

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 26 March 1991

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

## PETITION - KALAMUNDA AND DISTRICTS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

### *Administration Transfer Opposition*

**MR THOMPSON** (Darling Range) [2.03 pm]: I have a petition in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned object to the suggestion that the administration off the Kalamunda and Districts Community Hospital be transferred to a new authority, and request that our Hospital continues to be managed by a Board elected by the Kalamunda community.

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

The petition bears 1 755 signatures, which brings to over 5 000 the number of people who have signed similar petitions, and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 15.]

## PETITION - GUILDFORD ROAD, CAMELIA COURT AREA, BAYSWATER

### *Crossing Request*

**DR EDWARDS** (Maylands) [2.06 pm]: I have a petition couched in these terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned request that a crossing is provided so that we can safely cross Guildford Road (near Camelia Court, Bayswater.)

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

The petition bears 50 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 16.]

## PETITION - MANDURAH CITY RAPID POPULATION GROWTH

### *Comprehensive Public Transport System Request*

**MR NICHOLLS** (Mandurah) [2.08 pm]: I have a petition in the following terms -

To: The Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned

Draw the Government's attention to the rapid population growth rate of Mandurah City.

We call on the Minister and the Government to provide a comprehensive public transport service to Mandurah residents, seven (7) days per week until 10.00 pm.

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

The petition bears 203 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 17.]

## **ROYAL COMMISSION INTO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER MATTERS**

*Select Committee on Sale of Midland Abattoir Land to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd  
and Establishment of Brick Works on Site - Records and Evidence*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Michael Barnett): I have received a letter from Mr G.C. Pearce, Chief Executive of the Royal Commission which reads as follows -

Dear Mr Barnett,

As you are aware, Item 1.8 of the Terms of Reference of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters refers to "The Sale of the Midland Abattoir Site in 1986".

To enable the Commission to give full consideration to this issue, it would be appreciated, please, if all records can be made available pertinent to the work undertaken by the "Select Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Sale of the Midland Abattoir Land to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd and the Establishment of Brick Works on the Site".

## **MOTION - ROYAL COMMISSION INTO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER MATTERS**

*Select Committee on Sale of Midland Abattoir Land to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd  
and Establishment of Brick Works on Site - Parliamentary Officers Records and Evidence*

**MR PEARCE** (Armadale - Leader of the House) [2.14 pm]: I move, without notice -

That this House grants leave for appropriate parliamentary officers to produce to the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters all records of and other records pertinent to the Select Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Sale of the Midland Abattoir Land to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd and the Establishment of Brick Works on the Site, and to give evidence concerning the committee, provided that the officers shall not be required to attend at any time which would preclude the performance of their duties in the Parliament.

### *Points of Order*

Mr LEWIS: On a point of order, I inquire about the status of this motion, bearing in mind that the motion before the Chair is similar to a motion I have on the Notice Paper.

The SPEAKER: The ruling is that it is appropriate for this motion to proceed.

Mr LEWIS: I thought that the Standing Orders dictated that if a motion is substantially the same as another motion already on the Notice Paper, that the motion which was first introduced takes precedence.

Mr PEARCE: To the same point of order. Government matters take precedence over private members' motions.

Mr MacKinnon: Do the Standing Orders say that?

The SPEAKER: Order! I will take arguments from any member, but they must be directed individually to me.

Mr PEARCE: Government business takes precedence on Tuesdays. The member for Applecross gave notice of a motion which had nothing to do with a request being made by anyone. The Parliament is now seeking to do something about that request.

Mr Blaikie: What is your point of order?

Mr PEARCE: The day the member for Vasse was Chairman of Committees has long since passed. I am advising the Speaker of my view with regard to this matter. If the member

wants to listen he is welcome to do so. Before the House is a request from the Royal Commission to obtain certain things. It is proposed that the House respond to that request which has been moved in this House by the Government. We are proposing that the request of the Royal Commissioner be agreed to. The Opposition would be clever in supporting the motion.

Mr LEWIS: One is well aware of the need for this House to hand to the Royal Commission evidence and material to do with the Select Committee. The Opposition knew that the Royal Commission would require this material and, therefore, on the first day this House sat the Opposition properly put on the Notice Paper a motion that would preempt the request now made by the Royal Commission. If the Government wants to start playing smart tricks -

Mr Pearce: It is not smart tricks.

