

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 12 November 1986

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

School Activities: Petition

The following petition bearing the signatures of 15 persons was presented by Hon. Kay Hallahan (Minister for Community Services)—

TO: The Honourable the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned object to equal opportunity laws compelling our children to integration of school activities, including sports, without referral, consultation or regard for parents and further the current law does not have regard for individual communities.

We request that this legislated educational experiment cease.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(See paper No. 478.)

ACTS AMENDMENT (ELECTORAL REFORM) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November.

HON. MARGARET McALEER (Upper West) [2.35 p.m.]: When a Bill comes to our House from the Legislative Assembly it is our practice to treat that Bill, whether it comes in an amended or unamended form, as though it had originated in our House and it should be debated solely on its merits. However, there are times when it is relevant to take notice of the progress of a Bill which comes to us from the Legislative Assembly, and this is one of them.

This Bill has been the subject of exhaustive debate in another place. That debate, in its Committee stage, was in a sense academic. The spokesmen for the three parties put their points of view, and expressed their party positions and policies and the principles embodied in them. At no time did they achieve any compromise on a significant matter, nor did there appear at the end to be any room for negotiation,

in spite of the fact that in recent months the positions of all three political parties on electoral matters have moved closer together. It must appear to anyone who has taken notice of that debate that we have got as far as we can in respect of this Bill. I wonder what can be gained by an exhaustive debate in the Committee stages on amendments which have already been thoroughly debated elsewhere and negated.

Perhaps because of the number of amendments which appear on our Notice Paper there has been a tendency on the Government side to treat this second reading as a mere formality. I think the National Party has also attempted to treat it as such. The suggestion is that the real work will be done in the Committee stage, clause by clause. I do not believe that is a tenable point of view.

Much has been made by the Government in recent weeks of the areas of agreement between the three parties. All parties have an electoral policy which allows for proportional representation in the Legislative Council in a regional system. I do not minimise this area of agreement. Certainly, for my party it has been a long and hard way to come to such a position. I cannot say we have achieved total unanimity. I am not sure that we have thoroughly thought the matter through.

The second large area of agreement is that there should be an Electoral Commission with responsibility for drawing the boundaries of electorates with an ongoing responsibility of keeping them in kilter. Again, I do not minimise this area of common agreement because it will have a significant effect on the fringe areas of the metropolitan area and it will have an effect on various seats held by current members of Parliament. One cannot at any time totally discount the personal factor in dealing with electoral matters, nor should one.

These are very broad areas of agreement and when it comes to putting them into effect, as this Bill tries to do, absolute chasms of difference open up between the parties. The chasms are so wide and so deep I believe it would be impossible to bridge them satisfactorily by amendment to this Bill. There is simply not the time, even given the recent generous offer by the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform to make the facilities of his department available to members of the Opposition parties, to study various combinations or permutations. It takes time to ask questions and to receive answers; it takes even more time to

evaluate them. This cannot be done on the floor of the House in a limited space of time.

Little or nothing has been said by the Government about the many serious differences of principle and policy which still exist between the parties, apart from those common areas of agreement which I have mentioned. Here again, these differences are serious and basic, and I do not see how any number of amendments to the Bill could make it acceptable to the Liberal Party or for that matter to the National Party. I say this because, again, the Bill was given a very genuine and reasonably in-depth scrutiny in the Assembly and yielded so few points susceptible to compromise or negotiation. It does seem important to me at the second reading stage to reiterate these basic points of difference.

Firstly, there is the concept of so-called one-vote-one-value applied to the Assembly districts. Although this would not necessarily damage us as a Liberal Party in the sense of votes cast in our favour, we believe it would be extremely damaging to country people and to the State generally because of the extraordinary imbalance of our population distribution and our economic resources distribution. Like it or not, the State depends for its survival economically and therefore in every other way on our primary industries. Nearly all of them are found outside the metropolitan area. It is fair to say that the circumstances in which they operate are not understood by metropolitan people. When I refer to circumstances, I mean such things as costs, transport needs, and scarcity of labour, not to mention all the necessary facilities of living required by people who are engaged in or around those industries.

It has been the practice for Government members, Labor Party members to say that country members here represent acres of wheat, tonnes of crayfish, more tonnes of mineral sands, and so on. It does not upset me in the least to be said to represent these things as well as the comparative handful of people who produce them and service these industries. We live on the produce these people provide. It is important that these interests have significant representation in the Parliament.

Given the proposal before us, I fail to understand how the National Party can support the second reading of this Bill while such a very basic principle is not acknowledged in the proposals for the Assembly. The Government has thrown a sop to country representation in the Legislative Council with its 1.4:1 weighting.

But what is that in the context of the whole Parliament? In any case it is an inadequate weighting of the rural vote in the Legislative Council itself.

The second area of difficulty is the four-year fixed term for Legislative Councillors instead of staggered terms. This is a matter of principle for us because it provides one of the very few checks and balances on the Executive no matter how imperfect it is. The other day Hon. Colin Jamieson was reported in *The West Australian* as saying that Parliaments in the Westminster system were lacking in the ability to scrutinise the Executive. While what he said had other connotations, it ill behoves us to throw away what checks we do have.

The proposal for a single fixed term for the Legislative Council has other consequences for this Bill and for our deliberations on a new electoral system because it means that all the calculations of the ALP, of the Government, and of the National Party, with respect to quotas in regions, are at total variance with our own. It makes a difference when we are looking at, for instance, the proposition of a single region for the metropolitan area, something which I understand Mr Bryce rejected out of hand, whether we do our calculations on a Legislative Council which is elected for a single or for a split term. This applies all across the regions, and therefore it almost precludes meaningful negotiations on regions to be identified.

The fourth difficulty concerns a four-year term rather than a three-year term for the Assembly. As far as a four-year term is concerned I happen to belong to the school of thought which would settle for the three years, not as a matter of principle but of practicality. If a Government is performing reasonably, the electorate invariably gives it a second term and that gives it a six-year run. The people are the better for a chance to determine their Government every three years. Nevertheless it is not something on which I would go to the barricades.

It is probably more acceptable to have members of the Legislative Council serving for six years rather than eight years, although eight years is accepted throughout most of Australia and there is no reason that it should not be accepted here. We could go the other way and have only two years in the Legislative Council and have elections every two years for new members, but no Government, and perhaps no party which thought it might win Government, would be keen to accept that, because it would

mean having an election with a by-election atmosphere every two years, something Governments do not relish.

The third area of difference is optional preferential voting as opposed to compulsory preferential voting. This again is really a matter of principle. We do not hold to the first-past-the-post system although in some cases it would certainly be to our advantage. Preferential voting allows the preference of the majority of voters to succeed. It is a compromise, but it must improve representation on the first-past-the-post system when it comes into play. We fear that optional preferential voting would very quickly become a first-past-the-post system either through ignorance or perhaps through laziness on the part of the electorate.

The fifth area of difficulty is the proposal to allow the perceived intention of a voter to be taken into account when deciding on the validity of a vote. This must lead to a great deal of ambiguity and a whole variety of interpretations from one electoral district to another. Rules for voting are laid down so that the intention of a voter can be made quite clear, and these rules should be adhered to. It is not up to other individuals to try to assess the intentions of a voter; that would lead to chaos.

The sixth area of difficulty is with the demographic guidelines for Assembly seats first of all, and this spills over into the regions for the Legislative Council. These guidelines take no account of community of interest, geographic circumstances, distances, and so on. The results of this type of guideline, especially in conjunction with one-vote-one-value, were very well demonstrated yesterday by Hon. David Wordsworth, who incidentally also showed how unreliable were the department's figures produced for this debate.

All the matters I have listed are serious differences between us and the Labor Party or the Government which are shown up in the Bill. All of them should be serious differences between both the conservative parties and the Government, especially for a party which is largely, or totally, rural-based.

The Government's proposals seem not only to strike at the very basis of our philosophy on representation in the Parliament as a whole, but also to threaten the function and especially the potential functions of the Legislative Council. The Government has long refused to implement the committee system in the Legislative Council because it contends that it would prefer an electoral system more to its liking.

But while this Bill might produce for the Government a system which it likes better, it would not do away with the party system. In another place, Mr Bryce has rubbished the possibility of the Legislative Council ever having a review function because of the party system. One must ask oneself whether the Government with this Bill will establish, through fixed four-year terms, a Legislative Council totally geared to the Government of the day and totally obedient to the Government of the day, because it must stand and fall with the fortunes of that Government.

I am sorry that, at this time, we are not addressing the improvement of functions of the Legislative Council and that, perhaps, the failure of this Bill may be an excuse for deferring those improvements. However, I do not see how I can support the Bill as it stands and I am not willing to support its second reading.

HON. GARRY KELLY (South Metropolitan) [3.51 p.m.]: The Bill before the House is a compromise document. The Government has come a long way by taking on board some of the Opposition's criticisms of past legislation introduced by the Government, as long as those criticisms did not strike at the very heart of the principle attempted to be achieved by the Government—that is, a fairer electoral system in which the will of the people is reflected in the distribution of seats in both Houses of this Parliament.

There are a number of compromises in this legislation, and I will go through them. The first compromise relates to the weighting of votes for seats in the Legislative Council. In previous legislation the Government pursued the doctrine of one-vote-one-value absolutely; in this Bill it allows for a fairly generous ratio of 1.4:1.

In relation to electoral redistribution, under the present Act if 18 or more districts deviated from the quota by 10 per cent, a redistribution is triggered. Under previous Bills it was 10 seats being 10 per cent out of kilter. The general view is that that is too unpredictable and I think that, perhaps, there are fewer redistributions if one considers the number of seats in the metropolitan area, in particular, which is grossly overquota-ed and still there is nothing to trigger a redistribution.

In previous legislation the Government attempted to reduce the number of members in the Legislative Council by 12. Under this Bill the number will remain the same.

Previous legislation envisaged terms for the Council being tied to the terms in the Legislative Assembly. Under this Bill terms are fixed, although, as Margaret McAleer said, the terms will be four-year fixed terms, something with which the Opposition cannot cope.

Instead of having single electorates, we propose a system of regional electorates totalling six in number. In terms of the flexibility of enrolments, instead of there being a 10 per cent plus or minus deviation from the quota, the present Bill envisages plus or minus 15 per cent.

The Government has moved a long way. It has made many compromises, but none which strikes at the heart of a fair system. I do not think the conservative parties have moved more than one millimetre from their previous stand on electoral reform. They have not addressed the nitty-gritty of the legislation, and that nitty-gritty can be summed up in the issues surrounding how many regions will be established in the metropolitan area.

I will now look at the separate proposals of each of the parties. First of all the National Party proposes three regions, with one metropolitan region returning 17 members and two non-metropolitan regions also returning 17 members. I do not understand how the National Party can seriously expect this Government to agree to that.

Hon. E. J. Charlton: Why not?

Hon. GARRY KELLY: I will explain. Under that proposal, the metropolitan region, with four times the population of country regions, will have the same number of members. The

country areas would be grossly overrepresented with a weighting of a bit under 4:1, and that is not acceptable.

The Liberal Party has proposed four regions, again one metropolitan region with 18 members and three country regions with a total of 16 members. Perhaps that weighting is a little less than the National Party's proposal, but it is only a small degree of difference at 3.5:1. That proposal cannot be entertained either.

On the other hand the Government proposes six regions which are designed to produce a result. That result is that the winner of the majority of votes will get the majority of seats in the Parliament, something which I do not think is unreasonable.

Putting the weighting component aside for a moment, the Liberal Party proposes that in each of the regions there will be an equal number of seats. That could cause problems because, if the parties are evenly split, we would not obtain a result. In the interest of obtaining that result, commonsense dictates that there should be an odd number of seats for each region. The fact that the Liberal Party proposes an even number of seats in the regions is another factor militating against the party with the majority of support obtaining a majority of the seats.

I want to compare some election figures and look at the different proposals by the three parties, and then compare the election figures for the 1983 election and the 1977 election.

The following material was incorporated by leave of the House—

Estimated Effects in the Legislative Council of Three Proposed Systems of Representation

Party	Statewide Vote	Electoral Reform Bill 1986	Liberal Proposal	NPA Proposal	Actual Com- position of L.C.
Based on 1983 election					
Lib	41.6%	14	16	15	19
NPA	6.3%	2	2	3	2
ALP	50.6%	18	16	16	13
Based on 1977 election					
Lib	50.4%	18	17	18	18
NPA	4.5%	1	1	2	4
NA			1		
ALP	44.1%	15	15	14	10

Debate Resumed

Hon. GARRY KELLY: I selected the 1983 election because the Labor Party obtained 50.6 per cent of the vote and at the 1977 election the Liberal Party obtained 50.4 per cent of the vote. The contrast between the various proposals is quite stark when one considers that the two major parties got roughly the same percentage of votes in those elections. In the 1977 election the Liberal Party obtained 50.4 per cent of the vote, and under the Government's proposal it would have won 18 seats in this House. Under the Liberal Party's proposal the Liberal Party would have won 17 seats. Under the National Party's proposal it would have won 18 seats and the composition of the House after that election was 18 Liberals, 10 ALP members, and the National Party four.

Under the Liberal proposals the Liberal Party would have won 17 seats. Under the National Party proposals the Liberals would have won 18 seats. In the 1983 election, under the Liberal proposals the Liberals would have won 16 seats; in fact, they won 19 seats. Under the ALP proposal, the Government would have won 18 seats. In 1977 the ALP would have won 15 seats under the Government's proposal. After the 1977 election, it actually won only 10 seats. In 1977, the Liberal Party won 18 seats; the Labor Party won 10 seats. If the Government proposal had been instituted, the Liberal Party would still have won a majority of seats, but the Labor Party would have had 15 representatives on the floor of the House.

I cannot see how the conservative parties of the Opposition can claim that the proposal the Government is putting before the House now is trying to advantage the Labor Party, because under the Government's proposal the Opposition parties would have had the majority in 1977. When the percentage of votes was reversed in 1983, the Labor Party would have had the majority. The sole aim of the Government's proposal is for the party which achieves majority support at the polls to have the majority of representatives on the floor of the House. As a principle of achieving a democratic Parliament, I do not see how people can cavil at it.

Hon. Gordon Masters in his contribution said that with the 18 metropolitan seats proposed by the Liberal Party there was some chance that a member of the Australian Democrats or an Independent might win a seat. If the number of seats to be voted for at one time were 18, I would tend to agree with him. However, the Liberal Party does not support elec-

tion of all Legislative Council members at one time, so only nine of those seats will be voted for at one time. Thus the quota is 10 per cent. Under the Government's proposal there would be three regions returning seven members each. The quota for each of those regions would be 12.5 per cent. Thus it can be seen that there is not much difference between the quota proposed by the Liberal Party and that proposed by the Labor Party.

I add that the Australian Democrats support the Government's proposal; they do not support the proposals put up by the Liberal Party. Hon. Gordon Masters made much of the fact that under the Federal system which is, by and large, a one-vote-one-value system, most of the seats are held by the Labor Party, although the percentage of seats held by the Labor Party does not tally exactly with the percentage of the votes it received. In the House of Representatives, the party getting the majority of votes gets the majority of seats.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Not even remotely connected.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: There is no way to eradicate that as long as we have single-member constituencies. If the Liberal Party is proposing that there should be a proportional representation system for the House of Representatives, that is another argument. That is the only way to get a direct correlation between the votes received and the seats held. As long as we have single-member constituencies, we will have this disparity.

With respect to single-member constituencies, one-vote-one-value exaggerates the winning margin. But what one-vote-one-value cannot do is produce a majority of seats to the party which gets a minority of the vote. The party which fails to get majority support cannot obtain a majority of the seats. Under zonal systems such as exist in this State, it is possible for the party which gets a minority of the vote at an election to win a majority of the seats. That has happened in Queensland and although it has not happened in this State, it has come perilously close.

Hon. E. J. Charlton: But don't forget how that came about in Queensland.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: I am not forgetting that. In the past, the Labor Party has made mistakes, but at least we are prepared to admit it, which is more than those opposite are prepared to do.

Hon. P. G. Pental: We have by virtue of the concessions that we have made in this debate.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: I have already covered that, Mr Pendal. The Opposition has made virtually no concessions.

I want to lay to rest another ghost: If we had a one-vote-one-value system it would automatically mean that the Labor Party would win elections. Some Labor Party members believe that if we have one-vote-one-value we would win every election from here to kingdom come.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: That is not what was said in that Cabinet minute from the Geraldton meeting that was circulating around here last night.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: Some Liberals think that one-vote-one-value will permanently disadvantage them. Those who believe that is the case should consider the experience in South Australia. In 1979 after Don Dunstan resigned the premiership, Corcoran had a rush of blood to the head and called a snap election. In South Australia seats are distributed on a one-vote-one-value basis. There were some major swings against Labor in certain seats. This was particularly the case in those areas which depended on buses, as bus drivers went on strike a week before the election. It rained and people were stranded at bus stops. There was a lot of resentment towards the Premier for calling the election. David Tonkin and the Liberals swept to power. One-vote-one-value does not guarantee any party an advantage, but it guarantees that the party that gets the support gets the seats in the Parliament. That is what the Government is trying to achieve.

On that basis, it is good to see that Hon. Sandy Lewis is now a convert to one-vote-one-value. Last night he mentioned the New Zealand formula.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: Who is a convert to one-vote-one-value?

Hon. GARRY KELLY: Sandy Lewis. He may have changed his mind overnight.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You seem surprised, Mr Pendal.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: I think he might be just re-examining another faith, not actually becoming a convert.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: With respect to New Zealand, Mr Lewis said that 25 seats are given to the South Island and that that number of seats is divided into the number of electors in the South Island which gives a quota. That quota is divided into the number of electors in the North Island to give the number of seats the North Island gets. That is one-vote-one-value.

Mr Lewis said that the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly would be reduced by his suggestion to 51 and that 20 seats would be allocated to the country. We would then divide that 20 into the number of country electors to get the quota and divide that into the population to get the number of seats for the city. It is a bit curious though, because he said he was trying to reduce the number of politicians. Initially it would reduce the number to 51, but assuming that the city grows as it has been growing over past decades, the number of electors in the city would increase. Presumably, the number of seats in the city would also increase as the population increased, so there would actually be an increase in the number of parliamentarians.

The way the Government is going about it is better. One has a fixed number of seats in the Parliament, adjusted as equally as possible according to the population, rather than increasing the number of seats in the House so that the number of electors and the seats are in proportion. It is good to see that one Liberal—or erstwhile Independent—member is now converted to the principle of one-vote-one-value. Perhaps I have misrepresented Mr Lewis, but I think that was the import of his remarks.

One point made by Margaret McAleer about optional preferential voting was that it is important for all preferences to be expressed. Members may remember one of the double dissolutions in the Federal Parliament when there were 73 candidates for the Senate in New South Wales and the ballot paper was something like two feet long. No tables were long enough for the paper to rest on to fill it in. There were 10 vacancies. It is ridiculous to record a valid vote to elect 10 people and having to express 73 preferences. With one hiccup, using, say, the number 72 twice, the whole lot becomes invalid. The overriding provision is that as long as the intention is clear up to the point of error, that vote should be counted.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: It is first past the post.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: It is not first past the post.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. John Williams): Order! Honourable members should allow Hon. Garry Kelly to make his speech. He is doing very well; he does not need any help.

Hon. E. J. Charlton: Do you support the Senate voting system?

Hon. GARRY KELLY: The only thing about the last Federal election was that the publicity was perhaps too effective. People tried to transfer the voting system across to the House of Representatives. There is a problem where two systems are used in the one area. In the House of Representatives the system was full preferential. In the Senate one could express preferences by putting the number "1" in one box. That system is much simpler. It did reduce the number of informal votes for the Senate.

It is ridiculous to express preferences in excess of the number of vacancies. The Government is suggesting a commonsense way around it.

In conclusion I ask the House, and in particular the Opposition parties, to answer this question: What should be the basis of a fair electoral system? I would answer that question with the old saying: To the victors belong the spoils.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: It has stood the test for 80 or 90 years.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: We part company on that. What I mean is that the party which obtains the majority vote has the majority of seats. We should have no truck with any system of election which cannot deliver on that prescription. If the conservative parties, the Opposition parties, are honest, they must ask themselves what we are trying to achieve by establishing an electoral system. It must be that the will of the people expressed through their vote will be followed as closely as possible by numbers in the Parliament. Unless that is done, we are defrauding the people and devaluing their votes. I ask the Opposition parties to consider that question carefully and remember that we are not trying to advantage one party or another; we are trying to make sure that the party which succeeds in achieving majority support in the ballot box has that support reflected in the number of seats in the House.

I support the Bill and I ask the House to support it.

HON. P. G. PENDAL (South Central Metropolitan) [3.16 p.m.]: The debate now under way is perhaps of more historic significance than any other on the subject of constitutional change in Western Australia in the past generation. That historic significance, and more importantly, the future impact, is in danger of being submerged or even lost.

For the first time in a quarter of a century, each party is prepared to acknowledge the need for change. But it is more than that. Each party has, for the first time in a generation, actually formulated its own package of electoral change. To my personal knowledge the Liberal Party has shifted ground very substantially—in fact reducing the weighting from, at its worst, 11:1 down to 2:1. But the agonising involved in bringing this position about is in danger of dissipating.

Why? I suggest it is because the Burke Government steadfastly refuses to concede there might—just might—be merit in the arguments of this side of the House. The Government is saying, in effect, that electoral change will occur, and it will be on its terms. I have always been of the view that some change is necessary. I said as much publicly in 1982 when I addressed a national workshop conducted by Professor Gordon Reid, who was then working as an academic. I vividly recall several Labor members of this House deriding the view I took at that time, which was that one-vote-one-value was a sound principle so long as the population was evenly spread over the geographic area concerned. If that even spread was not evidenced, then the weighting was justifiable, in my opinion.

Four years down the track, the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform has openly stated that he supports that proposition; that is the proposition for which I was derided in this House only four years ago.

