard* of Wednesday, 9 November 1989 as follows -

In general terms if a matter is likely to be controversial, if it is a new matter, if it is not something expected by the people, I send it through the major amendment route. If it is a relatively minor amendment - something which has been much discussed amongst the community and the views are well known; if it is not likely to be controversial or make an immediate impact on the scheme - I send it through the minor amendment route.

To that extent the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass could not in any measure be gauged as a minor amendment. Clearly the road's removal is controversial. It will impact on local environments. The public and the councils want significant input, and to that extent, and on the then Minister's own criteria, it should be considered as a substantial amendment to the region scheme. It is also my understanding that the Government, against the recommendations of the Main Roads Department and the officers of the Department of Planning and Urban Development, directed that the matter be handled as a minor amendment.

The simple questions before the House are, first, does the Parliament accept that it should still overview the structural or broad intentions of the metropolitan region town planning scheme as originally intended; and secondly, can the deletion of an integral four kilometre section of a major controlled access road that will have a long term effect on some 300 000 people in the south west metropolitan region for decades to come be considered a minor amendment? If the answers are yes and no respectively, then this Bill, which will have the effect of causing the Government to treat the road's deletion as a major amendment by obtaining the approbation of the Parliament, should pass. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Planning).

## MOTION - SELECT COMMITTEE ON RURAL COSTS

### *Appointment*

MR MINSON (Greenough - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.14 pm]: I move -

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on -

- (a) the impact of Government and commercial imposts on farming enterprises, rural small business and the high cost of living in country areas. The inquiry should consider -
  - (i) State and Federal fuel taxes;
  - (ii) payroll tax;
  - (iii) transport regulations;
  - (iv) quarantine and anti-dumping measures;
  - (v) Westrail, State Energy Commission of Western Australia and Water Authority of Western Australia costs and charges;
  - (vi) import and stamp duties and sales tax;
  - (vii) air transport and inspection charges for agricultural commodities;
  - (viii) assets test and higher education costs;
  - (ix) port charges; and
- (b) to investigate the comparative costs of fuel, fertiliser and chemicals used by our trade competitors,

and to investigate any other matter the committee considers relevant to this issue and recommend to both State and Federal Governments, ways to reduce the cost of production burden on Western Australian farmers.

Mr Kobelke: Does that motion come with a GST?

Mr MINSON: I will get to the GST in a moment. Many members would realise that a similar motion was moved unsuccessfully by the member for Warren I think in September or October last year. A development has taken place since which may change the minds of not only Government members but also independent members of this Parliament who spoke and voted against the previous motion. I refer to the activities of the rural action movement which has moved to import fertiliser directly and distribute it without going through a Western Australian agent. This move by RAM has a history. I will not labour the point, but had this group of people been able to get started on their project a little earlier they would have been able to make substantial savings. On the latest figures available the group would be able to save about \$60 a tonne on urea which represents an overall saving of about 20 per cent. Figures quoted by factories around the world which subsequently could not supply the goods showed a possible saving of up to 40 per cent in this input cost.

As I said when speaking to a similar motion about six months ago, the public of Western Australia, along with members of this House and Western Australian farmers, should realise that little scope exists to affect the prices paid by countries overseas. All members would remember, particularly country members who were late for work because of a blockade of trucks on the freeway about March last year, that in the period immediately following that happening considerable talk occurred about perhaps demanding countries like America to pay rent on defence installations in Western Australia equivalent to the amount they were paying in subsidies to their farmers to undermine our export markets.

Twelve months have passed, and most people would acknowledge the reality that countries like America, and economic powers like the European Economic Community, appear completely untroubled and unmoved by the plight of Western Australian farmers and any threats that we may make against any installations that they have in our country. That was exemplified when President Bush visited Australia. The President met briefly some of our farmers, but the outcome, apart from a few clucking noises, was very little indeed. The end result is that not only has the United States continued with its export enhancement scheme, but also it has put into it more money. I am a little perplexed and puzzled about that action of the United States because I understand that its wheat reserves are now at their lowest level for many years, and that there was absolutely no reason for the United States to embark upon this very aggressive incursion into our traditional markets. I do not know the reason that the United States is doing that, and I venture to suggest that if it makes any more such sales, it may be looking to buy wheat from overseas so that it can honour the sales contracts that it has signed.

Mr Wilson: After the presidential election.

Mr MINSON: It is funny. I tried to connect the two events, and I could come up only with the explanation that the farm lobby in America is extremely powerful and influential. The wheat growing and cattle raising States have an incredibly powerful lobby group which is much more effective than are our lobby groups. The people on the land in Australia represent a greater proportion of the total population than do the people on the land in America, yet the American lobby groups wield enormous influence in that country. When I visited America last year, I tried to pinpoint the reason for that, and I must confess that I came away as puzzled as ever. I can say only that America has a structure in the Senate that is similar to the structure that we have in the Australian Senate, where a certain set minimum number of Senators represent a State, no matter how large or small is the population. We on this side of the House have always fiercely defended that, and still do, but that is probably the reason that the lobbies in the United States are so powerful and one of the reasons that their farmers are subsidised to the detriment of our farmers. Each American State is represented by two Senators in the United States Senate, no matter how many or how few people live in that State. Consequently, the wheat growing and cattle raising States have a powerful say in what happens in that country.

The rural action movement, and I think most people in Western Australia, now acknowledge that we will have little effect on the prices received for our products. However, as I said in debate last year, and as I have said - I suspect to my cost - to the rural action movement, it would be better for them to concentrate on farm input costs rather than fight the impossible and try to swim against the tide. They should look at what can be done within Australia to

reduce farm input costs; that is, what is left over after all costs have been paid, rather than the price that we get for a product on a market, because we may get what we want for a product when we sell it, but if we have nothing left over after the expenses have been paid, clearly there is no profit in it.

I moved this motion for the establishment of a Select Committee because I believe that the job of pinpointing and recognising which costs are excessive, and recommending a course of action to counteract those costs, is probably done best by a Select Committee of this Parliament. I do not propose to go into a long list of rumoured price differences; that would be counterproductive. However, I draw to the attention of this House how the balance of the terms of trade has changed for farmers over the last quarter of a century. That is a particularly useful figure for me to adopt because 25 years ago, in 1967, I started up my own farming business. Prior to that, I was employed. In 1967, I paid roughly \$13 a tonne for superphosphate. I paid \$4 300 for my first tractor. At that time, wheat was \$42 a tonne. In 1991-92, superphosphate was around \$130 a tonne; a tenfold increase. A similarly powered tractor was around \$43 000; again a tenfold increase. The only difference between my first tractor and a tractor that I would buy now is that the new tractor would perhaps be a bit quieter and would have in it a stereo radio, but I can do without both of those things. Certainly the tractor that I drove 25 years ago did nothing for my hearing, so I probably do not need a soundproof tractor right now.

Mrs Watkins interjected.

Mr MINSON: I am missing certain bands in my hearing range, and those bands happen to be on the frequency which the member for Wanneroo uses, so I could not hear the interjection. Another thing that I cannot hear is crying babies, which used to really upset my wife.

Mrs Beggs: It is called selective hearing loss, in my view.

Mr MINSON: I did not hear that interjection.

In round figures, wheat returns \$130 a tonne to the farmer; a threefold increase. Therefore, over a quarter of a century, we have seen the raw product of wheat increase by a factor of three, and two big input costs increase by a factor of 10. I suggest that not many members realise that, and probably not many of them realise that, as each year goes by, those terms of trade continue to deteriorate. One does not have to be Einstein to realise that if that trend continues, it will not be very long before a viable agricultural industry in Western Australia becomes a thing of the past. Since we derive virtually all of our income from agriculture, fishing and mining, I suggest that a large slice of what Australia and Western Australia produce will be taken from us.

Some of the other costs I want to draw to the attention of the House have been summarised by the Western Australian Farmers Federation. This morning that body faxed to me some of the costs it feels should be examined in detail, including State and Federal fuel taxes, about which the WAFF says -

These taxes impact badly on farmers and rural communities as they are major users of transport. The Federal Government take from fuel is about \$6.6 Billion of which only \$1.5 Billion is returned to roads.

Roads are very much an integral part of the operation of any farming enterprise or community. The WAFF continues -

The Western Australian Department of Transport has determined that the incidence of general taxation applying to the road transport industry is on average about 8% (after allowing for road track costs) and for all other industries is only about 2-3%.

So the House can see that the fuel taxes imposed by State and Federal Governments represent quite a significant impost on farmers, in particular; around three or four times the impost on other industries.

Mr Bloffwitch: Is that the 23¢ a litre that would come off under the Fightback package?

Mr MINSON: That is right. I thought someone might bring that up.

Mr Leahy: It is 19¢, but the GST won't help.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I know the GST is a controversial topic.

Mr MINSON: I thought there might be a little echo around the Chamber when I talked about fuel tax. I will speak later about the GST and the effect it might have on farms and farm input costs.

Mrs Beggs: I would not mention it if I were you.

Mr MINSON: The behaviour of members opposite on the GST during the Ashburton by-election was absolutely abominable.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Let us return to the topic of the motion.

Mr MINSON: I will talk later about the GST as it applies to this motion, Mr Deputy Speaker, and there will not be very many interjections because I venture to suggest that members opposite would not know any of the effects the GST will or will not have.

Mr Trenorden: They think everything will cost 15 per cent more.

Mrs Watkins: Do you support it?

Mr Trenorden: Of course I do.

Mr MINSON: After I have finished speaking I hope the House will support it.

The WAFF goes on to mention payroll tax, and admits -

There are no special arguments for our sector that do not affect all businesses . . .

All that does is to point out that while payroll tax does not preferentially discriminate against the farming sector it is nevertheless an impost on those farmers, and those industries which service agriculture, which are big enough to pay payroll tax. Some shearing contractors have very large payrolls. If a shearing team has 20 or 22 people travelling around, which some eight or 10 stand sheds would require, and if all of those people from the shearers to the roustabouts are quite highly paid, one can imagine that the payroll tax paid by the contractor is quite substantial. I will not say much more about these taxes now because I believe some of my colleagues will talk about them.

The WAFF says about transport regulations -

Now that the Permit Scheme will go on July 1 there are no major regulatory impediments to competitive transport.

On quarantine and dumping measures the WAFF says -

Because the industry often is not the marketer of the goods we have been unable in the past to take effective anti-dumping action. The process is too slow.

The WAFF continues by saying that on a related matter I should raise the point that some members have been pushing with respect to labelling and Australian producers having to meet all our regulations where importers do not necessarily do so. That is a reference to a motion moved by the deputy leader of the National Party, the member for Stirling.

As to sales tax, the WAFF says -

Sales tax has changed recently but sales tax applies to General Purpose Road Vehicles which is about the only business import not exempt. In addition the sales tax system is cumbersome and should be replaced by a G.S.T.

Surprise! The WAFF's document continues -

Until recently farmers were denied access to about \$200 million in exemptions. The Federal Government is making changes because of the G.S.T proposal.

Tariffs are still costing the farmer about \$6000 per year.

That is an up to date figure that I have received.

Mr Bloffwitch: That is close to the \$8 000 figure that was struck in the Ashburton.

Mr MINSON: I understand that it was actually \$4 000 plus. Members opposite are a terrible lot, are they not? The WAFF document goes on to say in relation to inspection charges -

Agriculture is required to pay full cost recovery for inspection. The AQUIS system - That is, the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service system -

- is hopelessly inefficient and costs about \$67,000 for every inspector.

That is very interesting. Those inspectors are paid only \$34 000 in salary, but somehow it costs as much in administration to have an inspector on the inspection service as it does to pay his salary. The WAFF continues, on the subject of fuel, chemicals and fertiliser -

Our best information is that chemicals are comparatively priced compared with overseas especially now that we have generic manufacturers such as Davison Industries.

However, I have had conflicting advice about that. The writer of this document says that that is the WAFF's best information, so there are many areas we could look at to define whether we are paying too much. The WAFF goes on -

Fertilizer has big margins and we need to encourage effective competition but one of the major impediments is shipping costs because of our poor waterfront performance.

Fuel is largely uncompetitive because of taxation especially for off farm use.

I acknowledge the effort made by the WAFF this morning in compiling that document for me. There are other imposts that farmers, farming people and people living outside the metropolitan area must pay and, as outlined in the motion, I want this Select Committee to inquire into not just those imposts to do with farming per se but also the high cost of living in the country. I draw to the attention of members the very high cost of education and the manifold weaknesses in the Austudy system. It is of great concern to me that, despite the Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the Prime Minister being approached every year on this matter, changes have been minimal and I believe many of them have come about only because the pressure has become so great. I am disappointed that the Federal Minister has not conceded the urgency and inequality of that situation and done something about it. To illustrate to those metropolitan members who have any doubt about the real problems faced by people who live outside the metropolitan area, I will give an example of a couple who live on the outskirts of Geraldton. They have two children who happen to be twins. Both children attended the Geraldton Senior High School and both did particularly well. One wanted to become a nurse and the other a teacher. They made inquiries about what it would cost and where they would live when they came to Perth to train in their respective professions.

They did well in their TEE and were accepted into the institutions. However, their father had quite a skilled job which paid \$30 000-odd a year, but he had no qualifications and could not earn that kind of salary in Perth. If he moved to the metropolitan area he would be classified as a 40-odd year old unskilled labourer, and his chances of finding work would be almost zero. He had a reasonably good job in Geraldton, but most members would agree that \$30 000 is not a lot of money in today's terms. This gentleman had a standard house in Geraldton; I do not know what it cost him, but he was managing his mortgage; his wife had a part-time job, again in the unskilled field.

It was indicated to the father and mother that if they moved to the metropolitan area, they would not be able to obtain work. Also, if they sold their house in Geraldton, the proceeds would pay barely half of the deposit on a modest house in the metropolitan area which was within reasonable travelling distance of the tertiary institutions involved. Nevertheless, when the two children applied for a living away from home allowance, they found that they fell just outside the guidelines. The end result was that one of the girls is working in a bank, and the other is a check-out chick at the local supermarket. These girls felt guilty about the prospect of throwing their parents out of work, making them sell their home and putting them under stress by shifting to the metropolitan area.

The greatest concern is that when I took up this matter with the appropriate Federal body, after haranguing that office for some weeks, in desperation the clerk said to me, "Well, if the father would like to sexually abuse or beat the children, they would receive a living allowance." I asked him what he meant and he said, "It is stacked that way. If a child must leave home because of trouble within the home, that child would be eligible for full subsidy and a living away from home allowance." It is a disgrace when a family is confronted with



such advice, even though it was tongue in cheek and given in desperation. Such advice is a dreadful indictment of the system! This matter is a denial of the basic rights of people who live in country areas, particularly when the Federal and State Governments both make claims about equal access to services.

Of course, many other imposts are placed on people who live outside the metropolitan area. I draw the attention of the House to the example of people from either Greenough or Geraldton who front up to the local regional hospital but will not find a resident doctor to treat them. Even that Medicare promise is not available to those who live outside the metropolitan area.

I refer now to the matter of the goods and services tax because many members opposite seemed to be knowledgeable on the subject during the Ashburton by-election campaign. We will now see whether they really understand how the goods and services tax will affect the cost structure of farming.

Mr Ripper: We do not mind if you do.

Mr MINSON: I do not mind going on record on this matter. I refer to a document titled "Tax and Economic Reform - Gains for Farmers" which reads -

Abolition of Commonwealth fuel excise will markedly cut farm input costs.

Mr Bloffwitch: By 23¢ per litre.

Mr MINSON: The article states that -

- Farmers will pay 26 cents a litre less for all petrol used on and off farm for business purposes and 19 cents a litre less for personal vehicle use.

The member is probably right that it averages to 23¢ per litre. It also states that diesel fuel will fall to the same level, and this refers to fuel used off the farm.

Mr Bloffwitch: That will apply to road transport.

Mr MINSON: That is correct, and it represents a substantial saving. The document continues -

- fuel price reductions will contribute to lower freight costs, particularly in areas such as livestock transport and hay and fodder cartage. These charges will be reduced further by the complete removal of sales tax on all transport equipment, eg, trucks, spare parts, tyres, etc

- the cuts will apply to Avgas, meaning aerial agricultural work such as crop dusting, superphosphate spreading and aerial mustering will be more price competitive.

In pastoral areas much of the daily mill run and the checking of station fences was done by light aircraft, and no excise tax relief is provided for this aspect of farming and pastoral enterprise, although a tax deduction is allowed. Farmers do not receive exemption from tax when flying around their own properties. Therefore, substantial cuts will result from the tax reform package put forward by the Federal coalition. The document continues -

The exemption of exports from GST will substantially increase the competitiveness of agricultural exports on world markets. This hidden tax is calculated to lower Australia's export competitiveness by 5% at a cost of \$1.7 billion annually to all industry

Mr Bloffwitch: So that is an estimate of our improved competitiveness internationally under GST, is it?

Mr MINSON: That represents a \$1.7 billion increase in our competitiveness, which would result in Australia being able to tap into new markets. This tax reform is maybe the measure which breaks the nexus this country faces in the form of subsidised countries such as those within the European Economic Community and the United States of America. If these countries see that we will have this \$1.7 billion advantage, they may give up the fruitless nonsense of their subsidies.

Mr Bloffwitch: That indicates how uncompetitive we are with the countries that operate under that system at the moment.

Mr MINSON: It indicates clearly what the GST package will do. The document then refers to the lowering of fringe benefit and capital gains taxes.

Mr Marlborough: Let us wait and see where the GST is before the next Federal election. Let us see how you will support it then.

Mr MINSON: It is funny that during the by-election campaign members opposite were very knowledgeable on the GST and had great input on the subject; now they sit there like stunned mulets. The member for Peel is saying, "Just you wait; we will get you." Members opposite may get me if they use untruthful figures at the next election in the manner they used them during the recent by-election - by telling fibs. The document continues -

... complete removal of Wholesale Sales Tax on all farm inputs (such as 2WD farm trucks and utilities). WST is calculated by the National Farmers' Federation to cost farmers \$170 million.

The member for Peel has selective hearing loss.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Members opposite do not realise that farmers will not be paying a goods and services tax; that is the obvious point of the whole document.

Mr MINSON: Mr Acting Speaker - I apologise, Madam Acting Speaker; I think we need a change in the Standing Orders regarding your title - the article continues -

\*a review of depreciation allowances to ensure they are appropriate to the needs of farm industries relative to their tax and economic situation

That would be a most useful reform. The matters to which I refer are part of the tax reform package, and I wish that people would begin to realise that this is a tax reform package rather than to make out that all the Federal coalition wishes to do is to slam another tax on the community. A Federal coalition Government will get rid of seven taxes and expand and slightly shift the application of one. I notice that that statement did not bring any comment. The maintenance of tax averaging provisions will be a feature of the package, as will quicker and more effective anti-dumping and countervailing procedures to ensure fair trade.

In summary, a few of the other benefits for farm and country families are: A goods and services tax will not be charged on health, education and local government rates. Members should remember that the Government made the mistake of saying that those services would incur GST. Financial transactions will be exempt from GST. Increases will be made in many family allowances and in the dependent spouse rebate. The people on the Government side conveniently forgot to mention that those allowances and rebates will increase substantially to make up for the acknowledged increases in the cost of living which will result from the Federal Opposition's reform package.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Increases in pensions will be almost twice the increase of the cost of living which will result from the GST.

Mr Marlborough: Rubbish!

Mr MINSON: The Government is long on rhetoric but short on fact.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Government must face up to its need to present a valid argument.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Edwards): Order!

Mr MINSON: I was enjoying the rhetoric which contained no facts; I wanted to ensure it got on the record.

Mr Marlborough: You can say that as often as you like, but the people of Ashburton decided the Government had more than rhetoric.