Mr LEWIS: The Government has now been embarrassed.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not appropriate to debate this matter at the moment. I am happy for the member to assist me but he is not doing that by putting forward that kind of argument.

Mr LEWIS: The Opposition is in favour, in general terms, of this motion. However, a member of this House has put a motion on the Notice Paper, and whether it is a Government motion or a private member's motion, the motion that was put first - which happens to be similar to the Government's motion - should be considered first. The right course of action for the House to take should be for the Government to suspend Standing Orders of this House so that the motion that stands in my name on the Notice Paper can be debated.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members would be disappointed if they knew that the Chair and his officers had not given some consideration to this matter before today. Based on that I will now give a considered opinion. The rule against anticipation is designed to avoid repetition of debates. Generally, the rule is that a matter on the Notice Paper cannot be anticipated unless it is anticipated in an equally or more effective form. The form of the motion can be examined in two ways. Firstly, the Chair, for example, will generally recognise that a Bill is more effective than a motion and that a motion is more effective than an agreement.

Secondly, the Chair may exercise discretion in a particular instance and look at the substance of the similar items, in this case the two motions, to see whether one may be more effective than the other. Based on past precedents, Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, House of Representatives' practice and on our Standing Order No 1, it is my view that this motion is now properly before the House.

Mr MacKINNON: Mr Speaker, would you indicate to me whether, by supporting this motion, we are precluded from in future debating Notice of Motion No 4 to which the member for Applecross referred.

The SPEAKER: No, we are not.

#### *Debate Resumed*

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [2.18 pm]: The Opposition does not want to stand in the way of the Royal Commission and wants to provide it with all of the information necessary. It is happy to support the motion. You, Mr Speaker, properly consulted me about this issue and we discussed the ramifications of it. I agreed with the course of action that you outlined to me. I find it highly insulting that the Government should come in today with this motion, having given the Opposition no notice of what is a very important issue because, as you know Mr Speaker, you consulted me appropriately. This Government should learn that the Parliament should be treated with the respect it deserves and that in debating issues like this - the National Party would agree with me on this - the proper action for it to take is to ensure that members are notified of the issue. We can then stop wasting the time of the Parliament in having to make points of order to obtain clarification. In that case, the business of the House would proceed properly. Mr Speaker, the Opposition is happy to support the motion, given that I accept your ruling that it will not preclude us from moving Notice of Motion No 4 which includes some very important issues for this House to implement to ensure that all of the information is available to the Royal Commission in the pursuit of its activities.

The SPEAKER: I point out to the Leader of the Opposition and to other members that the

information which I gave in the answer he required of me earlier might have been somewhat misleading. It might be said at the time we debate the member for Applecross's motion that a portion of it - that is, the portion contained in this motion - has already been debated in this House and therefore should correctly, or technically, at least, not be debated in that motion. Inasmuch as that may provide some difficulty to the Opposition, I indicate that, when the motion of the member for Applecross actually comes before the House, it is my intention, subject to no objection by the Parliament, to allow some debate relating to this motion - that is, that part of his motion that is exactly the same as that which is contained in this motion - but that the bulk of the debate on his motion should address other matters.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Mr MacKINNON:** In that case, I move that the motion be amended to include the following words -

And furthermore -

- (1) To advise the Royal Commission of the Assembly's inability to forward the transcripts of the evidence given to the in camera hearings of the Select Committee because such evidence was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly; and
- (2) To give leave to Officers of the Legislative Assembly particularly in the person of Mr John Mandy, Clerk Assistant and Sergeant-at-Arms to attend and in his former capacity as Clerk of the Select Committee to give information and his other understandings of evidence given in camera and of the allegations that witnesses to the Select Committee were intimidated.