The Minister's own words bear repeating. He said, "I have never suggested one-vote-one-value is a perfect system of electing members to Parliament. There is no perfect system."

I implore members to look at what we have right at this moment. On the one side we have a Labor Party which until now has locked itself into one-vote-one-value. We have Liberals and Nationals in this House who, until now, have locked themselves into a position of no change. Yet the reality is that both sides have now retreated from their former positions.

The ALP will now apparently accept some weighting and the conservative parties will now accept some decrease in the level of the existing weighting, so the debate today is really over the level of the weighting. Let there be no mistake about that.

It has already been pointed out that the upper House of the Federal Parliament is grossly weighted in favour of the less populated and outer States and in that regard, the ALP

said in this House last night that was the price of Federation—an argument I have heard bruited about a lot in recent years. In effect, what those people are conceding is that a so-called gerrymander exists in the Federal scene. I, for one, do not accept that it is a gerrymandered Senate since it permitted us to have a Federation.

I add in passing that maybe the time has come for this nation not to be federated in any way. If the Eastern States find it is offensive that Western Australia, or one of the other less populated States, should have more senators than our entitlement, let them be free of us. I have not the slightest doubt that Western Australia could exist on its own without needing the rest of Australia.

Let me take that one step further. If this State did separate and become the independent nation of Western Australia, would it not be the case that one of the prices we would have to pay would be that a Western Australian upper House would have to have a weighting in terms of its country vote? I suggest nothing surer than that would be the case. That really is the genesis of the whole debate currently before the House.

I concede that I had difficulty at one stage defending the Liberal Party's stand on this matter, but that difficulty has now been removed because the Liberal Party had the courage to make a break from the past, albeit that in the minds of some people that break was a very cautious one. Nonetheless, there is a significant and fundamental shift in the Liberal Party's policy. Currently there are 20 non-metropolitan members of this House and 14 members for the city. The Opposition proposes that we increase the number in the city from 14 to 18 and reduce the number in the country from 20 to 16.

I would suggest that this would make the claim of the Government that only the Australian Labor Party has made any concessions in the debate over this legislation look rather silly. I can tell members, as have other members from this side of the House, that the concessions to which I have referred as coming from the Liberal Party have come about after a process of very considerable agony. Again we are told, in a letter from the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, that the Government has magnanimously made a number of important concessions by accepting certain Liberal Party amendments in the lower House. In all honesty, those concessions made

by the Government are marginal, minor, and even peripheral.

Another great bone of contention is over the question of regions. Before I go on to that, let me remind members that it is a significant breakthrough in itself that each of the three parties in this House now accepts regionalisation. Each party here now accepts a system of proportional representational voting within those regions. The other area of dispute is in the number of regions and yet even Mr Bryce, the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, concedes that the six regions proposed by the Government may in fact not be the answer. He said, "There is nothing sacred about six regions—three in the city and three in the country." Later he said, "I have never suggested that proposition is sacred." I put it to the Government: What has it to lose by accepting that Liberal Party's proposition? The Government continually claims the present system is the worst in the world. Surely the ALP is not suggesting, therefore, that the revised Liberal position is worse than that? It would be an understatement to say that suspicion is at the bottom of everyone's thinking in this House on this matter, and there is good reason for that on this side.

I found it quite ominous that the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform should talk about legislation which, in his words, "will be in force for the next half a century". How could he possibly know that? I put it to the House that this in itself sounds dangerously like an admission that the ALP is trying to bring about the very vice-like grip that it condemns the conservative parties for having in this Chamber.

I have a further ground for suspicion. Last night we heard from a Labor Party member in what was meant to be a reassurance, I presume, when he said that all of these matters would in any case need to go to referendum. That is fine on the surface, but I do not know how many members of this House read an article in a recent issue of *The Bulletin* dealing with the Federal Constitution. There is now spirited discussion among certain lawyers in the Eastern States which suggests that the Federal Constitution may now be changed without a referendum. In itself that sounds quite incredible, but *The Bulletin* takes this matter seriously enough to warrant a lengthy article on those particular views.

Only recently, I persisted in my efforts with the Attorney General in this House to find out what were his views on the proposed Bill of

Rights. Members will be aware that he refused point-blank to table the Burke Government's submission to the Hawke Government. I do not know why he refused, although I have my suspicions. It is worth remembering that the very subject under debate here today might have been central to the Burke Government's submission in that regard. There are many other aspects of this Bill that could be discussed, and in fact were discussed, by other speakers on this side last night and today.

I note, as I am sure a lot of other observers do, the distinct lack of interest on the part of members on the other side of the House to get to their feet to discuss this matter. In essence I am suggesting that we may not get another opportunity like this for many years. The Liberal Party has made significant and historic compromises on this whole question. There has been a step forward even if the ALP thinks that we ought to have taken four or five steps.

Hon. Garry Kelly: Self-praise!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It is a reality, not self-praise. The Liberal Party and the National Party have made substantial concessions on this matter. I invite members opposite, and particularly those who are interjecting, to actually read the Liberal Party's proposals and, indeed, those of the National Party.

The Tonkin resignation which has been referred to so often in this debate left the Government's credibility in this matter in disarray and in tatters. The Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform has conceded that his Bill is not the only way out. Let the Government take one further step, and that is to accept the proposals the Liberal Party has in mind—proposals, I repeat, which have been produced at very considerable cost on the part of some members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party.

For that reason, I suggest that the ball really is in the Government's court.

HON. ROBERT HETHERINGTON (South-East Metropolitan) [3.29 p.m.]: I rise to support the second reading of this Bill.

Before I begin the main tenor of my remarks, I want to make reference to a couple of minor things. I would like to point out to Hon. David Wordsworth that his argument in relation to Murchison-Eyre is incorrect.

It is a statutory seat laid down by Act of Parliament. It is not decided by the Chief Justice; nor does the Chief Justice decide anything. It is decided by three commissioners. I do not know how they finally reach their de-

cision—I presume they do not vote, and that the Chief Justice does not override them, and they reach the decision by consensus. As far as Murchison-Eyre is concerned, the decision was made by a Parliament previous to the one which changed the Pilbara-Kimberley boundary, and was left in place when that boundary was changed.

I was also a little taken aback by the cynicism of the argument that we are bringing about parliamentary reform to reduce the Aboriginal vote. I do not think we can take that terribly seriously, and I am glad we have not heard it from anybody else.

I say to Hon. Phillip Pental that optional preferential voting is not first-past-the-post.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I said it is tantamount to it.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: If Hon. Phillip Pental thinks that, as I have pointed out before in this House, he should ask Hon. Marshall Perron in the Northern Territory Government whether it is tantamount to first-past-the-post, because in 1974 he was elected to the Legislative Council under optional preferential voting on the preferences of Mr Geoffrey Loveday, my brother-in-law, who was standing for the Labor Party and defeated the sitting Independent.

Many years ago when I was scrutineering in South Australia in the Senate election, I came across fairly sad cases of people voting for the Democratic Labor Party who filled out everything except the three names of the Communist Party candidates. Their votes were informal, and yet their intentions were quite clear. Under no circumstances, if their votes had been counted as valid, would their preferences have reached the Communist Party. But they hated the Communist Party so much that they disfranchised themselves by not filling in the last three names on the Senate form.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It serves them right, surely?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: The member may say that; I am more charitable. I would have thought, bearing in mind the kind of people voting for the DLP at the time, that Hon. Phillip Pental might have more charity towards them.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: No, they disfranchised themselves.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: That may show the difference between us.

The main person I want to address my remarks to is the Leader of the Opposition. Hon. Phillip Pandal raised a very important point, that there is a great deal of suspicion between the parties on this matter. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out to me that he had changed his mind quite a deal. I acknowledge that, and I welcome it. It does not surprise me. He said across the Chamber last night that perhaps it would surprise me, but I have known him to change his mind before.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Honourable members are not allowed to carry on audible conversations while a member is addressing the Chair, and certainly not in the President's Gallery.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I am pleased to see that change has come about. While the Leader of the Opposition was asking us on this side of the House to accept the fact that his change was serious and honest, he was throwing doubts on changed attitudes from the Labor Party. He pointed out that in 1978 a Bill was introduced in this House to change the method of election of this House to State-wide proportional representation. He also pointed out that at one stage Labor policy was for the abolition of the Legislative Council. It then changed so that the two-House system would be replaced by a single House equal in numbers to the two Houses. I remember that section in the Labor policy well because I wrote it; the form of words was mine.

I have been on the policy committee of the State Executive of the Australian Labor Party for so many years I have forgotten when I first joined it. I have watched all the changes; some I have not cared for, and I have been delighted with others. The thing that delighted me most was that argument was put forward in the committee for the retention of a reformed Legislative Council as a useful body. I have always believed a reformed Legislative Council would be a useful body. This became our policy, and I assure the Leader of the Opposition that as far as I am concerned I want to see a reformed Legislative Council, and I want to see the Council retained.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I believe you.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I am not claiming that view is shared privately by every member of the Labor Party. I am sure it is not; in the same way as the views put forward last night by the Leader of the Opposition are not shared by all members of the Liberal Party. I think we can agree on that. The policy we have at present for reforming the Council, and

not abolishing it, is a genuine policy. It was introduced after careful thought and debate, and I hope that policy remains the policy of the Labor Party, and I am sure it will if we can achieve a reformed Parliament.

I want to refer to another matter which is not central to my contribution, and that is the Leader of the Opposition's remarks about one-vote-one-value leading to a distortion of the result. The honourable gentleman was not correct. What leads to a distortion is not one-vote-one-value but a system of single-member electorates. I remember Hon. Vic Ferry pointing out in great detail to this House one night many years ago how the British Parliament did not have one-vote-one-value and the results there are highly distorted under first-past-the-post voting. That is one of the arguments used by proponents of proportional representation against the single-member constituency system in our Parliament because it produces distortion. I suggest to the honourable gentleman that his figures which suggested that the Labor Party got near the right proportion indicate the system is balanced against us, because if it had been the normal, unbalanced, non-malapportioned system of single-member constituencies we would have got about 60 per cent of the seats with 53 per cent of the vote.

When the Leader of the Opposition talks about the differences between the Federal Parliament and Western Australia I point out that they sometimes amount to five, six, or seven seats which would be a normal majority in a State Parliament. That is because it is a single-member system; it has nothing to do with one-vote-one-value. It was distorted before one-vote-one-value was introduced. To get rid of distortion in this State we need to go to a system of proportional representation for both Houses. I am not advocating that; I am quite happy with the system which distorts the result so long as the party or coalition parties which gain a majority of votes also gain a majority of seats and are able to form a Government.

This applies in both Houses. I am not suggesting that we form a Government in the upper House, but we should gain the majority of seats. When members read the results of the last election for this House I point out that they will find that the Labor Party got over 50 per cent of the vote and it got nine of the 17 seats. That is correct. It is the first time since adult franchise was introduced into this House in 1964 that the Labor Party had a majority of votes in the majority of seats. It is not the first time it has had a majority of votes. As a matter

of fact, it did not do it on a two-party preferred majority because it needed the Democrat's preferences to get that majority. This is what we are arguing about.

Furthermore, had 56 people in Hon. Beryl Jones' electorate decided to vote against her and for the Liberal candidate, she would not now be a member of Parliament and we would have, with a majority of the votes overall, a minority of the seats again. It was very close.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I suggest that Tom Knight's vote was a similar situation.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: That is true. It has happened this once, and I am glad that it has. I have argued within my party that as long as the present system remains we should be working to have it happen more often, because I think we might be able to do it.

The fact remains that in the past the Labor Party has had a majority of votes for this Council, but it has not got a majority of seats. It has been in the permanent minority even after getting the majority of votes at this election and the last election. The Labor Party has 16 members out of 34 members in this House, and I do not regard that as a fair election.

Even if one accepts the argument put forward by the conservatives that we need to change half the members in this House each three of four years to make sure that a demagogical Government will not sweep all before it—not that our Parliament looks particularly demagogical, but fair and reasonable—and make sure that the steady will of the people is maintained, then the steady will of the people over two elections has been for the Burke Government and the Labor Party; but the steady will of the people, after two elections, is not reflected in this House.

Hon. G. E. Masters: If the voting system were changed and it went the way you are suggesting, you would agree to splitting the term of members of the Council?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I am not saying I would do that at all. It is not a good idea. I am not arguing for it and I do not intend to argue for a split term. It might be better if we had a non-split term. I am not pointing out the need to argue for a split term. If we accept a split term for members in this House, then it does not reflect the steady will of the people.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I said in my speech last night that if the circumstances were against us I would stand firmly for a split voting system.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I am not convinced of that at all. I have been defeated in argument by my own party, and I accept my party's policy as it stands.

It is important that this House is elected differently, but I am looking at the argument at present that the term of members should be the same, particularly as I regard an eight-year term as too long.

However, the one point I want to put to the Leader of the Opposition is that the Labor Party has put up three electoral Bills since the Burke Government has been in power. It put up others before that, and I introduced Bills to this House. The Leader of the Opposition will remember how he treated one or two of them, but we will not worry about that. That is what happens when a party has the numbers in the Houses and when the Houses are in firm hands.

Since the Labor Government has been in office, it has presented three electoral Bills, and they have all been different.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 p.m.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: The present Government has introduced three Bills. Each Bill has become more and more of a compromise after the Government and its advisers have examined speeches made by Opposition members in another place and tried to see whether some sort of compromise could be reached.

We have departed from our principle of one-vote-one-value. That is a pity. I believe in one-vote-one-value; I believe in it strongly and passionately. If the principle were accepted and the parties came together we could arrive at an acceptable system which would allow representation and also one-vote-one-value. I have suggested this in the House in the past and people have laughed at me, so I will not bring it up now as I do not think this is the appropriate time.

We have given way slightly. The question is, how much weighting and what kind of system will we allow? It seems to me that when the Liberal and National Parties talk about weighting they are looking at how much weighting will give them adequate representation in the country—whatever that means—whereas we on the other hand are looking at how much weighting will give a negative distortion to the result so that the party with the minimum of votes can receive a maximum of seats, as has happened in the past. With the weighting of seats one can achieve this, so that the problem must be looked at very carefully.

One can make electoral systems do what one likes. What worries me is that the Leader of the Opposition said that he had prepared a package. This is our third package which has gone a long way to meet the arguments of members opposite. The Leader of the Opposition is now presenting another package, and we have either to accept or reject it. If he really means that we have either to accept or reject the total package, then I will reject it.

Hon. G. E. Masters: We are saying you cannot pick off bits. I guess you are saying the same.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I want to be more specific. I want to spell it out. What I find quite unacceptable in the Liberal Party package is the principle of multiple zones for the Legislative Council in the country and a single zone in the city under a system of proportional representation. The reason I find this unacceptable is this: Under the Liberal Party proposal, in each election the three zones return two, three, and three members. Two members will balance each other—one Labor and one Liberal. In the two three-member seats it is likely to be two non-Labor to one Labor member. The Labor Party is therefore trailing. Just like *America II*; it is a bit behind New Zealand.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: They are just about coming around the last mark.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: If one introduced one zone in the city under proportional representation, it would be a nine-member seat—a quota of 10 per cent plus one. This will mean probably that at best the Labor Party might be one seat ahead of the Liberals. It might balance. There might be one Liberal, one Labor and an Independent or a Democrat holding the balance of power. In other words, under this system it is almost impossible for the Labor Party to win the House, even if it wins the majority of the votes.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Of course we disagree on that.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: It is a fact.

Hon. P. G. Pental: It is not a fact.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Well, it is a fact.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Your own figures show that is not so.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I do not agree with that.

Hon. G. E. Masters: The figures supplied to us by the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform show that that is the case.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: If we have three zones in the country, we have to have three zones in the metropolitan area so that we are likely to achieve a result. It will not be a result for the Labor Party.

I have no desire to support a system of elections which has a built-in advantage for my party. I hope the leader will accept that too. I believe that whoever wins a majority of votes should get the majority of seats. This system would probably lead in the city to Liberals winning one seat, Labor winning one and one shifting. The Liberal Party, or the Liberal and National Parties together, could win a majority, or the Labor Party could win. This is my bottom line. I could not accept a system with one zone only in the metropolitan area. This is a huge zone.

If it were my own personal preference I would rather see proportional representation for the whole State. I will not go into the reasons; members can read my 1978 speech.

That would almost certainly achieve a hung House, with Independents and Australian Democrats holding the balance of power. But this may not appeal to a lot of people, and it certainly does not appeal to a lot of people in both the major parties. For this reason we have come to the zone system, and we believe that if there is a multiplicity of zones in the rural area there must be a multiplicity of zones in the metropolitan area.

Personally, I find distasteful the zonal system which gives equal weight to two-thirds of the population and one-third of the population, and I could not accept a zonal system that did just that. We would have to look at any amendments that came up. I deliberately have not looked at the amendments as yet, because I wanted to talk about principles. I believe that is what the second reading debate is for.

I do accept that the Liberals have come a long way. When I remember some of the debates in this House and some of the abuse and vilification I have received in the past, it is a long way; but I forgive them.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Mr Kelly thinks we are still in the primeval sludge.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: He may not be far wrong!

From what I have heard of what the Leader of the Opposition said, I think his suspicions are unnecessarily suspicious. I believe he has a little way to go before he can convince us that anything he proposes will be acceptable to us. But we do not want to go back to the days of Queensland under Vince Gair, who was the last Labor Premier—I remember that with no pride—when the whole State was gerrymandered to keep the Labor Party in office. We do not want a system which prevails in Queensland now, where the National Party, with under 40 per cent of the vote—with 60 per cent of the people voting against it—can obtain a majority of the seats; and where the National Party, with fewer primary votes than the Labor Party, can obtain a majority of the seats in the House while the Labor Party is an also-ran. I am not claiming that the Labor Party should have won.

Hon. G. E. Masters: There is a great discrepancy in electoral systems; for instance, in the United Kingdom, where Margaret Thatcher gets 60 per cent of the seats with only 40 per cent of the votes.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Electoral systems are difficult. With the best will in the world, electoral systems will have anomalies in them. I have said this about the Northern Territory system, with its single-member electorates and optional preferential system, but I will not go into that now. We are not the Northern Territory and what applies to that Territory does not apply to us. The key thing is to have an electoral system which allows the party or a coalition of parties that win a majority of votes in each House to win a majority of the seats. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition should take too seriously his argument about one-man-one-vote causing distortion because in that case he took a coincidence, not a cause. The cause is single-member electorates.

For this reason I warmly support the second reading of this Bill. I hope we can get it through to the third reading stage and at last bring into this Parliament the reform that I have looked forward to ever since I have been in Western Australia; that is, since 1967.

HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [4.13 p.m.]: I have listened to the debate from many members concerning the Bill before the House. It is another one of a succession of similar Bills that have appeared over many years. I cannot find anything in this Bill on which the three parties represented in this House will come to a total agreement. What we are doing here is playing a

glorious charade to the Press, or to somebody who might read *Hansard*, or for some other reason. I do not believe we are achieving anything at all.

I have represented country politics for almost 27 years, and on some occasions have not even been opposed. I could take members to my office and show them that I have not received any letter whatsoever from any of my constituents at any time protesting about the present electoral arrangements. Why should I upset the complacency of my electors? I do not intend to.

HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [4.15 p.m.]: I commend Hon. Mick Gayfer for his contribution, and can only agree with him when he says he has not received a single communication requesting a change to the Legislative Council system. I join him because I, too, have not received any such communication. I have always held very strongly to the view that there should be a system of direct election to this House, as we have at the present time, with each province having two members.

I am somewhat intrigued by the performance of Government members in regard to this debate so far. Yesterday, when we commenced the debate, a number of Government members were extremely testy and very teasy, and interjected in profusion from their seats. Later it became apparent that it was unlikely that members of the Labor Party would contribute to the debate. I was disappointed at that prospect because I feel they have a job to do, to represent the position as they see it; and I am pleased that today we have had contributions from Hon. Garry Kelly and Hon. Robert Hetherington. I commend them for that approach because their own Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, Hon. Malcolm Bryce, indicated he wanted a constructive debate on this matter. During yesterday's proceedings I was a little concerned that that constructiveness might have foundered somewhat, but today we have had two contributions. I hope there will be others, because the Labor members represent people of Western Australia in this Parliament. They are paid to represent people, and have the privileges of the Parliament, and therefore I would expect them to play their part in this way.

I want to comment on the Bill as it affects the Legislative Council. It has been said by speakers on both sides—or on the three sides—of the argument that this House needs to be shown to be different from the Legislative Assembly. I subscribe to that view. The method

by which we arrive at these differences is, of course, subject to debate. I, for one, do not believe that this House in total should go to the polls on the same day and at the same time as candidates for the Legislative Assembly. I do not see that as doing anything to improve the workings of this second House. I much prefer the system we now enjoy, where half the Legislative Council comes up for election every three years, and the remaining half stays for a further three years and subsequently comes up for re-election.

That has proved to be a very stable and beneficial method for this State over many years. It has provided stability, and above all the people of this State, and indeed of Australia, are looking for stability in Government. There are so many pressures and worries within the community that I believe the bulk of the people are looking for steadfastness and stability to give them courage and confidence to tackle their problems in their own way. If we have both Houses of Parliament going to the polls at the same time, it will do nothing to enhance that objective.

We have seen a constant attack on the Legislative Council over quite some time, particularly by members of the ALP. These people and members of the media from time to time have threatened, blasted, abused and denigrated people with a different view to their own. That does not set a very good atmosphere for genuine attempts to achieve changes of any sort because if someone starts to belt someone else the other person is likely to get a little ruffled and say, "To heck with you, I won't cooperate." These people have abused this House and its system of electing its members in their various utterances and writings and this has done nothing to help the debate on this vital issue. I deplore what has taken place.

It is my guess that if a referendum of the people of Western Australia were to be held for them to decide whether they wanted a Legislative Council, an upper House, the people would overwhelmingly support the retention of the existing arrangement; they would want to change nothing.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Honourable members, I must again remind you that audible conversations are out of order.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: Sooner or later we may see changes to the Legislative Council, but right now the people of WA look to this House for stability in this State and the vast majority of them would be very loathe to see the powers of

this House and its system diminished, something which would make them feel threatened. The people rely on the members of this Chamber to provide them with a lead and the comfort that comes with stability.