Mr MINSON: The people of Western Australia will make their decision soon. The isolated boarding allowance will increase to \$2 400 and the assistance for the isolated children's scheme will not be asset tested. Everyone must understand the importance of that. One of the by-products of this recession -

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr MINSON: Government members have missed the point; I am talking about a tax reform package, not about a tax. One of the problems precipitated by the rural and pastoral recession was that many people in those industries were asset rich but income poor. In many cases they were income negative. During the past 12 months I have been in the difficult

position of addressing the availability of living away from home allowances for children of parents who are asset rich but who have virtually no income. I am embarking on that task again because it is still the beginning of the year for tertiary institutions. I cannot overestimate the importance of this measure. Under the Federal Opposition's tax reform package retirees living on the family farm will not be subjected to an assets test. This is also particularly important. Farmers who retire and remain on their farms will be able to apply for the pension which they so richly deserve. Families in extreme financial hardship will not face an assets test for Austudy, family allowance or other welfare benefits; only an income test will apply.

Mr Grill: How will the family farm be defined? I was thinking of a hobby farm.

Mr MINSON: I think the Taxation Department has a definition for the percentage of income which must be derived from a farm.

Mr Cowan: If the majority of the farmer's income is earned from farming he will be taxed.

Mr MINSON: It is interesting that the member for Eyre asked that question. A friend of mine - a dentist in Moora - some years ago bought a motorbike and pretended that he had a farm because he wanted to claim a tax deduction on the bike. He told the Taxation Department that he ran sheep. When the Taxation Department indicated it intended to investigate his situation, he borrowed some sheep and put them in his backyard. He did not get away with that.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

Mr MINSON: As a matter of fact he was a rabid Labor voter. It is funny how Labor voters turn into rabid capitalists from time to time. Under the proposed tax reform package, household support will be reinstated as a grant or payment to farmers in short term financial difficulty. It offers a better welfare net than unemployment benefits.

#### *Points of Order*

Mr DONOVAN: I have nothing particularly against the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's acquainting the House with a summary of the goods and services tax proposition. However, I wonder how it is related to the motion to establish a Select Committee to look into farm costs. I have looked at items (a)(i) to (ix) and I cannot see any mention of it. I have also looked at (b) and I can see only the mention of costs. I suppose if one took the broadest possible view of the summary clause which states, "any other matter the Committee considers relevant to this issue" one might find a place for the committee to look at the impact of GST. However, I am not sure it supports the motion before the House.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The input costs of farms include many hidden tax charges, not the least of which are fuel excise tax and wholesale tax. Part of the tax reform package will be to remove those taxes and replace them with an across the board GST. The motion is relevant to the tax structure because it affects input costs.

Mr Donovan: That may well be the case for a motion, but -

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Edwards): Order! I accept some of the claims of the member for Morley. I have been studying the motion trying to decide whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's comments were relevant. I decided in general that they were relevant, although I wondered about the relevance of sheep in a dentist's backyard. When I was about to comment the Deputy Leader of the Opposition moved on to more relevant matters. Members should confine themselves to the motion being discussed.

#### *Debate Resumed*

Mr MINSON: I am using the example of how they will change under a different tax structure to indicate that those costs exist. I am sorry that I am not possessed with enough eloquence to get through to the member for Morley. Nevertheless, I am almost finished in that vein in any case.

I wish to raise two other points. My eighth point is that remote area allowances and zone rebates will rise by at least 25 per cent and personal tax rates will be cut dramatically. That means that 95 per cent of people will pay less tax per dollar of income.

Madam Acting Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a copy of two tables, the first

being personal income tax scales and the second a summary of how farmers will be affected. It compares the situation that exists now to what it might be.

*Acting Speaker's Ruling*

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Edwards): I will allow to be incorporated the first table that outlines new personal income tax scales because it shows clearly the differences in the scales and would be hard to describe verbally. I will not allow the second table to be incorporated because it presents arguments that could be detailed in a speech.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr MINSON: I thought that might be your ruling, Madam Acting Speaker, and that is why I spoke at length on the matter.

[The following table was incorporated by leave of the House.]

NEW PERSONAL INCOME TAX SCALES

Present Tax Scales	% Tax	Proposed Tax Scales from 1 October 1994	% Tax	Proposed Tax Scales from 1 Jan 1996	% Tax
\$0 - \$5 400	0	\$0 - \$7 000	0	\$0 - \$7 000	0
\$5 401 - \$20 700	20	\$7 001 - \$20 700	16.2	\$7 001 - \$20 700	16.2
\$20 701 - \$36 000	38	\$20 701 - \$50 000	30.0	\$20 701 - \$50 000	30.0
\$36 001 - \$50 000	46	\$50 001 & over	45.0	\$50 001 - \$75 000	36.0
\$50 001 & over	47			\$75 001 & over	42.0

Mr MINSON: I ask members to support the appointment of this Select Committee. I have had a bit of fun with the GST package this afternoon, but in all seriousness this Select Committee will attempt to recognise the costs imposed on farming people and people who live in country areas. It will also attempt to recognise where those costs are unreasonable and investigate ways to do something about them. Last year, when a motion similar to this was lost, the Minister for Agriculture indicated to me privately that he did not have a lot of problems with it. He thought it would be a useful committee, but he was a bit concerned, as was the Premier, at the cost of running such a committee and that it might be the launching pad for a group of tourists to take off around the world. If it were the first year of a four year parliamentary term, I may be guilty of getting such a committee up and running. However, as there will be an election within the next 10 or 12 months, I do not think that anyone would be keen to go on a world trip except someone who was not seeking re-election. Instead, this committee could do its job by using the resources that currently are available to the Government. The Department of Agriculture has within it vast resources of trained personnel, research workers, telephones and fax machines. If this committee were given a competent research officer it could, in a couple of months, report to the House without leaving the country.

In a couple of weeks the State Government will be opening an office in Surabaya and Indonesia has been mentioned as a country from which we could get not only cheap fertilisers and chemicals but also machinery in the future. We may also be able to make breakthroughs in exporting agricultural produce to that country. The first job of this new office should be to get on the local telephone and develop a network to find out the prices at which Indonesia could supply us with fertilisers, chemicals and perhaps fuel. We have a similar sister State relationship with a province in China. That country is a source of cheap manufactured products and, although I do not want to be guilty of suggesting that we should import dumped products or products that will drive our manufacturing sector into the ground,

I should be representing the people whom I was elected to represent - country people. By utilising the contacts we have in China as well as other contacts in western countries around the world, we could, without leaving our shores and with a minimal number of meetings, present to the House recommendations and a list of costs that would answer many of the questions that farmers and country people generally are asking. Many accusations about the costs of certain items have not been proved. The current importation of fertilisers by the Rural Action Group is precipitating a difficult situation between it and Wesfarmers Limited and CSBP and Farmers Ltd because CSBP has been accused of profiteering from fertiliser sales. It is in everybody's interests, therefore, to clear up that argument and find out whether farmers are being ripped off. It is wrong for people to quote figures without being able to substantiate them and farmers, manufacturers and importers of such products find themselves in a very difficult situation. There is a need for a Select Committee of this type.

In conclusion, it was pointed out by one of the Independents - I do not remember by whom - that the farmers of this State need not words but actions and not committees but hard dollars. I cannot disagree with that. However, the fact is that, as a member of Parliament, the course of action open to me and which will be the most effective in the short to medium term will be the establishment of a Select Committee to identify the costs and recommend ways of solving the problem of high costs for country people. While action may speak louder than words, it should be borne in mind by members of this House that the action that is most appropriate for members of Parliament is to appoint this Select Committee. I therefore ask the House to support the motion. I do not wish it to become a political football, or to be used for political purposes. I even promise not to mention the GST again. I simply want to have recognised those costs which are unreasonable, and to have brought to this House recommendations which are sensible and a reasonable foundation on which to put in motion some mechanism whereby we can sensibly address the unreasonable costs that are imposed.

**MR McNEE (Moore) [3.10 pm]:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition in his closing comments referred to the importation of cheap fertiliser, chemicals and machinery from countries such as Indonesia. Is it not a crying shame that the land of the long weekend must look to other countries for these goods? Government members are proud of that, but they should ask themselves why 35 per cent of our young people under the age of 25 years are in the dole queues. They must learn pretty soon how to handle the truth, difficult though they might find it. The agricultural industry is in a serious situation, never mind about the other industries which are trading offshore or the imported goods in this country. The Government does not concern itself about the complete mess it has made of this State.

A Select Committee of inquiry can do its work in Western Australia and it can establish those costs and other items that are detrimental to rural and small businesses. In support of my comments, I refer to some figures compiled by a reputable firm of chartered accountants. The report of that firm states that farm operating expenses were almost constant between 1989-90 and 1990-91. What is the reason for that? One reason is that fertiliser expenditure decreased by 14 per cent. Government members may not understand how goods are produced but I can tell them that when an industry starts working into its fertiliser bank, that industry is on a perilous course and it simply cannot be maintained. Some people in my electorate last year failed to fertilise their land because they could not afford to do so. What was the result? They had to get rid of sheep because they could not run them on their land. What happened then? The Australian Workers Union is encouraging Australian shearers to go on strike because it claims that New Zealand shearers are taking work from them. The union should understand that half the reduced number of sheep were shot on the properties and the other half were slaughtered in the abattoirs. The reduced number of sheep is the reason that the Government's mates are losing work. That is unfortunate, and it is not helped by the reduction in the application of fertiliser to the soil.

The cost of fuel and sprays increased by 22 per cent, and the prices of those items include heaps of Government taxes. The report from the firm of accountants, to which I referred earlier, contains some of the costs in farming and I will refer specifically to those which include a high component of Government charges. It has estimated the cost per hectare of some farm costs. For example, bank fees, which have a large component of Government taxes, cost the farmer 79¢ a hectare. I recall that the Government doubled the financial institutions duty some time ago. The situation gets worse. I have not picked out the highest figure - I am being kind to the Government. I am merely quoting the costs that apply to

people in my electorate. I could turn the page and blow the Government out of the water with some of these figures, but I will not do so. I will cruise through those which are relevant to my constituents. The cost of freight and cartage per hectare is \$14.35. That certainly contains a high percentage of Government taxes.

**Mr Gordon Hill:** Add 15 per cent GST.

**Mr McNEE:** I am glad the Minister mentioned that. I will let him simmer for a while before I deal with that interjection. The cost of fuel per hectare is \$9.28. How many Government charges are involved in that cost? In a while Government members will either say that these costs do not matter, or they will deny them altogether.

**Mr Bloffwitch:** It is only \$1.7 billion and it does not matter.

**Mr McNEE:** This Government has no idea of the value of \$1.7 billion. Insurance costs the farmer \$2.85 a hectare. We can all imagine how the Government is helping its mates who are appearing before the Royal Commission, and where it is getting money from. Sprays cost the farmer \$11.74 a hectare, and that item includes a huge amount of Government taxes. All sorts of taxes are imposed by this Government, and I am referring to those that relate to rural industry. About the end of last year the Government decided to add a further \$300 to agricultural college fees. People in my electorate did not think that was a good deal. I asked the Premier and Treasurer a question without notice.

**Mr Kierath:** Did you get an answer?

**Mr McNEE:** She went twice around the town hall and once around the haystack, but it was an answer.

**Mr Trenorden:** You should frame it; they are pretty rare.

**Mr McNEE:** Yes, perhaps I should, but there is a story attached to the answer. In the first place I addressed the question to the Premier because, as Treasurer, she has the cheque book and I thought she would know what was going on. The Speaker said at the time that the question should not have been addressed to the Premier because it was an educational matter. Anyway, the Premier answered the question and responded with a lot of doublespeak, as she does often, particularly when she gets on to the GST, and stated, finally, that, "I will undertake to get specific details for the member and the justification that there has been an increase of that kind." I have not heard another word to this day.

**Mr Kierath:** What date was that?

**Mr McNEE:** I asked the question on 14 November 1991. That question is from a bunch of rural people who are trying to have their kids trained so that they will not join the 35 per cent of Western Australians under the age of 25 who are unemployed. However, this Government would rather form a training school somewhere else to train people for a job that they cannot get, and in the meantime impose a further fee of \$300. Members opposite seem to like talking about the GST. The GST absolutely terrifies members opposite.

**Mr Kierath:** It provides them with a voodoo doll.

**Mr McNEE:** It does. I have heard some pretty poor Dorothy Dix questions asked in this House. The other day, the member for Marangaroo asked a Dorothy Dix question that I do not think he understood. He did not even bother to listen to the answer. I suppose he did not understand the answer either. However, that is the sort of nonsense that members opposite go on with. Every other day they ask a question about the GST and, in reply, the Treasurer gives a load of garbage. I turn now to what Keating said about the GST.

**Mr Bloffwitch:** Was that when he was in favour of it?

**Mr Kierath:** Was he Treasurer at the time?

**Mr McNEE:** Yes. Perhaps we should look first at what the former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, said. He is now a television presenter, but he is not a very good presenter; I thought his performance on television the other night was lousy. Bob Hawke stated in November 1984, on the Channel 9 "Sunday" program, that -

Unless there is a source of income in the consumption area, then the mass of Australians - the ordinary taxpayers - are not going to be able to get the substantial cuts in personal direct taxes to which they are entitled.

Even worse than that, Mr Keating stated on 4 June 1985 that -

It would create the foundations for a more efficient system to promote stronger economic growth and higher living standards.

Is that not just what we want in this land of the long weekend, with 17.5 per cent leave loading, four weeks' annual leave, and goodness knows how many sick days? I can tell members opposite that, as an employer, I have had a gutful, and many of my fellow employers have had a gutful too; make no mistake. I speak not for myself but for the poor buggers who are paying the bills. Members opposite are supposed to represent the people about whom I am talking. Members opposite have caused the unemployment. Mr Keating stated on 5 June 1985 that -

It will allow a more rational indirect tax system than the current anomaly-ridden wholesale tax, which has multiple rates, numerous exemptions, and fails to tax the services sector.

Mr Kierath: The difference is that then it was their idea, but they did not have the political guts to bring it in. Now that it is our idea, it stinks.

Mr McNEE: I remind members opposite also that Mr Keating, who is now their Prime Minister, stated on 1 July 1985 that -

Any claim that the proposed consumption tax makes low income earners worse off is not true.

Low income earners are the people whom members opposite purport to represent; yet the Treasurer will come into this House in a while and give a pious response to some Dorothy Dix question that members opposite are now drafting.

Several Government members interjected.

Mr McNEE: I will take on the whole paddock of members opposite on GST. Members opposite need to learn how to handle the truth, difficult as that may be. It is worth noting that, at present, no tax is paid on caviar, nor on antique clocks - and we know who collects them!

Mr Kierath: He does not pay wholesale sales tax on them. It is no wonder he is now opposed to a GST!

Mr McNEE: Yes. We have exposed him. No tax is paid on gold plated bathroom fittings, but ordinary bathroom fittings attract a 10 per cent tax.

In the 15 minutes that I have left, I want to have a quick chat to members opposite about their transport system, because that is in an even worse state. It is a pity that the Minister for Transport is not here. She probably has an appointment somewhere. Ministers are never here, but we will carry on without her. This year, a new system of fertiliser transport is operating in the bush. I would rename the "Fertiliser Operating Guide" the "Get Westrail Out of the Transport of Fertiliser Handbook", because the Minister is a real screamer. I can just imagine the Minister squaring her shoulders and saying, "We have ways and means." The guide is full of regulations, and I want to look at a few of them. Here is a dag of an idea: When, shock horror, someone wants to transport some fertiliser by rail in this land of the long weekend, and is silly enough to go to his Bulk Fertilizer Services contractor, order his fertiliser, and state on the order form, "BFS contractor, Joe Bloggs", he has a real problem. First, he has to get in touch with the customer services officer for rail and check that the order exists, the railing date, the availability of the train on that day, the available train capacity, and the available line capacity. What the heck does that have to do with the BFS contractor? If the train gets there, that is proof that the line is available. He has then to check that the daily rail limit is within the agreed minimums and maximums. I suppose there is a strike if it is not. There is probably a nong-nong union leader there somewhere. He has also to check that the shunt capacity of the train is not exceeded. That would be important! I bet there is a union rule about that.

It refers to the contractor's capacity to unload. I would have left that decision to him. It refers to the work plant capacity and the availability of the product. Members should know that these are the things that must be done. It refers to availability of loading time to meet the train departure deadline. It gets worse, because after all those things have been done it

states that where the cancellation of an order or orders reduces the train below 90 per cent capacity the service will be cancelled and remaining orders rescheduled. Really! We have a transport organisation in the 1990s that has a simple task of transporting fertiliser, yet the Government is so incompetent that it cannot get the organisation to do that. It gets even worse because the other day the bulk fertiliser people at Goomalling were told that they could not have 450 tonne of fertiliser railed to Bolgart because Westrail would lose money on it. We should consider the figures because if all of a sudden the Government got a fervent urge to spend money it would be far too late. Let us look at what it costs the Government to transport passengers around metropolitan Perth. On the one hand, the Government applies to the rural sector a whole book of rules, which most probably will not do the job. On the other hand, what happens to the city people who use the Perth passenger rail system? These figures come from the Budget papers. Last year the Government collected \$5.5 million in fares.

Mr Kierath: What did it cost the Government?

Mr McNEE: I will come to that. The Government also collected \$24 million in special welfare concessions. So, in effect, the Government collected by way of social welfare concessions and contributions by passengers some \$30 million. That is not too bad.

Mr Cowan interjected.

Mr McNEE: If a person pays a \$1 fare, it turns into about a \$4 ride, but 450 tonne of superphosphate cannot be transported to a siding because it does not pay. Members should keep in mind that a \$1 fare turns into a \$4 ride, but it gets worse: The next page of the Budget papers indicates that the train service costs the Government almost \$61 million; that is, it collects \$30 million and spends \$60 million. That is the amount of money paid to Westrail for all the things that Transperth does; that represents a huge loss from the transport of passengers in the metropolitan area. Further, the Government spent \$185 million on the electrification of the metropolitan railway - never mind about the northern line! The situation is even worse: Because of the fuel franchise paid by people in Western Australia - and the rural people pay more than their fair share in this area - Transperth gets 40 per cent of the money. Yet people are denied the right to have a truckload of fertiliser delivered to the nearest siding - indeed to any siding in the district. In case members do not understand, the levy for the fuel franchise is 5.5¢ per litre for petrol and 7.5¢ for distillate. In its usual form the Government has two-faced double standards. It has a standard for the people who produce and another for those in the metropolitan area. As long as the Government is happy about that, it is okay by me.

Let us consider what has happened to farmers. I refer now to the cost of transporting products to ports. Last year farmers were disappointed to discover that they had lost a market for Australian wheat to Saudi Arabia. I wonder why! The reason is that it costs about three times as much to ship a load of wheat from an Australian port to New Zealand as it does to ship via a foreign flagship in the land of the long weekend. In this country we must get our productivity going. Until we do, and until we get rid of taxes and allow that to happen, we will continue to decline - no matter what the Government says. The Government continues to give stupid answers to stupid Dorothy Dix questions. One question recently referred to New Zealand. Why does the Government not explain to this House why it is that New Zealand has taken over our lamb market? Why is it that New Zealand has taken over the export of live wethers? Why is it that premium grade wheat in New Zealand is priced at \$365 a tonne and its third grade is priced at \$245 a tonne? Perhaps while the Government is telling us about the GST and criticising New Zealand, it might bother to tell us how it is that we are so far behind. The Government might also tell us that, but I doubt that it will. It could do so via a Dorothy Dix question; that could happen because the Government can twist the facts. The facts are that if we want to export a motor car to the port of Wellington it would be cheaper to go via America. Perhaps the Government thinks that is something of which to be proud. As the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party stated earlier, we should look towards these countries for imports. The imports should be produced right here. That would keep some of the 35 per cent of the under 25 year olds employed. We should not be told that the way to attack this problem is by putting these people in another place, or keeping them at school, or creating more training through TAFE. People gain far more skills in the work force. People do not get skills kicking pickets outside the Commonwealth Employment Service, as they do in Stirling Street. If the Government is not careful the queue will end up



running past the East Perth football oval. I emphasise that people get skills by entering the work force but we must have the right economic standards to enable them do that. People do not have that chance. They do not have a snowflake's chance in hell because the Government does not know what to do. The Government is terrified of the Fightback package because that package says to the people of Australia that it is time for a change.