**Mr Speaker,** your ruling indicates that part of Notice of Motion No 4 would be ruled out of order in future. If that is the case, the most appropriate action is for the Opposition today to move that amendment which incorporates the totality of our Notice of Motion No 4 in the motion which gives this Parliament the ability to indicate quite clearly to the Royal Commission these facts: Firstly, that the Royal Commission has its request answered and is provided with all of the information that this House properly has. That is as it should be. We are the masters of our destiny. We and nobody else should determine what is provided to the Royal Commission. That is appropriate and we support that part of the motion. Secondly, we should also indicate to the Royal Commission the points outlined in paragraphs (1) and (2); that is, we should advise the Royal Commission that we cannot provide it with all of the in camera evidence because it does not exist, and also give specific instruction and guidance to the Royal Commission that if it wants to pursue that matter, that it collect the information not from a member of the committee, although that is its choice, but that it consult Mr Mandy who was, as the motion states, the Clerk Assistant and Sergeant-at-Arms and also secretary to that committee, as the member for Applecross, who was a member of that committee, can attest. He can then answer the questions.

I see nothing wrong with the amendment. It adds to the motion and will give to the Royal Commission all of the information it desires to pursue this very important aspect of its inquiry.

**MR PEARCE** (Armadale - Leader of the House) [2.27 pm]: I did not speak when I moved the motion because it seemed to be self-evident that, if the Royal Commission asked for documents in the possession of the Parliament, the Parliament should provide those documents. I moved a motion drafted by the Clerk to give effect to that. That is as far as we saw the matter progressing. We are not seeking to make political points. A request was made and it was responded to. The Leader of the Opposition's proposition is astounding and particularly hypocritical, given another aspect involving the Liberal Party. My motion proposes to put all of the papers for which the Royal Commission has asked in the hands of the officers of the Parliament who would take them down to the Royal Commission and answer any questions which the Royal Commissioners may raise, including those to do with what was said at the committee or in camera. The motion seeks approval for the papers and the officers to go before the Royal Commission. The Leader of the Opposition is asking us to give those people a direction about what they should say when they turn up before the Royal Commission.

**Mr Lewis:** That is not true.

Mr PEARCE: That is precisely what the Opposition is doing. It is directing these people to say certain things. It is disgraceful that people should be giving directions to others about what they should say to the Royal Commission.

Mr Omodei: It does not say that at all.

Mr PEARCE: It does; it puts it in a pejorative way. It is disgraceful to attempt to blame Mr Mandy for those things. The fact is that that Select Committee took in camera evidence and collected documents in a way that was the standard practice of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Lewis: It is not.

Mr PEARCE: It is. I am happy for officers to look through parliamentary records to see whether these things are true or not.

That is the first aspect. The second aspect is that, as far as the Government is concerned, officers can go before the Royal Commission and answer any questions which are asked. If Opposition members have any claims to make in relation to the Select Committee, they have the capacity to go to the Royal Commission and tell their tale. As I recall, the member for Applecross was a member of that Select Committee. He can tell any story to the Royal Commission he wants.

The Royal Commission is open; the member can go to his office this very second and ring the Royal Commission to arrange for one of its investigators to visit him and he can tell him any story he wants. I am not surprised he is not proposing to do that because he will be subject to cross-examination and a whole range of other things which the Opposition has sought not to do. If the Opposition wants to be helpful to the Royal Commission about the Midland abattoirs issue, let it produce the financial records of the 500 Club. I will make a prediction about those records: They will disclose that a significant donor to the 500 Club is a person who had a direct financial interest in the Midland abattoirs question. If my claim is proved to be correct, once those records are produced they will have serious consequences on the way in which the Royal Commission will consider not only the role of Liberal members who were on that Select Committee, but also the role of the Liberal Party in the Parliament on that issue. Members of the Liberal Party in the Parliament at that time sought to use the forum of the Parliament to financially advantage one of its major contributors. That is the kind of thing the Royal Commission is interested in. It is very surprising that the Liberal Party which is calling for the disclosure of everything is now seeking to hide the records of its 500 Club.

Several members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: Members opposite should not tell me that the 500 Club is not a device. Mr Jones, the President of the Liberal Party, pops up -

*Point of Order*

Mr LEWIS: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the motion and to the amendment before the Parliament, both of which have nothing to do with the 500 Club or the disclosure of what other people may or may not have donated to whoever or to whatever. The amendment is about whether the additional words should be included in the motion. The Leader of the House is, as usual, rabbiting on about things which have nothing to do with the amendment before the Chair. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to request him to direct his remarks to the amendment.

The SPEAKER: I will rule on the point of order first: The Leader of the House has strayed only a trifle and perhaps he is coming back to the point.

Mr Pearce: Absolutely.