I strongly support the introduction of a committee system of this House rather than a joint committee system. Members will be aware that I have spoken on this matter previously. Irrespective of the contents of this Bill, this House has work to do to put in place an adequate committee system so that we can give the people of WA an avenue through which they can present their points of view to the Parliament. A committee system in this House would provide that avenue. I have previously pointed to the Australian Senate's committee system to back up my view.

I strongly support a loaded vote value for the non-Perth metropolitan area. I do not support the one-vote-one-value concept. My colleagues have expounded on the reasons for this but I will reiterate the point that in this vast State there must be a loading ratio for those members representing electorates in the non-Perth metropolitan area. It just does not make sense, when in this age of electronic aids available in electorate offices, not to have such a weighting. The fact is that our electors expect their representatives to be available to them.

Members of Parliament are mere human beings, although at times some people seem to think we are machines. But country members must traverse great distances to service their electorates and like anyone else they get tired. Their family lifestyle is disrupted and restricted. Their families put up with this although they do not necessarily accept it. Because of this travelling we need some weight ratio to advantage—if I can use that word—those fewer electors in country areas away from the closely settled metropolitan regions.

As one who has had the privilege of representing country areas for nigh on 22 years, I believe it is preferable for a member to be elected in a direct contest, a one-on-one election, rather than by means of proportional representation. I believe that very strongly, because with proportional representation in a party system, candidates are at the mercy of selection committees which place candidates very largely according to party directives. To be successful a candidate must be seen to be solidly behind the party line rather than one who follows its general principles yet is prepared to exercise his own individual judgement at times.

I have been happy to belong to a party that has allowed me that licence to use my personal judgement on a whole range of issues, without fear or favour. The only people to whom I have to respond are my electors and the members of my selection committee, people from the province I represent. Because those people come from the province they have a direct say in choosing their candidate.

This arrangement would be weakened under a proportional representation system, where candidates would be selected according to the wishes of a strong party system and members of Parliament would not be able to exercise their individuality, something which I deplore. We come back to party favouritism and cronyism. Members of Parliament should be elected by the people of their area, not by party machines. If we undermine that concept we do a great disservice to what we call democracy. There are all sorts of definitions of democracy, but in real terms the bottom line is that in a democracy members of Parliament represent the people. The party system has a role to play but individual members have a greater role to play.

For the purpose of the record I will refer now to the situation in the United Kingdom, and Hon. Robert Hetherington alluded to this earlier this afternoon. On the question of size of electorates it is commonly said that the British model is the ideal democratic system, despite what I said previously about there being different ideas of democracy. I will quote from a document headed "Population Censuses and Surveys in Great Britain". The office which produced this is charged with overseeing electoral matters in the United Kingdom. Although these figures are six years old they still have relevance to this debate. The document is dated 20 May 1980 and I quote as follows—

Electoral statistics

Table 1 in this Monitor gives the number of parliamentary electors on the 1980 Register of Electors in each of the 635 parliamentary constituencies within the United Kingdom. It also gives the electoral quota (for definition see footnotes to Table 1) for each of the four countries of the United Kingdom and the amount and percentage by which each constituency differs from the electoral quota.

The four countries, England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, have their own systems of quotas so there is no uniformity as to the number of electors in each constituency. The

document shows the largest constituencies and the smallest in each country. In England the largest electorate is Buckingham with 110 117 electors and the smallest is Newcastle-upon-Tyne with 24 366 electors. In Wales the largest is Monmouth with 83 459 and the smallest is Merioneth with 27 652. In Scotland the largest is Midlothian with 103 339 and the smallest is Glasgow Central with 19 019. In Northern Ireland the largest is South Antrim with 130 324, and the smallest is Belfast West with 59 642. Those figures indicate the tremendous disparity between the smallest and the largest electorates.

For the sake of the record I wish to quote from the document at random to indicate the disparity in individual electorates throughout Great Britain—

Abingdon.....	99 202
Aldershot.....	89 442
Ashford.....	63 138
Aylesbury.....	77 703
Bromsgrove and Redditch.....	108 945
Buckingham	110 117
Burton	71 274
Colchester.....	93 531
Colne Valley.....	65 659
Gainsborough.....	67 359
Gravesend	91 204
Guildford	74 929
Horsham and Crawley.....	104 256
Houghton-le-Spring.....	61 115
Lewes.....	78 275
Lichfield and Tamworth.....	105 134
Newton.....	106 708
Normanton.....	62 183
Ripon.....	53 843
Rother Valley	101 866
South Hertfordshire	66 326
South Norfolk.....	103 265
Weston-Super-Mare	95 721
Whitehaven	53 890
Hounslow, Feltham and Heston.....	81 009
Islington Central.....	41 531
Barrow-in-Furness.....	54 580
Basildon.....	107 687.

The last figures I will give the House indicate the great disparity because both electorates are contiguous and the difference is quite stark. Kingston upon Hull East has 91 349 electors

and Kingston upon Hull West has 51 685. That is a difference of approximately 40 000 in contiguous electorates.

Those figures are fascinating. Undoubtedly there have been changes to the size of electorates since those figures were published because electoral boundary alterations are an ongoing process there. Nevertheless, these figures, officially published in 1980, illustrate the difference in the numbers of electors throughout Great Britain. We also have to have variations in the size of electorates in WA.

I do not believe proportional representation will give the stability we expect to elections. I am at odds with some of my colleagues, with members of the National Party, and with members of the Labor Party about these matters. Nevertheless, I am saying what I believe to be the case. It will be interesting to see the eventual vote that this House makes.

It has always fascinated me that this Government has gone to great lengths to introduce so-called electoral reform to change for change's sake. It is not necessarily reform that is sought. The Government was extremely embarrassed by a minute from a Cabinet meeting in Geraldton being leaked to the Opposition. An article appeared in the *Daily News* of 25 June 1986 stating, "Cabinet leak exposes tactics". That Cabinet leak did expose the Government's tactics. I do not know how I got a copy of this document but it sets out all sorts of ideas which are the basis for the Bill we are now debating. The then Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, Mr Arthur Tonkin, saw fit to resign from the Ministry after that meeting.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Ferry, have you got an actual Cabinet minute?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It purports to be, yes. I cannot guarantee its authenticity but it has come into my possession marked, "Cabinet Minute, Geraldton, 20 April 1986". I presume there is only one Government in this State and that this is a Cabinet document.

Hon. D. K. Dans: You know you should not have it, don't you?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It has come into my possession.

It is fascinating that Mr Tonkin decided to resign over this issue. It indicates also the shallowness of the Labor Party in trying to introduce changes because it seems from the evidence—it has not been denied by the Government—that Mr Tonkin resigned because he could not stomach the methods of his col-

leagues in relation to electoral reform. The Labor Party knows he resigned because of that, the Ministers know it, and the Premier knows it because he accepted Mr Tonkin's resignation. He is no longer a member of Cabinet and therefore I guess the document is authentic.

The Government is acting out a charade by introducing these changes based on so-called principles. The Labor Party does not have any principles. Mr Tonkin said in his letter of resignation that he was disappointed with his colleagues and felt he could no longer serve in the Government. It has been said in the Press and other places that he was horrified to hear his colleagues say that they must make absolutely sure that this Bill is defeated. What an indictment it is to introduce such a Bill and attempt to ensure its defeat. The Labor Party talks about honest Government.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Why don't you make us look foolish and vote for it?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: Before the elections, the Labor Party told the people that it would reform the Parliament, and particularly the Legislative Council. Where is the reform and where are its principles? It does not have any.

The Labor Party has sold itself out. This Bill is not a true reflection of the original intention. The Government has left out items that were destined to have been included in the Bill. That adds weight to what Mr Arthur Tonkin alluded to, namely, that the Government was dishonest with itself. Not only that, the Government has also been dishonest with the people of Western Australia.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: One thing we haven't tried is a gerrymander.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: This Government is being exposed. I am certainly doing my best to expose it.

Hon. D. K. Dans: We are under no threat if you are the only speaker.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It is being exposed by its own actions. The people are recognising the shallowness of this insipid Government that preys on the people and blends reform into the walls of the Parliament. The Government is monkeying around, hoping that its Bill will be defeated.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: Spot on!

Hon. D. K. Dans: Come and vote with us, Mr Ferry.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What a ridiculous thing to say!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. V. J. FERRY: Government members are very embarrassed about this. Although I cannot reach them, I feel for them.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I feel awfully bored.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: They are very embarrassed that their Premier, their Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform and their former Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform are at odds with each other. Many members on the Labor side of the Chamber want this Bill defeated.

Hon. Robert Hetherington: Name them!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. V. J. FERRY: There are also members of the Labor Party who would like the Bill to pass. They are very much divided. We have heard that acknowledgment from members opposite.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: Mr Bryce for one.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The Labor Party has paraded itself before the people of Western Australia as a party going forward with a clear-cut aim of bringing changes to the Parliament. The changes come thick and fast every day, as can be seen from a reading of the legislation. With respect to this legislation, the Government did not consult sufficiently with other members of the Parliament in order to ensure that when the Bill got here it would be a consensus Bill that would have a chance of passing through this Parliament.

The Government changed the Bill in another place. Therefore, those changes must have had merit. The Bill may never pass in this Chamber. It may never get a second reading. The Labor Party members might vote against it themselves, as they are so ashamed of it and would be glad to see it disappear. They would then be able to say that they knew that the upper House would vote against it.

Hon. T. G. Butler: Which one of us would vote against it?

Hon. P. G. Pandal: Your own Cabinet said that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Enough is enough and I will not tolerate any more. I suggest that the honourable member direct his comments to the Chair and that everybody else listen to them.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: This legislation is a charade on the part of the Government and Government members cannot deny it. It has been proven.

I mentioned earlier that I favour the system we have at present, by which members are elected for six years and half the House comes up for re-election every three years. I do not believe that the whole House should be elected at once because that runs counter to the practice of the vast majority of upper Houses throughout the world. Although many upper Houses are run differently, the Australian Senate, for example, is one of those whose members are elected on this basis. I favour that system and I do not support any proposal by which all members of the Legislative Council would come up for election at the one time.

My view on this matter is reinforced by the sure knowledge that there needs to be a continuity in the Parliament and a continuity in the responsible work undertaken by the Parliament. The electorate expects that. I do not believe that a system whereby the whole House had to be elected at once would serve that purpose. If we adopted such a system we would be moving towards a one-House situation such as that in Queensland. The Australian Labor Party is very embarrassed that in 1922 it abolished the Upper House in Queensland. It is now grizzling about the present system in Queensland, but it cannot have it both ways. The Labor Party is now grizzling about the lack of checks and balances in the one House in Queensland, but it brought it upon itself.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Hon. Russ Hinze told me one day that the only good thing the Labor Party did for Queensland was abolish the upper House.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: He is entitled to his opinion, as is Mr Dans, but members of that House were paid out for life. They were bought out.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Make me an offer.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: I do not control the Government Treasury, but the Minister is sitting next to the Minister for Budget Management and should ask him what offer he can make.

The Bill is a stunt by the Government. Many parts of the Bill can be considered in greater detail and can best be considered during the Committee stage. If the Bill passes the second reading, I have no doubt that I will enter into the debate at that time.

HON. N. F. MOORE (Lower North) [4.49 p.m.]: Mr President—

Hon. Tom Stephens: Here we go, a voice from the dark ages!

Hon. N. F. MOORE: Once again, Hon. Tom Stephens illustrates his great capacity for one-liners and demonstrates clearly his incapacity to make anything more than one-sentence speeches. This is illustrated by the speech that he has not made on this subject or the one that we can expect to hear or cannot expect to hear in a moment. I intend to address some of my remarks to Hon. Tom Stephens because I predict that he is one of those who may give some consideration to voting against this Bill, with his colleagues Hon. Mark Nevill, Hon. J. M. Brown and Hon. Tom Helm. When we start to consider the consequences of the legislation, we might find that two of those people will not be here if the Bill is passed. Perhaps they can toss up amongst themselves as to which two that will be.

Government members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I make this point for the final time. The next member who interjects will be named by me. I will not say it again. Every member has had fair warning and I will not tolerate this constant total disregard for the decorum of this place. Some members may not like the place and may want to do something about it. However, there are appropriate methods of doing it and while I am in the Chair they will not use larrikin tactics to denigrate this place. I remind members that the next member who interjects will be named.

Hon. N. F. MOORE: In 1977 I was elected to this Parliament to represent the people of Lower North Province, which province consisted of the two Assembly seats of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre. Because they are statutory seats they have not changed in those nine years. It is, therefore, my role as a member of Parliament to represent their interests, bearing in mind that as I was elected as a member of the Liberal Party I feel it incumbent on me to pursue the policies of the Liberal Party. My basic reason for being in Parliament is to represent the views of my constituents.

The Bill before the House seeks to change dramatically the circumstances in relation to my constituents. It changes their level of representation quite dramatically. I did not know until yesterday how dramatic those changes would be. If we look at the reply given to a question asked by Hon. D. J. Wordsworth yesterday, we find that the Government's proposed North and East Region encompasses the following existing Legislative Assembly electorates: Esperance-Dundas, Kalgoorlie, Gascoyne, Murchison-Eyre, Pilbara and Kimberley. This encompasses a region which

currently has six Legislative Assembly members and six Legislative Council members. Within that region we have the Legislative Council seats of North Province, Lower North Province, and South-East Province.

The legislation provides that there will be four Legislative Assembly members in the new region and three Legislative Council members; a reduction in Assembly members from six to four and a reduction in Legislative Council members from six to three.

I remind the House and those people who think that the country starts and finishes at Midland Junction that Lower North Province, which I currently represent, is 800 000 square kilometres in area—for those who have not yet caught up with kilometres, that is 500 000 square miles. When Hon. Peter Dowding was a member of this House he argued that his electorate was of a similar size. If we put North Province and Lower North Province together we have an area of one million square miles or 1.6 million square kilometres. If we add Kalgoorlie, which is pocket handkerchief size, plus Esperance-Dundas, an additional 100 000 square miles or so, we have an enormous part of Western Australia.

It can be seen on a map that the area about which I am talking is equivalent to the current Federal seat of Kalgoorlie. As we all know when we look at the performance of the member for Kalgoorlie, it is physically impossible for one man to represent an electorate of that size in the way in which people are entitled to be represented.

The change proposed in this legislation in respect of State parliamentary representation provides a dramatic decrease in representation. That must count against the interests of my constituents and the constituents of Hon. Tom Stephens, Hon. Tom Helm, Hon. Jim Brown and Hon. Mark Nevill, who are all involved.

As I mentioned earlier, looking at the potential future representation in the Legislative Council, if this Bill were passed, the North and East Region would have three members in this House. On past voting figures one could expect two Labor Party members and one Liberal Party member to represent that area. At present four Labor Party members represent the area so, in fact, two would have to go somewhere else. If I had a choice, I would have no trouble deciding which two should remain and which two should move off down the track, but I will not make that judgment now. I am sure the Government has worked it out in the

expectation that the Bill will be passed. Hon. Tom Stephens will perhaps magnanimously have said to his colleagues that he will step down. I have reservations about whether he has adopted that course of action.

Of these six seats in the Legislative Assembly, four are held by the Labor Party and two are held by the Liberal Party. In a rearranged boundary system in that area, based on the one-vote-one-value system proposed in the Bill, I would expect the Labor Party to win all the Assembly seats, although the Liberal Party may squeeze over the line in one seat, depending on the boundaries. Considering the overall area involved and bearing in mind that Kalgoorlie and Boulder will be part of it—I did not think they would be included when first considering these proposals—it means the Labor Party will win every Assembly seat.

That in itself is to the disadvantage of my constituents. It would be a tragedy for my constituents if they were represented only by Labor Party members of Parliament, with one Liberal Party member in the upper House. The Labor Party's record in remote areas is pretty miserable and people are entitled to better than that. I am here to argue on behalf on my constituents about how bad things are in remote areas; much more needs to be done and the people must receive a fair share of the taxpayers' cake. It is important for remote areas to have additional representation to press the arguments on their behalf.

It is easy to forget the people living in Mt Magnet, Wiluna and Cue because they live in small towns and are a long way from the seat of Government. They have little political clout because they are tiny communities. In some parts they still do not have television, even with the superior representation they have at present. With the reduction in representation proposed in the legislation, their interests will be sorely neglected.

Bearing in mind that I am here to represent the interests of my constituents, as I have said on numerous occasions when Bills of this nature are presented, I cannot support the legislation. It does nothing to improve the representation of my constituents; it goes a long way towards making certain that they have extremely bad representation. I argue strongly that the proposed Bill should be defeated at the second reading and I will certainly vote against it. I guess I may be supported, perhaps not loudly, by two current Labor Party members in that area whose jobs will disappear if the Bill is passed.

Finally I make the point made by Hon. V. J. Ferry: This Bill is an absolute charade. A person who is a Minister of the Crown and who takes the extreme step of resigning his commission as a Minister, must have been put in a position of extreme pressure. He must have felt that if he went along with his colleagues he would completely and totally compromise his principles. Resigning from Cabinet is a very serious and important matter and, as those members who are Cabinet Ministers appreciate, it would require extreme provocation and extreme difficulty in going along with the decisions made by his colleagues. The resignation by Mr Tonkin is the most significant aspect of this legislation which clearly indicates what the Government is about. The legislation is a nonsense and for that reason it should be thoroughly dispensed with at the second reading.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. Fred McKenzie.

[Questions taken.]

VALUATION OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 October.

HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [5.05 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the Minister's allowing debate on this Bill to be delayed to enable inquiries to be made about the effect of the proposed amendment. The delay enabled certain inquiries to be made and I can now indicate that I see no great impediment to the Bill's progress through the House.

I support the remarks made earlier by Hon. Max Evans and Hon. Phil Pandal about the lack of retrospectivity for people submitting claims seeking relief from incorrect assessments made in bygone times. The Bill proposes a very severe limit on how far a person can go back in respect of a complaint. Hon. Max Evans mentioned an incident which showed that mistakes have been made inadvertently which would indicate that adjustments need to be made to this provision. The Bill does not address the problem, which is a pity. I object to this deficiency but nonetheless I give the Bill my support.

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Minister for Budget Management) [5.06 p.m.]: Hon. Max Evans, Hon. Phil Pandal and now Hon. Vic Ferry have all drawn

attention to clause 13. This clause introduces new provisions to make it clear that where a valuation is amended as a result of an objection or appeal, that amendment does not have retrospective application for rating or taxing purposes. The amended valuation will apply only from the year in respect of which the objection was lodged.

I am advised that the amendment does not really introduce any new principle into the Act; rather it clarifies the position and reinforces what has always been the general practice.

The principle that a valuation which has been amended on objection or appeal should apply only from the year for which the objection was made, is sound.

A landowner has the right at any time to formally question by means of objection and then appeal the accuracy of the valuation applied for the purpose of imposing rates or taxes on his land. If he chooses not to do so until after the valuation has been in use for a period of time, that is his decision.

As a general principle rating and taxing authorities are entitled to assume, once a year has come to a close, that their ratepayers and taxpayers have accepted as correct the level of valuations used. It would be unsatisfactory if there were always some contingent liability hanging around the neck of these authorities because landowners might at any time in the future challenge a valuation and then demand a refund for past years.

However, it should not be thought that the insertion of the proposed new section 34A means that it is not possible for the Valuer General to retrospectively adjust a valuation where he discovers that some serious act or significant error has occurred in its determination.

Section 23 of the Valuation of Land Act has always allowed the Valuer General to make an interim valuation of a particular piece of land where, among other things, in his opinion it is necessary or expedient for any reason that such land be valued.

Subsection (5) of section 23 provides that the Valuer General may determine the effective date of any such interim valuation, whether that date be retrospective or prospective.

Hon. Max Evans appears to have concluded that the insertion of proposed new section 34A would in the future prevent the Valuer General from retrospectively adjusting a valuation

where an error had occurred in the valuation procedure, as happened in the Perth Chamber of Commerce case.

That conclusion is incorrect. The Valuer General was able to adjust the Perth Chamber of Commerce valuation under the provisions of section 23. That section remains unchanged and any future errors could likewise be corrected.

Mr Pandal suggests that "a gross error" was made in the case of Mr Pinder because the Valuer General valued the wrong area of land.

The Valuer General advises that in the Pinder case the area of the lot in question was wrongly shown on the map on which the valuations were recorded. However, he emphasises that the valuation was not in fact determined on the basis of its area. It was determined having regard to the physical attributes of the land as disclosed by actual inspection.

Had an error been made as suggested by Mr Pandal, then the Valuer General could have rectified the problem under the provisions of section 23. Again, clause 13 of the Bill does not affect that position.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon. John Williams) in the Chair; Hon. J. M. Berinson (Minister for Budget Management) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1: Short title—

Hon. MAX EVANS: I thank the Minister for his clear explanation of the matter.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 14 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon. J. M. Berinson (Minister for Budget Management), and transmitted to the Assembly.

CONTROL OF VEHICLES (OFF-ROAD AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [5.15 p.m.]: The Opposition does not oppose this Bill but there are a number of questions I would like to direct to the Minister in charge of the Bill.

The Bill will achieve an increase in the advisory committee of two persons. At the moment there are five permanent members on the committee. The committee is appointed by the Minister for a term of three years and the term is renewable. The Government proposes to increase that number to seven; one being a person who is experienced in the operation of four-wheel drive vehicles and the other a person nominated by the Minister to represent conservation and land management.

The Act provides for five members consisting of a chairman appointed by the Minister, a person accepted by the Minister on behalf of local government, a person representing country shire councils and two persons selected with appropriate experience in the operation of off-road vehicles. Could the Minister advise who is the chairman and who are the two persons who have experience in the operation of off-road vehicles.