Mr P.J. Smith: It is time you had a change.

Mr McNEE: The member for Bunbury will not be here much longer.

Mr P.J. Smith: You said that in 1986.

Mr McNEE: I was returned, was I not? I have more runs on the board than Bradman ever made.

The Government is absolutely terrified of the Fightback package because it says to all thinking Australians that it is time to change. We certainly cannot go on operating in the way the Prime Minister says. He says the Government should put in another couple of million dollars to kick start the economy. I do not know whether that amount will kick start the economy, but I do know that if I were running "Australia Limited" and I went to my banker he would probably call in the receivers. The Government should pay attention. One question we should consider when requesting a Select Committee is transport regulations. We now have regulations on the regulations. We have a regulation which says that the transport of gypsum is regulated to rail, and the end result is that the State is not competitive in the export market for that product; that is, Westrail loses money carting it.

Mr Thomas: How does that compare with the situation when a conservative Government ran this State?

Mr McNEE: Any deregulation was started long before the present Government came to power. It started with the transport problem. I am not saying "Do not deregulate". I am saying that to deregulate the Government must know what it is doing, and the Government does not. It is crazy to regulate gypsum to rail and then turn around and say no to farmers who are one million tonne-plus customers. The Government is not only saying that farmers cannot do it, but also it is blatantly trying to stop them and make it difficult for them. In addition, the Government is not prepared to repair the roads. I support the motion.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Leader of the National Party) [3.40 pm]: I am quite sure that when the members of the Government get to their feet to defend the Government's position, and if the record is anything to go by and they are consistent in their approach, one of the first things that will be said is that agriculture and those industries allied to the support of agriculture want a solution rather than further identification of the problem. When members think about the volume of information provided by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Moore members may be justified in saying that those problems listed in part (a) of this motion are quite easily identified. One has only to go to the various tax gathering departments of the Commonwealth and State Governments to get a clear identification of the rates of excise and State fuel franchise levy. I am not forgetting for one moment that bona fide primary producers are capable of being exempt from those taxes provided the product is to be used for agricultural purposes. Nevertheless it is still a fairly serious impost on primary producers. Payroll tax is a little different; not too many farmers would farm on a corporate basis. Generally corporate farming is undertaken by people who are absentee owners. I say "generally" as some farmers operate with a corporate structure and, because of the number of their employees, they are required to pay payroll tax. Nevertheless, many of the companies that provide a service to agriculture are required, because of the number of their employees, to pay payroll tax and that cost is automatically passed on as a cost for a service, and some of those service costs are very high. The same argument can be made on the other seven points in part (a) of this motion, and that has been done.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Moore have provided statistical data which identifies clearly the problems associated with agriculture and its allied industries. That can best be summed up by acknowledging that over the last five years productivity in agriculture has increased at the rate of 2.2 per cent per annum. That is not a bad record in any industry and I do not believe anybody in this Chamber - even if members were all here - could point to any other industry that has had such a productivity increase over that period. The problem, which is not confined solely to agriculture, and most

exporters would agree it fits them as well, is that the terms of trade for primary producers has been decreasing at double that rate. While there has been a 2.2 per cent increase in productivity every year, there has been a 4.4 per cent fall in the terms of trade. One does not have to be a Rhodes scholar to know that if productivity cannot increase at a rate higher than the falling terms of trade, one will get into some trouble unless adjustments are made. No Government has been prepared to make the adjustments. There has not been any relief for the people who faced the prospect - no matter how efficient and productive they were - of falling prices for commodities in the international marketplace and increasing costs for farm inputs. That is what this is about. I acknowledge that a lot of work has been done by many people in identifying those problems. A number of people have provided solutions and one of the solutions has been presented by the Federal coalition - that is, of course, the Fightback package. Given the interest the Western Australian Government has shown in the Fightback package and given the national interest in that political package, it might not be a bad idea for this proposed Select Committee to be used as a vehicle to identify very clearly what are the advantages or disadvantages of the Fightback package for agriculture and its allied industries. If there is a reason to support this motion, the opportunity for a committee of this Parliament to examine what is being claimed in the Fightback package for agriculture and its allied industries would be the most valid reason. The Government should support the appointment of this Select Committee if it is so confident about all of the figures that are bandied around at question time when Ministers anxiously jump to their feet to answer Dorothy Dix questions to slander the Fightback package -

Mr P.J. Smith: They are not slandering the package, but slamming it.

Mr COWAN: I do not really mind what the member says; let us be completely neutral and say "criticising the Fightback package". The Government should be prepared to hand this question over to a Select Committee of inquiry and ask it to identify those issues.

The final portion of the motion allows me to refer to some of the provisions for financial assistance to the agriculture industry which have been made over those lean times which for some reason are cyclical in agriculture. The Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation is of some benefit to those people in the farming community who are eligible for assistance. People have been seeking part B assistance from the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation. It is assistance available for carry on purposes; in other words it is to assist a farmer to secure enough finance to maintain his farming program for the ensuing farm year. An announcement was made earlier this year by the Minister for Agriculture that in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government the State Government would make \$3.6 million available to Western Australian farmers under part B of the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation Act. At the end of February approximately \$40 000 had been made available. I do not have an update on the figures, but I suggest that at least \$3 million will be returned to Consolidated Revenue and consequently to the Commonwealth. Under the RAFCOR Commonwealth-State agreement the Commonwealth contributes approximately twice the amount of money put in by the State. In this case, the State contributed \$1.2 million and the Commonwealth agreed to put in \$2.4 million to provide a part B package. The rules associated with that package deny the vast bulk of that money to the rural areas. I suggest that by 30 June less than \$600 000 will have been delivered to the farming community.

I do not want the Minister or any other person speaking on the Government's side of the House to tell the Opposition that the Government already has in place a body which is responsible for delivering financial assistance to farmers. Unless one is eligible for assistance from RAFCOR under part A or part C, which covers relocation and rehabilitation - where one has acknowledged one no longer has a farm and wants to get out of the industry - it is very difficult to obtain funds. As I said, if a review of RAFCOR's process for making assistance available under part B is carried out on 30 June we will find that most of the \$3.6 million will be returned to the CRF in Western Australia or to the CRF in Canberra.

On many occasions when people move motions of this nature they concentrate on the farming industry. There is no doubt that when farming is successful the other industries associated with it receive their share of the wealth. Consequently most of the service industries receive the flow on effect and are no longer in such a difficult situation. However, when the agriculture industry suffers as a result of an economic downturn the suffering is

compounded in the service industries associated with it. Recognition of that fact and the need to address the problem has not been shown by the Government. It is an area which is deficient and to which this proposed Select Committee could turn its attention for a very good purpose. It could identify what must be done for small businesses which are an integral part of any rural community. The results of the Select Committee's investigations could help them through a period of economic decline and, consequently, if agriculture became profitable they would receive the flow on of funds through business. When the farming community has no money clearly businesses receive no money and they are faced with a very difficult situation. That issue must be addressed.

I do not want to cover old ground, but I remind the Government that some years ago - I think it was before 1986 - a Select Committee was established to examine agriculture and its allied industries. That committee drew up a report. At that time it was considered appropriate that the inquiry be conducted. One could say that economic times in rural Western Australia now are no different from the year in which that Select Committee was appointed. It may be appropriate for a new committee to conduct an inquiry, gather new information, update existing information and make some recommendations to assist the rural community.

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont - Minister for Community Services) [3.58 pm]: The Government opposes this motion.

Several members interjected.

**Mr RIPPER**: I appreciate the measured comments made by the Leader of the National Party. The fact that he has spoken before me means that some of the argument I wished to make has already been made. As he has correctly pointed out, a number of points which one would expect to be reported by the proposed Select Committee have already been mentioned by members speaking in support of the motion. At least the performance of the Leader of the National Party was a measured contribution. The same cannot be said for the comments made by the member for Moore. I hope members of the National Party will send copies of *Hansard* to the National Party opponent of the member for Moore. I think he will be amused to see that the member for Moore has imitated Max Gillies impersonating Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

**Mr Minson**: Joh was in my electorate the other day; I had lunch with him.

**Mr RIPPER**: Did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition see any resemblance to Max Gillies and consequently the member for Moore?

**Mr Minson**: He left Queensland \$600 million in credit.

**Mr RIPPER**: Regardless of his performance in Queensland, I am sure members will notice some similarities in his style to that of the member for Moore. Members of the Government and of the Parliament are well aware of the difficulties confronting agriculture in this State. Those difficulties have arisen because costs involved in agriculture are determined in this country while the prices received for agricultural produce are determined outside the country. At the best of times those prices are subject to the vagaries of commodity markets. They are now subject to the vagaries of not only a fair market but also an unfair market brought on by subsidy policies of other nations. The awareness of the problems of agriculture and its dependence on overseas markets is demonstrated by those people involved in this debate. One would normally expect the Minister for Agriculture and the spokespersons on agriculture in the Opposition and the National Party to be involved. However, I am advised that all three are in Singapore promoting Western Australian agricultural produce.

**Mr Strickland**: I have been told that the Minister said if we can organise a pair we can go together.

**Mr RIPPER**: I do not know what the member for Scarborough has been told, but Western Australians will appreciate the cross-party support for marketing their products. That support indicates that members of Parliament are well aware of the difficulties facing the agricultural industry. They are certainly aware of its dependence on overseas markets, the need for its promotion and the need for fair and free trade in those markets. Indeed, there are good reasons for members of Parliament to be well aware of those things. A number of Select Committees have already examined questions relating to agriculture. They have travelled far and wide and heard from many witnesses. For example, we have had Select Committees into the right to farm and into land conservation, and, outside the Parliament, the

Special Rural Task Force was set up and it dealt more closely with the matters referred to in this motion. That committee has reported to the Government and it remains a forum in which these issues can be addressed.

Mr Strickland: It has not reported to Parliament.

Mr RIPPER: The Parliament is well aware of the issues confronting agriculture, as, indeed is the community. The Western Australian community and the farming community understand the difficulties facing the agricultural industry and the strategies which are likely to succeed in helping it. Everyone understands that subsidies will not work; that freer and fairer trade is required; and, that improved efficiency is required within the industry. The Leader of the National Party referred to productivity growth over the years. Everyone understands the need for improved efficiencies in industries providing inputs and services to agriculture.

Mr Bradshaw: What about the GST?

Mr RIPPER: I will come to that later. Perhaps the member for Wellington will let me say what I have to say and then I will respond to what other members have said.

Mr Minson: I was waiting for you to say something about farm input costs.

Mr RIPPER: I am about to address that question. Everyone understands there is a need to keep taxes and charges as low as possible and consistent with the effective provision of Government services required in the community, including those services required by country people. As a result of all those mechanisms the community understands those matters. There is no need for a Select Committee to tell us about all of those things again and to repeat some of the information which has already been put to the House by those members who preceded me in this debate and on previous occasions when a similar motion was put to this House and defeated.

Mr Read: Maybe we should have a Select Committee into the effect of the GST on agriculture.

Mr RIPPER: I am sure that further debate on the GST will only be to the advantage of members on this side. I am pleased that members on the other side have nailed their colours to the mast and I encourage them to continue talking about the GST. They should publicise it widely because the Government will benefit from their attempts to explain it. We do not need a Select Committee because the issues in this motion have already been examined by the community, the industry, by other Select Committees set up by this Parliament and by the Special Rural Task Force.

Mr Minson: I bet you can't name one of them because they haven't been examined.

Mr RIPPER: Some of the matters were examined in a previous debate on a similar motion calling for a Select Committee to be established. That motion was defeated in November last year. It is not surprising that there is a good understanding of the position facing agriculture because everyone realises, as the Leader of the National Party pointed out, that there has been a decline in farmers' terms of trade over many years. It is a long term process and is characteristic of the economics confronting those involved in broadacre agriculture.

Mr Bloffwitch interjected.

Mr RIPPER: People involved in agriculture would be more interested in the actual outlook for their input costs than they would be in further futile discussions about matters which have already been the subject of much community debate.

Mr C.J. Barnett: They know the forecasts are bad and they want something done about them.

Mr RIPPER: I will take up the point made by the member for Cottesloe by referring to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and what it says about the input costs farmers are likely to face. In February of this year the ABARE presented its "Outlook for Farm Inputs" and said that farmers were benefiting from falls in interest rates and the lowest rates of input price increases for many years. The ABARE forecast also stated -

Average price increases for farm inputs are likely to be below the general rate of inflation in 1991-92, with the expectation that lower interest rates and falls in the prices of fuel and store livestock will more than offset higher fodder prices.

Mr Bradshaw: That is a forecast, not a reality.

Mr RIPPER: I know the situation confronting farmers is not rosy but it is worthwhile referring to some positive aspects of the general scheme of things. The ABARE forecast shows that the rises in input prices will be below the general rate of inflation. Of course, the rate of inflation is much lower than it has been for many years. In fact, the rate of inflation for 1991-92 is expected to be about 2.5 per cent, well down on the rates of inflation in previous years. Therefore, we have the dual impact of lower inflation rates and reductions in price increases for agricultural inputs.

Mr Bradshaw: What about increases in commodity prices? Do you take them into account?

Mr RIPPER: I have already said that the long term trend for broadacre agriculture is a continuing decline in the terms of trade confronted by farmers. Indeed, input prices in this area are still increasing at a rate faster than that of prices for produce. This motion does not address how the committee would inquire into market problems. It is not directed at trade problems but at cost problems. The cost outlook, for this year at least, is relatively better than it has been for a number of years.

Mr Trenorden: You are showing your ignorance.

Mr RIPPER: I am not showing my ignorance.

Mr Trenorden: That is rubbish!

Mr RIPPER: If I am showing my ignorance it is the ignorance of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics. The member for Avon may like to write to the bureau and tell it that it is ignorant, but I am not an expert on the economics of farming matters and I am only quoting what the appropriate authority is predicting because it has done the investigations.

One of the reasons for the improvement is interest rates, which have fallen from the peak business rate in 1989 of 20.5 per cent to about 11.5 per cent. Of course, that has involved a decline in real interest rates of about five per cent. It could well be argued that for farmers and businesses those real interest rates still present a problem, as do the increases in other inputs. However, this is a somewhat odd time to be moving to establish a Select Committee into the cost pressures in agriculture when we have seen a slackening of the rate of increase in those cost pressures. We have seen a range of other input costs actually fall. I know that other speakers from this side of the House will, in this debate, draw attention to some of the input prices which have fallen from the point of view of farmers.

I want to put this clearly before the House: The situation confronting farmers is serious and it deserves close attention. The Government certainly endorses both of those propositions and it has acted to try to improve the economic situation confronting Western Australian farmers. I will refer to a number of areas in which the Government has acted. As the member for Moore would be well aware, the State Government did not proceed with the one cent a tonne kilometre levy on grain and fertiliser transported by road in areas serviced by rail.

Several members interjected.

Mr RIPPER: While the member digests that in order to come back at the Government in his characteristic style, I point out to the House that the State Government has agreed to refund stamp duty on refinanced farm loans. While the Leader of the National Party pointed out some alleged deficiencies in the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation's financial assistance, nevertheless the Government has activated part B of the scheme which will provide farmers with interest assistance.

Several members interjected.

Mr RIPPER: The Government has acted, and that is what the farming community is interested in. It is not interested in more discussion on issues which have been well and truly debated. The Government has introduced a top-up interest subsidy scheme to help the early recovery of those farmers whose businesses were adversely affected by a fall in the price of commodities in 1990-92 and seasonal conditions in 1991-92.

Several members interjected.

Mr RIPPER: It is important for Ministers to consult with industry. One of the things I have noticed about the Minister for Agriculture is that he is very good at consulting the industries

with which he deals and his record on consultation has been rewarded by a very positive level of support from farming communities in this State. If the member for Moore can approach his level of popularity he will have nothing to fear from his National Party opponent at the next election.

These issues have been well and truly debated, there is a good understanding of them in the community, and for that reason there is no need to establish another Select Committee. The State Government has acted and will continue to act to produce the best possible situation in which our farmers can compete on world markets. In doing that this Government will vigorously oppose the introduction of a goods and services tax, which is threatened by the Federal Opposition. Those members on the other side of the House who promote a GST should recognise that the package includes a substantial cut in Federal Government spending. I understand it will be about \$10 billion, and it will have an effect on services provided to the community, including services to country people. The fine print of the GST package states that there will be a cut in grants to the States. If that is the case it will impact on services, particularly services delivered to the country.

Mr Clarko: The Hawke Government not only increased the taxes of workers, but it cut their real wages.

Mr RIPPER: I have noticed that the member for Marmion has been very vocal in his support for wage increases for workers each time this subject has been debated! He and his colleagues have opposed them at every opportunity, and he has proposed a system of industrial relations which will remove the basic protections from the working people of this country.

Apart from the cut in Federal and State spending which will impact on country areas, the Government has been advised that a GST will also result in a transfer of income from regional economies to the metropolitan area. While 28 per cent of the State's population lives in non-metropolitan areas, only 12 per cent of those who would receive benefits from the abolition of payroll tax and 21 per cent of those who would receive benefits from the abolition of sales tax live in the country. When that is calculated it means that there will be a transfer of \$115 million to the city.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Will you explain why the National Farmers Federation supports a GST?

Mr RIPPER: I am not sure whether it does. If it does, perhaps it has something to do with the political ambitions of a former president of that organisation. I advise members opposite that there is also someone from the farming area in the Liberal Party - he is actually the president of the Three Springs branch of that party - who does not support a goods and services tax and he wrote to a rural newspaper strongly opposing it. Mr Hedley Hunt said that when it is fully understood and analysed, a GST will, in the long term, spell disaster for agriculture in Australia. It is because of comments like that that I encourage the Opposition to go on campaigning for a GST because in the end it will only reassure the people of Western Australia and Australia that they should re-elect Labor Governments.

I have outlined a number of reasons why this motion should not be supported. The Parliament and the community have already discussed these issues. I am sure the people involved are looking for solutions to their problem and for action. The Government has taken action and it is interested in taking further action; it is not interested in promoting further futile discussion by virtue of a Select Committee.

MR GRILL (Eyre) [4.17 pm]: In the absence of the Minister for Agriculture I have been asked by the Government to make some remarks in respect of this motion. I welcome that opportunity. I have not said very much about agriculture for a while, but I have been speaking on other matters and I will touch on them as well as agriculture.

This debate should not come down to a dispute about a goods and services tax and it was unfortunate that that element was introduced at an early stage of the debate when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made his speech. I know he has a very sincere interest in this matter and most of his remarks were made in that vein, but it is not productive for us to have a debate about a GST today. That matter will come and it will be decided. However, while we are talking about issues which vitally affect a very productive area of our economy we should not be talking about a dispute which will be the centre of attention at a national level for some time.

On a personal level I have a great deal of empathy with and sympathy for a number of matters set out in this motion, and there should not be an ongoing process of ruthlessly pruning input costs for farmers. The farmers of this country have had it hard, not only this year or last year but for a couple of decades. The Leader of the National Party was absolutely correct when he said in his speech that the terms of trade have gone against our farmers for a long period. We are looking at a chronic situation, and it is not one which arose last year, the year before or during the term of this Government; it is a situation which has been going for a couple of decades.