The SPEAKER: I have some very real concern about a parliamentary precedent which may be set during this debate, particularly those precedents as they infringe on the freedom of speech and the Bill of Rights in respect of Article 9. On that basis it is an appropriate time for me to leave the Chair for a short period and I ask the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party to join me in my office for a discussion on these matters.

*Sitting suspended from 2.34 to 3.09 pm*

The SPEAKER: I thank members for their indulgence with regard to that short break and advise that as a result of a meeting just held, in order to protect the rights and privileges of this House, and in particular Article 9 of the Bill of Rights 1689, it is the intention of the Leader of the Opposition to take certain action in respect of his amendment and for the Leader of the Government to take certain action in respect of his amendment.

*Amendment, as altered*

MR MacKINNON (Jandakot - Leader of the Opposition) [3.09 pm]: I seek leave of the House to withdraw paragraph (2) of my amendment.

Leave granted.

*Motion, as altered*

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [3.10 pm]: I seek leave to alter the motion by deleting the words "at any time which would preclude the performance of their duties in the Parliament", and substituting "when the House is sitting, unless the House gives special leave."

Leave granted.

*Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed*

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [3.11 pm]: It was a very useful meeting in the Speaker's Chamber to clarify the issues, and I express my disappointment that the Leader of the Opposition was not prepared to withdraw paragraph (1) of his proposed amendment and to agree to the procedural motion altered by way of the discussion. The words proposed in the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which seek to direct officers who attend the Royal Commission, are misleading. He would be asking those people to advise the Royal Commission of the Legislative Assembly's inability to forward transcripts of the evidence given because such evidence was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Lewis: That is fact.

Mr PEARCE: It is not fact in the way it is worded. For a start, it is not a fact that the reason the Parliament will not forward the evidence of in camera hearings is because it was destroyed. Until last year the Parliament jealously guarded in camera evidence of its committees for the simple reason that when people come before committees and are invited to give in camera evidence they do so on the basis that the evidence will be in camera. The members of the committee weigh up the validity of the in camera evidence given, and it is reflected in the report drawn up by the committee and presented to the Parliament. People are given certain guarantees when they give in camera evidence about the in camera nature of that evidence.

In my view the whole business of in camera evidence is open to flagrant abuse and in the past it has probably been abused in this way. People are prepared to make claims under the cloak of anonymity which they are not prepared to make in the full light of day. Equally, one can envisage cases where some people for a range of reasons, some of which may be personal, may have genuine information that they are scared to present under any other circumstances. Debate took place in the Parliament last year about the way in which this should be dealt with, and the Parliament changed the procedure by amending the Standing Orders. I moved that set of amendments to the Standing Orders last year and it was agreed to change the practice of the Legislative Assembly which in the past had always been to destroy the record of in camera evidence.

Mr Lewis: That is not true.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Applecross may say that -

Mr Lewis: When had evidence been destroyed before?

Mr PEARCE: Whenever in camera evidence has been given before a committee. People may be excused for thinking that this is an argument between the member for Applecross and me. At the meeting convened by the Speaker the officers of the Parliament confirmed that the practice of the Parliament has been that in camera evidence not be retained for the reason that guarantees were given to the people giving in camera evidence. When this matter was

discussed last year it was decided to change that practice, and a record of that discussion is contained in *Hansard*. Therefore, it is not necessary for anybody to give evidence to the Royal Commission on that point. No member of the Parliament dissented from that proposed change. We decided to adopt a new practice that the in camera records of Select Committees would be retained, but would not be released for at least 30 years. We established our own 30 year rule with regard to the destruction of in camera evidence.

It has not been the practice in the past for the Legislative Assembly to pass a motion that in camera evidence should be destroyed; it was the practice that the chief Presiding Officer of the Parliament, the Speaker, would be consulted before such evidence was destroyed. Therefore, it is not accurate to suggest that the in camera evidence of the Select Committee inquiring into the Midland abattoirs was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly. I understand that the destruction of the in camera evidence was undertaken as part of normal practice with the concurrence of the Speaker at the time. That is the information available to me on this matter. The Opposition is asking the officer who goes before the Royal Commission not to tell the whole story or to put before the Royal Commission what happened, but rather to present the Opposition's version of events which is the much more restricted version contained in the motion. The words used are not strictly true. Everybody will understand that a good way to tell a lie is to tell a small part of the truth. The Opposition is seeking to do that. The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition does not tell the whole story and the way in which it is expressed puts a slant on the situation.