I refer to the proposed inclusion of a representative from CALM. With the proliferation of four-wheel drive vehicles and off-road vehicles in the metropolitan area and most certainly in country areas, it is now fashionable for people to own a four-wheel drive vehicle with the intention of driving off-road—to get out into the bush and enjoy it, to investigate and travel through remote and difficult areas where roads are not suitable.

Over the years, tens of thousands of vehicles have been purchased for that reason and their control has become more of a problem and better advice is needed. Of great concern is the damage that has been caused to some beach areas by four-wheel drive and off-road vehicles. Conservation groups and the Department of Conservation and Land Management have become more and more concerned as people gain these vehicles and use them off the road. An expert in conservation and land management will be very useful on this advisory committee. I accept that inclusion.

Could the Minister give me some background of the experience of the chairman and more particularly who the two persons are and

what experience they have in the operation of off-road vehicles.

HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [5.18 p.m.]: The National Party is not at variance with this Bill nor with what the Leader of the Opposition has said in his speech. However, like Hon. G. E. Masters we wonder how the Government will select the person considered to be appropriate as a representative of the four-wheel drive users. What are the standards to be set?

Hon. G. E. Masters said it has now become fashionable to own a four-wheel drive vehicle. Might I remind Hon. G. E. Masters that four-wheel drive vehicles in country areas, in many cases, are the greatest invention since sliced bread. It means that one can get from point A to point B through the terrain we have to cover, particularly in the station country, whereas before it was not possible.

When I see a considerable quantity of four-wheel drive vehicles in the metropolitan area, look at their shiny exteriors, the silverware, roll bars, water bag carriers and the petrol carrier on the back, I wonder what the hell they think they are doing and who they think they are kidding. One only has to drive behind them to see there is no mud on the underside. I agree the four-wheel drive vehicles are fashionable in the city and becoming a glorious toy, costing \$38 000 for a Toyota and up to \$80 000 for a Mercedes, possibly more these days.

I often wonder at the mentality of the people who are buying them. They are monstrosities to park, but they are absolutely necessary in the country on certain occasions. I would imagine that the person to be chosen as one who is experienced in the operation of four-wheel drive vehicles would have to come from the country.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: He would have to have mud on his bonnet, for sure.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, mud on the vehicle and all those things.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: And a water bag.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, and the petrol container full at the back, and a shovel.

Hon. Doug Wenn interjected.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: If one wants to cook a steak on the road one lights a fire and puts the shovel on. One puts on the steak and then cracks an egg. That is the best steak and egg anyone will eat in his life, especially if the shovel has been used to clean the septic tank the day before!

I assure members that some people do know a lot about four-wheel drive vehicles, but they are not necessarily those people in the metropolitan area with bright and shiny vehicles. People living in Hon. Tom Stephens' electorate would have more experience with four-wheel drive vehicles than anyone else, and the next most experienced would be people in the Murchison, and so on down the line. We are interested to know who will be appointed and whether that person will have a water bag, a shovel, and a petrol can on his vehicle. It may be that the appointment will be challenged when it is made. I have no objection to a conservationist being on the board, but I have a shrewd suspicion there will be two, and one will be a conservationist with a four-wheel drive vehicle.

I have no ulterior motive in saying this, but the committee could be overloaded with conservation-minded people, and all those members of the public who want to take their shiny four-wheel drive vehicles for a spin on Sunday into inaccessible places will not be able to do so because the majority of the people on the board will be conservationists. The effect will be the reverse of what the Government expects in appointing to the committee someone with experience of four-wheel drive vehicles.

We support the Bill but we have a query about it in relation to who this person might be and what might be his particular bent.

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [5.24 p.m.]: I have taken on board the questions raised by Hon. Gordon Masters and Hon. Mick Gayfer. I appreciate the indication from Hon. Gordon Masters that he does not want to delay the passage of the Bill pending a reply, but there is not so much pressure on this legislation that we are prevented from pausing between the second reading and the Committee stage to obtain the answers for him. I propose, therefore, after the passage of the second reading to defer the Committee stage to a future sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

CO-OPERATIVE AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon. J. M. Berinson (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [5.26 p.m.]: On behalf of Hon. Kay Hallahan, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In 1973 the Co-operative and Provident Societies Act 1903 was amended whereby the maximum shareholding permitted by a member was increased from \$5 000 to \$10 000. The purpose of this Bill is to increase the maximum shareholding from \$10 000 to \$50 000 or such other amount as may be prescribed.

The purpose of the increase is to allow the societies to finance their expansion through increases in equity rather than by external borrowings. This purpose is in line with the cooperative criteria, whereby these societies exist to benefit members only.

The requested increase would only strengthen the equity base of the society in real terms, equivalent to slightly in excess of eight per cent over the last 12 years.

The requested increase has been supported by the societies. The increase will not disturb the voting power as the Act still provides that all members have equal voting power.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. G. E. Masters (Leader of the Opposition).

SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon. J. M. Berinson (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [5.28 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill amends the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act 1938 to allow members to exit the existing State Superannuation Fund.

Currently, although membership of the State Superannuation Fund is voluntary, once a person elects to join the fund membership can be terminated only by resignation from Government employment. The past practice of some State Government employers has required compulsory membership of a superannuation fund, and many people joined the State fund on this basis. Subsequently, this practice of

compulsory membership has been discarded. Nevertheless, one consequence of the practice of compulsory membership is that the fund acquired a number of involuntary members.

Because of the unit-based design of the existing State fund, involuntary members have been able to satisfy the employment condition of superannuation coverage by holding the minimum of two units which, for all intents and purposes, results in no effective superannuation benefit for the people involved.

Members will be aware that a number of public sector employees who have reduced their unit holding to a minimum have made alternative superannuation arrangements. These people have not been able to claim their alternative superannuation contributions as a tax deduction because the Commissioner of Taxation has ruled that technically they remain in an employer-sponsored scheme.

The proposal to allow members to exit the State fund should be of assistance to these people in that it would provide them with the opportunity to enter into alternative superannuation arrangements which attract tax deductions.

In addition, the proposal to allow members to exit the existing fund has been framed in the context of finalising the design of new superannuation arrangements for public sector employees. One of the options under consideration is to offer contributing members of the existing State fund transition to a new fund, the basis of which is being finalised. Importantly, if members elect to exit the existing fund prior to the introduction of the new arrangements, they will be given no credit for past service if they seek to enter the new fund. Those members who wish to have continuity of superannuation cover in joining the new fund will be advised to wait until the new arrangements, including any transitional arrangements, are announced.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. A. A. Lewis.

ACTS AMENDMENT (PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon. J. M. Berinson (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [5.31 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In order to facilitate the passage of the Bill, an explanatory memorandum has been prepared for the assistance of members and interested parties.

The Bill is arranged in two parts. The first part deals with amendments to the Parliamentary Superannuation Act in the expectation that the trustees of the fund would continue to have the general responsibility of administration of the fund and some incidental matters.

The second part of the Bill covers amendments to the Salaries and Allowances Act so that certain matters relating to parliamentary superannuation will be brought within the jurisdiction of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

Part 1 of the Bill seeks to amend the Parliamentary Superannuation Act 1970 to provide for—

- (a) Recognition of de facto spouses;
- (b) members of the fund who retire voluntarily after completing 12 years' membership or who have served in four complete Parliaments to be eligible for a pension;
- (c) loss of endorsement by a political party to be a ground for the emergence of a pension;
- (d) pensions to be increased twice a year in accordance with movements in the Consumer Price Index;
- (e) members of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund to have the right to elect to convert to a lump sum payment up to 100 per cent of their annual pension entitlement;
- (f) an increase in the conversion factor from 10 to 12 for calculating lump sum payments when members decide to commute part or all of their annual pension entitlement; and
- (g) withdrawal of the spouse's benefit in respect of whatever portion of the pension is commuted to a lump sum.

Other amendments in the Bill in part II are to the Salaries and Allowances Act 1975 to give the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal jurisdiction to—

- (a) Determine rates of contributions, pensions and benefits of members of the fund;
- (b) determine the rate of pension accrual;
- (c) adjust basic pensions in recognition of higher offices occupied by members of Parliament; and
- (d) determine the age at which the reducing commutation factor applies.

None of the proposals in the Bill will give the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal any jurisdiction to determine matters with retrospective effect.

After the Bill has completed its passage in Parliament, the Premier will ask the Chairman of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to conduct, as soon as possible, an inquiry into those aspects of parliamentary superannuation which are within the tribunal's jurisdiction and will emphasise the importance of the tribunal issuing a determination soon after the inquiry is concluded.

The Government's consulting actuary has given the Government advice on estimates of cost savings which will flow from giving full commutation rights to retiring members of Parliament and an increased conversion factor of 12.

The savings which can be achieved are dependent on the following two factors—

- (a) The average age at which the retirement takes place; and
- (b) the extent to which members exercise such an option.

The actuary has calculated the savings assuming various average retirement ages and 100 per cent participation by members. This is demonstrated by the following table—

Average at Retirement	Capital Value of Savings	Annual Savings
50	\$6.510 m	\$369 000
55	\$7.122 m	\$404 000
60	\$6.557 m	\$372 000
65	\$4.731 m	\$268 000

On average, the annual actuarial savings would be of the order of \$300 000 under a conversion factor of 12.

The current actuarial deficit of the fund would be reduced by members commuting large proportions of their pension. In time, this

would reduce the amount the Government must pay in real terms to offset the actuarial deficiency. However, the effect of the savings reducing the liability of the fund would not emerge until after the actuarial valuation for the three-year period ending on 30 June 1989 is completed.

Bearing in mind the cost savings the Government is achieving under the Bill and the need for responsibility and restraint in current economic circumstances, the Premier will advise the tribunal that, in conducting the inquiry, a conservative approach to the review should be adopted.

Although the minimum pension payable under our State's parliamentary fund is the lowest in Australia and our maximum pension is some three per cent below the Australian average of maximum rates, the Premier will suggest to the tribunal in strong terms that new rates determined by the tribunal should be very close to the average rates applicable in other Australian parliamentary funds.

I mention to members that they are not fettered in any way from making individual submissions to the tribunal in respect of superannuation issues when the Bill has been passed.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. V. J. Ferry.

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon. Kay Hallahan (Minister for Community Services), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. KAY HALLAHAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Community Services) [5.37 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is consequential on the Environmental Protection Bill 1986, which amongst other things consolidates principles established within the Environmental Protection Act, Clean Air Act, certain sections of the Noise Abatement Act, and part IIIA of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act.

The Bill seeks to repeal those Acts and sections which are made redundant by the Environmental Protection Bill 1986, as well as allowing for appropriate amendments to be

made to other Statutes which themselves refer to the Environmental Protection Act 1971-80. In particular, it ensures consistency between other legislation and the Environmental Protection Bill when it becomes law.

One of the main thrusts of this Acts amendment and repeal Bill is to allow for sections of the Noise Abatement Act 1972 to remain in place or to be amended so as to assist the Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare in carrying out its duties with respect to hearing conservation in the workplace. This Bill has been prepared in consultation with that department. Members would recall in this regard that the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984 enables the use of relevant legislation to achieve the objective of protecting the work force in industry. In this context, the Noise Abatement Act is used to facilitate regulation of factory noise problems.

Other aspects of the Bill are framed to allow for the Chief Executive Officer, established under the new Environmental Protection Bill, to contribute as a member, or to nominate appropriate specialist persons to represent him, on relevant committees and advisory bodies set up under other Acts. These amendments, therefore, are aimed at ensuring consistency of environmental advice by providing for continued representation, in particular, on the Mines Ventilation Board, the Metropolitan Planning Council, and the Western Australian Water Resources Council.

Furthermore, where under section 26A of the Fisheries Act an aggrieved person prevented under that Act from depositing substances which might have a serious effect on the aquatic environment formerly could appeal to the Director of Environmental Protection, he will now be able to appeal to the Chief Executive Officer. The basis of this amendment is to ensure continuing consistency, as I have already indicated.

Section 6 of the Mining Act 1978 requires that it be read and construed subject to the Environmental Protection Act. In the event of an inconsistency, the latter, to the extent of the inconsistency, must prevail. Clause 8 of this Bill provides for that approach to continue.

Clause 9 makes it clear that with the passage of the Environmental Protection Bill 1986, the Minister responsible for the Mining Act will continue to consult with the Minister through whom the new Environmental Protection Act is administered in matters to do with mining on foreshores, the seabed of the State, land

under navigable water, and any land reserved as a site for a town.

In addition, members would be aware that the Waterways Conservation Act 1976 requires the Waterways Commission to take account of directions from the Environmental Protection Authority, and as necessary to consult with the authority. This Bill seeks to continue all such arrangements set out in the Waterways Conservation Act.

As indicated earlier, through this Bill the current Environmental Protection Act will be repealed, along with the Clean Air Act, certain sections of the Noise Abatement Act and part IIIA of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. With respect to these matters there has been consultation with all relevant authorities and their contribution is greatly appreciated.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. A. A. Lewis.

MISCELLANEOUS REPEALS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November.

HON. P. G. PENDAL (South Central Metropolitan) [5.40 p.m.]: If anyone becomes nostalgic about this sort of thing, now is the time to get out the hanky. This is a much vaunted piece of Government legislation which will do a number of things, but principally it will remove from the Statute book some of the more exotic pieces of legislation which have been in force in some cases for over 112 years.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You must determine whether this was at the time of the Crimean War.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: We were led to believe that the honourable member who interjected took part in that debate, therefore we seek his guidance on that point.

The Bills deal with such diverse matters as The Exportation of Horses Act 1874; The Foreign Recruiting Act 1874, and many others, including The Shipwrecked Colonial Seaman's Act 1880.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is how the Leader of the House got here.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I am asking to be struck off the roll.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: There is perhaps one lesson to learn in the process of repealing those Statutes, and that is the brevity with which they went on to the Statute book in the first place. I was not able to go through each of those Acts,

but as a matter of interest, The Naval Deserters Act, which was passed in July 1884, took 2½ minutes to introduce and then, no doubt to ministerial delight, when it reached the Committee stage, we are told that the Bill passed through Committee sub silentio. Even with my poor Latin, I imagine that that means no-one had a word to say about it. At least three Ministers on the front bench of this House would wish that we dealt with a lot of legislation in that way now.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Actually we thought the present second reading might be an appropriate sub silentio occasion.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It is interesting that Hon. Joe Berinson has interjected, because it might have been appropriate for him to introduce this repeal Bill. As I recall it, it was Malcolm Fraser who was responsible for ending something of his political life in 1975, and it might have been appropriate therefore for the Attorney General to have introduced this Bill, because it would have given him an opportunity to put an end to many Acts of another Malcolm Fraser who, as Colonial Secretary in 1884, put on the Statute book some of those Bills, in particular The Naval Deserters Act. That was clearly a prerogative the Leader of the House took unto himself when he introduced this Bill a few days ago.

Secondly, and on a more substantial note, when I heard the second reading speech of the Minister last night, I took particular note of the comment he made that this stripping of the Statute book was part of an on-going procedure coordinated by the Office of Regulatory Review. That has been overtaken by events. I notice that a member of the Opposition in another place last night raised the point I was going to raise, but I will nonetheless mention it, albeit in passing.

The Office of Regulatory Review is of such consequence in the Government that nowhere can it be found in the Budget papers. Presumably, therefore, it is one of those oddities which exist but which nobody can find out about. Nobody knows where it resides in the Government. In the time available to me I have not been able to find it.

Hon. John Williams: Sub silentio!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Yes indeed. While it is probably of some value to be stripping the Statute books of old and archaic bits of law which are no longer in use, I do not think one should fall into the trap of believing this is a serious

part of law reform. Of course that is the mould in which it is presented to the House.

We were told in the course of the Minister's second reading speech that last year legislation abolishing eight statutory agencies and repealing six Acts was passed. Each of those statutory bodies and each of the six Acts which were repealed were in the mould of those before us at the moment. In other words it would not matter a jot if they remained on the Statute books because they require no administration. To my knowledge they do not require any reprint; they just happen to be exhausted. Therefore one cannot say we are embarking on a serious law reform exercise by repealing these Statutes. Whether they stay or whether they are repealed is of no consequence whatsoever.

Hon. Tom Stephens: Long speeches like this probably discourage the repeal of further legislation.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I shall plough on regardless. If anything, the Statutes we are repealing—I can refer the member back to the reasons for their being on the Statute books in the first place—are a reminder of the timeless nature of man's attempts to legislate for his fellows. We are dealing with 10 Acts here. Nothing changes in the course of 100 years.

In 1884, in the *Hansard* of that session, there was a great deal of discussion of inter-governmental relations. Now, 102 years down the track, nothing has changed. Only recently the Constitutional Commission in Western Australia has been trying to come to grips with that very issue. Some of these Statutes in 1884 deal with the submarine telegraph. Now, 102 years down the track, we are still trying to deal with people's rights of access to communication. The Aussat satellite has just been put into orbit, so nothing has changed there.

These Statutes came into operation 15 years before Australia became a federated nation. One member referred in glowing terms to what he called the grand fabric. That was his reference to that dream many people had of a federated Australia. Clearly the Opposition has to agree to the removal of these Statutes from the book.

May I end on one note which I think is relevant today. I am not in a position, in the short time the Bill has been before the House, to determine whether we should be removing it all because the Opposition has had the Bill in front of it for no more than 24 hours.

It seems to me that one thing has not altered in 102 years, and that is the lack of research facilities given to members of Parliament. Whatever they had then is what we have now, and to a large extent one operates in the dark by suggesting to one's colleagues that they should go along with the Government and remove these Acts from the Statute books. We must take the Government at its word, and I must admit that on the face of it, the Statutes should be removed.

We support the Bill.

HON. MAX EVANS (Metropolitan) [5.51 p.m.]: When we have 24 hours to look through a Bill like this, which refers to Acts going back to last century, it seems our priorities are all wrong. Included in the Statutes to be removed is an Act which deals with the black marketing of brown horses to India for the Crimean War, for the Light Brigade—or, as it is India, for the dark brigade. There is plenty of rhetoric but it does not tell us anything much about what the committee is doing.

I would like to know what has happened since the Deputy Premier, Mr Bryce, launched this red tape review committee about two years ago at a wonderful luncheon at the Merlin Hotel. It was a big ceremony at which it was said that all the old Acts would be got rid of, there was a cutting-of-red-tape ceremony with a big pair of scissors, and a pledge that a great job would be done.

As previous speakers have said, if we look at what we got through last time, there is nothing world-shattering there. What we have now is even less world-shattering. We are led to believe we should give credit to this Government for getting rid of a lot of legislation.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Do not forget that it created employment.

Hon. MAX EVANS: That is correct. It was a beautiful lunch. I do not know who paid for that. The cost of that luncheon should have been in the Budget.

Hon. D. K. Dans: You must have been better connected than me—I did not get an invitation.

Hon. MAX EVANS: I am sorry, I will see to it next time. The review of red tape will be an ongoing thing, because there is plenty to be reviewed. That happened two years ago. The red tape committee, under Bill Lapsley of the Australian Institute of Management, set up by the Liberal Government, brought together all this stuff so that when the committee was set up two years ago there was a huge list of things

to get on with. It seems that it has done very little. I hope it has cost us very little. Honourable members say there is nothing for the committee in the Budget, and that is all there should be for it, for what it has done. It created a lot of interest for historians. Many people have had fun reading these things and getting a few laughs, but it has not brought us very much.

There is a reference to the Bills of Sale Act, and once again I will refer to the rhetoric. I wish the Attorney General was here, because he takes great credit for this. In a previous speech to the House he said that amendments to the Bills of Sale Act passed earlier this session obviated the need for lodging notice of intention to register a bill of sale. As members will remember, this was a Bill going back to 1895, and significant changes were made to it. The Attorney General said it was significant that that action was illustrated by the fact that 88 000 documents lodged during the past 29 months no longer needed to be lodged.

However, in a question I asked following my speech some months ago, the Minister was asked whether if people stopped lodging documents, we would save in the area of staff—in other words, get rid of them. The Attorney General said the lodging procedure was bogging us down with more staff and more space, which was needed to handle those 88 000 documents. But a couple of weeks ago he told us no staff had been saved—they are all still there.

I pointed out to the Minister that the revenue raised from those 88 000 documents was \$616 000, at \$7 a document. We have lost that revenue but have not saved a penny on wages, yet we are led to believe that the committee has done a great job. Let us get things in perspective. We are supposed to say a great job has been done, but no saving has been made. The Western Australian Arts Council will go on in the same way, because although there is no Council there is a department. The General Insurance Brokers Act went by the board because there is a National Insurance Brokers Act.

I ask the Government to give us something real on this red tape issue. I could tell the Government of a lot more in local government Acts. In my younger days I read an Act which said that a lady could not walk down Bay View Terrace, Claremont with a hat pin in the back of her hat because it might poke someone's eyes out. That Act is probably still in force today. I noticed the other day that in relation to

the Mosman Park waterfront a lawyer brought up the point that the workers going across the foreshore were not properly dressed according to the Act. That Act probably went back to about 1920. There are many Acts like that which probably do not matter very much and are nice for historians to read.

The Government should get down to some real legislation and get rid of a lot of Acts which will save a lot of money.

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.55 p.m.]: I thank members for their support of the Bill. I have been puzzling for a long time as to who thought up the game of Trivial Pursuit, and I am convinced he was a member of Parliament.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: On the Government side.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon. John Williams) in the Chair; Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the House) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Repeals—

Hon. N. F. MOORE: The schedule to Part II—Subsidiary Legislation lists in paragraph 8 a series of by-laws made under the Water Boards Act 1904. It then refers to a number of places within my electorate—Big Bell, Carnarvon, Cue-Day Dawn, Leonora, Meekatharra, Mt Magnet, Sandstone, and Wiluna. Would the Minister tell me the effect of repealing this subsidiary legislation with respect to those water boards?

Hon. D. K. DANS: As far as I can ascertain, water boards have long since ceased to exist. If Hon. Norman Moore can dig up one that is still in operation, perhaps I would be prepared to take it down to the Minister in charge of the Bill and say that he has made a fool of himself.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the House), and passed.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed from 29 October.