Mr Minson: Have you seen the ABS graph which shows that it has been going down for 20 years?

Mr GRILL: Nearly every commodity we produce in abundance displays the same sort of unfortunate graph. I was talking, for instance, to a representative of Woodside Petroleum a few weeks ago who was a bit unhappy about some remarks I made on radio about Woodside's performance. The representative rang me and asked whether the company could brief me. He said, "Are you aware that the real price of gas in this State over the past decade has halved?" I said that I was not aware of that fact and asked him to show me the relevant information so that I could make a judgment. I was shown the information, which indicated he was correct. However, the same situation applies to iron ore, nickel, wheat, and wool. We are producing those raw commodities in abundance and tremendously efficiently. I believe someone mentioned today that our broadacre farmers are among the most efficient producers in the world. I know that the Leader of the National Party remarked that farmers have been increasing productivity at a rate in excess of one per cent each year.

Mr Trenorden: They are 56 per cent more efficient than American farmers.

Mr GRILL: I have no doubt that that figure is close. It is true that our farmers and mining industry are efficient. However, what we are producing is not worth anything like it was worth 10 or 20 years ago. I have seen a graph showing the real price of wheat from 1939 to 1991 and it is absolutely horrifying to see the way in which that price has gone down during that period. Of course, our farmers have had to become more and more efficient and I take my hat off to them because they are supporting this country well.

I cannot say that we have been able to match their performance. We have tried, and will continue to try. This Government has been responsible for reducing a whole range of input costs that I will go into in a moment. That is difficult because the breadth and depth of our economy is too shallow for us to cross subsidise our farmers in the way in which the European Common Market and American farmers are subsidised. I think that no-one has yet fully appreciated just how strongly American farmers are subsidised for their grain crops.

Mr Trenorden: Sometimes they are paid not to produce.

Mr Bloffwitch: Look at the subsidy in the EEC and England!

Mr GRILL: The same thing applies to them. Our farmers have been subjected to tremendous problems with our terms of trade over a long time. We can all fly kites, posture and say things here that will go down well in the electorate, but if we are to approach this problem properly we must do so on a constructive basis. Frankly, this rehashed motion - and I am sorry to put it that way - will not find favour with the Government. It has been put to the Government before and has not found favour with it. Room still exists for a bipartisan effort in looking at some of the elements of this package. In many respects it is a bit of a grab bag and, as the Minister for Community Services has already pointed out, a number of the matters raised in this motion have been addressed previously in one way or another. Whether they were addressed completely is another question. The Special Rural Task Force set up last year by Hon Ernie Bridge is still in place and it is still led by Bruce Donaldson, a person held in high regard in country areas.

Several members interjected.

Mr Strickland: He is an endorsed Liberal candidate.

Mr GRILL: I have no problem with that. I do not mind throwing a bouquet from time to time.

Several members interjected.

Mr GRILL: Members may not be so happy with what I shall say presently. The Special Rural Task Force is still in place and well led. I have no problem with Bruce Donaldson as I have known him for a long time and respect him. The task force does broadly represent those elements of the farming community who need to be represented. I believe the rural action movement, a somewhat radical group, could perhaps be invited to be part of that committee. The task force represents those elements of the agricultural and livestock industries which can, and should, look at some of these questions and make recommendations to Government about them. I am inviting the Opposition to pick out those items in this motion that they really believe should be looked at.

Mr Lewis: You are ministerial material.

Mr GRILL: So is the member for Applecross. It is a pity he is on the wrong side. Those items should actually be referred to the task force. It is willing to look at many of these matters. Some need to be looked at, some have been looked at, and some have been dealt with fairly effectively. State and Federal fuel taxes appear on the list. Farmers, agriculturists and primary producers are exempted from fuel tax on farms. I personally introduced a situation under which petrol that was previously taxed on farm was exempted from tax. A whole range of reforms of that nature were brought about during the time of this Government. It is not fair for the member for Moore to rise in this place and hurl abuse at the Government on the basis that it is uncaring of rural industry. It is not. It would not have put in place the guaranteed minimum price for wheat last year if it had that sort of attitude. The GMP was roundly criticised across Australia, not only by my Federal colleagues but also by Federal and interstate colleagues of members opposite. That guarantee was not called on in the final analysis.

Mr Bloffwitch: We did not, in general, condemn the GMP.

Mr GRILL: The member for Geraldton did not and nor did his colleagues here, but his colleagues in the Eastern States did.

Mr Bloffwitch: We are not responsible for them.

Mr GRILL: That is something else upon which we can agree. Such things represent an attitude to the agricultural sector which is enlightened, empathetic and sympathetic. That has not always been the case with the Labor Party, I grant that. In times past the Labor Party in this State, led by people like Joe Chamberlain, was almost exclusively for the working classes and excluded the agricultural industry. However, that approach is long past.

Mr Minson: Since the member for Eyre is being so gracious and accepting that, I accept that during those times farmers had a large margin of profitability that they do not have now.

Mr GRILL: That is true, too. A number of matters need to be considered. Payroll tax also appears on the list. However, most farmers do not pay that.

Mr Bloffwitch: What a terrible attitude; because some of them do not pay it, forget about it!

Mr GRILL: Let me make my next point. If the mining companies, the biggest rural employers, were exempted from payroll tax without any replacement tax being put in place the member for Cottesloe would understand that somewhere down the track that tax would have to be picked up somewhere else, so in the final analysis if one exempts the whole of the rural world, including miners, from payroll tax, one may not be doing the hard done by farmer a great favour. That is all I am saying. Having said that, I confess that I have written an economic paper which indicates that under the right circumstances we should abolish payroll tax.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It has certainly impacted on a lot of input costs such as fertiliser. Most shearing contractors are subject to payroll tax, so the farmer is paying it.

Mr GRILL: Some are.

Mr Bloffwitch: About 10 people plus the owner working as part of a station group brings them into payroll tax.

Mr GRILL: No-one is a greater supporter of the mining industry than I am. The raw figures for mining output last year went through the roof. There was a 15 per cent increase in the exportable product, and the Minister for Mines can confirm that. General exports increased by 20 per cent and the trade surplus was nearly \$8 billion; but where did the real tax benefit



of all that go? It did not come to this State; it went to Canberra. The profits were expatriated either to Melbourne or Sydney in the Eastern States, or to Tokyo, London or New York. This State is not getting the sort of return it really needs from its mining industry. If we were getting a larger return we would be able to do more for the very hard strapped agricultural sector, but we are not.

Mr Bloffwitch: We get employment out of it.

Mr GRILL: Yes, but we do not get the sort of employment we really should get out of it. Every time we wave goodbye to a ship laden down with iron ore at \$37 a tonne in that unprocessed form, we are waving goodbye to most of the potential jobs and most of the potential wealth. The same thing applies to our wool. When we send three-quarters of our woolclip offshore without even washing it we are waving goodbye to jobs for our children and to almost all the jobs that are potentially there. We need some structural changes in Western Australia, and in Australia generally, and until we bring about these structural changes we will not get anywhere. The Opposition and the Government can argue about input costs until the cows come home, but the truth is that input costs have been shaved, perhaps not as much as some people would like, but they have come down and are continuing to come down.

The next item mentioned in the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's motion is transport regulations. When this Government came to power in 1983 transport was very largely regulated within the State. I know the Opposition will say that it had plans to deregulate it, but the truth is that land transport in this State has been largely deregulated under a Labor Government. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition's list includes import and stamp duties. Let us talk about import duty. The only Governments at any time in Australia's history to have done anything about lowering tariffs have been Labor Governments, and some of the good work they have done has been undone by incoming Liberal Governments. I refer, for instance, to the 25 per cent across the board tariff cut made by the Whitlam Government, I think in 1973. That was undone in subsequent years by the incoming Fraser Government, which was most unfortunate; and the sector which picked up most of the adverse impact of that was the farming and agricultural community. When I became a member of Parliament the gross exportable product from Western Australia was roughly divided; nearly 50 per cent came from the agricultural sector and a little over 50 per cent came from the mineral sector. The truth today is that the agricultural sector now produces only a fraction - about one-sixth - of what the mineral industries produce. That is nothing like its potential but it is faced with the terrible problem of the terms of trade.

However, things have been done about input costs, and things will continue to be done about them. For instance, I believe that one of the really productive areas where there could be some discussion and examination on a bipartisan basis is in relation to quarantine and anti-dumping measures. The Federal Government will tell us that it has just done a review of the anti-dumping measures in this country and has now brought in the most productive and efficient regime in the world. That is just nonsense and posturing. There are still 150 days during which no action will be taken. In the United States action in respect of anti-dumping can be taken in certain circumstances within 30 days, and we need a regime whereby action can be taken in respect of a firm or a country dumping goods within Australia in 30 days or less, because if one must wait 150 days before any further action is taken one's industry can be in ruins. That is an area which possibly could be referred to the Special Rural Task Force because the Commonwealth Government, despite its posturing, has not gone far enough in this respect.

The motion also mentions the assets test and higher education costs. There is agreement on both sides of the House on that issue. Every year this State Government makes a very strong submission to the Federal Government in respect of those matters, especially in relation to the asset threshold. We agree that people who might appear to be asset rich are in fact broke in many cases. A previous speaker, I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, mentioned negative income. That is an area where we agree and I do not think there is any need for an examination of that. I think there is a need for some bipartisan strength in the next submission that goes to Canberra, and it will be made again because this State believes that many people on the land are being unfairly treated by the application of this very low assets threshold. So things are happening. I am not saying that everything is happening, but in the final analysis I do not believe that the grab bag presented in this motion is the right way to

go. It has elements which will be examined and which can be examined on a bipartisan basis.

Mr Minson: Why don't you amend the motion to what is acceptable? I am serious about this.

Mr GRILL: I have been informed by the people who instructed me that if these matters were put forward seriously they would be examined by the Special Rural Task Force, and examined fairly quickly. That is an offer I have been told I can put forward here today and I do so sincerely. This is not an occasion for posturing or scoring points for the electorate. We should not be talking about the goods and services tax today because we will argue about that interminably. I believe there are a number of areas where the Opposition and the Government can cooperate and I am instructed that the Government is prepared to cooperate.

MR BRADSHAW (Wellington) [4.36 pm]: I support the motion because it is very important for people in the country areas of Western Australia. I was astounded by the contribution of the Minister for Community Services, the acting Leader of the House, today because if anyone should not have said anything, perhaps it is he. The member for Eyre showed some concern and understanding of the rural industries and rural areas of the State but I am not sure whether the Minister for Community Services has even been outside the metropolitan area.

Mrs Watkins: He grew up on a farm in the country.

Mr BRADSHAW: He had a funny way of showing it today.

Mr McNee: I have told you before: Just because kittens are born in the chook house it does not make them chickens.

Mr BRADSHAW: The member for Moore is quite right. Even though the Minister for Community Services was brought up in the country he knows very little about it. He is probably like a good many people in the metropolitan area, who think milk is made in a factory, put in cartons and delivered to their houses, whereas it comes from cows, beef comes from cattle, and so on. Rural people are struggling to make ends meet. The Minister for Community Services at least pointed out that farm input costs are coming down, but until I pointed it out to him he failed to say that the returns to the farmers for their commodities are not coming anywhere near in line with their input costs.

Mr Ripper: Perhaps you did not understand my speech, because I made that point.

Mr BRADSHAW: I pointed out to the Minister that the rise in commodity prices was not going anywhere near the input costs. Only this year a farmer down my way was talking to me about the problems of farming and the fact that the returns and the input costs were getting so close that he was virtually running at no profit or, because of the current recession and the downturn in wheat and sheep prices, he had a negative income. He said that 20 years ago if he sold 10 steers he could buy a motor vehicle. Today he must sell almost 100 steers to buy the same vehicle. That has been happening on the rural scene over the years.

Some years ago I framed some figures regarding returns to farmers. At the time we were looking at the rating system in the south west because the Grants Commission developed some magic formula to determine how rating would apply in country areas. I referred to 1980 and multiplied the beef prices by a CPI of 10 per cent - this was probably under the actual figure - over the years until 1990. However, I discovered that to keep up with the 1980 price a farmer in 1990 would need a 50 per cent increase in the return per kilo on his beef. That is an example of the return to the farmer not keeping up with the CPI. On the other hand, farm input costs have risen dramatically over that time.

An article in the *Agriculture and Resources Quarterly* provides an example of real expenditure and the input involved in the farm sector. The average increases in the financial years from 1977-78 to 1979-80 were as follows: Fuel rose by five per cent; fertilizer by 5.2 per cent; chemicals by 1.3 per cent - that was certainly a low figure; seed and fodder by 11.4 per cent; repairs and maintenance by 7.9 per cent; and wages by 10.9 per cent. These are some of the increases which have taken place over the years.

It is sad that farmers' returns have not kept up anywhere near the rate of cost increases. If that trend continues and profits are not made, more farmers will go broke. Also, people in rural communities are affected if farmers do not have funds to spend in the community. We

have seen these effects in rural communities with shops closing, businesses laying off staff, and the decline in rural populations. All these problems come back to the returns to farmers.

One of the major costs to farmers over the past few years has been interest rates. It is all very well for the Acting Leader of the House to say that interest rates have come down; however, farmers' debts have increased so much over the years during the period of high interest rates they are now paying as much, if not more, interest than they were during that time of high interest rates. If farmers could not afford to pay the interest when the rates were high, the unpaid interest was added to the debt. Also, farmers have to borrow in order to plant crops. The expenditure on interest payments also denies revenue to the community through farmer expenditure.

As well as interest rates, wages, cartage, feed, fertilizer, fuel and other such payments, farmers must pay Government charges. Last year the Premier issued a media release claiming that Government charges would increase by only three or four per cent - I cannot remember which.

Mrs Beggs: By the CPI.

Mr BRADSHAW: She also mentioned the figure. However, irrigation charges increased by 40 per cent, which is a lot different from the CPI!

Mrs Beggs: How was that broken down?

Mr BRADSHAW: The Premier just increased the charges by 40 per cent, and in the previous year the increase was 15 per cent.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Third party insurance increased by 30 per cent two weeks after that announcement. The Premier has no credibility at all.

Mrs Beggs: She has 85 per cent credibility, and that gets up the member's nose.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kobelke): Order! The member for Wellington is making a speech.

Mr BRADSHAW: Fortunately, a public meeting was held which made representations to the Minister for Agriculture, who happens to be the Minister for Water Resources, and he saw fit to reduce the increase to 15 per cent.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It must have been a full moon that night.

Mr BRADSHAW: It was still a little different from the three or four per cent promised, but it was certainly better than 40 per cent.

Over the years we have seen other dramatic increases in farm costs for properties in drainage districts. In the past drainage charges have been minor ones, but this has become a major cost to farmers. In some cases farmers are paying more for drainage charges than they are in shire rates. One receives more for one's dollar from shire rates than from drainage charges. In many cases the drainage of property is very important; I do not underestimate that. However, when one must pay more than the shire rates because one has a channel running through one's property and needs to have a little water removed, it is atrocious.

Members opposite claim to be friends of farmers; in fact they claim to be everyone's friend. However, they are not prepared to go out and witness the situation in the rural community. If we identify these problems, we can solve them. It is not good enough for the Acting Leader of the House to say that many studies have been done. He mentioned a Select Committee which had nothing to do with farm input costs; his claims were codswallop.

The situation with farmers is not like making a car for which the manufacturer sets a market price - although market resistance will apply if the product is overpriced. Nevertheless, farming produce must be sold on the auction system and the farmer gets what he can. It is not a matter of putting the produce on a shelf and sitting on it until it is purchased. Once that fruit, vegetables, wheat or whatever is produced, it must be sold as it cannot be stored forever and a day. I am disappointed that the Government has taken a negative attitude towards the farming community. Members opposite do not worry about their poor country cousins. The Labor Party mentality has come to the fore again; namely, the view that anybody who owns a farm is rich.

Mr Ripper: Nonsense!

Mr BRADSHAW: That is the Labor Party's mentality. If members opposite realised how farmers lived, they would know that there are not many rich ones. They think all farmers drive around in Mercedes cars.

Mr Graham: We hold more country seats than you do.

Mr Clarko: You are wrong.

Mr Graham: Count them.

Mr BRADSHAW: I cannot see many country members sitting opposite. For a start the member for Mandurah is not a country member.

Mr Read: We have the member for Bunbury, the member for Mitchell -

Mr BRADSHAW: The member for Bunbury does not live in the country; that is a metropolitan area. He would not know what a farm was; Bunbury is a city. Even though one may live in Bunbury, one can still be isolated from the farming sector.

Mr Thompson interjected.

Mr BRADSHAW: To some extent, the population is probably less than Bunbury. I also live in the country and I am amazed at the attitude of this Government which is not prepared to help the farmers. The establishment of this proposed Select Committee would help not only the farmers but also the people in business who are going broke, retrenching workers and having to sell their businesses. In some areas they may be battling to sell, but if they do they will not make enough money to pay a deposit on a house in the metropolitan area. The Government should realise that when someone leaves a country area, particularly if he is left with nothing, it is another cost to the State because he may require unemployment benefits, a Homeswest house or rent or bond assistance from Homeswest. Although the Government may need to think of ideas to try to keep people on the land, that is much more beneficial than their leaving the country and moving to the metropolitan area.

I commend the Government for its stand on the guaranteed minimum price for wheat. However, as the member for Eyre pointed out, one or two Government members did not support that. It is vital that farming people remain in the country; it is all very well to say that they must become more efficient and productive. However, the only reason that farmers remain on the land is that they have become more efficient.

Mrs Beggs: Everyone agrees with that.

Mr BRADSHAW: It is unlikely anyone would be farming who was not efficient and productive unless he was a St George's Terrace farmer.

Mrs Beggs: The Opposition did nothing to deregulate costs. The Government has deregulated all the areas that the farming community asked for and it has reduced costs by 60 per cent.

Mr BRADSHAW: It is important to ascertain what are the input costs for farming and discover a way to reduce them. I am sure that can be done. As I tried to say earlier when I was interrupted, with regard to selling our wheat overseas we do not operate on a level playing field. While European communities and the United States are subsidising rural products, the Australian Government must come to the party to some extent. The Federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Mr Crean, has put in place a scheme in which dairy farmers subsidise their own products overseas. That is helping them. It is not the complete answer to the problem, but it goes part of the way towards helping the sale of our products overseas.

Mr Gordon Hill: Do you think the State Government should be involved in subsidising farm products?

Mr BRADSHAW: I am not necessarily referring to the State Government. However, the Federal Government should be involved because it collects most of the revenue in Australia. Earlier I congratulated the State Government for introducing the guaranteed minimum price for wheat. That has had a beneficial effect not only for Western Australia but also for Australia. More crops have been planted, which means more overseas funds will be earned.

Mrs Beggs: That shortfall in revenue must be made up somehow. Which tax do you suggest the Federal Government should impose in order to pay that subsidy?

**Mr BRADSHAW:** I agree that that is a problem, but I am not in favour of imposing more taxes. Perhaps some funding can be eliminated from somewhere and channelled into that area. I do not know what costs are involved in subsidising the farmers. However, the prices must be kept at an appropriate level and a minimum price guaranteed so that farming is viable. I am not suggesting they should make a fat profit; they may not even need to be given any money. I have never worked out the figures and I do not know whether anybody else has. I do not know whether we are talking about \$1 billion or \$500 million. Once the requirement is quantified one can look at alternative measures. It is important to look at ways of helping the rural community. Farming is dying out and the sad situation has arisen where people are not only losing their homes, but also suffering as a result of family break-ups and suicides. Once people leave the rural areas, there is little chance that they will return.