The motion I have moved is a procedural motion, drafted initially by the Clerk, and the form of words considering the rights and privileges of the Parliament represents an amendment to which we can all agree. The Opposition is seeking to add politics to a procedural motion which would allow information to go to the Royal Commission. As I pointed out, if the Opposition wanted to get into politics I could now move an amendment to this motion along the following lines: "Furthermore, the Liberal Party should produce the records of the 500 Club for the Royal Commission to look at because they will disclose that a significant contributor to that club was a person with a direct personal financial interest in what happened to the Midland abattoirs." If the Liberal Party suggests that is being political, it is. It makes a substantial political statement about the hypocrisy of the Opposition in these matters when it clamours for disclosures, except when such disclosures involve its records and fundraising. I will not move that amendment because we should not score political points on these matters. We should respond to the request of the Royal Commission to provide the documents, and my motion seeks that. We should leave it to the officers of the Parliament to go with those documents before the Royal Commission, attest that they are the documents of the Parliament, and answer any questions the Royal Commissioners put to them. We should not seek to direct those people in what they say, seek to constrain them, or pretend to the Royal Commission - which this amendment seeks to do - that by implication something has occurred which is contrary to the practices of the Legislative Assembly. If Royal Commissioners are interested in these matters and the officers are questioned, the officers should be free to give the complete explanation I have just given. I am not seeking to direct the officers to give my explanation, because right as it is and wrong as that of the Opposition's is, it is not right for the Parliament to seek to direct people appearing before the Royal Commission on what they may say.

Mr Omodei: Where does it say the officers should be directed?

Mr PEARCE: The motion on the Notice Paper states that the officers should -  
advise the Royal Commission of the Assembly's inability to forward -

It tells the officers what they are to say when they appear before the Royal Commission.

Mr Lewis: You are making it up as you go along.

Mr PEARCE: I am not making it up as I go along. The Assembly has never made available the records of its in camera evidence for the reasons I have stated. Therefore, it is not true to make that claim in the amendment.

Mr Omodei interjected.

Mr PEARCE: I invite the member for Warren to tell the truth about the practice of the Legislative Assembly with regard to the record of in camera evidence given before Select

Committees. He does not have a clue. I will tell the member for Applecross. Members have no excuse for not knowing about these matters because they were in the Parliament last year when we had that discussion and changed Standing Orders regarding these matters.

Mr Omodei: We were not on the Select Committee, but the Premier was.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Warren was here when we discussed those matters. Destruction of in camera evidence was not done at the behest of the Government.

Mr McNee: Oh yes?

Mr PEARCE: That makes the point. Members opposite are trying to imply things that are untrue.

The SPEAKER: Order! Not only is the member trying to imply things that are untrue but also he is reflecting on the Chair. I tell him that there was no compunction on me by any member of Parliament to take the action I took in respect of that in camera evidence. I object strongly to anybody implying that that is so. I make that point at this time and leave things at that.

Mr PEARCE: It makes the point strongly. We should leave the officers of the Parliament to go before the Royal Commission and tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We should not ask them to go there and tell a limited, distorted truth as the Opposition sees it.

The SPEAKER: In view of what has gone before, I think it probably appropriate that I advise members of the motion and the amendment so that everybody is clear about it. The motion moved by the Leader of the Government was -

That this House grants leave for appropriate parliamentary officers to produce to the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters all records of and other records pertinent to the Select Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Sale of the Midland Abattoir Land to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd and the Establishment of Brick Works on the site, and to give evidence concerning the committee, provided that the officers shall not be required to attend when the House is sitting unless the House gives special leave.

The amendment to that motion, which we are now debating and which was moved by the Leader of the Opposition is, in part, as follows -

And furthermore -

- (1) To advise the Royal Commission of the Assembly's inability to forward the transcripts of the evidence given to the in camera hearings of the Select Committee because such evidence was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

MR LEWIS (Applecross) [3.21 pm]: The Government is greatly embarrassed about what has occurred here this afternoon. In the normal course of its new openness and accountability the Government should have moved a motion at the opening of the Parliament to do what we are endeavouring to do this afternoon, indeed, what I moved to do on the opening day of this Parliament in relation to evidence required by the Royal Commission. The Opposition had concluded that the Royal Commission had no jurisdiction to demand that this House hand over any evidence or that officers of this House should wait on it to deliver evidence and comment on evidence that may have been given at hearings of the Select Committee. As usual, the Government was not on the ball, being preoccupied with all its other problems, and it was left to the Opposition to move a substantive motion in this place to provide for this House to hand up such evidence.