HON. DOUG WENN (South-West) [5.59 p.m.]: I support the motion and compliment the Government on an honest and responsible Budget.

I am concerned about the problems we have here in Australia that have in some ways been created by overseas problems. Despite the general recovery in our economic activities since the 1982-83 recession, the outlook for the world economy does give some cause for increased concern.

Most of the problems nowadays come about in balancing depressed commodities. The principal problem, as I see it, is accelerating protectionism.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. DOUG WENN: We are still in the grip of a world recession which I think will threaten Australia more than many people think. It has come about because of imbalances of trade, increased commodity prices, and increased protection of goods by other countries. Protectionism is no more apparent anywhere else than it is in America. That country is subsidising its wheat sales to Russia by huge amounts. It has made tremendous inroads into our trade with Russia to the extent that immediately the Americans thought that we might increase some of our sales to Russia, it increased its protection.

I wish to quote from the National Bank of Australia monthly bulletin, copies of which are available from the National Bank if members care to write to it. They are full of very good information, particularly about Australia's economy. This one states—

The problems in the world economy have been caused by a number of inter-related developments, including adjustment to the application of new production and communication technologies, the cycles of economic activity. However, at a more fundamental level, the present problems reflect the growing conflict between essentially different approaches to world economic matters, which can be labelled the 'international economy' and the emerging 'global economy.'

This of course is also reflecting on the Australian economy and as international trade became increasingly important as a

source of wealth creation for national economies, government has been entrusted with the task of overseeing the institutional framework within which trade takes place.

In democratic regimes these responsibilities have been combined with accountability to the domestic community—

I want members to listen very carefully to the next part which states—

—and governments have been expected to protect the national interest in the face of political and economic threats from internal and external sources.

That is happening much too often for the good of Australia. We have only to remember what happened when a member of the other House sent letters to Mr Shultz, the American Secretary of State.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Are you still trying to extract mileage from that?

Hon. DOUG WENN: If I have done nothing else, Mr President, I have at last got their attention. That member encouraged the subsidisation of American grain sales to Russia to bring down the socialist Government in this country. That is the only reason he did what he did. He offered no apology whatsoever. I think the National Party must have been rapt in what he did. His only explanation was that he was very sorry, but the only thing he was sorry for was that he got caught. That was the only apology he offered to the Australian people. He did not care how far he pushed people down or what effect that letter might have had on the rural community of this country. He wrote that letter for his own political gain, and he should be dragged across the coals for what he did.

Maybe Hon. Phil Pental thinks that I am trying to gain political mileage out of this matter, but it has been said in this House before that that member should be castigated for what he did. If members opposite condone what he said, they also should be condemned.

Hon. Gordon Masters often refers to the fact that members on this side of the House have very little knowledge of how small businesses operate. The member is either very naive or very ignorant.

Hon. Graham Edwards: A good quinella.

Hon. DOUG WENN: Recently I represented the Premier at an Australian naturalisation ceremony. Also present was Hon. Max Evans. He spoke for a great length of time, to the degree

that he embarrassed the person performing the ceremony. He kept saying how we had created the problem, but he did not use the words "the Labor Government". Apparently they stuck in his throat. He carried on until I turned to him and said that I had been there already. I told him that I had been in small business even though I might have done a few dollars through my own ignorance and through not knowing how small businesses should be run. He had a look of complete surprise on his face because he thought he was talking to someone who did not understand. I do not put myself in the same class as Hon. Max Evans as far as finance matters go—I know he is a trained accountant. However, small businesses in Australia are very important because they are the largest employers and provide continuing services to consumers. Those businesses, though, are not making the profits. The profits are being made by the large conglomerates which send a large percentage of their profits overseas to parent companies.

The other day I picked up a paper which interested me greatly. It referred to the top 10 companies to which I will refer in a minute. I could not believe it when I read that, in six months, those companies had made profits totalling \$1.5 billion.

Hon. Tom Helm: How much tax did they pay?

Hon. DOUG WENN: Recent statements in the Press indicate that some of those companies are paying only four per cent tax and others just over 10 per cent tax. That is a disgrace. It was also pointed out that if they paid their full share of tax, Australia's overseas borrowings would drop to almost nothing. I think we should seriously consider forcing those companies to accept their responsibilities to other taxpayers of this country.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Well, you're the Government. Make them pay.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Read out the rest of what it says about the Hawke Government.

Hon. DOUG WENN: It does not actually go through that. If members opposite listen for a moment, I will tell them what might be thought in that regard. I will read out the top 10 profit margins made in this country in six months. BHP had a profit margin of \$574.4 million in a half year; Westpac had one of \$182.2 million.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. DOUG WENN: The National Australia Bank had a profit margin of \$156.6 million; ANZ Bank, \$143.6 million; News Limited, \$133.9 million; Coles-Myer, \$115.3 million; Santos, \$79.4 million; Boral, \$74.4 million; Bell Resources, \$69.5 million; and Elders IXL, \$61.8 million. The top 10 profit margins amounted to more than \$1.5 billion in six months.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! When I call "Order" I am trying to get the attention of all members. I said earlier this afternoon that interjections would not be tolerated. That state of affairs still exists. The honourable member is entitled to speak and to say what he wants to say. Members do not have to agree with it, but they should let him say it.

Hon. DOUG WENN: Thank you, Mr President.

If anyone wants to get hold of the figures, they are freely available. They come from the 1986 *Business Review Weekly* Statex corporate scoreboard.

We are continually told how bad the economy in Australia is, yet we have approximately 25 000 millionaires in this country. Every one of them is suddenly starting to complain that profit margins are falling. I am sorry that Hon. Gordon Masters is not here. Members opposite should realise that a small business can be destroyed by perpetual badmouthing of what is happening in the business world. Word of mouth is probably one of the most potent forms of advertising available. It can make a business or completely destroy it.

Hon. N. F. Moore: You should have been here in 1976.

Hon. DOUG WENN: Unfortunately, I was not, so I have no idea of what the member is talking about.

I am sorry Hon. Gordon Masters is not here, because I would like to point out to him that the New Right is part of that group indulging in badmouthing everything going on around it. We have only to consider the make-up of the New Right to understand why the country is in its present condition. If these people were to say, "Come on Australia. We have this going; we have that going", we would probably see people overseas looking at Australia and saying, "Well, they are confident; we are confident." But unfortunately that does not happen.

Mr Charles Copeman is really at the top of it all. I have heard many words spoken about this fellow. Some tell me that he is a very intelligent man and that he has taken on a job that Governments of all political persuasions have failed to take on.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: True.

Hon. DOUG WENN: However, others tell me that the man is a nut.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: That is not becoming of you.

Hon. DOUG WENN: I will not challenge either side.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: That's not becoming of you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. John Williams): Order! The Deputy President will decide what is becoming. I heard the President say that there were to be no further interjections. Unless someone wants an early night, there will be no further interjections.

Hon. DOUG WENN: Many people in the northern area would have decided views on the man's mentality. We have only to consider the irreparable damage he has done to the iron ore industry in the north with the action he has taken through Peko Wallsend. I can just imagine members opposite applauding the actions that he has taken. I was thinking about it the other day and wondered whether the three members who sit on the Opposition front bench, in particular, really thought about the little catchery that they have been spouting for the five months that I have been here, namely, "What about the little man; what about the worker?" Of course, they all back big business. They do not care about the little man or about the worker.

Hon. G. E. Masters: We care about them more than you do, if the truth be known.

Hon. DOUG WENN: I do not intend to challenge the mental attitude of Charles Copeman, but through Peko Wallsend he has destroyed not only the workers employed by Peko, but also their families. That aspect has been completely disregarded.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Ha, ha!

Hon. DOUG WENN: The honourable member may laugh about it.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I was laughing at you.

Hon. DOUG WENN: Two months ago I visited Karratha and attended a meeting. The number of distraught families at that meeting was appalling. Mr Copeman gave no thought

whatsoever to the wives and children in those communities. Families have been forced to leave the north-west because of his actions. They have come to Perth, and some of them will have no option but to go on the dole. I bet that some members opposite are already calling them dole bludgers.

Hon. N. F. Moore: You really are a most extraordinary person.

Hon. DOUG WENN: I have here a newspaper photograph of a family lady with children. She and her family have been forced out of town. The article reports the general manager of Peko Wallsend as saying, "You can't afford to be sensitive." He does not care what he has done to those families who have lived in the north-west all their lives. Their children have lived in the same houses since they were born. However, those families are now being forced to come to the city, and the parents of the children are forced to go on the dole. Not happy with that, Mr Copeman charged back to the Eastern States and sacked 500 workers on the spot from the Besco battery factory in Sydney. He is certainly a man to look up to!

Others influential in the New Right include Mr Elliott. He is President of the Liberal Party and chairman of the IXL group of companies. I pointed out before how his profit margins were going. It was reported the other day that he pays just over 10 per cent tax on his millions. To top it off, guest speaker at the first meeting of the H. R. Nicholls Society was Sir John Kerr! If anyone wants a character reference on him, I am sure Gough Whitlam would give him a real beauty.

Hon. A. A. Lewis interjected.

Hon. DOUG WENN: The honourable member came back to interject. However, I have made my point and believe people like Mr Copeman should think a little more about what they are doing to the industrial relations system in the north and what their actions have done to the families of those who worked for them.

I now turn to something of importance to my electorate, the wine industry.

Hon. N. F. Moore: Stick to something you know something about.

Hon. Tom Stephens: That will give you a broad field, won't it, Doug?

Hon. DOUG WENN: It certainly will.

The wine industry in the south-west is booming. It has become very strong because overall it is making very good wine. It is mak-

ing competitive wine which is being sold throughout Australia.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Tell us what you think about the wine tax.

Hon. DOUG WENN: I may well do so later. The Leader of the Opposition will have to wait.

I wish to quote again from the National Bank Monthly Bulletin. It reads—

The Wine Industry is no place for the faint-hearted, or investors seeking a quick return. Beneath the froth and bubble and fashionable image, wine is an industry bedevilled by a grape surplus, oversupply and overproduction, rising costs, dwindling sales and low profitability.

To understand Australia's winemakers and growers, a few mythical dragons must first be slain. The industry essentially, despite its open 'manufacturing' (viticulture) component, is a primary one, with its roots firmly in and dependent on the fortunes of agriculture. The relationship and mutual interdependence between the grape-growing industry in toto and wine grape growers, is often overlooked—(59 per cent—495 000 tonnes—of grapes grown in Australia went into winemaking in 1984)—as is the importance of viticulture and viticultural research.

Wine grapegrowing is farming in much the same way as the mining industry depends on what it pulls out of the ground. Paradoxically, 90 per cent of what is written on wine concentrates on the glamorous section of the market, the 5 per cent of premium bottled wine selling at \$7 and above, whereas the industry's lifeblood comes from bulk or vin ordinaire wine sales.

It continues to describe how wine companies are locked into a competitive and vicious battle for a tiny share of an already minuscule portion of that market. It states that the main sellers in the market are bulk flagons and soft pack wine casks, known as bag in box, and disparagingly referred to as "chateau cardboard". The article runs through the types of wine on the market and indicates how the percentages break down in Australia.

I conclude by quoting from the National Bank report which indicates—

The McKay report of the enquiry into the grape and wine industries, recommends a moratorium on sales tax increases for the next two to three years, and that

future taxes should be levied on an ad valorem rather than volumetric basis.

I suggest that the honourable member sitting behind me, who has been carrying on, has not heard a word I said. I will not read it again and if he wants to know what I said, he can read it later in *Hansard*. The report continues—

Obviously, there is a need for a well researched, controlled vine pool system, although there are strong arguments against the long-term benefits of such a scheme. Basically, the McKay report steers away from government interference or assistance, or tariff protection. Thus, the industry is reliant on self-regulation and market forces to counter the current malaise.

It is a little surprising to read that, in the long term, those best equipped to survive will be the very large or very small companies.

I heard a comment from one member that they have just been hit with a new wine tax; so they have. I support the motion by the member for Vasse calling for a joint House deputation from Western Australia to the responsible Federal Minister, to argue for a reduction in the wine tax imposed in the last Budget.

HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [7.53 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a report in *The West Australian* this morning on page 36, headed, "Abattoir deal done—Grill". It states—

THE sale of the Midland abattoir site had been finalised, State Parliament was told yesterday.

The Minister for Agriculture, Mr Grill, said that all the money had been paid when the settlement was finalised on Monday.

He said that conditions associated with the settlement would be made public by the Government.

He was responding to a question from Mr Reg Tubby (Lib., Greenough).

On Tuesday, 28 October the Leader of the House assured us that the Government would support any committee when the number of Government members on that committee was proportionate to the number of members of each party in the House. He said that when the committee was set up the Government would take part if two Labor members were appointed to it, and that offer was refused. Of course, that is not correct.

What on earth is the Government trying to hide in the Midland abattoir deal? Why is this Government and its Minister for Agriculture prepared to mislead Parliament—I will cover these matters by evidence later—and every Western Australian to defend an indefensible sale? Do the principal players have information which could sink the Burke Government? Indeed, can there be any other explanation for the Government's contemptuously completing a sale against the wishes of the entire rural sector of the community in Western Australia, against the wishes of its own Midland saleyards liaison committee, and before the Government-dominated Select Committee inquiry into the sale has been able to report in another place?

There can be no other explanation. Someone has the Burke Government scared stiff, and it has had no option but to complete the deal.

Hon. Tom Stephens: Mr New has you scared stiff.

Hon. N. F. Moore: Rubbish!

Hon. Tom Stephens: He pays for your magazine.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Do not sidestep the issue.

Hon. Tom Stephens: Does he pay for the magazines or not?

Hon. P. G. Pandal: You seem to know more than we do, you boofhead.

Several members interjected.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Let us face it, the Burke Government has been severely embarrassed by the whole unsavoury business. It has had every opportunity to overturn the deal, to please everyone apart from Mr Peter Ellett, and to save its face. But it has failed to do so. When Mr Ellett's previous record was revealed the Government could have dropped him like a hot potato, but instead it defended him.

Hon. Graham Edwards: You are a wimp.

Withdrawal of Remark

The **DEPUTY PRESIDENT** (Hon. John Williams): Order! I ask Hon. Graham Edwards to withdraw that remark.

Hon. GRAHAM EDWARDS: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Hon. Graham Edwards: You are a \$250 000 man.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: When it was revealed that Ellett had fraudulently submitted that three prominent businessmen were his co-directors, the Government could have pulled out. However, it defended him. When it was revealed that the Minister for Agriculture had signed the sale document without any authority whatsoever, in contravention of the Land Act of this State, and that the document which purported to make the sale was worthless and unenforceable, the Government could have pulled out. But it went ahead at full steam.

Hon. Robert Hetherington: You are a bit persistent.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Obviously it is embarrassing and getting under your skin. It will be a great embarrassment for a long time.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am allowed to tolerate certain things in the good humour of the House, but the interjections I am hearing are not good humoured and I shall treat them as an offence against Standing Orders, following the President's directions.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: As late as last week the Minister for Agriculture deliberately misled his parliamentary colleagues to take the heat off. In a letter sent to members of both Houses the Minister failed to tell the truth on at least four occasions within two pages. I quote—

There is no threat to the livestock saleyards at Midland. Their continued existence is guaranteed under the terms of the sale of the site for so long as they are needed.

That is not true. No guarantee is given beyond six years, and the saleyards will be needed for another 15 years at least. To continue, and the committee to which he refers is the Midland saleyards liaison committee—

At this point that committee has been presented with a draft copy of the lease which covers to their satisfaction most of the mechanical and procedural matters associated with the continued use of the land.

That is not true. Today I spoke with several members of that committee and not one of them knows anything about a draft lease, let alone having approved it. The fact is that last Thursday the committee wrote to the Minister for Agriculture asking that the saleyards be excluded from the sale. That is the truth of the matter. The Minister has deliberately mis-

represented the situation to suit his own purposes. I quote again—

I would like to point out that in the course of numerous studies which have been conducted into the future use of the site, the major stockfirms were specifically approached, as were a number of transport companies. Not one had any real interest in buying it.

That is another deliberate misrepresentation. No stock firm or transport company was approached about the saleyards. The only person given the option to purchase the saleyards was Mr Peter Ellett. I challenge the Government right now to name another party which was even approached about the saleyards land as distinct from the abattoir site. I quote again—

Indeed I was extremely insistent on securing a minimum 6 year lease, with an undertaking from the new owners that they would give at least 2 years notice of any substantial change to that arrangement. That effectively gives 8 years operation without any amendment to the present boundaries of the saleyard.

Absolute rubbish! Even the Attorney General will agree that if someone is given a lease for six years with an option to terminate it on two years' notice, that does not add up to eight years, yet that is what the Minister for Agriculture is saying. What absolute rubbish. Does the Minister take us all for fools? There is nothing at all to stop Mr Ellett giving notice four years from now that he will require the saleyards at the expiry of the six-year lease. Again I challenge the Government to refute that fact and to show me where it is documented that Mr Ellett cannot give notice after four years. We have a Minister so desperate to get the sale through that he is prepared to mislead the Parliament and the public. He is derelict in his performance of his duty.

I refer now to an answer from the Minister for Agriculture which appears on page 1361 of *Hansard* dated 9 July where he is commenting on a very detailed valuation made by Baillieu Justin Seward. He said—

Until such time as the Opposition comes forward with one iota of evidence which impunes the valuation made by Baillieu Justin Seward, backed up largely by the Valuer General, I do not think it has any need to whip up public concern or cast doubts upon validity of the sale.

I will quote now some comments made by the Minister on the television programme "State Affair" on Monday, 9 June—

In respect to the price, the price is very much in line with the valuations obtained through the Valuer General's Officer, Justin Seward, and in line with the recommendations made by GHD-Dwyer.

During the sittings of the Legislative Council Select Committee inquiring into the closure and resiting of the saleyards, those comments were heard quite regularly so it was obviously essential that the committee verify this valuation. We wrote to the office of the Valuer General and we received this reply dated 11 August—

This Office was not requested to make a valuation of the site as a basis for sale in 1985 or 1986 and therefore I cannot comment on the price received.

A valuation was made in 1981 and reviewed in 1983 as part of advice given to the Inter Departmental Committee for relocation of the Metropolitan Markets from Wellington Street, but this would have no relevance in 1986.

The Minister had been telling us that the office of the Valuer General had prepared a valuation which was in line with that given by Baillieu Justin Seward, yet the Valuer General's office indicated to us that it was not aware that the Minister had received that valuation. When the Minister made his comments on "State Affair", I thought the office of the Valuer General was incorrect so on 14 August I wrote to it again enclosing the transcript of that "State Affair" interview with the Minister. On 18 August I received the following reply—

I refer to your letter dated 14 August 1986.

It is not known to which valuation the Hon. Minister referred.

The only valuation made for the Hon. Minister is that dated 14 July 1986, a copy of which I forwarded on 11 August 1986.

This incidentally was a valuation of a lease—nothing to do with the valuation of the site. I then wrote a further letter.

I do not have that reply with me but I can say that the contents of it were such that the Valuer General said he had arranged for three senior members of his staff to examine every file in the office. They questioned all the staff and were unable to obtain a valuation other than

that referred to as the valuation obtained in 1981 and reviewed in 1983.

Hon. Mark Nevill: You never challenged the Baillieu Justin Seward valuation. How about an analysis of that?

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Any comment with respect to Baillieu Justin Seward is hypothetical. Mr Phil Logan, the valuer, when putting together the proposal to value the lease agreement, had a hypothetical valuation of the site. Having been asked to give a valuation of the lease agreement, he declined. The WADC then sent him written instructions to undertake the valuation. Having examined those valuations he found they were inconsistent and inappropriate, and he rejected his commission.

Hon. Mark Nevill: They valued it at a lower price.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The member should not bring that into it. If a member wants to interject, let him get his facts right. He should not pull red herrings out of the air. He is acting exactly like the Minister. They come from almost the same electorate, so it must be contagious. They live in fantasy land. The Minister was so desperate to get the sale through that he was prepared to go to the length of misleading the Parliament. That is on the record. I have read *Hansard* to the House and the correspondence from the Office of the Valuer General.

There are a series of questions that need to be answered. In moving to settlement on the sale, what was the purpose of another Select Committee in another place? The Government clearly had no intention of waiting until it reported. It voted for the Select Committee, which has more Labor members than all members from any other party on it, and the Government never bothered to wait for the report. No announcement of the sale was made in this House. It was made in another place. What is the status of that Select Committee and what is its purpose? What is the purpose of this report now that the sale has been finalised? Is the Government's action not a contempt of the Select Committee system? Is it not in contempt of the members of that committee? The work is unfinished. What about the public who responded to the advertisement and gave their time and energy to cooperate with the committee according to the terms of reference that the Government supported? What about all those people who have given evidence and responded to advertisements paid for by the taxpayer?

Members opposite may laugh, but what about the people who came from Katanning, York, and all over the countryside to give evidence before that Select Committee? What does the Minister do? He does not even bother to wait but gives his own decision. What has been the cost to the taxpayer of this inquiry for which the Government voted? Has the Minister or the Premier been privy to the committee's deliberations, and in particular to the evidence given in camera? Does that mean they know what that committee's findings may be so they are able to proceed with the sale before the Select Committee reported, which they recommended and strongly supported?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! There are two members in this House whom I cannot see but I can hear. I suggest, if they wish to carry on a conversation, they should move elsewhere.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: What about the other committee? We know about Mr Peter Ellett, who was found to be in contempt of this House because he did not consider the questions relevant.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am not prepared to listen to private conversations. I suggest that Hon. Graham Edwards and Hon. A. A. Lewis had better withdraw from the House to carry on their conversation.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: It was very interesting that Mr Ellett made a Press statement to the effect that if he was aware of the relevance of the question, he would have answered it. On 16 October in *The West Australian* an article appeared which said that if Mr Ellett was to know the relevance of the questions, he would be prepared to answer them. Having listened to that debate from the Government side in which nearly every member spoke, I would say it was extremely relevant. It was relevant because of the terms of reference as to whether tenders were called to enable parties to express interest as purchasers; the adequacy and propriety of using the WADC as an agent for the sale of the land in preference to other realtors; the adequacy of the price obtained for the site; the reason for including the adjoining abattoirs and whether or not the sale of the abattoirs was separate from that of the saleyards; and the effects of the closure on employment.