**Mrs Beggs:** That is sad. The decline of the population in rural areas is of concern to the Government. I am not sure that establishing a parliamentary Select Committee will resolve that issue. Some fundamental areas must be changed. Quite often Select Committees are established without examining what is taking place on the ground. However, I am not disagreeing with you about the problems.

**Mr BRADSHAW:** People leaving the rural areas has a snowball effect; the fewer people in the towns, the fewer services available, and so on. It is important that somehow farms become more viable and make more profit to enable country towns to survive. I am extremely disappointed with the Government's attitude. I support the motion.

**DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Minister for Fuel and Energy) [4.56 pm]:** The issues referred to in this motion are being taken seriously by the Government, therefore another inquiry is not needed. The specific issues which I will address relate to the impact of the State Energy Commission on rural communities, farms in particular. In the past 12 months many changes have occurred with regard to the supply of electricity and related matters in Western Australia. Some of those matters have impacted on the rural community, and on balance they have had a very positive effect on rural people. I will focus on three areas which have produced some argument in rural areas. The first concerns the overall electricity tariff situation in Western Australia for last year and for the forthcoming year. The second refers to the specific changes to the tariff system, particularly to the K tariff. Thirdly, I will refer to the supply extension policies which have been a matter of controversy among some members of Parliament. The most important contribution the State Energy Commission can make to rural areas is to keep overall tariffs down. If we can tackle the overall system, that will help rural customers in exactly the same way as it will help metropolitan customers. In the past 12 months coal and labour costs have reduced. Those reductions have been carried through to SECWA, and they will impact on SECWA's costs, particularly this year. A review of work practices is taking place within SECWA. Fourthly, we are proposing to examine the price we pay for gas from the North West Shelf venturers. We hope that will produce some benefits for SECWA, given the current losses made in the gas business which are subsidised by electricity consumers. The final issue concerns the overall debt charges. Of course, it is more difficult to tackle them head on, but the Government is attempting to manage them as best it can. As a result of all of those initiatives, in the last 12 months - 1991-92 - Western Australia has had the lowest increase in electricity costs of all States. It was a two per cent increase.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Declare the differences before you speak about them.

**Dr GALLOP:** The differences exist. As I said, the increase in Western Australia was two per cent. The average increase in New South Wales was four per cent; Victoria 4.3 per cent; South Australia 5.7 per cent; Queensland three per cent; and Tasmania 5.5 per cent. Some of those relativity differences were tackled this year.

**Mr Thomas:** How far back do the differences date?

**Dr GALLOP:** We need to look at the overall structural problems that we have in Western Australia. However, the most important factor that impacts on electricity charges is the debts associated with the North West Shelf pipeline and the overall lack of contribution that the gas business makes and which has to be subsidised by electricity.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Are you criticising the North West Shelf project?

Dr GALLOP: No, I am not criticising it. I am talking about the impact it has on electricity charges in this State. Next year there will be no increases in charges to our rural or metropolitan customers. That is the first contribution that we can make. We are tackling the overall problem of costs in SECWA and passing that contribution on to our metropolitan and non-metropolitan users through a uniform tariff system. We did that last year and we will do it even more next year. The second thing we can do is look at some of the areas in which specific tariffs are charged to industries. This year we have seen a major reform of our tariffs. We must target areas that need special assistance and also look at ways of using our plant more effectively by encouraging off peak use of electricity. This allows for savings on the overall capital charges in the electricity generation system. When I became Minister, one of the issues on the agenda which had to be tackled was K tariffs. That reform is included in the overall reforms of industrial and commercial tariffs.

Mr Wiese: The National Party is responsible for that.

Dr GALLOP: The National Party did absolutely nothing except lobby for it. The Government had the matter well in hand at the point at which the National Party started to lobby.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The National Party thought of it and you did it!

Dr GALLOP: No, it did not. It claimed the credit for it, which was very clever politics on its part, but it was purely politics. I admire the way it set up the whole thing so that it appeared as if it had done it. However, no-one in the rural community was convinced because those people knew that, as a result of the consultations that had been going on for over 12 months, we were planning this measure. We increased from nine to 20 units per day the domestic component of the K tariff. That is a very significant contribution to the rural community, to farms in particular, and to many small businesses that have a domestic facility attached to their businesses. We estimate that that will send back into the rural community about \$3.5 million. I am pleased to have been the Minister to announce that change. In summary, we had only a two per cent increase last year, which is less than other States, as a result of the changes we are making in SECWA. The increase was below the rate of inflation last year and next year there will be no increase at all in electricity charges. There has been a special effort with the K tariff which has come into effect from March and which pushes back \$3.5 million to the rural community.

I turn now to an issue that has been a matter of controversy: The rural contribution extension scheme. It is no good me as Minister not addressing this issue. The problem that members opposite face is that they do not recognise that SECWA must be efficient in its operations; it must get an appropriate return on the effort it puts in so that it can plough back the savings from that efficiency into an overall reduction in tariffs. It also means that SECWA's costs must be met.

It was pointed out to me as Minister that there has been absolutely no change in industrial, commercial or rural extension schemes for a decade. The cost of extending electricity to hobby farms and to those separate facilities on farms that need power such as shearing sheds, some of which are quite remote from the farms, is expensive. Those facilities are used for only one or two months a year and therefore returns to SECWA are low. However, there has been no change to that rural contribution extension scheme for 10 years. Approximately 95 per cent of the agricultural area has been reticulated as a result of that scheme and only small infill works are necessary to add to the system. What have we done? We have said that the increase in charges to SECWA over the last 10 year period will now be part of the cost of delivering that service. The 43 per cent rebate that is provided to the rural area will stay. We have introduced an up-front deposit of \$200 that must be paid but which is taken off the overall cost when it is calculated. The Government reckons, given the contribution that has been made and given the small number of farms that will be coming onto the system, that it is fair to allow SECWA to charge that fee to its users because it reflects the increases of the last 10 years. However, members opposite will not acknowledge that if SECWA has to meet that increasing subsidy - by not allowing CPI increases to be reflected in its charges - the cost must be met by the system overall, including the farmers. In other words, it is harder for SECWA to reduce those costs and tariffs for everyone who consumes electricity.

In summary, there will be no increases in tariffs in the forthcoming year.

Mr Wiese: That is a lie. You have put up the price already. You are taking away the amount for the users of 165 units per day.

Dr GALLOP: That is the removal of the declining block system which has been part of our tariff structure. Members opposite do not comprehend. They have no package to offer. All they do is say that, if anything impacts on their constituents, they will oppose it. They have not offered a package of measures that will contribute to the system overall, including appropriate cost recovery.

The contribution made by SECWA in the last 12 months, the contribution it will make in the next 12 months and the contribution it has made to improve the K tariff far outweigh the increases in charges that are necessary to meet increases in costs to SECWA in the rural supply scheme for which there has been no increase in the last 10 years. Therefore, SECWA is on a sound foundation to lower the tariffs in the future. In the last two years, SECWA has contributed to rural recovery just as changes to the transport system have contributed to the rural recovery and just as the hard lobbying and changes in import tariffs at the Federal level have done. We have also contributed with guaranteed minimum prices for our wheat farmers.

Mr Court: What changes to tariffs at the Federal level?

Dr GALLOP: Changes in tariffs over the next period that will contribute to our State's economic development.

Mr Court: You said they were Federal.

Dr GALLOP: Yes, the State Government lobbied hard for these changes. They have been announced and they will be coming.

Mr Bloffwitch: Tariffs on what?

Dr GALLOP: On imports.

Mr Court: All imports?

Dr GALLOP: Yes. The Federal Government accepts the principle of reducing tariffs but there has been debate on the timing of these things.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: Keating is creaming the Liberal Party in Wills and members opposite do not like that.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: The State Government is contributing this year by way of the lowest tariffs of any Australian State. No increases will be made next year. The K tariff will start impacting on farmers, and following the introduction of the new efficiency measures and the increasing user pays system SECWA will pass on the benefits to all customers in this State, including farmers.

MR DONOVAN (Morley) [5.11 pm]: I do not support the establishment of this Select Committee in exactly the same way and for the same reasons as I was unable to support the establishment of a similar committee in November last year. I note as a reminder to the House that the motion was originally moved in May last year; in other words, we are 12 months down the track.

Dr Turnbull: We still have the same problems and that is why it has been brought up again.

Mr DONOVAN: The problem exists, but it will not be solved by a Select Committee. Indeed, the length and breadth of the debate this afternoon is the best evidence for the case that there is no need for a committee. This afternoon the mover of the motion, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, has provided a summary of the case for a goods and services tax. I guess he was saying that this is the case he would have put in Ashburton and, if the Opposition had the opportunity to run it again, that that is the way it would do it. The member for Moore put the case for the long weekend; I assume he was putting that case because he was certainly debating some important economic issues. The member for Eyre gave a quite comprehensive and, in his usual way, sensible analysis of the real economic problems facing the State in terms of industrial development and noted that one cannot isolate the problems addressed in this motion from the broader problems of industrial

development in the State. The Minister for Fuel and Energy has just given the House a statement - although some members might regard it as a politically coloured statement - on energy costs and issues, and the solutions the Government has in mind to meet those. My point is that the major items of the motion, particularly those in paragraph (a)(i) to (ix), all involve objective information that is available from existing sources - Government, industry, farmers federation and other sources. They are available, and most members have been arguing about them all afternoon. In relation to paragraph (b), which calls for an investigation of the comparative costs of fuel, fertiliser and chemicals, members have been drawing on information readily available to support their respective cases.

Under those circumstances, I do not think the farming community of this State is looking for another committee. It may be dissatisfied and it may disagree with the different approaches the Government has adopted from time to time to some, if not all, of its problems. However that is not a case for the establishment of a fairly expensive committee which will take another 12 months to report a problem that the farmers know and can analyse for themselves quite easily now. As was the case last year, there is no need for a committee of this nature because the information is readily available. That situation has not changed this year and, therefore, I am unable to support the motion.

#### *Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

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Ayes (20)			
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mrs Edwardes	Mr Minson	Mr Fred Tubby
Mr Bloffwich	Mr Grayden	Mr Nicholls	Dr Turnbull
Mr Clarko	Mr Lewis	Mr Shave	Mr Watt
Dr Constable	Mr MacKinnon	Mr Strickland	Mr Wiese
Mr Court	Mr McNee	Mr Trenorden	Mr Bradshaw ( <i>Teller</i> )

Noes (23)			
Mrs Beggs	Mr Grill	Mr Marlborough	Mr P.J. Smith
Mr Cunningham	Mrs Henderson	Mr McGinty	Mr Thomas
Mr Donovan	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr Read	Dr Watson
Dr Edwards	Mr Kobelke	Mr Riebeling	Mr Wilson
Dr Gallop	Dr Lawrence	Mr Ripper	Mrs Watkins ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mr Graham	Mr Leahy	Mr D.L. Smith	

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Pairs	
Mr Blaikie	Mr Taylor
Mr House	Mr Bridge
Mr Omodei	Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan	Mr Catania
Mr Kierath	Mr Troy

Question thus negatived.

### **DECLARATIONS AND ATTESTATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 1990**

#### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 29 May 1991.

**MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [5.20 pm]:** I support the Bill. The reason for widening to deputy town or shire clerks and accountants the range of people who are able to witness declarations is that often in country regions the town or shire clerk is out of town and no other persons who are listed in the schedule to the Act are available; therefore, it is very difficult for people to find a person to witness their documents. In 1987, the number of people who were able to witness documents was extended considerably because of the huge number of people who applied for appointment as a commissioner for declarations. We are all aware that a much larger number of people are now able to so attest, and that few people are being granted commissioner for declarations status. That is very important when we are proposing to make additions to the schedule, because we are trying to make it easier for



people to get documents witnessed, while being aware also that we need people who are able to attest documents as a special witness.

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell - Minister for Justice) [5.21 pm]: The Government supports the Declarations and Attestations Amendment Bill. However, it does not agree with the remark made by the member for Wagin in the second reading speech that there is a shortage of persons who can witness documents. We believe that since the breadth of people who can witness documents was broadened, those problems have been largely overcome. However, the thrust of the amendments which the Government introduced some time ago was to ensure that a broad range of people was available to witness documents. We have no objection to assistant shire or town clerks, nor to the accountancy profession, having the ability to witness documents; for that reason, we are pleased to support the legislation.

**MR WIESE** (Wagin) [5.22 pm]: I thank all members on both sides of the House who have supported the Declarations and Attestations Amendment Bill. It has been a long time since the Bill was first introduced and debated, and I assure members of the House, and particularly the Minister, that while a great number of people are available in the metropolitan area to witness and sign documents, there is a shortage of people available in many rural areas.

Mr Clarko: I correct you there. I have been a justice of the peace for 20 years and I am witnessing more documents now than I ever did before. This Government will not appoint JPs, other than former members of Parliament.

Mr WIESE: The member for Marmion has raised a valid point and has referred to another area where statutory implements need to be witnessed specifically by a justice of the peace. There is certainly a shortage of justices of the peace in country areas, and it is obvious from the comment of the member for Marmion that there is also a shortage of justices of the peace in the metropolitan area. That problem needs to be addressed; however, at this stage we are addressing the witnessing of documents by commissioners for declarations, and I am glad to receive the support of the House for this legislation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *Third Reading*

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Wiese, and transmitted to the Council.

## **GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Receipt and First Reading*

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

### *Second Reading*

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the second reading.

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell - Minister for Lands) [5.26 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Leave granted for the following text to be incorporated.]

This Bill seeks to amend the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990. The changes proposed do not alter the basic intent of the principal Act and are based solely upon practical considerations as to the way in which the board will operate. The proposed changes are based on the experience of guardianship boards in other States. The amendments provide for -

the establishment of a new position of deputy chairperson;

an increase in the pool of members to 10; and

the board to be constituted by a single member in certain circumstances.

Under the principal Act, the chairperson of the board is required to be a judge of the Supreme

Court or a person of equivalent experience. Experience in other States indicates that there will be an ongoing daily need to deal with many routine applications which do not require the consideration of a Supreme Court judge. After consultation with the Chief Justice, it has been decided that a legally qualified person of the status of a registrar of the Supreme Court should be prescribed as deputy chairperson of the guardianship and administration board. A provision to that effect is in the Bill before the House. It is important to emphasise that a present or former senior judicial officer will continue to be chairperson and preside over important cases.

The principal Act currently provides for the appointment of deputy members of the board to provide a pool of not more than four persons to act as members during the illness or absence of any member of the board. Again, the experience in other States strongly suggests the need for a larger pool of members with a range of skills so that the composition of each board can be appropriate for the case to be considered. For example, in dealing with an application in respect of a person suffering from Alzheimer's disease, the board could include a member with experience in that field. To provide this flexibility it is proposed to increase the maximum number of members to 10, thus avoiding the need for deputy members.

Before the proclamation of the legislation, it is intended to call for expressions of interest from persons who have knowledge of or experience in working with people with intellectual disabilities. This could include psychiatrists, geriatricians, nurses and other health professionals, psychologists and social workers. Members could also include other persons, whether involved with community organisations or not, who have experience with people with disabilities of dementia, brain damage, mental illness and intellectual disability.

Again relying on interstate advice, it is clear that circumstances will arise where it will be either inconvenient, impossible, or wasteful of resources to convene a full board to deal with urgent applications or unscheduled routine cases. To overcome this potential problem it is proposed to amend the principal Act to indicate that the chairperson will be responsible for the arrangement of the business of the board, and this will include the requirement to specify for the purpose of any particular matter the member or members to perform the functions of the board for the purpose of that matter. This authority will include the possibility of a single member dealing with an application. This proposed amendment has two safeguards. Firstly, the Bill contains an express provision which precludes a single member from dealing with an application which involves sterilisation. A proposed new section will provide that in such circumstances the functions of the board may be performed only by a full board. Secondly, in any case determined by a single member, the Bill provides a simple procedure for such determinations to be reviewed by a full board.

The Bill includes some other minor amendments. For instance, the opportunity has been taken to alter references to "chairman" to read "chairperson". The principal Act also contains several references to "registrar of the board". As the proposed deputy chairperson will have the status of registrar of the Supreme Court, this could cause some confusion in titles. To resolve this, it is proposed that all references to "registrar of the board" should be amended to "executive officer" rather than "registrar". This title is consistent with officers of the same name performing similar functions in the Supreme Court, District Court, Family Court, Children's Court, and Magistrate's Court.

Finally, as a result of the change in title of "registrar" to "executive officer" and the creation of a position of deputy chairperson, it is proposed that the limited powers of the delegation referred to in section 14(1) be from the board to the executive officer, rather than to the position previously described as registrar.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Minson (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

[Questions without notice taken.]

*House adjourned at 6.00 pm*

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## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### FITZGERALD STREET BUS BRIDGE - CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

#### *Government Intention*

33. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it the Government's intention to continue with the proposal for bus traffic in Fitzgerald Street, Northbridge, to continue to use a bus only facility to cross the railway line to access the Wellington Street Bus Station?
- (2) If yes, is the bus crossing to be at existing grade or otherwise by the use of a bridge over the railway tracks?
- (3) If it is intended to use a bridge for the bus crossing on what alignment is this bridge to be built?
- (4) If a bridge is to be built what is the expected cost and what is the expected completion date of the building works?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) It is the Government's intention to continue with the proposal for a facility to allow bus, cyclist and pedestrian access across the railway from Fitzgerald Street to the Wellington Street Bus Station.
- (2)-(4) The options to allow for such a crossing are presently being examined by a working group comprising Government and Perth City Council officers and Northbridge representatives.

### HOSPITALS - ALBANY REGIONAL

#### *Upgrading Funds*

50. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Minister intend to provide the Albany Regional Hospital with funding in the 1992-93 State Budget to upgrade its facilities?
- (2) If so -
  - (a) what will be the nature of the proposed facilities;
  - (b) how much funding will be allocated in total;
  - (c) over how many years will the project be funded;
  - (d) what will be the allocation of funds per year over the life of the project?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Funding for this work will be considered along with all other competing projects in the forthcoming budgetary process for the 1992-93 financial year.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

### TAFE - ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

#### *Question 1935 (2) 1991*

118. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Of the 400 000 Aboriginal students referred to in (2) of question 1935 of 1991, will the Minister advise how many are -
  - (a) part time;
  - (b) full time students?
- (2) Will the Minister also advise the number of these students attending -
  - (a) metropolitan;

(b) non-metropolitan Technical and Further Education facilities?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

The figure referred to in 1935 of 1991 was approximately 4 000. This includes -

- (1) (a) 2 070;
- (b) 1 820.
- (2) (a) 500 students in the metropolitan area: 50 part time and 450 full time.
- (b) 3 390 students in the non-metropolitan area: 2 020 part time and 1 370 full time.

#### DEFAMATION ACTIONS - MINISTERS OF THE CROWN OR PRESIDING OFFICERS

##### *Public Moneys Usage*

134. Mr COWAN to the Treasurer:

- (1) How many times has public money been used to pay for, either partly or wholly, a defamation action initiated by a Minister or Presiding Officer against another person during the last 10 years?
- (2) How many of these actions proceeded to trial or were settled out of court?
- (3) In the cases referred to in (2), did any of the proceeds go personally to the Minister or Presiding Officer concerned?
- (4) What are the current guidelines with respect to the use of public money by Ministers to initiate defamation actions?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1) None.

(2)-(3)

Not applicable.

(4) Extract from Paper No 382, tabled on 10 July 1990 -

(b) Proceedings instituted by Ministers and Officers.