They are the terms of reference. I wish to comment on how relevant those questions were and the need for them to be answered. The

Government agreed to the closure and sale of the saleyards as part of the land for a brickworks which would be beneficial to the State and would result in new industry which would provide increased employment once the industry was established. The expenditure for the establishment of the industry was to be \$24.8 million. The sale would mean greater use of natural gas and greater use of Westrail. It was also agreed this benefit would justify the price agreed. As corroboration of this argument, there must be some guarantee that the new industry will be established. The committee was of the opinion that normal commercial investigations should be made as to the validity and the correctness of the proposals for the brickworks.

These should have led to measures to ensure that—

- (a) the contract of sale contained a legal obligation to establish the brickworks; and
- (b) the applicant had the financial capacity to do so.

The committee was concerned to determine whether these corollaries were established because if they were not then part of all of the justification for the closure and the price would be lost.

How relevant is that? The committee's inquiries established—

- (a) there was no legal obligation to erect the brickworks; and
- (b) such evidence of financial capacity as was offered to the WADC—the names of the directors of the applicant—has proved to be falsely misrepresented thus raising significant questions as to whether there was any financial capacity at all.

The committee wished to satisfy itself as to whether there was in fact any financial capacity in the applicant so as to justify the closure of the saleyards and the agreed price. For that reason it wished to know—

- (a) whether the applicant had made any financial arrangements to carry out the project;
- (b) if so, what were the specific nature of those financial arrangements and in particular:
 - (i) The amount available and when and under what legal arrangements;

- (ii) whether those arrangements were subject to any and if so, what qualification which may prevent the applicant having unconditional access to those funds;
- (iii) who had provided those financial arrangements.

In particular an inquiry as to the name of the financial backer appeared one that should have reasonably been made by WADC when determining the adequacy and genuineness of the proposition and therefore the justification for the closure of the saleyards and the price; but that has been made even more requisite in view of the established falsity of the other financial bona fides offered; namely the financial worth and prominence of the persons who were supposedly the directors of the applicant company. Of course it was relevant; how could anybody argue it was irrelevant?

What about the other key players? We know Mr Peter Ellett, and I do not wish to repeat the evidence which has already been placed before a Select Committee of another place. Then we come to Mr Luke Saraceni, the town planning consultant who assisted Mr Ellett to find the Midland site. This is the Mr Luke Saraceni who assisted the Premier and the Labor Party in their attempts to build a Chinese restaurant. We all remember that example of Labor's standover tactics.

Point of Order

Hon. MARK NEVILL: Under Standing Order No. 81, this debate is straying from the subject matter of the Midland saleyards. I cannot see how it is relevant.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: It is a Budget debate.

Hon. MARK NEVILL: We are debating a matter which has already been debated in this session.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. John Williams): Order! The motion before the Chair is that we take note of the Budget papers. The debate can be as wide-ranging as is possible. I cannot stop the member on that point.

Debate Resumed

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Mr Saraceni told both Select Committees that he made everyone aware of the unfortunate mistake which led to the fraudulent inclusion of three false directors in the Prestige Brick application. The only problem with that evidence is nobody could remember Mr Saraceni mentioning it. We

asked everybody, and not one witness could remember that he mentioned it. He is as deeply in this deal as Mr Ellett and the Government. He was asked whether he had a financial interest in the Midland deal, and he replied, "At this point in time, my interest is purely as a consultant." If he was just an innocent consultant, why would he use that phrase? He did so to cover himself in the future to avoid a charge of misleading the Assembly Select Committee. Mr Saraceni, the Premier's favoured town planning consultant, is a major player, not a walk-on part, in this particular comedy.

What about Mr Ryan, the WADC's property man? What part did he play? We know that he and Mr Ellett go back a long way together; they were members of the same clubs for a start. When Mr Ryan built his home some years ago Mr Ellett gave him a substantial discount on bricks. The relationship does not end there.

Who is Mr Ryan? He is a real estate salesman, and a good salesman at that. Whether that qualifies him to act as the Premier's go-between in the WADC property deals, as he did on the Perth Technical College site, the Mandurah ocean marina, and the Midland abattoir is not clear, nor is it necessarily pertinent.

Hon. Graham Edwards: Stop degrading this House.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: It is pertinent that on at least one occasion Mr Ryan was found to have taken funds in relation to his employment.

Hon. Graham Edwards: You are a dead-set disgrace.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Mr Ryan, the Premier's go-between, repaid \$20 000 to a previous employer which he had taken as a so-called secret commission. He was found out and repaid the money. On the advice of a solicitor, he was not prosecuted because of the publicity. Because of that advice I do not propose to name the employer now, but it happened, and it is another indication of the kind of man with whom the Government has dealt, and in this case employed in this sordid deal. Mr Ryan admitted in evidence to both Select Committees that he was dealing with Mr Ellett in regard to the Midland saleyard and talking about price before Christmas last year.

The WADC was not instructed to assess the offer until February. What on earth was Ryan doing talking to Ellett about the deal at least two months before the WADC was instructed—indeed about the same time that

Ellett's offer was presented for inclusion in the GHD-Dwyer report? Who instructed Ryan to talk to Ellett at that time? Did the two players, with Saraceni's assistance and perhaps with the Government's knowledge, act in collusion to put in a low offer on this \$3 million site, knowing perfectly well it would finally come back through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to Ryan to tie up the deal?

What other conclusions can we come to? Ryan was talking to Ellett about the land long before the deal officially came to the WADC, and Ryan took over the deal when it landed back in the WADC office. Ryan had known Ellett for a number of years. What conclusion can we come to other than that the deal was a conspiracy between the Government, Ellett, Ryan, and Saraceni? A conspiracy may have many objects, but one certain object was to give Mr Ellett a State asset at far less than its true worth. That can be proved beyond all doubt, not through conjecture or valuations or other offers, but through a mortgage on the land lodged at the Titles Office on 10 November and dated two months ago while two Select Committees were taking evidence and calling witnesses.

Hon. Garry Kelly: We have heard all this before.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: No, the member has not heard it. The only place he could have heard it would have been if he was involved in a secret deal. We did not know about it, and we could not get the information in the Select Committee. The member must have known on 8 September, so he was privy to some information, and that is why the Premier and the Minister do not need the report of the Assembly Select Committee.

Is Hon. Garry Kelly also privy to the information? I suggest that he is and that that information has not been made available to other members in this House. The Government took this action before both Select Committees completed their findings, before the Governor had given his assent to the sale of the land, and before the title could be issued.

Mr Peter Ellett paid the people of Western Australia \$450 000 for the land, and on that amount he was able to borrow \$920 000.

Hon. P. G. Pental: There is your answer, Mr Kelly.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: He was able to borrow twice the amount he paid for the land. He has nearly \$500 000 more in his pocket because of this dirty Government deal. Can any member

on the other side of the House say one word in justification of that?

Hon. Tom Helm: You justify it. You are saying it.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Would any member opposite care to explain to the House how an asset sold recently for \$450 000 is now worth twice as much? Does any member know how much the other players have made out of this deal?

Several members interjected.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: It is very unfortunate that members opposite have not got a clue about this deal. They were probably briefed about it, but the sooner the Premier of this State comes clean and explains this deal and the reason he had to defend it, the better.

Members opposite are throwing in red herrings because they do not know the circumstances and, therefore, are unable to understand the situation. If they did, they might be in a position to comment.

A lot of questions still remain unanswered regarding the office of the Governor. For example, when a reserve is sold the requirement is that the Government must obtain the approval of the Governor. In this instance the approval of the Governor was not obtained.

The Government used the Land Act in such a way, through the *Government Gazette* dated 31 October, to place the Midland saleyards and abattoirs beyond public interest. It used section 29(2) of that Act to vest the land in the Western Australian Meat Commission for its purposes. Therefore, it was able to dispose of the land in fee simple.

I wonder whether the Governor was made aware by the Government that it had placed the Midland saleyards and abattoirs beyond public interest. It used section 29(2) of that Act to vest the land in the Western Australian Meat Commission. Therefore, it was able to dispose of the land in fee simple.

I wonder whether the Executive Council made the Governor aware that the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly was still sitting and had not tabled its report. I wonder whether the Executive Council made the Governor aware that a Select Committee of this House had examined the propriety of the sale and had reported that the sale was contrary to public interest.

I wonder whether the Government disclosed in Executive Council the source and conditions of Mr Ellett's financial position. If the Govern-

ment did not address these facts in Executive Council, how does the Government answer the charge that it may well threaten the position and integrity of that high office?

Hon. Tom Helm: Because it does not.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Is the Minister for Agriculture aware that a member of his staff, Mr Paul Regan, commonly called Detective Regan, has, throughout the deliberations of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee, been telephoning witnesses and their associates in a menacing manner and seeking information that may damage the reputations of key witnesses? Was Mr Regan acting on the Minister's instructions when he made these calls? If not, is the Minister aware of any interest, other than as a member of the Minister's staff, that Mr Regan might have in the sale of the Midland site? These questions need to be answered, and the public of Western Australia will demand that the truth be told.

The Tricontinental Group of Companies, the merchant bank which has ostensibly lent the money for the purchase of the land and which is a subsidiary of the State Bank of Victoria, will in no way be lending \$31 million to finance this project. It is not stupid and it is not in the business of lending \$31 million to a businessman with little equity in a deal which seeks to compete with established and efficient competitors when new brickworks have had a history of failure over the past few years. Tricontinental will not lend the money. The money will be laundered and it will come from the Builders Labourers Federation, through the building unions' superannuation scheme. The building unions will attempt to take over the brick industry in Western Australia by refusing to lay bricks produced by the proposed company's competitors. I am talking about a union some of the officials of which have already been convicted of criminal actions in the State of Victoria, a union which has currently been deregistered by the Cain Labor Government and the Federal Labor Government.

I challenge the members opposite to say that they will not be part of this deal. Members opposite have been in on this deal from the word go to give their militant union mates an entry into the building supply industry. It is the first step to take over the building supply industry in this State. I put it to you, Mr Deputy President (Hon. John Williams): Let the Government deny it.

HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [8.38 p.m.]: The powerful speech of the speaker preceding me is one of which all members should take note. I think he has outlined a difficult proposition for anyone to understand because there has been a succession of wrongs. Hon. Neil Oliver has graphically illustrated the ineptitude of the Government in being able to handle a business arrangement. I suppose it will become known as the Midland Junction saleyards scandal before the issue is finalised, and it certainly will not be let down lightly in the annals of this Government's history.

Its sequel would have to be the mismanagement of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd purchase. What has taken place regarding this company is nothing but business mismanagement. It is either that or it is something that was meant to happen, and that is the reason it was engineered that way. Both these issues have been mismanaged, and regretfully the lack of experience has caused the Government to fall in a hole in both cases.

It makes one wonder, when considering the Budget papers before the House, what impact the Government's business dealings may have had on the Budget in general.

With the Budget papers that we are asked to consider now, we are really considering the mini-budget side of them. The main Budget was brought down to us in June. There appears to be no doubt that on the seventh sitting day after the election the Premier and Treasurer introduced part 1, the major parts, of the 1986-87 Budget. He was following the time-honoured practice of most Premiers of returning from the Premiers' Conference saying straightaway that he had to introduce a most severe Budget to counteract the downturn in the State's share of Commonwealth moneys. No doubt the next Treasurer will use the same excuse, because this has become the practice.

In June the Treasurer warned us of what was likely to happen. He said an increase in State Government taxes and charges would be implemented across the board on 1 July. He said he had some innovative plans to slash spending, but he refused to detail them. The supposition at the time was that he might even cut back Public Service salaries by 10 per cent, as he had done in 1983. But no, he chose to keep that side of it to himself and let us wait until he announced what the increases were likely to be.

On 17 June in *The West Australian* we quickly found out that electricity would go up by 12 per cent, third party insurance by 10 per cent, water by 7.9 per cent, sewerage by 9.5 per cent, and Stateships rates by five per cent from 1 July and another five per cent from next January.

The next day *The West Australian* announced that country water charges for domestic consumers would rise by 7.1 per cent, and the minimum rate would rise by 14 per cent from \$57 to \$65. We were also told that fares for children, pensioners and students would rise.

A week later the Treasurer told us that Western Australia would have to tighten its belt. He announced that jobs would be cut and fuel and liquor would go up. The fuel tax would go up 2c a litre and there would be another 1c on a glass of beer and 4c on a bottle. Payroll tax was to hit big business, as we learnt shortly after, and the public sector would be cut by 3 000 jobs. Restrictions would be placed on public servants' first-class travel, flexi-time was to be suspended, and the Government's adverse image was to be abolished.

All this gave rise to Mr Burke saying on 25 June that he found painful the winding down of working conditions for Government employees. He went on to say that actions like chucking out flexitime and changing long-service leave provisions would leave this State in good stead for many years to come. To my knowledge flexitime has not been thrown out.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: It has been modified substantially.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: It has not been thrown out. Mr Burke said, "The action we have taken, like chucking out flexitime..."

Hon. J. M. Berinson: In the end it has been substantially modified.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Well, substantially modified is totally different from what we read. Furthermore he was going to change long service leave provisions.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is to be introduced this session.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: We look forward to it coming in.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: And we look forward to your support.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: It is a long time coming. He also said that the loading on holiday leave at 17.5 per cent was unfair. He was going to chuck that out too.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: He did not say that. You have been very fair up to now.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Premier said he honestly believed that the 17.5 per cent loading made no sense at all.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: But he did not say he would chuck it out. I am giving you credit; you have been very fair up to now.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Treasurer has made a nonsensical arrangement. What I am leading up to is that with fuel going up and costs going up, and all these other charges going up, with all the promises which were to come in on the other side of the Budget like flexitime, holiday leave loading, and so on—

Hon. J. M. Berinson: But you are ignoring the most important cost-cutting measure, which is the reduction in the public work force by 3 000.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Can the Minister assure me, when he replies to this debate, that the work force is in fact being cut down, or is it only being cut down by way of natural attrition?

Hon. J. M. Berinson: A cutback by attrition is a cutback. you are not suggesting that you actually have to sack people who are in jobs in order to achieve a reduction in the public sector work force?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Minister does not believe that attitude should be adopted in Government business where Government increases in costs are causing us to have to do it in our private business.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What we say is that it should not be done in that way if it can be done in another.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: What the Minister is saying is one thing, and what he does is another.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: We are doing it at this moment.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I believe that the Government has raised the taxes, but it has not kept its promises to alleviate the cost problem. I do not believe the Government has even attempted to do that. If I am wrong, when the Attorney General gets up he can tell me.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is wrong.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Is it?

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Yes.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: We find that Western Australians will pay an extra \$111 a year in new taxes introduced by the Commonwealth

and State Governments, according to the former State Under Treasurer, Mr Les McCarrey. Perhaps the Government will draw swords with me on Mr McCarrey's ability before I go any further.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: He is a very able person. It depends on how you use statistics. For example, the largest single element of increased tax was by way of payroll tax. Are you suggesting the average Western Australian pays that?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Indirectly, yes. The tax has been laid on to big business. It has been offloaded by big business onto the country sector.

It gets back to the little person in the long run. Really and truly, the Government has hit Mr little guy again. Of all the mainland States, Western Australia has the highest rate of new taxes per capita. Ours is calculated at \$57 per head. The next highest is the Australian Capital Territory with \$54. The New South Wales figure is \$12 head, Victoria's figure is nil, as is Queensland's—no wonder the National Party won the election—and South Australia's figure is nil.

Those figures represent the per capita increases in new taxes. No wonder the Budget was called a lemon! There is nothing surer than that it was a lemon—and that it lacked juice, too. Later, on Tuesday 21 October, Mr McCarrey said—

My quarrel is with the hike in State taxes. That was an economical and political mistake.

It is not very often that we have such an eminent person as a former Under Treasurer warning the Government that it has made a political mistake.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remember very clearly mentioning yesterday to honourable members that the rule regarding the reading of newspapers in this House has not been relaxed. It does not matter what the title of the newspaper is, it is still a newspaper.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Mr President, are you referring to my quoting from newspapers?

The PRESIDENT: No, I am not.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Thank you, Mr President.

Mr McCarrey said that it was an economic and political mistake, and it is not very often that a former public servant will come out and advise the Government that it is making a political mistake. Mr McCarrey, who was our No.

1 public servant—the Under Treasurer of the State—warned this Government that it was making a horrendous political mistake. We are trying to tell the Government that it is making a political mistake. Nobody in this country is going to stand the hike in tax to which I have referred.

When we find out that—and I quote further from *The West Australian*—the help in the Budget is for the needy and the jobless, that really starts to make our blood boil. I am not against the needy receiving help if they are really needy, but if they are not I doubt whether they should be receiving our encouragement at all. The article reads in part—

Special help for the needy, job-creating schemes and moves towards land-tax reform are key features of the Burke government's post-election Budget.

The Government . . . (is) seeking to balance the \$3.3 billion Budget . . .

Education spending, after adjustments for payroll tax, will go up by 6.8 per cent . . .

Health spending is up 14.4 per cent . . .

There are no tax increases in the Budget. They came in the June 24 economic package when there was a steep rise in State fuel tax, heavier payroll tax on bigger employers, increased liquor fees and other imposts.

And what has it done? Once the Budget came in we straightaway read that inflation surged to a four-year record. On 24 October an article in *The West Australian* indicated "Inflation surges to 4-year record". The day before that was published, on 23 October, we discovered that telex machines were going mad, pointing out that the Perth Consumer Price Index for the September quarter of 1986 was 3.4 per cent. Western Australia was the only State to jump the three per cent barrier. Our CPI rose to 3.4 per cent, when the weighted average of the eight capital cities was 2.6 per cent. Can we expect otherwise when that sort of inflationary trend is taking place with the increase in taxation?

When we realise that Perth has surpassed the average CPI figures for all the capital cities, it becomes very difficult to say that Mr McCarrey was wrong two months before. He was right in what he said about the repercussions that the taxes would bring, and they have been reflected in the CPI figure. It is very interesting to note that since this Government has been in office, land tax has risen by 48.6 per cent in four

years. Stamp duties have risen by 78 per cent in that period. The financial institutions duty, which was a tax introduced by this Government, is now running at \$27 million. Probate duty has decreased by 91 per cent, not through the good management of this Government but due to somebody who was running it prior to the present regime.

In the four years of this Government, revenue from payroll tax has risen by 20 per cent overall. Revenue from licences for liquor and tobacco has risen by 126 per cent, and revenue from the betting tax has risen by 37 per cent in four years. This year the casino tax will yield \$4.6 million, with probably \$12 million next year, and that is another tax that was introduced by Labor. Third party insurance charges have risen by 13 per cent. Soccer football pools duty now yields a revenue of nearly \$1 million, and was also introduced by Labor.

In other words, under those headings I have mentioned there has been a total increase in taxing arrangements of 53 per cent in four years. Members should believe me when I say that it is not a situation in which any Government which is crying poverty and which believes its people are having a bad time should be introducing or be proud of.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What about the reductions?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The reductions are minimal.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Payroll tax minimal?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The payroll tax reductions have been given to small business, but big business has had huge increases and has to get it back somehow.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: I am not just talking about reductions for the lower end of the scale this year. Reductions have been progressively introduced over three years, which more than sets off the increases.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I doubt that, because the total is increasing. If it is increasing, how can the Minister for Budget Management say it is being reduced?

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Because business and employment are increasing.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Who do you think pays it in the end?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: That is right. There is only one lot of people—the consumers. If the total amount is increasing, where is it coming from, and who will pay for it? It is a consumer tax and will go back to my part of the world. It

is going in all directions so that big business can unload it. Mr little guy will have to pay it in the long run, and nobody else. The Minister is just kidding himself that the burden is being taken from small business, and what big business does to recoup it does not matter.

The Minister uses the stupid argument that the Government has got rid of payroll tax.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Is payroll tax on the mineral producers at the top end of the scale being paid by the little man in Western Australia?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, the little man is paying more because the charges are being passed on to him. I do not blame big business for passing the costs on because it has to get rid of those charges somehow. Our company, Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, has paid \$8 million in payroll tax in the last five years. Who does the Minister believe is paying that tax?

Hon. P. G. Pandal: The farmer.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, the farmer.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not mind the Attorney General asking the odd question, but when seven or eight start it is beyond a joke.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Premier, in his Budget speech delivered on Thursday, 16 October, said that he believes that it is a Budget for the times—frugal, balanced, and likely to be unpopular, but nevertheless necessary and responsible. There were no increases at all in that Budget. The unpalatable increases had been imposed two months before. When we received the Budget papers we could not find any breakdown of the figures included in it. Expenditure estimates have gone up, not down.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Very modestly.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: We will work out a percentage.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You compare the increases with increases over the last 20 years.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: They have still gone up. Our wages and salaries are going down. Why cannot the Government's estimates go down? The public believes the Government is living very well by increasing taxes when farmers are having to close the farm gate and literally starve because the Government is increasing everything. It is so elementary. If the Government is going to be frugal and say that it will cut out flexitime, it should do it and stop talking about it.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: How many schools in your area would you like us to close?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: If the Minister wants to take it out on the kids, he should do it. The Government has cut out computers for schools. Why does Mr Burke not run an afternoon teashop to raise funds like we have to run them for our schools to obtain the necessary equipment. That is what we are doing now to get computers for the schools. Nobody is complaining. We have done it before and we will do it again. However the Government is not cutting down at all.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Of course we are.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: It is not doing a thing.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: I cannot believe you are saying this.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The proposals for decreases in expenditure include not going ahead with construction of the new Department of Land Administration building in the city. Big deal! The Government has said it will also not build any additions to Parliament House. Big deal! It said also that offices for the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Perth Museum extensions, and the Esperance regional agricultural office will not be proceeded with. So what? They are not earning the Government any dough, so naturally it can cut them off. The Government will not save anything.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Don't you think capital works have a recurrent cost to them?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, I do.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is what is being saved.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Not any more than we can buy a new tractor to cut out our recurrent costs. We expect the Government to save money. Its overall Budget should be coming down, not going up. The Government should not need to take the amount of money it is taking from the community at the moment.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: How do you handle the cost of two per cent increase in population? Do you think we can absorb that?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: That two per cent will pay taxes, and the Government's intake will increase accordingly.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is a very simple view.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, it is. The Prime Minister planned to make people work for the dole. The Government would be getting somewhere if it implemented that scheme. It would then be implementing a frugal, balanced, and unlikely-to-be-popular Budget. If the Government wants to get us out of the mire, these are the sorts of actions it should take. It should cut out flexitime and the 17.5 per cent loading, and it should cut out the 38-hour week and make people work a 40-hour week again. It should bite the bullet.

Hon. B. L. Jones: Is that what you would do?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, we are doing it, because we are sacking people in the bush. We do not want to get rid of them, but we cannot afford to keep going.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You know we resisted the 38-hour week for the Police Force, but we were overridden by the Industrial Relations Commission.

Hon. P. G. Pental: With encouragement from the Government.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, the commission was encouraged to grant that 38-hour week, and it did not need much encouragement. With that reduction in hours, Mr Bull has now said that the force will be increased by 135 members.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: By 172, actually.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: A total of 172 new policemen will be appointed to take up the slack.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What did the Government say?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Government said, "Good on you boy, get out there and get the roadblocks into the country areas and stop those farmers speeding. We should fine them a bit more." The Government wants to make itself the most unpopular Government ever. It will not listen to us.

Hon. Tom Stephens: You all have radar detectors.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Yes, and the member knows all about them.

We, as an Opposition, are a constructive part of the Parliament and are entitled to tell the Government where it is going wrong. The people are living in parlous times at present. The Government is living in a fool's world if it does not understand that.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You haven't been listening to what we have been talking about. You are practically quoting us.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Last week I received this pamphlet about the fringe benefits tax. This is the type of thing we in the country have suffered; certainly the Liberal-Country Party Government learnt with the road maintenance tax that people will jack up. In fact at that time the people said, "We are not filling in any more forms or documents." Surely this Government should have learnt its lesson by now, even if the Prime Minister and the Federal Government have not learnt. We on this side are trying to tell the Government that it must cut out this sort of thing.

This pamphlet which arrived at my place has to be filled out by 31 October, and thereafter at the end of every quarter. The farmers and local businessmen, who are busy people, must find time to do this in addition to all their other work, or hire an accountant to do it for them. I know that the State Government has raised some protestations with the Federal Government about this matter, but surely to God Government members must realise that it is not only the log book in the car which affects Mr and Mrs everybody. The Federal Government has wiped that out very effectively because it discovered that this issue was hurting most people; however, the people whom members like Hon. Joe Berinson represent are affected even more—people who are in small business and in business in the country. These are the very people who will be hit hardest by having to fill in documents like the ones for the fringe benefits tax every quarter from now on.

I can assure members that if one makes a mistake in filling out these forms—and one has to hold them for seven years—the fines involved are horrendous. The Liberal-Country Party Government found out five years ago with the road maintenance tax what it means to people when they have to fill out documents and papers. It does not win any Government any friends.

I will now deal quietly with the increase in the police and roadblocks in the country. Four years ago at this time of the year, I criticised the same practice, and eventually—about four days before Christmas—I finished up in gaol after publicising my protestations about the roadblocks, and stopping cars for all sorts of odd reasons on country roads. I suppose Hon. D. J. Wordsworth saw a report in the *The West Australian* of 11 November with the heading "Road Blocks for Country". The article was on

the front page of the paper and it reads as follows—

POLICE road blocks which have stopped tens of thousands of city motorists will be extended into the country.

The highway patrol's manpower has been increased and it now has authority to go anywhere in the State.

I do not remember giving them this "authority". The article continues—

The Commissioner of Police, Mr Bull, said that from today road blocks would be set up without notice anywhere and at any time.

Checks would be made on driving licences and vehicle roadworthiness, he said.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Random testing.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: Exactly! I will come to that in a moment. The article continues—

The country road toll was unacceptable and intolerable.

Highway-patrol crews had been told to concentrate on drunken drivers, speeders and motorists who did not wear safety-belts.

The road toll for the year is 208—nine more than at the corresponding time last year.

There have been 95 deaths in the metropolitan area and 113 in the country compared with 93 metropolitan and 106 country deaths at this time last year.

According to this article, there were seven extra deaths in the country. How many times do members on this side have to tell the House that we did not vote for random testing? There has never been a Bill before this House which gave members in this place the privilege of being able to state their views as legislators as to whether they approved or disapproved of random testing.

To my knowledge this is the only State which has roadblocks and the type of police activity which is being used without its being discussed in Parliament. I will defy this random testing. I know what will happen. It will not only be in *Hansard* but also in the Press, and no doubt my car will be numbered again, as it was last time.

Hon. Tom Stephens interjected.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: No, I will not relate what happened. Hon. Tom Stephens was not here at that time, but it was a very sad story.

However, I will say that when these roadblocks are set up this time they will enable the police to harass a lot of people in the country. I wonder whether the Government realises what it is doing to the community. The Government says it is saving lives by setting up roadblocks outside country towns at Christmas time. I can tell the Government now that we in the country are down on our bellies and it is fair enough if we want to go into town and have a beer, and talk to our mates. Farmers only go into town one day a week now; they used to go into town on two days, Friday and Saturday, and they might have had a drink on Friday night. That is fair enough; it is much less than people in the city have—city people can go drinking every night of the week. There are only two roads into a country town—one road in and one road out—so it is easy to set up roadblocks and catch people. Members would know that in the country we have some women whom we call “Nervous Nellies”—and I mean no disrespect to Hon. Margaret McAleer; she will know whom I mean. Police officers in their jack boots and uniforms will now be able to stop these women at roadblocks, and sniff down the womens’ throats to check whether they smell of grog. I hope that police officers will not be too unreasonable in their approach to these people.

Hon. Tom Stephens: You might be interested to know that the Premier himself was pulled up at a roadblock the other night, and he is not complaining.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The Premier may have been pulled up, but he should not boast about it. I have been pulled up myself on occasion. Anyway, the Premier was not driving so it would not have been he who lost his licence or was given two demerit points; it would have been his driver. The point is that somehow or other Government members must realise that country people are no longer enjoying life in the country. Things are bad enough there but if one cannot go into town, have a game of bowls and a beer, or enjoy going a round of drinks, what the devil is there left to do?

This is very dictatorial. Roadblocks will be set up everywhere around the State, and the police have the authority to go anywhere. I can only implore the police and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, through the Minister representing him here, to slack off a bit and not to be the belligerent type of people that they sometimes are. I hope they will not upset people and upset community living to the extent that country people will have nowhere to

go and nowhere to turn. It is not as though one’s friends can come to one’s home and socialise, because in the country home is a long way to go.

[Quorum formed.]

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: When I read the statement that the increased availability of police will enable the Police Department to send out more patrol cars and more motor cycles and to set up road blocks, I cannot help wondering whether the police are moving away from their true role—the protection of public property. The crime rate in this State is going from bad to worse. One has only to read the paper every day to see that the crime rate is increasing. Some of the crimes committed are horrendous. Perhaps they cannot be averted, but I hazard a guess that the Police Department has been told to put its efforts into trying to reduce the road toll for the good name of the Government.

The Police Department will never succeed in reducing the road toll; even if it put everybody on horseback, it would not reduce the toll. My grandfather died because of a buggy accident, so road accidents happened even in those days. The police will be going after the wrong people. They will be going after the people who are doing no harm at all and who are not causing any great problem with public property.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I would get a spare tail-light globe if I were you.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I know that I will be marked—CR-500 is already marked. I will be marked the moment I go out of here.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What was that number?

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: It was CR-500, black and white, an old Mercedes that has done 500 000 kilometres.

Hon. Tom Stephens: It always looks new to me.

Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I look after my gear, including the apparatus that is on the car.

I am worried that we are taking this action. One could go on at great length about the effects on country people of the monumental taxes that we have had put on us in the last few months, but it would be futile to do so because the Government takes no notice whatsoever of what the Opposition says and it makes no endeavour to prune its Budget and its spending in spite of what it said it would do. I am afraid that there is no hope for the Government.

We can only come here as representatives of our electorates and say to the Government, "It is a fact that the people have had enough." If the Government does not take any notice of that, there is not much use in my talking any longer. The Government is not likely to have paid to it the increases in wharfage fees, railway charges, and the like because, to use a colloquialism, people have had a gutful. On that note, I close my remarks.

HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [9.24 p.m.]: This motion gives members the opportunity to raise various issues. Tonight, on behalf of my constituents and, more generally, people throughout the State, I will raise half a dozen issues which I believe need to be raised.

With respect to the first item, I refer to a further request I have received from the Busselton Water Board. The Busselton Water Board has endeavoured for some time to obtain the same sort of treatment from the Government as the Government has given to the Bunbury Water Board. I congratulate the Bunbury Water Board on its success in obtaining Government favouritism, it seems, as compared to the treatment meted out to the Busselton and Harvey Water Boards.

The Bunbury Water Board has been allowed a three-year breathing period for pension rebates and a three per cent levy on revenue. It has been allowed a moratorium on those. Instead of having to pay the three per cent levy to the Government, the Government has told the Bunbury Water Board that it may have three years to sort it out. To allow this, the Government has made an *ex gratia* grant to Bunbury to cover the cost of these amounts for the three years from July 1986. That is good business for the Bunbury Water Board and the people of Bunbury. I do not argue with that, but the Government is not consistent.

The other two water boards, Harvey and Busselton, feel that they deserve the same sort of treatment and that they have been discriminated against. I tend to agree with them. The Government has responded in a letter from the Premier setting out the Government's reasons for not acceding to the Busselton Water Board's approach in this matter. It does not seem a reasonable proposition. I believe the Government needs to review the situation again. I ask it to do so in order to give what would appear to be more equitable relief in that regard.

I understand that the benefit for the Bunbury Water Board ratepayers will be \$46 000 in 1986; in 1987 it will be \$92 000; and in 1988 it will be \$138 000. That is a total of \$276 000 over three years. That is a handsome payment to the Bunbury Water Board for the benefit of the people there. I wish the board well in that regard, but it seems a little unfair that the same benefit is not given to the other water boards. The issue has been previously raised by me and also by the member for Vasse, Mr Barry Blaikie, MLA. I hope that Hon. Doug Wenn will join with us in trying to persuade the Government to give some relief in that regard. The situation is quite inequitable and is a serious anomaly in the Government's administration.

The second matter I refer to is one which I raise periodically. It concerns part of the area which I represent. In regard to the Commonwealth Employment Service statistics for the Bunbury region, I will refer to the CES official publication which sets out the unemployment figures throughout Australia, and particularly to the figures for Bunbury. At the end of the September quarter last year the Bunbury region had 2 568 unemployed. At the end of the September quarter this year the figure was 3 043. That is an increase in unemployed people in the Bunbury district of 475 in the last 12 months.

I refer also to the Collie statistics. At the end of the September quarter 1985 there were 332 unemployed; in 1986, 12 months later, there were 407. Again, there was an increase of 75 in the number of unemployed people in the Collie district. The statistics for Manjimup showed that in 1985 there were 597 unemployed; and in 1986 there were 698 unemployed. That is an increase in the last 12 months of 101 in the number of unemployed. In those three statistical districts, in the last 12 months there has been a total increase of 651 people in the number of unemployed. The figures for this State indicate that the situation overall is somewhat favourable as compared to other States in Australia, and I applaud that.

Certainly in the south-west corner of the State these official figures show a different story. Despite the trumpeting of the Government and the efforts of the South West Development Authority and other agencies, the facts are that the unemployment position in the south-west is infinitely worse than it was 12 months ago, and it is infinitely worse than it was when the Government came into office. The trend is there and, despite the Govern-

ment's efforts, it has miserably failed the people of the south-west.

That is an indictment of the "Bunbury 2000" policy. It is a good concept but it is not working; that is my criticism of it. I am all for helping the Bunbury area and the people of the region wherever possible, and I know certain programmes have been put in place and employment assistance is being implemented in a number of areas. But is it enough? These measures have my full support, but the Government's policies have failed the people.

These are not my figures, they are official figures put out by the Commonwealth Government and accepted by the State Government. It is a dreadful indictment. I refer to an article which appeared in the *South Western Times* on Tuesday, 4 November 1986, under the heading, "Bleak outlook for youth in Bunbury", which stated—

The study by Mr. Irwin covered Bunbury, Eaton, Australind, Gelorup and Capel.

The report says the Commonwealth Employment Service estimated that unemployment percentages for the region were two per cent above the national average and that 45-50 per cent of registered job seekers in Bunbury are aged 15 to 24.

"It appears that relative to the national average the youth of Bunbury are seriously disadvantaged as regards employment prospects," the report says.

The observation of financial impoverishment is based on the fact that in 1985 one in five young people age 15 to 19 could not find any work.

This article appeared in the major newspaper circulating in the area, and I take it to be reasonably accurate in its appraisal of the situation. It saddens me, as it does any other responsible person, that young people are unable to fulfil their ambitions and aims in life by seeking gainful employment. The Government continues to fail these people.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: That is nonsense.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: How can the Minister say that when these figures indicate otherwise?

Hon. Kay Hallahan: They would be worse under a Liberal Government, and they are much improved under our Government.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The Minister has not been listening; I invite her to study the figures for Bunbury from the time the Burke Government took office. I have quoted these figures in

the House before, and I have updated them tonight. The facts are there, they are not a figment of my imagination. The Minister refuses to accept them, just as a little while ago the Minister for Budget Management refused to accept some of the facts of life in country areas. This Government is blinkered; unfortunately it does not want to hear the truth. This all comes back on the people, and the Labor Party does not deserve to be in government.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: You have some very funny facts of life.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The Minister is making a joke about the young people in the south-west.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: That is nonsense.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The Minister is making a joke about the opportunities for employment, yet the facts are here. I will pass this information to her if she wishes to check it. The number of unemployed is 651 more than it was 12 months ago.

Several members interjected.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It is pitiful that a Minister of the Crown, who is supposed to be responsible, should make a mockery of the young people seeking gainful employment.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: That is rubbish.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: I probably know more about the south-west than any other member. I am not bragging, that is just a fact.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: Do you live in the south-west?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It is incredible, and I find it extremely devastating, that I have colleagues in this House who make fun of young people in the south-west who cannot find gainful employment.

Hon. Robert Hetherington: You've said that three times already.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: I will say it again because I represent those people as does Hon. Doug Wenn; and I hope he will support my remarks.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: Have you heard about the employment programmes in the south-west?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The Minister has not been listening; I referred to the programmes and commended them. The Minister is very rude. She does not listen and chirps away like a hen on a nest of eggs. She is irresponsible, and I will make it known throughout the south-west that this Minister and this Government have no regard for the plight of young people genuinely trying to better themselves, to take their

place in the community and play their part as citizens. The Minister is laughing.

Hon. John Halden: Who would not laugh at you?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The Government members are making a joke of it.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth): Order!

Hon. V. J. FERRY: I hope the *Hansard* report will show that the Minister said I am not worthy of representing the people in Bunbury. The people of Bunbury will be interested to read this contribution of mine in which I am trying to represent the people in the south-west in their plight, and the Minister is making fun of it.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: High drama.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: What an indictment of this Government's attitude! The Australian Labor Party is supposed to pride itself on looking after people.

I refer to an article which appeared in the *South Western Times* on 11 November 1986, under the heading, "Big rent rises face Homeswest tenants". I will quote from statements made by the member for Mitchell, David Smith MLA. I am sure Hon. Graham Edwards will be interested in this.

Hon. Graham Edwards: You have changed tack because your attack on the Minister was unwarranted and not substantiated.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It is fascinating to listen to members opposite. I would like to hear the member interject after I have quoted from this article. It demonstrates the Government's lack of concern for people and it states—

The cost of renting an average three-bedroom house has already jumped from \$58.70 to \$65.60 for some people.

By this time next year, the same clients will be paying \$79.50 a week.

Tenants with the capacity to pay—those with jobs—will have to part with up to 25 per cent of their gross income for rent.

Mitchell MLA David Smith says the hike will have horrendous implications for low-income tenants—and he has blasted his own Government about the increases.

Mr Smith, whose electorate covers Bunbury's Homeswest areas of Carey Park and Withers, believes the new rental structure could encourage people to stay on pensions or remain on the dole.

Great silence from Government members!

Hon. Doug Wenn: At least he has stood up for what he believed in.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: That is what I am doing. The member for Mitchell has castigated his own Government for the hike in rental charges for the people in the south-west.

The article continues—

The policy also discriminated against tenants in country areas—in Perth the number of clients not on a rebate was 30 per cent, in Bunbury it was 45 per cent.

"There is also some incentive for people to stay on a pension or out of work," he said.

"Whatever extra income they get from going out to work will be lost in the Homeswest rent."

Mr Smith said the system could cause a "dog chasing its tail" effect.

Hon. Tom Helm interjected.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The member should take that up with Mr Smith and argue with him about that.

Hon. Tom Helm: You should have asked him about it before quoting from the article.

Hon. Doug Wenn: He is one of the hardest working members for the south-west.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: And I commend him for that but the point I am making is that he is here condemning his own Minister's decision. I will have great pleasure in relating this article on David Smith's comments to the people of the south-west so that they understand what even the Government's own member thinks of his callous and uncaring Ministry.

I refer now to an article which appeared in yesterday's *The West Australian*. It was written by John Nayton, a journalist from the south-west, and a very likeable gentleman well known to me. The article was headed "New look at growth" and referred to actions taken by the South West Development Authority for the future of the Bunbury region. Reference was made to Margaret River, Pemberton, and Balingup also, towns which have attracted new settlements of alternative lifestylers. The point to be made is that this has been going on over the last 25 years; there is nothing new about it. I quote as follows—

An SWDA study has found that more than 1 000 people in the South-West are making a part-time living from cottage craft.

Again, that has been going on for a long time. To continue—

The second phase of the Bunbury 2000 programme promotes an idyllic lifestyle as the region's most important industry.

Of course it is a lovely area; it has a beautiful climate, wonderful scenery, and marvellous people. People are very attracted to the idea of living in such areas. An especially fascinating part of the article is as follows—

Authority research has found that most of the current South-West population boom is based on the area's appeal as a place to live.

One does not have to be a Rhodes scholar to work that out. It is a fascinating conclusion. To continue—

The findings have contradicted traditional decentralisation strategies which depended on resource developments to attract people by creating new jobs.

But resource-based growth has ignored the fact that most jobs are created by small business and service industries.

An appealing environment attracts people who are retired, self-employed or working for service industries.

The so-called quality-of-life programme is a gamble for the SWDA.

After three years, the Bunbury 2000 programme is at the cross-roads.

Dr Manea admits that government support for the venture has been affected by the development demands of other centres.

I do not take John Nayton to task for his article, because what he says is right; it is just that there is nothing new in it. If the article was designed to promote what the South West Development Authority is doing for the future of the area it makes a very interesting point. The chairman of the authority, Dr Manea, is well known to me and other members and the article shows that he has admitted that the authority is at the crossroads. He admits that the authority is trying hard to help the area but that its efforts are not reflected in an improvement in the unemployment figures for the region, which I quoted earlier. No-one can escape from this fact. I commend Dr Manea and others who are working for the area, but at present they have been unable to overcome the void.

The point about all these people moving into the area and living alternative lifestyles for various reasons is that this has been going on

for years. Certainly it might be accelerating, but that is just because more people are becoming aware of the area. This is not a development which has been achieved by the Government or the authority. It has been the result of people making their own choice. They have bought land for a house, a hobby farm, or something bigger, and have moved into the area. They have exercised their right as individuals to do that, just as they have been doing for years. Like many before them, some set up cottage industries. They do this without Government assistance although they might have some Government advice now and again. But they do it of their own volition. The Government and the authority have nothing to crow about. The article was unnecessary although not untrue; it merely reflected the status quo.

Yesterday I asked a question without notice of the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. During the recess week I gave notice of the question to the office of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services so that he could have a reply ready for the Leader of the House when we resumed. My question was as follows—

Having regard for the fact that a group of women camped at Point Peron a couple of years ago, disrupting the local community, and bearing in mind another or possibly the same group of women camped in a public place in Canberra recently, again disrupting the community—

- (1) Can the Minister assure the people of Western Australia that similar disturbances will not be allowed during the America's Cup period?
- (2) What action can the Government take to prevent disruptive groups of people imposing their unwanted presence upon the Fremantle community, or anywhere else in this State?

I do not have the answer in front of me, but the Leader of the House responded along the following lines: I hope the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was listening to my remarks on the previous Bill. That sort of answer is frivolous. I asked a genuine question out of genuine concern for the community. Notwithstanding the fact that I had given notice of the question to the office of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Leader of the House deemed it unnecessary to use the response supplied and preferred his own quip. That is not an insult to me but to the people of Western Australia.

My final point concerns the way we commemorate Anzac Day. Anzac Day is governed by the Anzac Day Act and it also falls within the provisions of the Public and Bank Holidays Act. We have quite a number of public holidays throughout the year: New Year's Day, Australia Day, Labour Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Foundation Day, the Queen's Birthday, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

Anzac Day falls on a different day each year. When it falls midweek there is no Monday holiday before or after that day. Where it falls on a weekend, the following Monday is gazetted a public holiday. That is completely unnecessary. Anzac Day is a national day which should be commemorated on the day on which it falls, 25 April. Whether it falls on a Saturday or a Sunday or on a weekday it should be commemorated on that day. There is no justification for gazetted a public holiday on the Monday following an Anzac Day which falls on a Saturday or Sunday. Such a public holiday is a travesty of the respect we should show for the purpose of the day, which is a commemoration of those who gave their lives or who were permanently injured during that conflict so many years ago, and millions of people throughout the world were victims. A Monday holiday when Anzac Day falls on a weekend is the wrong tack to take and it should be changed. It will be said by some people that this arrangement has been entered into through proper industrial agreements following bargaining between the parties in the industrial arena. I think it is the wrong thing to do.