The Crown does not become directly involved in the institution and conduct of proceedings to the personal benefit of a Minister or officer claiming damages for torts (especially defamation) and other civil remedies. These are personal actions, and it would be expected that a successful action would result in an order for payment of damages to the individual concerned. All legal costs associated with such proceedings (whether successful or otherwise) will be borne by that litigant himself. However, in special circumstances the Cabinet might authorise the commencement of an action and provide an indemnity as to legal costs, for example, where the prime motive for taking the proceedings is to make clear the truth concerning particular Government decisions.

#### TREASURY DEPARTMENT - AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT 1990-91

##### *Annual Report Delay Reason*

172. Mr MacKINNON to the Treasurer:

- (1) When was the Auditor General's report commenting on the Treasury Department's Annual Report for 1990-91 completed?
- (2) When was that report ready for presentation to the Parliament?
- (3) Why was the annual report not presented to the Parliament until 5 November 1991?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Treasury's Annual Report was submitted to the Treasurer on 30 August 1991 to meet the statutory obligation under section 62 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act.
- (2) Section 64 of the FAA Act requires the annual report referred to in section 62, together with a copy of the opinion of the Auditor General to be laid before both Houses of Parliament within 21 days of receiving the opinion of the Auditor General.
- (3) The Auditor General's opinion was issued on 15 October 1992. Tabling of the annual report on 5 November 1991 was within the statutory requirement. During the 21 days following receipt of the opinion of the Auditor General the annual report is printed.

**CHILD CARE - MINISTERIAL BREAKFAST, HYATT REGENCY HOTEL**  
*\$15 Payment Account*

186. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) Referring to the Ministerial breakfast on child care held on 18 February 1992 at the Terrace Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, at which Helen Creed was the speaker, the cost being \$15 per person, would the Minister advise into which account each of the \$15 was paid?
- (2) How many people attended?
- (3) How much was received?
- (4) How much was paid to the Hyatt Regency Hotel and from which account?
- (5) (a) Were there other expenses incurred;  
 (b) if so, what and how much?
- (6) (a) For how many persons did the Minister's department pay;  
 (b) what were their titles and classifications?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) Ministerial breakfast, Minister for Consumer Affairs.
- (2) 110.
- (3) \$1 551.
- (4) \$1 210.70 from the ministerial breakfast account.
- (5) (a) No.  
 (b) Not applicable.
- (6) (a) Five.  
 (b)
 

Industrial Inspector	Level 3
Policy Officer	Level 5
Policy Officer	Level 4
Policy Officer	Level 2
Policy Officer	Level 2

All members of the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations  
 Policy Committee on Workforce with family responsibilities.

**BEENUP POWERLINE - PICTON-BEENUP PROPOSAL**  
*State Development Department Social Impacts Unit Impact Study*

189. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for State Development:

- (1) Has the Social Impact Unit from the Department of State Development carried out a study on the impact of the proposed Picton-Beenup power line?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If not, will a study be undertaken?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

(1) No.

(2)-(3)

The responsibility for carrying out social assessments for development proposals lies with the projects's proponent. The Social Impact Unit provides advice to Government, through the Environmental Protection Authority and the Minister for State Development, on the social acceptability of development proposals. SECWA assessed the social impact of the Beenup power supply within guidelines issued by the EPA, which had input from the SUI. The results of SECWA's assessment were published in the Beenup Power Supply Consultative Environmental Review (CER). The Social Impact Unit gave advice to the EPA on the social acceptability of the proposal outlined in the CER. This advice was taken into account in the EPA's report and recommendations to the Minister for the Environment.

**EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT  
OF - EXTERNAL STUDIES COLLEGE  
*Student Enrolments, 1991-92***

197. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

How many students enrolled in the external studies college of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (previously known as Technical and Further Education) in -

(a) 1991;

(b) 1992?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

(a) 10 500.

(b) 3 911 as at March 1992.

**EDGELL BIRDSEYE, MANJIMUP - ISSUES COMMITTEE  
*Terms of Reference - Membership***

225. Mr OMODEI to the Minister for State Development:

- (1) Who drafted the terms of reference to examine issues at the Edgells' Manjimup facility?
- (2) What are the terms of reference and an implementation plan for Government for the Edgells' Manjimup facility?
- (3) Who are the members of the committee appointed under the terms of reference to look at the facility?
- (4) Why was a representative of the Potato Growers' Association not appointed to the Edgells' Issues Committee?
- (5) Why was the member for Warren not elected to the committee membership to examine and report to the Government on the Edgells' Manjimup facility?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) The terms of reference to examine issues at the Edgells' Manjimup facility were drafted by the Department of State Development in consultation with Edgell-Birdseye on behalf of myself.
- (2) The terms of reference include the objective to examine ways of ensuring the future viability of Edgell-Birdseye and report back to the Minister with recommendations and an implementation plan. The report, including the recommendations and activities for implementation, will be presented to me within the next few weeks.
- (3) The members of the committee include -

**Chairman**

**Mr Reece Waldock - Department of State Development**

**Members**

**Dr Brian Stynes - Department of Agriculture**

**Mr Gary Roxburgh - Edgell-Birdseye Manjimup**

**Mr John Keogh - Edgell-Birdseye Manjimup**

**Ms Bisica Gavranich - Food Preservers Union of WA**

**Ms Eileen Hull - Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training**

**Mr Michael Smart - Manjimup potato grower**

**Committee Secretary**

**Mr Bruce Robins - Department of State Development.**

- (4) Since the terms of reference relate specifically to the Manjimup facility of Edgell-Birdseye, it was deemed most appropriate to appoint a grower representative to the committee who had direct and detailed knowledge of the issues facing Edgell's contract growers at Manjimup. Mr Michael Smart, the appointee, is a contract grower for Edgell-Birdseye at Manjimup as well as being a member of the Potato Growers' Association.
- (5) The issues identified for examination relate almost entirely to the costs of production of potato growers and the Edgell-Birdseye facility. It was considered that the committee members appointed had the required expertise to address the issues adequately.

**INDUSTRY, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMERCE, DEPARTMENT OF -  
BIOTECHNOLOGY SEMINARS AND GRANTS PROGRAM**

*Perth Omission*

230. **Mr OMODEI** to the Minister for State Development:

- (1) Does the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce have meetings in every other capital city in Australia except Perth calling for expressions of interest for grants from the biotechnology section of DITAC?
- (2) If yes, what actions has the Minister taken as the result of this omission of DITAC?
- (3) Does DITAC call for applications for funding of biotechnology research in -
  - (a) food;
  - (b) forestry;
  - (c) viticulture
  - (d) aquiculture?
- (4) If yes to (3), will the Minister undertake to approach DITAC requesting it to consider grants for Western Australian research development?
- (5) Were the Western Australian Departments of Agriculture and State Development given adequate warning about DITAC's program of meetings?

**Mr TAYLOR** replied:

- (1) The Industry Research and Development Board, under the auspices of DITAC, conducts information seminars for each of its grant programs. These seminars are not necessarily held in each capital city. For example, the forthcoming round of manufacturing and materials technology seminars will only be held in Perth, Sydney and Adelaide.
- (2) A biotechnology seminar was in fact held in Perth, however, the decision to do so was taken after DITAC's promotional material had been finalised. Hence, Perth did not appear in the original advertising for the seminar. Accordingly, local promotion was arranged by the Department of State Development in conjunction with the DITAC Perth office. The seminar was held on 24 March at Technology Park and there were 25 attendees. Targeted

industry meeting were held on 25 March between the seminar presenter and selected representatives of each special interest area.

- (3) Yes, these areas have been identified as both economically significant for Australia and ones upon which biotechnology will have significant impact, but where few applications for grants have been received to date.
- (4) Western Australian applicants are as eligible as those from any other State to apply for these funds.
- (5) The notice provided from Canberra regarding IR and D seminars was rather short. The Department of State Development and the DITAC Perth office are working closely together to improve this situation.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - KALAMUNDA DISTRICT**  
*Future Structure of Health Care Appointments*

237. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Who are the seven persons appointed who are currently working with the four representatives of the Kalamunda Hospital Board on the future structure of health care in the Kalamunda district?
- (2) What are the professions of these seven persons?
- (3) Is there a local general practitioner or medical person in this group?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1)-(2)

Dr Peter Brennan (Chair) Commissioner of Health.

Mr Ian Pitman, Regional Director, North East Metropolitan Health Region, Health Department of WA.

Ms Sue Terry, Chief Nursing Officer, Health Department of WA.

Ms Liza Newby, Principal Consultant, Legislative Review and Development, Health Department of WA.

Mr Mark Donald, Acting Director of Community Nursing, North East Metropolitan Region, Health Department of WA.

Ms Catherine McCloy, Regional Planner, North East Metropolitan Region, Health Department of WA.

Dr Haydn Dyer, Chairman Medical Advisory Committee, or his nominee.

- (3) Yes - Dr Dyer or his nominee.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - PATIENTS ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME**

*Retrospective Claims for Hospital Visits*

238. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Can persons travelling to visit hospitals claim patients assisted travel scheme retrospectively?
- (2) If not -
  - (a) why is this so;
  - (b) in view of the hardship this can cause patients, will this rule be reviewed?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) In line with current PATS guidelines it is possible for patients to receive retrospective PATS assistance for travel to their nearest specialist, when an application has been lodged, but not approved, prior to departure. This is currently at the discretion of regional health directors. Under the guidelines it is not possible to grant retrospective assistance where no application has been lodged prior to departure. This is because it is regarded as essential that the patient's GP endorses their application certifying that the specialist treatment is -



- (a) necessary; and
  - (b) not available locally.
- (2) Not applicable.

**HOSPITALS - MT HENRY**  
*Showering of Patients Change*

239. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) At Mt Henry Hospital has there been a change from daily showering the patients to showers every second day and sponge baths every alternate day?
- (2) How long has this situation been in place?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The practice of daily showering patients in "Stirfold 1" ward was recently amended to provide a more flexible arrangement according to need. The changes have been made in consultation with patients - and relatives where necessary - and allow a more effective allocation of nurse time to the total needs of the patient. The new arrangement is flexible enough to cater for special needs.
- (2) Patients at Mount Henry Hospital have been given bed baths and/or showered according to their needs for many years.

**HOSPITALS - SWAN DISTRICT**  
*Bed Numbers*

241. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What were bed numbers at the Swan District Hospital at 31 December 1991?
- (2) What are the current bed numbers at Swan District Hospital?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) As at 31 December 1991 there were 103 available - that is, staffed - beds.
- (2) As at 2 April 1992 there were 95 available beds at Swan District Hospital. The reason for the reduction is that the hospital is now undergoing major renovation and redevelopment, and this has led to the temporary closure of half of the maternity ward. 14 maternity beds have been closed in the maternity wing, but six beds have been reopened in another area of the hospital. The net loss has been eight beds. Due to the redevelopment program restrictions on available beds in different areas of the hospital will continue through much of 1992. During this period, when the need arises, patients are referred to Kalamunda or King Edward Memorial Hospital.

**HOSPITALS - SWAN DISTRICTS**  
*Administrative and Office Staff Statistics*

242. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What were the number of administrative and office staff at Swan District Hospital as at 31 December 1991?
- (2) What is the current number of administrative and office staff at Swan District Hospital?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) 26 full time; 12 part time.
- (2) As at 2 April 1992 - 29 full time; 11 part time.

The main reason for the difference is that during the past three months functions and staff have been decentralised from the central office of the Health Department. Also, one temporary staff member has been taken on under a national study of DRG/Casemix programs.

**TOBACCO CONTROL ACT - POLICING OF SALES TO CHILDREN**  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
*Prosecutions*

244. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Who is responsible for the policing of the Tobacco Control Act 1990 as far as the supply of tobacco products to children under the age of 18 years?
- (2) How does this policing occur?
- (3) Have any prosecutions been made of retailers?
  - (a) if so, how many;
  - (b) when was the last prosecution?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Authorised officers of the Health Department and police officers, in particular officers of the Liquor and Gaming Branch of the Police Department are responsible for policing the Tobacco Control Act 1990. However, any member of the public who observes cigarettes being sold to a person under 18 years can report this to the Health Department.
- (2) All complaints made to the Health Department regarding sale of cigarettes to children are investigated by authorised officers of the Health Department or officers of the Liquor and Gaming Branch of the Police Department.
- (3)
  - (a) Two.
  - (b) 28 February 1992.

**NARROGIN PERMANENT CARE UNIT - NEW PATIENT ADMISSIONS**  
*Waiting List; Closure Plans*

268. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are new patients being admitted to the Narrogin Permanent Care Unit?
- (2) If yes, when was the last patient admitted?
- (3) Are there any beds empty in this unit?
- (4) Is there a waiting list for this unit?
- (5) If yes, how many persons are on this waiting list?
- (6) If no to (1) why not?
- (7) Are there plans to close this unit?
- (8) If so, where will the patients present and future be accommodated?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Last patient was admitted on 1 April 1992.
- (3) 20 beds are staffed and these are full. Physically there are 26 beds, two of which are reserved for respite care.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) One, currently accommodated in the Slavin Wing of Narrogin Regional Hospital.
- (6) Not applicable.
- (7) There are no current plans to close this unit.
- (8) Not applicable.

**MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) AMENDMENT ACT - STATE  
GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION**

*Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust Policy Holders - No Prejudice Undertaking*

269. Mr HOUSE to the Minister assisting the Treasurer:

- (1) In relation to the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Amendment Act 1987, did the Government give an undertaking to the State Government Insurance Commission's motor vehicle insurance trust policy holders at the time of the passing of the above amendment that they would not be prejudiced as a result of the amendments?
- (2) If so, what was the specific commitment?
- (3) If not, how did the Government intend to protect those policy holders in the light of the above amendment?
- (4) Was the purpose of the above amendments to transfer responsibility for damages relating to personal injuries arising from an accident in a vehicle which is not a motor vehicle accident, from the motor vehicle insurance trust policy to workers' compensation policies?
- (5) Did the SGIC give an undertaking to the Government that it would not use the above amendment in such a way as to prejudice any of its existing policy holders who had taken out a policy before the above amendment became law?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The undertaking given by the then Premier and Minister for State Government Insurance Commission, was that no person would be non-suited as a consequence of the amendments.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) No, the purpose of the amendments was to restore what had been the original intention of the originating legislation. In moving the second reading of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Bill, the Minister for Works said in the Legislative Assembly on 28 September 1943 -

The general principle laid down in the Bill is that before a licence can be issued, a policy of insurance must be taken out by the owner of every motor vehicle, which will cover the legal liability of any person driving the vehicle, whether lawfully or unlawfully, in the event of death or bodily injury occurring to any third person.

It is clear, therefore, that the Parliament thus intended that the liability of a Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust - as it was then - was to be limited to the payment of damages for injury or death sustained by persons in consequence of the negligent driving of motor vehicles. Although the terminology appearing in the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act 1943 successfully withstood the test of time, all that has now changed with the High Court of Australia judgment of *Dickinson v The Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust*.

- (5) Yes, but within the terms of the undertaking explained in (2) above.

**MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) AMENDMENT ACT - STATE  
GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION**

*Amendments Support Submission*

270. Mr HOUSE to the Minister assisting the Treasurer:

- (1) In relation to the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Amendment Act 1987, did the State Government Insurance Commission put a submission to Government requesting or supporting these amendments?
- (2) If so, can the Minister table the submission/request?
- (3) If not, on whose advice did the Government proceed with the amendments?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No. The submission was in the form of a Cabinet Minute.
- (3) Cabinet.

#### HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM - FUNDING

272. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) By region what was the break-up of total funding provided to the home and community care program in Western Australia in 1989-90 by -
  - (a) the State Government;
  - (b) the Federal Government;
  - (c) other sources?
- (2) By region what was the break-up of total funding provided to the home and community care program in Western Australia in 1990-91 by -
  - (a) the State Government;
  - (b) the Federal Government;
  - (c) other sources?
- (3) By region what was the break-up of total funding provided to the home and community care program in Western Australia in 1991-92 by -
  - (a) the State Government;
  - (b) the Federal Government;
  - (c) other sources?
- (4) Will there be any increase in the level of funding provided to the home and community care program in the 1992-93 State Budget?
- (5) If so, what will the increase be?
- (6) If not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1)	<u>Region</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Other</u>
	North Metro	5 515 609	7 585 601	115 771
	North East Metro	3 409 077	4 688 493	195 600
	South Metro	4 167 428	5 731 452	56 570
	Central	933 896	1 284 384	0
	Gascoyne Mid-West	147 459	202 801	0
	Goldfields	210 652	289 708	0
	Great Southern	823 303	1 132 287	14 719
	Kimberley	272 092	374 208	0
	Pilbara	87 774	120 716	0
	South West	1 987 166	2 732 944	16 490
(2)	<u>Region</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Other</u>
	North Metro	5 711 142	8 813 633	136 700
	North East Metro	3 529 929	5 447 510	230 958
	South Metro	4 315 166	6 659 314	66 797
	Central	967 004	1 492 314	0
	Gascoyne Mid-West	152 685	235 629	0
	Goldfields	218 121	336 613	0
	Great Southern	852 491	1 315 593	17 376
	Kimberley	281 740	434 791	0
	Pilbara	90 883	140 255	0
	South West	2 057 610	3 175 377	19 469

(3)	Region	State	Federal	Other
	North Metro	6 029 997	9 305 703	121 700
	North East Metro	3 687 132	5 690 111	230 958
	South Metro	4 608 915	7 112 639	66 797
	Central	998 598	1 541 072	0
	Gascoyne Mid-West	172 834	266 724	0
	Goldfields	230 446	355 632	0
	Great Southern	902 579	1 392 892	17 376
	Kimberley	288 057	444 540	0
	Pilbara	153 630	237 088	0
	South West	2 131 623	3 289 596	19 469

(4)-(5)

The 1992-93 Budget estimates are not yet finalised. The HACC program budget will be influenced by the allocation and indexation of funds from the Federal Government.

(6) Not applicable.

## ROADS - PILBARA

*Sealed Road Links Provision - Road Funding Budget*

274. Mr COURT to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When will the Government provide sealed road links for all towns in the Pilbara?
- (2) What is the road funding budget in the Pilbara for this financial year?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) There are no firm proposals for providing sealed links to all towns in the Pilbara. The progress of this work is subject to the availability of funds.
- (2) \$9 742 383.

## SCHOOLS - BICYCLE HELMETS STORAGE SPACE

294. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What steps is the Ministry of Education taking to cater for the additional storage space that is now needed in schools with the advent of the compulsory wearing of bicycle helmets?
- (2) Has the Ministry had any requests from schools for extra storage space for bicycle helmets?
- (3) If yes, what has the Ministry advised the schools?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

(1)-(3)

For new schools the matter of storage space for bicycle helmets will be taken into consideration within the school design brief. Existing schools may be able to identify surplus areas which can be used for storage or alternatively apply through the district based minor works scheme for funding to provide storage areas. The ministry has received a number of inquiries from schools regarding this matter, and they have been advised of the above information accordingly.

## MANDURAH - OCEAN ENTRANCE

*Sand Removal Funding*

315. Mr NICHOLLS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Was any funding allocated to remove sand build-up from the Mandurah entrance via dragline or dredging since the dredging last November?
- (2) Does the Minister support keeping the Mandurah entrance open and navigable all year?

- (3) How much sand has been removed from the Mandurah entrance in each of the previous five years?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) No. The 1991-92 allocation of funds was spent on dredging in November 1991.
- (2) The Government expends a considerable amount of money each year to maintain a navigable ocean entrance. However, it has been necessary to close the entrance on two occasions for short periods of time in the last six years. At this stage the Government has not been able to justify the additional expenditure required to maintain an "all year" navigable channel.
- (3) The volume of sand removed from the ocean entrance over the last five years has been -

1991-92	25 500 cubic metres
1990-91	31 500 cubic metres
1989-90	57 000 cubic metres
1988-89	64 600 cubic metres
1987-88	65 600 cubic metres

EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT  
OF - COURSE WAITING LISTS  
*Rockingham, Fremantle, Mandurah*

316. Mr NICHOLLS to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Further to question 123 of 1992, how many people are on the waiting list for -
- (a) Rockingham Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training;
  - (b) Fremantle DEVET;
  - (c) Mandurah DEVET annexe;
- to access either full-time or part-time courses?
- (2) How many people on the waiting list (2800 approximately) have studied at a DEVET facility previously?
- (3) What is the expected or forecast number of people who will be on waiting lists for DEVET in 12 months' time?
- (4) How many applicants were there for the "double chance" program this year?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) (a) Nil.
- (b) 249 full time and 10 part time candidates.
- (c) Nil.

(2)-(3)  
Not available.

(4) 414.

RAILWAY ENABLING BILL - MANDURAH-FREMANTLE RESERVE  
*Introduction Date - Rapid Transit Link Cost*

318. Mr NICHOLLS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When will the railway enabling Bill to provide for a reserve between Mandurah and Fremantle be introduced into Parliament?
- (2) (a) What will the cost (in 1992 dollars) be of constructing a rapid transit rail link between Mandurah and Fremantle;
- (b) what is the cost of rolling stock to provide the service;

(c) how many stations will be constructed on this line and at what locations will they be?

(3) When will this project be completed, as per the commitment given in the Premier's WA Advantage statement?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) It is anticipated that an enabling Bill to provide a reserve for rail transit from Fremantle to Rockingham and Mandurah will be introduced in the spring 1992 parliamentary session.
- (2) Work is currently being undertaken towards identifying the route and rail technology most appropriate to the needs of the south west area. It will not be possible to give indicative cost estimates until after route and rail type decisions are taken.
- (3) At this planning stage a cost benefit analysis has shown that building a rail transit system to Rockingham by 1996, and to Mandurah by 2000, is justified. The precise date for completion of the project will depend on a number of factors, including the extent of any private sector involvement.

#### HOSPITALS - FREMANTLE

##### *Computer Equipment Purchase, Pathology and Radiology Departments*

319. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Health:

- (1) (a) Has the Fremantle Hospital recently expended funds to purchase computer equipment and/or software for the pathology and radiology departments;
- (b) if so, what was the cost?
- (2) If so, what process for letting this contract was followed?
- (3) What type of software was purchased?
- (4) What type of hardware was purchased?
- (5) For what purposes was this hardware and/or software purchased?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) (a) Yes, software only.
- (b) \$79 310.
- (2) An external consultant was engaged, an assessment made of an appropriate relational database product, and three quotations were called.
- (3) A relational database product and associated development tools.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) To connect the hospital to the health industry's patient care system and to transfer an existing system onto a relational database.

#### STRATA TITLES ACT - REVIEW

320. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is the Strata Titles Act 1985 still under review?
- (2) If so, when are recommendations expected to be made?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) As the Minister for Lands has responsibility for all parts of the Strata Titles Act, except part VI relating to the strata titles referee, the review is being undertaken by the Department of Land Administration. I suggest the member direct the question to the Minister for Lands.

**SCHOOLS - GIRRAWHEEN SENIOR HIGH**  
*Contributory Primary Schools - Enrolments*

321. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Which primary schools are the feeder schools for the Girrawheen Senior High School?
- (2) What are the numbers of students of each of those schools in 1992, and prospective numbers for -
  - (a) 1993;
  - (b) 1994;
  - (c) 1995?
- (3) What are the student numbers for the Girrawheen Senior High School and prospective numbers for -
  - (a) 1993;
  - (b) 1994;
  - (c) 1995?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) The contributory primary schools for Girrawheen Senior High School are: Blackmore, Girrawheen, Hainsworth, Koondoola, Marangaroo and Montrose.
- (2) The enrolment at each contributory primary school in 1992, and the projected enrolments for the years 1993 to 1995, are as follows -

Primary School	Primary Enrolment (1992)	Projected Primary Enrolment		
		1993	1994	1995
Blackmore	272	266	268	266
Girrawheen	305	310	322	315
Hainsworth	310	296	294	276
Koondoola	228	223	231	261
Marangaroo	471	550	599	620
Montrose	352	368	369	373

- (3) The enrolment in February 1992 at Girrawheen Senior High School was 945 students, and the projected enrolments for the years 1993 to 1995 are respectively 925, 885 and 865 students.

**BEENUP POWERLINE - SOUTH WEST SOCIAL IMPACT STUDY**

326. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for State Development:

- (1) Has a social impact study for the south west been undertaken with regard to the powerline to the mineral sand mining development at Beenup?
- (2) If yes, is that report available?
- (3) If no, why has no study been undertaken?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

See answer to question 189.

**GAS - GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION PLANS**

327. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What has been achieved and what plans have been put into place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2005?

Dr GALLOP replied:

In the fuel and energy area, the main planning emphasis has been through



attention to efficiency in the power industry, an increased focus on energy management and conservation, and encouragement of renewable energy. This is consistent with the recommendations of the ecologically sustainable development working groups on energy production and energy use. To give examples, the Government has -

formed the Carnegie Review Board into the WA power industry structure;

installed efficient gas turbine plant at Pinjar to meet peak loads, which will permit the retirement of inefficient coal plant at the Bunbury power station;

introduced a new tariff structure to reduce peak electricity use;

introduced tariffs to encourage cogeneration;

formed an energy conservation unit, initially to address the Government's own energy use - a financing package to assist the purchase of energy efficient equipment and systems was recently approved;

joined with other States to pursue a number of energy management initiatives including appliance labelling and energy efficiency of buildings;

approved a substantial extension to the Esperance wind farm, and other demonstration projects in renewable energy.

#### OPHTHALMIA DAM - ROY HILL STATION REPRESENTATION *Report Preparation*

330. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

- (1) Has representation been made to the Premier by the proprietors of the Roy Hill Station in relation to the Ophthalmia Dam?
- (2) Has the Premier directed the Minister for Mines and the Minister for the Environment to investigate the matter?
- (3) Has a report been prepared?
- (4) If yes, will it be tabled?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) What action has been taken?
- (7) What further action will be taken?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Yes. The proprietors of Roy Hill Station wrote to the Premier on 21 June 1990.
- (2) Not to my knowledge.
- (3)-(5) Not applicable.
- (6) The issue of vegetation stress on Roy Hill Station downstream of the Ophthalmia Dam has been addressed by the Minister for Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture and the Water Authority have undertaken studies to identify the problems and recommend a plan for rehabilitation.
- (7) The Minister for Agriculture recently met with the proprietors of Roy Hill Station and further discussions are planned.

#### HOSPITALS - PATIENT CARE SYSTEM

334. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When was the patient care system introduced?
- (2) Are all general hospitals now operating the patient care system?

- (3) What is the total cost of its implementation?
- (4) Has it satisfied all performance criteria?
- (5) Is it being introduced into the hospitals according to the planned stages?
- (6) What was the estimated cost for stage 1?
- (7) (a) Is stage 1 completed;  
(b) if not, at what level is it at?
- (8) What is the cost to date?
- (9) When was stage 2 estimated to be started?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The first phase of the hospital information systems project - previously known as the patient care system - commenced implementation in October 1988.
- (2) All of the metropolitan hospitals planned for inclusion in the first phase are now operating the systems.
- (3) The cost estimates for the project were \$23.4 million over three years for phase 1, and \$50.7 million over five years for phase 2.
- (4)-(5) Yes.
- (6) \$23.4 million.
- (7) (a) Yes.  
(b) Not applicable.
- (8) The project cost to date is \$27 million, including ongoing maintenance and support.
- (9) A formal request for proposal for options to progress the second phase was issued to the private sector computer industry in September 1991, with a closing date in January 1992. A comprehensive evaluation of the proposals received is scheduled to be completed by September 1992.

#### SCHOOL BUSES - STUDENT REMOVAL

##### *Notification of Parents Procedure*

336. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the procedure followed by a school to notify parents when a child is removed off a school bus service?
- (2) Is the notification to parents given -  
(a) verbally;  
(b) in writing?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

The school principal in normal circumstances would advise the parents verbally and/or in writing if access to a school bus service is denied to any student.

#### FREMANTLE PORT - CARGO TONNAGES, 1980-91

##### *Total Gross Revenue (Earnings), 1980-91*

337. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the total annual tonnages of all cargo that has passed through the Port of Fremantle in the following financial years -  
(a) 1980-81;  
(b) 1985-86;

- (c) 1987-88;
- (d) 1988-89;
- (e) 1989-90;
- (f) 1990-91?

(2) What is the total gross revenue (earnings) of the Port in the years referred to in (1)?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- |     |         |              |
|-----|---------|--------------|
| (1) |         | Cargo Tonnes |
|     |         | 000          |
| (a) | 1980-81 | 14 262       |
| (b) | 1985-86 | 15 062       |
| (c) | 1987-88 | 16 378       |
| (d) | 1988-89 | 17 028       |
| (e) | 1989-90 | 17 622       |
| (f) | 1990-91 | 16 332       |
- 
- |     |            |
|-----|------------|
| (2) | Revenue    |
|     | \$         |
| (a) | 27 456 376 |
| (b) | 39 325 110 |
| (c) | 43 070 196 |
| (d) | 49 661 695 |
| (e) | 54 156 247 |
| (f) | 40 757 823 |

#### RAILWAYS - NORTHERN SUBURBS TRANSIT SYSTEM

*Total Expenditure - Revised Total Estimated Cost*

338. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the total amount of all monies expended on the (Joondalup) northern suburbs railway inclusive of all lease fees, borrowing costs, interest, capital costs from the announcement of the project to 31 March 1992?
- (2) What is the revised total estimated cost inclusive of all expenditure referred to in (1), to complete the railway as referred.

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) Infrastructure - \$64.6 million, including \$6.5 million interest cost. Additionally for the railcars there is a lease commitment of \$89.6 million.
- (2) Infrastructure - \$186.3 million including \$17.3 million interest cost. The operating railcar lease rental of \$18.7 million per annum for first 10 years is additional.

#### STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - REVIEW BOARD

*Terms of Reference - Membership*

342. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What are the precise terms of reference for the review board into State Energy Commission of Western Australia, announced on 20 February 1992?
- (2) Who are the members of the proposed review board?
- (3) On what basis, and on what contractual terms, has Sir Roderick Carnegie been appointed to be Chairman of the proposed review board?
- (4) Were the results of the W.D. Scott review undertaken in 1981-82 considered by the Government in committing to this new review?
- (5) Was the proposed review discussed with the board of SECWA before committing to the enquiry?
- (6) Was the SECWA Chairman or board consulted on the selection of an appropriate person to conduct the review?

- (7) (a) What is the budgeted cost of the proposed review of SECWA;
- (b) by what date is it required to report to the Government?
- (8) Is it intended that the proposed review board will have technical and financial advisors to assist its deliberations?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) The precise terms of reference are still to be finalised and agreed to by the Government. I expect this to be achieved over the next two weeks.
- (2) Sir Roderick Carnegie - Chair  
Mr Stuart Hohnen  
Mr Robert Huxtable
- (3) Sir Roderick has been engaged as a consultant until March 1993 through an exchange of letters. He will be paid a negotiated fee based on rates for consultants with similar qualifications and experience.
- (4)-(6) No.
- (7) (a) The budget has not been finalised but is not to exceed \$4 million.
- (b) There will be a series of reports, with the final report expected by March 1993.
- (8) Yes.

#### STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - PIPELINE AUTHORITY PROPOSAL

*Enabling Legislation Introduction Date - Gas Transport Prices Decrease*

344. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) With reference to the Premier's announcement regarding the establishment of a pipeline authority -
  - (a) when is it expected the enabling legislation will come before Parliament;
  - (b) has a planning and/or negotiating group been established to draft the appropriate legislation, negotiate the financial aspects and prepare logistic details?
- (2) (a) (i) Is it proposed that existing gas transport prices could fall as suggested in the Premier's media release;
- (ii) if not, how can competitive access be obtained as the Premier has suggested?
- (b) Why has the Premier implied that present transport gas prices are not solely based on the operation of the pipeline?
- (3) Will Mr Don Saunders, former employee of the State Energy Commission of Western Australia and currently associated with the policy planning for the Government, be the first head of the proposed pipeline authority?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) (a) It is intended that enabling legislation for the pipeline authority will be introduced into Parliament as soon as practicable.
- (b) The gas strategy group established in February 1992 has responsibility for developing an implementation plan for establishment of the pipeline authority. The gas strategy group has established a subcommittee to deal specifically with this matter.
- (2) (a) (i) By facilitating competition within the gas marketplace, it is intended gas prices will be reduced. It has not been proposed that gas transport prices will fall.
- (ii) The pipeline authority will be required to provide open access to

the Dampier to Bunbury pipeline in order that gas suppliers can compete for sales.

- (b) There has not been such a suggestion. At present, all gas transported in the Dampier to Bunbury pipeline belongs to SECWA or Alcoa of Australia Ltd. Establishment of the pipeline authority will ensure that future transport prices are based upon pipeline capital and operating considerations.

- (3) Appointments have not been considered.

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION - ASSISTANT PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSIONER (EQUITY)  
*New Appointment***

345. Mr COURT to the Premier:

- (1) Was a new position of Assistant Public Service Commissioner (Equity) recently created, and an appointment made to this position?
- (2) Was the position created at the request of the Premier?
- (3) Who has been appointed to this new position?
- (4) How many applications were there for the position?
- (5) Who were the members of the selection panel?
- (6) Was the person appointed the unanimous first recommendation of the selection panel?
- (7) For what reason(s) did the Premier consider that such a position should be created?
- (8) What salary and other conditions of employment will apply to the appointment?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The creation of the position was announced on 17 July 1991 at the launch of a statement on women's policy.
- (3) Mrs B.E. Robbins.
- (4) 24.
- (5) Dr M. Wood, Public Service Commissioner  
Mr D. Blight, Director General, Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet  
Ms J. Williams, Commissioner for Equal Opportunity
- (6) Yes.
- (7) To operate as Assistant Commissioner, to have active involvement in the mainstream activities of the commission, and to highlight and reinforce the Government's commitment to equity in the public sector for all groups such as disabled persons, Aborigines, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and women.
- (8) The remuneration has been determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal at special 3 which has a salary of \$88 483 per annum. Other conditions of employment will be those that apply to a permanent officer of the Public Service.

**SCHOOLS - ONSLOW  
*Relocation Commitment***

347. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) Did the Premier recently give a commitment in Onslow that the school would be relocated?
- (2) If so, when was this decision made?

- (3) Where will the school be relocated to?
- (4) When will the school be relocated?
- (5) Why is the school being relocated?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

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

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GREYHOUND RACING ASSOCIATION ACT -  
AMENDMENTS**  
*Introduction Date*

348. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Is it the Government's intention to introduce amendments to the Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association Act 1981 in the current session of the Parliament?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

No.

**LAND TAX - SUBIACO VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**  
*Effective Date of Valuations 1985-86*

352. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

Was 1 July 1985 the effective statutory date as certified by the valuation roll for land tax assessment for the 1985-86 financial year for the valuation district of the City of Subiaco.

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I am advised that the effective date of valuations for 1985-86 land tax assessments for the City of Subiaco was 30 June 1985 as shown in a notice published in the *Government Gazette* of 8 February 1985.

**LAND TAX - ARMADALE VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**  
*Effective Date of Valuations 1985-86*

353. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

Was 1 July 1985 the effective statutory date as certified by the valuation roll for land tax assessment for the 1985-86 financial year for the valuation district of the Town of Armadale.

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I am advised that the effective date of valuations for 1985-86 land tax assessments for the Town of Armadale was 30 June 1985 as shown in a notice published in the *Government Gazette* of 28 June 1985.

**LAND TAX - FREMANTLE VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**  
*Effective Date of Valuations 1985-86*

354. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

Was 1 July 1985 the effective statutory date as certified by the valuation roll for land tax assessment for the 1985-86 financial year for the valuation district of the City of Fremantle.

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I am advised that the effective date of valuations for 1985-86 land tax assessments for the City of Fremantle was 30 June 1985 as shown in a notice published in the *Government Gazette* of 2 August 1985.

**LAND TAX - SOUTH PERTH VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**

*Effective Date of Valuations 1985-86*

355. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

Was 1 July 1985 the effective statutory date as certified by the valuation roll for land tax assessment for the 1985-86 financial year for the valuation district of the City of South Perth.

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I am advised that the effective date of valuations for 1985-86 land tax assessments for the City of South Perth was 30 June 1985 as shown in a notice published in the *Government Gazette* of 10 May 1985.

**LANDCORP - MAIR & CO, BURRENDAH OFFICE**

*Sales Agent for Leda, Bateman Estate, and Waratah Estate Land*

356. Mr SHAVE to the Minister assisting the Treasurer:

- (1) In respect to the LandCorp subdivision conducted at Leda, was the real estate agent from the Burrendah Branch of Mair & Co.
- (2) Has the real estate agent of the Burrendah Branch of Mair & Co, every been appointed the selling agent of LandCorp land for the sale of the Bateman Estate?
- (3) Is the selling agent of LandCorp estate referred to as Waratah, being handled by the Burrendah Branch of Mair & Co?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Mair & Co Kwinana was originally appointed selling agent for Leda. Mair & Co Burrendah took over as caretakers in June 1990 after the Kwinana office ran into difficulties. The Kwinana office - franchise - closed its doors some months later.
- (2) A number of agents have handled sales in Bateman in previous years for LandCorp/Landbank. They are -  
Clive Elliot Jennings  
Winston Gellard  
Satterley  
Mair & Co Burrendah  
Peet & Co
- (3) Mair & Co Burrendah has been appointed selling agent for the Waratah estate at Canning Vale.

**LAND TAX - FREMANTLE VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**

*Notices Issued, 1991-92*

357. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

What was the total number of individual land tax assessment notices issued in the valuation land district of the City of Fremantle in the 1991-92 financial year?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

The information requested cannot readily be extracted from land tax records.

**LAND TAX - SOUTH PERTH VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**

*Notices Issued, 1991-92*

358. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

What was the total number of individual land tax assessment notices issued in the valuation land district of the City of South Perth in the 1991-92 financial year?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

The information requested cannot readily be extracted from land tax records.

**LAND TAX - ARMADALE VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**  
*Notices Issued, 1991-92*

359. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

What was the total number of individual land tax assessment notices issued in the valuation land district of the Town of Armadale in the 1991-92 financial year?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

The information requested cannot readily be extracted from land tax records.

**LAND TAX - SUBIACO VALUATION DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS**  
*Notices Issued, 1991-92*

360. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

What was the total number of individual land tax assessment notices issued in the valuation land district of the City of Subiaco in the 1991-92 financial year?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

The information requested cannot readily be extracted from land tax records.

**MINERAL SANDS - JANGARDUP**  
*Vasse Highway Route Decision - Transport Routes Consideration*

362. Dr ALEXANDER to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In respect of the proposed Jangardup mineral sands project, has Cabinet adopted a transport route via road - the Vasse Highway - in preference to rail and why was a route initially chosen which goes through the centre of Nannup?
- (2) Why does the possible Nannup by-pass still pass through parts of the town of Nannup?
- (3) What other routes have been, or will be, considered?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) Yes; Cabinet has adopted a transport route via the Vasse Highway. A temporary transport route through Nannup is required in order to let the Jangardup project meet its proposed May-June 1993 start up date. The route was initially chosen to pass through Nannup because no other road of a suitable standard was available.
- (2) The alignment for the by-pass of Nannup is still being considered and information regarding how much of the by-pass is within the townsite boundaries is still to be determined.
- (3) Numerous main transport routes have been considered since the Jangardup project was first mooted. A number of different by-pass routes are being considered in the current study.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT  
 AND OTHER MATTERS - LEGAL REPRESENTATION COSTS**  
*Government Assistance - Criminal Charges Extension*

62. Mr LEWIS to the Premier :

- (1) Will the Government assistance with legal fees given to members of the former Burke and Dowding Governments and to the Lawrence Government to appear before the WA Inc Royal Commission be extended to representation on criminal charges brought as a result of the commission's inquiries?
- (2) Will daily expenses paid to any of these people for time spent appearing



before the WA Inc Royal Commission be extended to them while they face charges in court?