Hon. Tom Helm: It is a recognition by employers of a most important day.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It has been agreed all along that this should be the situation under the Act. I differ; I have a personal view. I believe Anzac Day should be commemorated on the day on which it falls, irrespective of whether it is during the week or at the weekend.

Hon. Tom Helm: Most people do not agree with you.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: I am not particularly worried about that. I am expressing my point of view and I believe that is the way it should be. I would like more people to think about that angle. It is not like a holiday to commemorate Australia Day. That can be a day of festivities. Some people regard the commemoration of Anzac Day almost as a sacred event. It depends how deeply one feels about these things. It is not a day for jollification in that

sense. We know that under the Act allowance is made for sporting events to take place after noon or 12.30 p.m.—I am not sure of the time. Funds from events such as racing and trotting meetings held on Anzac Day go to the Anzac Day Trust Fund and further the interests of ex-service organisations. I know that source of money is extremely welcome to organisations such as the RSL, Legacy, and a range of others.

Hon. Tom Helm: If we lose the holiday they will lose the money.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: Maybe we will, but a lot of people lost their lives, and that is the whole point of the day.

Hon. Tom Helm: That is the reason we got the holiday.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: It is extraordinary. I like Hon. Tom Helm, but I am speaking about something which arouses deep feelings in me and other people. Money does not concern me in this matter; there are other ways of raising money such as the lottery system and a host of fund-raising methods. This holiday has nothing to do with money in that context. I would like to see the Act changed and Anzac Day commemorated on the day on which it falls.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. N. F. Moore.

RURAL HOUSING (ASSISTANCE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November.

HON. C. J. BELL (Lower West) [9.54 p.m.]: The Opposition welcomes this Bill, which is a worthwhile amendment to the Act. The Act has been supported by all parties in the Parliament over the years. It was introduced in this House on 25 May 1976 by Hon. Graham MacKinnon, representing the Minister at the time. In speeches at that time members from all parties supported the Bill in an endeavour to provide worthwhile housing for rural landowners. The major concern at that stage was that in many new land areas families were living in sheds, humpies, and all sorts of dwellings.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Some still do.

Hon. C. J. BELL: Hon. Jim Brown is quite right, some still do; and the Rural Housing Authority still has work to do. It is unfortunate that the rural economy is in such a decline. Many people are not game to take on the liberal terms of the Rural Housing Authority to improve the standard of housing for their spouses and families who are at present living in very

harsh circumstances. The authority has done and is doing a good job. This Bill will enable it to help a new range of people. A number of amendments have been made over the years to update the Bill, in 1978, 1981, 1982, 1984, and 1985.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Did you know the CWA wanted to see it abandoned?

Hon. C. J. BELL: I am surprised to hear that.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: What was the reason?

Hon. J. M. Brown: I do not know; I was surprised, too.

Hon. C. J. BELL: I understand 417 people have been assisted over that period of time.

On behalf of the Opposition I express our appreciation to the Minister for making representatives of the Rural Housing Authority available recently to discuss how it is going. It was very informative and worthwhile, and I hope it will become an annual event.

The second reading speech mentioned the special leases in Kununurra for the horticultural industry. We support the extension of the Act to that area. The horticultural industry in Kununurra will be of great benefit in the development of that area. Currently many farmers on the horticultural blocks have to travel 20 or 30 kilometres twice a day from Kununurra to their blocks. That is unacceptable if one wants to do the sort of work one would like to do. It is costly, and it interferes with the good management of the horticultural industry.

Another aspect I would like the Minister to look at is the special mining leases in the Southern Cross area, because I would have thought they would be in the same situation as Kununurra. Does the amendment cover those people, and will it enable them to borrow money to build houses? Some of them undoubtedly would require similar assistance to that given to other rural people throughout the State.

The Budget papers indicate that last year the Rural Housing Authority was not able to spend its allocation. I guess that illustrates the current plight of the rural economy. Last year's report indicates outstanding arrears of about \$65 000. That is not a big sum, but if it continues to grow it will be a cause for concern because it is a further pointer to the dire situation which some unfortunate producers are in.

The Opposition supports the Bill and we look forward to its coming into effect to assist these people.

HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [9.59 p.m.]: When one reads the contents of the Bill, after listening to the Minister's second reading speech, one cannot but acclaim the wisdom of R. B. McKenzie, the well-known General Manager of the State Housing Commission years ago, whose one desire was to make it possible for houses to be built on land in isolated country areas, and also to renovate houses and allow country people to live in much more comfort than was possible under the existing arrangements they had to abide by.

It was not easy to set this up in the first place and money was not readily available. I know of various avenues from which quite large sums of money were given to enable the Rural Housing Authority to get off the ground.

The National Party commends this latest move, particularly in respect of the availability of housing on lease lands in Kununurra. Those of us who know the Kununurra area would realise that if we are to get true satisfaction from farming in an isolated and very difficult area, people must live on their farms the same as anywhere else and enjoy the surrounds of their farm rather than living in the town. This Bill makes that possible. I can only say it is a step in the right direction. It may, as the Minister says, leave more housing available in the town of Kununurra for other persons. In my opinion that is only a sideline. The main thing is that this action is enabling people to get out onto the land where I believe they should be if they are to farm that land.

I commend the Government and the Rural Housing Authority for this breakthrough and commend the Bill to the House.

HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [10.03 p.m.]: I have pleasure in supporting this Bill and commending the Rural Housing Authority for its continuing endeavours on behalf of people needing assistance for housing throughout the State.

I recognise that when this scheme was first mooted its major thrust was for the developing areas in places such as Esperance, Ravensthorpe, Jerramungup, and so on. It was quite surprising to see the number of farms and farmers eligible to receive assistance in the south-west of the State.

I refer to the Augusta-Margaret River Shire scheme where 33 houses have been built. That is a sizeable number. It is a commendable scheme. Esperance had 49 houses built, Lake Grace 40, Manjimup 17, Ravensthorpe 36, and

many other districts throughout the State had lesser numbers.

It has been a real success story. I agree with Hon. Mick Gayfer that the people administering the scheme have put in more than 100 per cent of their enthusiasm and competence. I pay tribute to a former member of this Parliament, Mr Geoff Grewar MLA, the former member for Esperance-Dundas, who fought very hard for a scheme such as this and succeeded in seeing it come to fruition. Other members took an interest as well, but Mr Grewar took a very vigorous and special interest in this project. It is to his credit and he can take much comfort from this in his retirement from the Parliament. It is something he can look back on with a great deal of pride.

I commend the authority for the work it is doing and the people of the far north will appreciate the assistance.

HON. KAY HALLAHAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Community Services) [10.06 p.m.]: I am very pleased to hear the expressions of satisfaction from members opposite for the amendment before the House. There is no doubt that along with other amendments it gives greater flexibility to the authority's ability to meet the needs of people in particular circumstances throughout our State.

This amendment does make good sense. I am pleased to be able to pass on to the Minister for Housing the commendations of the members who have spoken in this debate, both of his willingness to bring in a further amendment and of those people working for the Rural Housing Authority.

I refer to the point raised by Hon. Colin Bell. I thank him for giving notice of that in a responsible manner to allow me to seek information to clarify a point of interest to him.

I advise him that mining leases come under the Mining Act of 1904. The new Mining Act of 1978 gave a transitional period of five years for mining leases to be converted to either special leases or fee simple by the Lands Department. The Mines Department had to supply a report to the Lands Department that the lease was satisfactory. The five-year lease period has been extended to 31 December 1986. If the leases are converted to fee simple they will satisfy the existing Rural Housing (Assistance) Act. If converted to a special lease the proposed amendment would cover the situation. If action under the Mining Act of 1978 has not been undertaken, the proposed amendment will not assist.

I think that clarifies the position for Hon. Colin Bell. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon. Kay Hallahan (Minister for Community Services), and passed.

MAIN ROADS AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon. J. M. Berinson (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [10.08 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has three purposes. The first is to enable the Commissioner of Main Roads to delegate his duties more effectively. This is particularly necessary on occasions when he is travelling interstate or overseas, as is quite often required of him, or when he is on leave. The existing legislation enables him to appoint an acting commissioner, but without power to carry out some of the duties of the commissioner, such as legal transactions. The Bill will allow the commissioner to appoint a deputy during his absence, who will be empowered to carry out the full duties of the Commissioner, with the exception of the commissioner's delegated power to appoint officers and employees.

The second purpose of the Bill is to set up a Main Roads Board. It has been felt for some time that there is a need, in conformity with overall Government policy, to provide for the greater participation of interested groups, including the motoring public, in the development of policies relating to roads and the functioning of the Main Roads Department. To this end, the Bill proposes the creation of an advisory board, whose purpose will be to advise the Minister and the Commissioner of Main Roads on any matter that may be referred to it. It is expected that the board will be asked to make recommendations on a broad

range of policy issues affecting the Main Roads Department. Such policy issues might include, for example, the overall needs of the road system, the allocation of resources between road categories, construction and maintenance priorities, roadside conservation, roadside advertising and traffic management.

In order to fulfil this task effectively and to ensure the full participation of interested groups, the Bill provides for a board consisting of 11 persons, who will represent the interests of road freight hauliers, private motorists, metropolitan and rural local governments, and environmental conservation. There will also be included one representative each of salaried and wage employees of the department and a senior officer of the department. The Director General of Transport and the Commissioner of Main Roads will also be *ex officio* members of the board, and a chairman will be separately appointed by the Governor. It is hoped that this will provide for the balance of interests necessary to ensure that the board's recommendations are representative of the road-using public, yet adequately guided by the many technical and operational considerations that are so important in the formulation of sound policies for roads.

The third purpose of the Bill is to continue the system of annual road grants made by the State Government to Western Australian local governments. The previous statutory grants scheme expired on 30 June 1985. The road grant schemes contained in this Bill cover the period commencing 1 July 1985 and ending 30 June 1990. They are similar to those in the last quinquennium.

The Bill fixes grant levels for the 1985-86 financial year and matching provisions for three years and makes provision for subsequent fund levels and matching provisions to be determined by the Minister. In this regard I assure the House that policies adopted in recent years, and accepted by local authority representatives, will be continued.

In recent years the Government has adopted the policy that statutory grants to local authorities are increased or decreased by the percentage by which Commonwealth road grants to Western Australia are increased or decreased. Grant levels for 1985-86 were determined in accordance with this policy and it is the Government's intention that it will be continued.

The Bill provides \$17 519 240 for country councils and \$10 618 360 for metropolitan councils in the 1985-86 financial year. During 1985-86 payments have been made to councils under interim arrangements of a special provision of the Main Roads Act. For 1986-87 fund levels have been determined by the Minister in accordance with provisions of the Bill.

The metropolitan and country statutory grant schemes covered by this Bill have been developed in close consultation with representatives of the executive of the Country Shire Councils Association, Country Urban Councils' Association, and the Local Government Association. There had been discussions between representatives of the executives of the various associations and the commissioner and his senior officers before the former Minister for Transport (Hon. Julian Grill) had discussions with them to finalise and agree the details.

I should like to mention that there are two standing committees, each chaired by an Assistant Commissioner of the Main Roads Department, dealing with country and metropolitan road funding schemes. Local governments are strongly represented on these committees which meet from time to time to discuss local government submissions and also general details of the statutory grant schemes. By this process members will appreciate that there is continuing consultation with local government.

This is an important aspect of the Bill to assist local authorities to improve and maintain their road systems. While the total funds allocated in this Bill are linked with the low growth in Commonwealth funds, nevertheless, the grants provided in the Bill will continue to make a significant contribution for improving local authority roads throughout the State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. Margaret McAleer.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [10.14 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 3.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 18 November.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: ORDINARY

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [10.15 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

America's Cup Festival of Sport

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West—Leader of the Opposition) [10.16 p.m.]: I wish to use the facility of the adjournment debate to deal with a project related to the America's Cup; that is, the America's Cup Festival of Sport.

Members in this House may recall that in early 1985 a colleague of the Opposition's, Hon. Ray O'Connor, proposed that in conjunction with the America's Cup, a series of sporting events should be held and be designed to enhance the America's Cup spectacular, and his proposal was enthusiastically supported. It was intended that leading sportsmen and women be invited to Western Australia and that the proposal would very much involve the local sporting bodies which would be asked to promote some of the sporting events.

It was envisaged that these sporting events would enhance Western Australia in the eyes of potential tourists from overseas who were attending the America's Cup and to focus their attention on Western Australia.

We have dealt with a number of pieces of legislation over recent times which have been designed to encourage and promote tourism in Western Australia and the America's Cup Festival of Sport was designed to promote Western Australia.

Together with members from both sides of the political fence, I attended a function on 3 May 1985 which was held to celebrate the launching of the America's Cup Festival of Sport and it was sponsored by Town and Country WA Building Society. The invitation stated that the Premier of Western Australia, Hon. Brian Burke MLA, requested the company of whomever to attend that function. On the arrival at that function guests were handed an elaborate brochure which was headed, "It started when we won the Cup", and it announced the America's Cup Festival of Sport. On the first page of the brochure was a photograph of Ray O'Connor and the Premier of Western Australia. The Premier made some very complimentary comments at the function about the Festival of Sport recognising, of course, that it would be of significant benefit to Western Australia.

I was left in no doubt at all that there would be strong support from the community and the Government for the America's Cup Festival of Sport.

I have raised this matter because I have read in the newspapers some criticism of the Festival of Sport. However, many successful events have been held already and many more events are proposed.

I will mention some of the successful events. They included a three-day equestrian event at Narrogin and a show jumping event at Brigadoon which was well-attended and televised. A netball competition was held and it was highly competitive.

A squash competition has been held and competitors from all over the world took part. I understand that there was an Australian record attendance for the finals of a squash event which was held at the Entertainment Centre. A major cycling event was held between 29 September and 5 October and it attracted between 15 000 and 20 000 spectators. I have been told that in the vicinity of 8 000 spectators witnessed the final day of racing.

Members will be aware of the marathon which was very successful, and they will recall that two world-class Japanese athletes successfully competed in that event. An Australian rules football competition was held at the Subiaco oval and 25 000 people attended. It was an exciting game which resulted in a two-point win to the VFL premiership team, Hawthorn.

A golf tournament is being organised—Australia versus USA—and Greg Norman, a recognised world champion, will compete in that tournament.

I have demonstrated that the Festival of Sport has had a great degree of success. The reason I am raising this matter tonight is to dispel the criticism which is emerging from some sectors of the community. I urge the community to support fully the America's Cup Festival of Sport. The Opposition, the public, and the Government, through the Premier, have all given enthusiastic support to the festival as part of Western Australia's finest hour; that is, the America's Cup.

I ask the Minister with special responsibility for the America's Cup—I know he is away on Government business tonight, but I hope this is passed on to him—to ensure the success of the Festival of Sport. At the same time I intend to do all I can to urge the organisers to continue their good work. I would be sorry to see the

project founder for want of parliamentary or public support. We have never had a better opportunity to sell Western Australia to the world, and with our renowned sporting record in all areas of sport, whether golf, swimming athletics, cricket, racing, or whatever, our achievements are unrivalled.

Avondale Research Station: Museum

HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [10.21 p.m.]: I rise briefly to ask the Government to investigate a rumour which is pretty rampant in the Beverley Shire that two married couples are being taken off the old Avondale research farm, and this will necessitate closing down the machinery museum, a very well-known institution in this State. This is a serious matter, and it is rather surprising too, in view of the number of tourists we expect in connection with the America's Cup. It is surprising because

the WA Tourism Commission has just set up a tour to take in the Beverley area, going through Balladong Farm at York, down to Toodyay and back to Perth. It is a new tourist route.

I ask the Minister to look at this museum. If he has not seen it, he will find it is a most interesting institution. It was opened by His Royal Highness Prince Charles three or four years ago. It is a huge shed full of magnificently restored machinery which attracts interest from all over the Commonwealth.

I hope that what we are told is not true. Nothing would be worse than for this to close, the Clydesdales to be dispersed, and generally the tourist attraction closed down. I appeal to the Minister to follow this up for us as I may not have time to refer to it again.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

GOVERNMENT BUILDING: AUSTMARK TOWER

Bunbury: Staff Relocation

562. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it the intention of the department to move any staff into the Austmark Tower block in Bunbury?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) from what sections;
 - (b) how many from each section;
 - (c) what offices will they be vacating; and
 - (d) what will the offices mentioned in (c) be used for?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) South-west regional education office;
- (b) 30;
- (c) South Bunbury Primary School and Craig House;
- (d) South Bunbury PS—for education purposes; Craig House—future use yet to be decided.

WATER AUTHORITY

Regional Operations: Northam

566. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is it correct that Northam has been designated as the regional centre for the operations of the Water Authority?
- (2) Does this mean the transfer of staff from Merredin or the downgrading of the Merredin establishment?
- (3) If so, what numbers are involved in the transfer?
- (4) Is it correct that a draft document for such regionalisation plans is in existence, dated September 1986?
- (5) Have its contents in fact been finalised?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) to (3) I am aware that the Water Authority is preparing proposals for restructuring. However, these have not as yet been finalised.
- (4) and (5) The authority prepared a report in August 1986 giving conceptual options for regionalisation. The report, which was made available freely to staff, made no recommendations.

WATER AUTHORITY

Regional Operations: Northam

567. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Regional Development:

- (1) Does the Government have a policy on building up country centres?
- (2) Is he aware of Water Authority plans to make Northam a regional centre?
- (3) Is it correct that this would put Northam in the extreme south-west of the new region?
- (4) Will this not substantially increase the amount of employee travel out to the eastern and northern extremities?
- (5) Will he intervene with the Minister for Water Resources in order to reverse current plans which will have a drastic adverse impact on a town like Merredin?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) The Government's regional development policies are to promote and facilitate the economic and social development of the regions and communities, in line with their comparative advantage.
- (2) to (5) I understand that the Water Authority of Western Australia is working towards a system of decentralised management. This includes the establishment of a number of regional offices throughout Western Australia. A number of locations are under consideration, but no plans have been finalised for the areas referred to.

SPORT AND RECREATION

Boxing Club: Instant Lottery Grant

581. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Was an Instant Lottery grant awarded to a country-based boxing club in March, which was later cancelled on the grounds that the organisation was ineligible for such a grant?
- (2) Were the police eventually brought in to investigate whether an attempted fraud was committed by the applicant?
- (3) If so, what were the grounds for not pursuing the matter to the point of prosecution?
- (4) Is he satisfied that all available evidence was examined by both his department and the police prior to any decision not to prosecute?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) Yes, but as the funds were returned, the department did not initiate any further action.
- (2) to (4) Not applicable.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Review

584. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Will the Minister advise what action he proposes to take to overcome the shortcomings of the Department of Consumer Affairs as highlighted in the department's annual report?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The present Government has given more recognition to consumer affairs than any previous Government. This recognition has included the very creation of the department, and subsequent substantial growth in staff numbers and financial resources which is clearly indicated in the Budget papers over the last few years.

It is hypocritical for the Opposition, which professes to support small government, to feign interest in this area that had been overlooked by the Liberal Government for many years.

The problems are not due to shortcomings on the part of the department, but are mainly the result of staff numbers not keeping pace with rapid growth. I have been in continual consultation with the department and my Cabinet colleagues in this regard. The matter is being addressed by the provision of temporary assistance and the lifting of the freeze on unfilled vacancies which will enable the department to optimise its resources to provide maximum services to the public.

At the same time, the department, like all other departments, has to bear its part in the reduction of public expenditure represented by the Budget requirement for a three per cent cut in Public Service employment.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT FOUNDRIES

Closure: Notice

181. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Works and Services:

My question is based on an article headed "Burke scraps foundries, 100 jobs hit" in today's edition of the *Daily News*. How much notice were the workers at the Westrail and the State Engineering Works foundries given of the scrapping of the foundries?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

I informed the union officials this morning at a pre-arranged meeting in my office, and then I went down to the works, as I promised the workers, and informed them that the works would officially close down on 19 December. Effectively, they were given notice today. In fact 19 December is the normal date on which they would go on Christmas holidays.

Officers of the Office of Redeployment and Retraining and an officer from the State Superannuation Board will be at the site on Monday morning, and the men will be advised tomorrow what financial arrangements can be made for them. This is for those people who are going to accept voluntary retrenchment, those who want to

be redeployed, and those who want to remain with the foundry.

GOVERNMENT FOUNDRIES

Closure: Consultations

182. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Works and Services:

Am I right in understanding from the Minister's answer that the only consultation with the affected union leaders was today, or did the Minister have numerous discussions with them before this decision was reached?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Not only have I had quite a number of discussions with the unions, but I have also been down to the works on two or three occasions and had discussions with the men en masse.

GOVERNMENT FOUNDRIES

Staff: Redeployment

183. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Works and Services:

Has he any idea how many of the 100 affected workers will be re-employed by the proposed joint venture at Midland?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Between 80 and 90 men will be affected. That is not out of the 100. There are about 180 workers at the plant now. The people associated with the foundry will be retained, and that includes the pattern shop and some machinists.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Students: Usage

184. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer her to the undertaking she gave me in an answer to a question without notice some weeks ago when she indicated she would consult with the Minister for Education with respect to setting up an inquiry into drug usage in schools. Can she now indicate to the House the result of her consultations?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The matter is still being considered by the Minister for Education and me.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Students: Usage

185. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

Would she indicate whether she put the proposition to the Minister for Education in writing or verbally?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I had discussions with the Minister for Education.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Students: Usage

186. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

Can she indicate to the House when a decision will be reached? I ask this in view of the recent comments in the Press about the seriousness of drug usage among young people.

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I am unable to say when a decision will be made because the matter is still under active consideration.