- (3) Has the Government considered recovering or seeking recovery from any such person the costs of legal representation at the WA Inc Royal Commission if there is a subsequent finding of guilt in the courts?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) The answer, as the member would know if he had read the guidelines, is no; quite clearly and categorically.

(2)-(3)

I have sought advice on that matter as of last evening, and I will inform the House accordingly. My disposition, particularly in relation to (3), is yes, we would attempt to do so, but I am seeking legal advice.

#### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORTS - FIRST REPORT 1992

##### *Government Response*

63. Mr READ to the Treasurer:

What is the Government's response to the Auditor General's first general report for 1992?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

This is not a ministerial statement either, particularly because the Leader of the Opposition has been suggesting in various venues today, as have also some members of the media, that this is an extraordinary indictment of the financial and accounting procedures of all Government departments and agencies in the State. Nothing can be further from the truth. I remind members that the role of the Auditor General in reporting to this Parliament is to draw attention to those occasions when he believes there has been something less than a 100 per cent performance by the accountable officers and the departments and agencies which it is his duty to review and to audit. It is very important that members put the Auditor General's report into context. I have seen a lot of selective quoting of it, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition, which chooses to ignore, for the obvious reasons, the overall finding of the Auditor General. I quote from the Auditor General's report because it is important to do so -

This report, by its nature, focuses on the exceptions and unsatisfactory findings disclosed government-wide and within individual agencies. While these issues are of concern and warrant specific remedial action, I remain firmly of the view that the overall standard of financial and public administration practices and procedures in this State are satisfactory.

He makes recommendations about that remedial action, upon which the Government will act. For those hard of hearing, or those who cannot understand a simple statement, the Auditor General is firmly of the view that the overall practices are satisfactory. The Auditor General repeated that upon questioning in the media today. He also notes - and this is important for Parliament to be aware of -

In recent years reporting processes and formats have been progressively revised and enhanced . . .

We have an Auditor General who is doing his job exceedingly well. He notes that his reporting processes and his formats have been revised and enhanced. In other words, he is doing more, he is likely to detect more, and likely therefore to ensure that the financial procedures in Government are improved year by year. That is our goal, unlike the Opposition which lived with an Act that was 80 years old. Members opposite, when in Government, were quite prepared to live with an out of date Act with very minor amendments along the way. It took the introduction of a new Act in 1985 to provide for modern financial accountability and Government financial administration.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr LAWRENCE: Not only has there been an Act which brings us into the twenty-first century, but also the Government has ensured that the Auditor General has the resources to do his task. Far from running away from the need for financial accountability, we are making sure that every officer of the civil service in this State, whether in a Government department or in an agency, is accountable, will be brought to task - as is the case in this matter - and that remedial action is taken. A measure of that enhancement is shown by the fact that the Auditor General's budget has gone from \$3.9 million in 1986-87 to \$8.1 million in the current financial year.

#### TRADING - MONDAY 27 APRIL

##### *Retailers Wages Increase Decision - Finest Result in Microeconomic Reform*

64. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Microeconomic Reform:

Does the Minister consider that the Government's decision to increase the wages of retailers by 250 per cent for trading on Monday, 27 April is the Minister's finest result in microeconomic reform?

Dr GALLOP replied:

I find it very difficult to relate the comment made by the member for Avon to any decision that I have made as a Minister.

Mr MacKinnon: You have not made any decisions.

Dr GALLOP: I have made a lot of decisions. Many reforms have come through the system as a result of those decisions. Earlier I referred to some of those decisions about electricity tariffs in rural communities in this State. The question is what some people would call a smart alec question, delivered by a smart alec member whose credentials were revealed by the comments that he made about the Government Employees Superannuation Board last year. He has not had the guts to stand up and apologise for them.

#### GOVERNMENT BUDGET - TRIENNIAL FORWARD BUDGETING

##### *Leader of the Opposition's Proposal*

65. Mr P.J. SMITH to the Treasurer:

Is the Treasurer aware of the novel suggestion by the Leader of the Opposition that the Government should introduce a system of triennial forward budgeting?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I was heartened when I awoke this morning to hear on the radio a proposal from the Leader of the Opposition which appeared to be forward looking, when most of the time he spends his time looking over his shoulder thinking about the past.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr LAWRENCE: Unfortunately, despite the Leader of the Opposition's best efforts I must tell him that I had already announced -

The SPEAKER: Order! I wanted to wait for a while to call for order, because I have had the distinct impression - about which I would like to be proved wrong - that there is a concerted effort by members of the Opposition, every single time the Premier stands up, to have a constant stream of interjections, so much so that it is difficult to hear the answer. I point out that this is an impression I have. I do not believe that it would actually happen; I would like that to be proved to me.

Dr LAWRENCE: I can shout louder, obviously, but I did not think the House would necessarily welcome that.

I was indicating that the Leader of the Opposition is proposing bravely a system of triennial forward budgeting - a proposal we have already undertaken and which will be implemented in the current financial year. The Leader of the Opposition overlooked the need to do the same in relation to capital works. Today we released a three year program for capital works - we are not talking about doing it one day in the future. It is not a complete program but it is one on capital works in which we can invite investment from the private sector. This is a superb opportunity for the private sector to get involved in infrastructure in this State. In my view, it is a breakthrough that the industry clearly welcomes. A large number of people attended today, after having taken part in the initiation of the program. I hope that we will see in Western Australia an acceleration of the necessary infrastructure - roads, ports, schools and hospitals - with a partnership in the private sector and at a reduced cost to the taxpayers. I welcome aboard the Leader of the Opposition. I hope that he will at least acknowledge when decisions have already been made and, in this case, implemented.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - MITSUBISHI-TRANSFIELD**

*Collie Power Station - Revised Tariff Proposal*

66. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has the Mitsubishi-Transfield consortium made a new tariff proposal to the State Energy Commission of WA since being selected as the sole bidder in March 1991 for the proposed Collie power station?
- (2) If yes, is that revised tariff proposal by the Mitsubishi-Transfield consortium around five per cent or more higher in real terms than the original tender offer?
- (3) Is the current Mitsubishi-Transfield tariff proposal now higher than the calculated SECWA tariff from a SECWA built, owned and operated Collie power station?

Dr GALLOP replied:

(1)-(3)

Mitsubishi-Transfield has reworked its proposal and brought it back to SECWA. That proposal contains an increase in tariff.

Mr Lewis: So much for the reduction in power prices.

Dr GALLOP: The proposed increase in tariffs is unacceptable to SECWA and to the Government. That has been made very clear to Mitsubishi-Transfield.

**BRERETON, LAURIE - PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBSTACLES  
DISCUSSIONS, PERTH**

*Mitsubishi Transfield and Collie Power Station Discussions*

67. Mr C.J. BARNETT to the Premier:

- (1) Is the report in today's *The West Australian* correct in that Mr Laurie Brereton, the Federal member for Kingsford-Smith and a former Minister for Public Works for New South Wales under the Wran Government, is in Perth this week to discuss obstacles to big development projects?
- (2) Is the proposed Collie power station and the reported difficulties of the Mitsubishi-Transfield consortium in raising finance for the project one of the items under discussion between Mr Brereton and the Western Australian Government?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I can confirm on this occasion that *The West Australian* was accurate. Indeed, I met with Mr Brereton this afternoon. The subject of our discussions was the proposal by the Federal Government in its One Nation statement to establish a

unit that it wished to use to facilitate project development approvals. Our discussion covered the territory of our own strategic State projects unit which is designed to ensure that where State Government approvals are required - and this is in about 90 per cent of cases - it is accelerated, and made clear, simple and straightforward for the proponents. That is already up and running and the first projects have been selected. We made it clear to the Commonwealth Government that it will have a modest role to play in relation to project approvals. When it comes to Foreign Investment Review Board approvals and the Heritage Commission we have not always found them to be helpful. Therefore I took the opportunity to outline to Mr Brereton those occasions when the State Government and the proponents in Western Australia had fallen foul of contradictions and conflicts between State and Federal Acts.

An Opposition member interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: It was not on the agenda. However I took the opportunity to raise with Mr Brereton, since it is one of his responsibilities to assist the Prime Minister in project development, what progress the Federal Government was making on infrastructure bonds, whether they would be applicable in this case or in any others that I mentioned in relation to infrastructure development. It was not the only matter raised. Mr Brereton undertook to inform the State Government as their thinking is developing on this question. It was very much a question raised by me about infrastructure bonds and members opposite are lucky that I am impolite enough to reveal the content of a private conversation. In this case the agenda was very clearly on approvals processes between State and Federal Governments. I took the opportunity to seek clarification on their progress on the development of infrastructure bonds. That is the beginning and end of it.

#### TRAFFIC LIGHTS - FARRINGTON ROAD-BIBRA DRIVE INTERSECTION *Removal Reason*

68. Mr THOMAS to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Minister aware that temporary traffic lights installed last year at the intersection of Farrington Road and Bibra Drive have been removed? Is the Minister also aware that this is causing traffic congestion? Why have the lights been removed, will they be replaced and when?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

The lights were removed to enable the Main Roads Department to complete some channelisation work. As soon as those works are completed they will be replaced. I know some temporary disruption to traffic and to some of the member's constituents has occurred because of the lights not being there, but it is in the best interests of the development of that whole road system, and the lights will be replaced as soon as possible.

#### HEPATITIS C - INTRAVENOUS DRUG USERS LEVELS *Saunders Analysis - Minister for Health's Response*

69. Mr DONOVAN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the levels of hepatitis C infection reported among the injectable drug using population by Associate Professor Bill Saunders of the Curtin University of Technology's addiction studies?
- (2) Has the Minister yet received advice from his own agencies confirming or denying the analysis of Professor Saunders?
- (3) What, if any, will be the Minister's response to the problem of hepatitis C in Western Australia?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1)-(3)

I am advised that the matter the member for Morley refers to, namely the

allegations by Associate Professor Saunders on hepatitis C, were exaggerated. Transcripts of Professor Saunders' comments on radio have been examined. He claimed that a new more serious disease than the HIV virus was affecting especially intravenous drug users. He alleged that not enough was being done to inform this group of the danger of this disease. Hepatitis C is not a new disease; it is an endemic disease. I am advised it used to be called non-A, non-B hepatitis until tests became available to differentiate it from other types of hepatitis. The initial tests were available in 1988 but were quite unreliable and better tests have been available since 1990. The tests still show a fairly high proportion of false positives. Screening of blood donors began on 16 January 1990 as it was essential to exclude donors who may be positive. The overall prevalence of reactive individuals in the blood donor group is approximately 0.3 per cent. Hepatitis is transmitted mainly from blood to blood and therefore intravenous drug users who share syringes are at the highest risk. It goes to show that some of these fringe groups who impose these problems on the whole community become a fascination for some people with the view that their rights seem to override the rights of the majority.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr WILSON: I am personally fed up to the back teeth with the concentration of emphasis given to these fringe groups and their problems when they are in fact the ones imposing these major problems on the rest of the community.

Mr Court: The Minister is starting to sound like us.

Mr WILSON: I do not want to retract what I have said but the member for Nedlands made me think twice when he said that.

These matters are currently being examined on a national basis. The Communicable Diseases Standing Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council is considering appropriate information that should be made available on hepatitis C and also the value of look back programs for individuals who may have been infected through a blood transfusion. Although the final reports are not available it would appear that any look back program for hepatitis C would not be worthwhile and that investigations should be carried out if and when an individual is found to be infected, post-transfusion, so that appropriate checks can be made. In any case pamphlets are being distributed through general practitioners. The pamphlets have been prepared by the Australian Gastroenterology Institute and other information is being directed to the targeted population. It is another case of some people expecting us to enter into expensive, grand publicity programs for the whole community when we are dealing with a fringe group, and I reiterate what I believe about that matter.

#### TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT *Returns Reduction Forecast - Turnover Tax Reduction Intention*

70. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Totalisator Agency Board annual report forecasts that the return to industry will reduce by \$3 million next year?
- (2) Is the Minister prepared to reduce the taxation on the TAB turnover immediately?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(2)

I am aware of course of what is in the Totalisator Agency Board annual report and I am concerned that the reduction in the amount of money received in the TAB presents a problem for various codes because naturally their return is based purely on what the punters invest at the TAB.

Mr Trenorden: And on your take.

Mrs BEGGS: That is another issue.

Mr Court: Why not speak to the taxation aspect?

Mrs BEGGS: I am quite happy to discuss tax with the member for Nedlands because I have been doing a lot of work on that subject recently and I have a lot of information.

The second part of the member for Avon's question is whether the Government intends to reduce the turnover tax. It is important for all members to know that Western Australia's TAB has a lower tax take across the board than any other State in Australia.

Mr Clarko: On what basis?

Mrs BEGGS: On a percentage basis the distribution Western Australia returns to the industry through the TAB is more than any other State except Tasmania.

Mr Trenorden: Is the Minister prepared to table that document?

Mrs BEGGS: I am quite happy to give the member a copy of all this information. The percentage of TAB turnover distributed to industry in Western Australia is 6.7 per cent; New South Wales, 3.5 per cent; Victoria, 4.2 per cent; Queensland, 4.5 per cent; South Australia, 5.4 per cent and Tasmania 7.1 per cent.

Mr Clarko: That is a bit different in dollar terms.

Mrs BEGGS: The population figures must be taken into account.

Mr Clarko: Has the Minister heard of economies of scale?

Mrs BEGGS: I agree that population is relative. Another interesting fact, which is something I am now trying to address, is that the distribution to the punter as a percentage of turnover in Western Australia is 80.7 per cent which is the lowest distribution across Australia. That is something we need to correct and correct very quickly. That is one of the major problems the TAB has at the moment and I am working very hard on that. We are losing punters as a result of telephone accounts and the technology that is available now. While that variation exists punters will prefer to bet on their horses in the Eastern States through interstate TABs.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS - PERTH CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE *Purchase of Rival's Campaign Posters Allegations*

71. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Local Government:

Is the Minister aware of allegations made on radio this morning to the effect that a candidate in the Perth City Council elections created disturbances in a shop and allegedly offered to buy the campaign posters of a rival candidate? If yes, does the Minister intend to have the matter investigated with a view to appropriate action?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

On the Howard Sattler program this morning Councillor Jack Marks made a complaint that Mario Ambrosini was visiting shops in which Mr Marks had placed his posters and was offering to buy the posters in order to destroy them. Mr Ambrosini was invited onto the program to deny the allegations, but declined to deny them. Later an unnamed person called the radio station and claimed that she had been approached in her shop and had been made similar offers. While I am in favour of encouraging the most vigorous contest between candidates in local government elections it would be an improper practice for any candidate to offer to buy election material of other campaigners with a view to destroying it. Although it may not amount to a bribe, it goes very close to it. That kind of conduct in local government elections should be discouraged. I will be investigating the matter further to see whether the people involved can be identified and, indeed, whether some prosecutions should occur.

**STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - PRIVATISATION**

*Bankers Trust Corporate Finance Appointment - Legislation Requirement*

72. Mr COURT to the Minister for Microeconomic Reform:

With the appointment of BT Corporate Finance to handle the privatisation of the State Government Insurance Office, will the Government be proceeding with Orders of the Day Nos 10, 11 and 12 which are Bills related to the operations of the SGIO and the State Government Insurance Commission?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The first stage is to take advice on what is the best way to handle this issue. The second stage will be to actually implement that decision. BT Corporate Finance has been appointed for the first stage, which is to provide advice to Government on the best way it should proceed in this area. Depending on that advice, the Government will either go ahead with the legislation currently before the Parliament or it will not. If the decision is to float the SGIO, that legislation will need to be amended and passed through Parliament as a prelude to that float. If, on the other hand, another decision is made, the legislation will not be necessary. The advice of the board is that the legislation is not currently required but may be required, depending upon the decision.

Mr Clarko: Yes, Minister!

Dr GALLOP: It is not "Yes, Minister" at all. The Government will leave that legislation on the table of the Parliament and, if it is required, it will use it. If not, the Government need not go ahead with it.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - MITSUBISHI-TRANSFIELD**

*Collie Power Station - Unacceptable Tariff Level, Government Action*

73. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What actions will be undertaken by the State Energy Commission of Western Australia and the Government if the Mitsubishi-Transfield consortium is unable to present the Government with an acceptable tariff level in the next few days?

Dr GALLOP replied:

I answered an earlier question which dealt with the inability of the consortium to produce an acceptable tariff at this stage. That advice has been passed back to Mitsubishi-Transfield and the Government must wait for its response. When the Government receives that response it will consider the matter. It has been made clear to Mitsubishi-Transfield that it is necessary for this project to produce benefits for the State and that those benefits must include a lower tariff over a long time for the people of this State. When the Government and SECWA hears from Mitsubishi-Transfield it will indicate to this Parliament and the people of Western Australia what will be its decision.

**POLICE - GERALDTON RENTAL HOUSING NEED**

74. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Minister for Housing:

Is the Minister aware of the problem in Geraldton that a lack of suitable rental houses is preventing two police officers, who are badly needed, being allocated to Geraldton?

Mr McGINTY replied:

I am not aware there is a problem in that respect. The Government Employees Housing Authority's construction program is designed to accommodate the needs of many departments. In recent years it has built accommodation for Government employees transferred to country towns. It has not been drawn to my attention that there is a problem for police officers in finding accommodation in Geraldton. If the member wishes to pursue the matter with me I will find out if there is a problem.

**GREYHOUND AUTHORITY BILL - INTRODUCTION INTENTION**

75. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association states in "Notes to Accounts No 21" that a Western Australian Greyhound Authority Bill is to be introduced?
- (2) Is the Minister also aware that the first general report of the Auditor General for 1992 states on page 61, in reference to the amalgamation of Cannington and Mandurah, that to date the legislation has not been passed and that, as the situation has existed since July 1987, it is recommended that appropriate measures be taken to regularise the situation?
- (3) Will the Minister introduce a Bill on this matter in this session of Parliament?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(3)

I am aware that matters have been raised by the Auditor General and that his report discusses the matter of the amalgamation of greyhound racing at Mandurah and Cannington. I remind the member that some years ago I introduced legislation which was defeated in the upper House.

Mr Trenorden: That was five years ago.

Mrs BEGGS: That is right, and the conservative parties in the upper House defeated the legislation. I intend to reinstate the board. That will be done as soon as possible because the terms of the current board members, who have delegated their duties to the chief executive officer, will expire in May.

**NORTH WEST SHELF GAS PROJECT - MAXIMUM SIZE AND VALUE OF GAS ADVICE**

76. Mr MINSON to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has the Government received advice from any of its agencies or advisers about the maximum cumulative size and value of gas that will be paid for, and not taken, in each of the financial years from now until 1995-96 under the North West Shelf gas contracts?
- (2) If yes, is the figure for cumulative value for the current year in the order of \$300 million?

Dr GALLOP replied:

(1)-(2)

My memory may serve me incorrectly, but I am sure I have answered that question which was put on notice by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Advice is available on that general issue and I will look into it and respond to the member accordingly. If he checks his records he will see I have answered a question previously asked by him on gas inventories.

The SPEAKER: Order! I take this opportunity to thank all members for their cooperation during this question time. I am sure it benefited all members because at least 15 questions were asked.

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