Mr Pearce: There had been no request made at that time.

Mr LEWIS: It should have been a matter of course. It is a matter of embarrassment to the Government that the Royal Commission had to write and ask for this evidence. As a matter of course a motion should have been moved in this House by the Government that these things happen. If the Government were at all honest it would have moved a suspension of Standing Orders today in order to deal with my motion on the Notice Paper and amend it appropriately. However, because my motion was considered to be a procedural one the Government introduced this motion, which took precedence over mine. The Government



thought it would have a quick episode and the matter would not be debated and that the things the Royal Commission asked for would be forwarded to it without any debate about the matter in this House. The Government was caught out again, as the Opposition would not put up with that sneaky move. I suggest that the Leader of the House protesteth too much. I repeat the amendment for the benefit of the House -

And furthermore -

(1) To advise the Royal Commission of the Assembly's inability to forward the transcripts of the evidence given to the in camera hearings of the Select Committee because such evidence was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

What is wrong with that?

Mr Pearce: There is a clear implication in that amendment that something has been done wrongly when the member knows perfectly well that was the normal practice of the Assembly for years under the Court and other Liberal Governments. What is wrong with that?

Mr LEWIS: That is not the absolute truth.

Mr Pearce: Is it not?

Mr LEWIS: It is not. This House is about truth. Is that statement not the absolute truth about what happened?

Mr Pearce: No, yes, no to those three questions.

Mr LEWIS: The Leader of the House unfortunately has the ability to tamper continuously with the truth. The Government is greatly embarrassed that such an amendment was moved pointing out that Mr Speaker, without the authority of this Parliament, I suppose acquiesced to the destruction of this in camera evidence.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not mind the motion's being on the Legislative Assembly Notice Paper, but members must be very careful about what they say. I advise members once again that that was a decision I made without discussion with any other member of Parliament based on the past practices of this House. If the member for Applecross wants to say something about that, that is fine, but he should not reflect on the Chair in a way which implies that I was in some way led, because I was not.

Mr LEWIS: I accept what you say, Mr Speaker. I in no way implied that that occurred. I was merely recanting what happened. They are the facts.

Mr Pearce: It would be a fact if it read differently.

Mr LEWIS: The Leader of the House can argue as much as he likes. The facts are absolutely as they appear in the amendment before the House. I suggest with absolute courtesy to the Chair that I believe, Mr Speaker, that as the Speaker of this Parliament you take directions from it and the normal course, as I understand the Westminster system, is that no evidence - whether in camera or not - is ever destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Pearce: What is your evidence of that?

Mr LEWIS: That is based on the conventions of the Parliament. I can accept that the convention is that in camera evidence of Select Committees can be destroyed, but never without the approval or a motion in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Pearce: Ten minutes ago you were saying that the evidence was not destroyed. Now you are saying it was.

Mr LEWIS: I have never said that. I am one of the people who complained for many years that evidence was destroyed.

Mr Pearce: You just admitted that it was the normal thing to destroy it.

Mr LEWIS: There is something wrong with the hearing of the Leader of the House.

Mr Pearce: It is your mouth causing the problem.

Mr LEWIS: I know that the Leader of the House is not going well and has not won this

argument. However, he still has not given the House any reason why it cannot accept the validity of the amendment.

Mr Pearce: You tell me why you will not amend your motion to read "In accordance with the normal practices of the Assembly"? We will consider that as an amendment. If the member changed the amendment to that it would be accurate.

Mr LEWIS: One must also reflect on the need perhaps for in camera evidence to be conveyed to the Royal Commission if it requests it. We in this Parliament are concerned with truth, integrity and honesty. This Royal Commission is concerned with an inquiry into the Government. It is not a Royal Commission inquiring into the wine industry, the cheese industry, the right to farm, soil conservation or any matter like that. This is the most damning Royal Commission of all time, and its appointment is really an admission by the Government that it has been doing something wrong.

Mr Pearce: It is not.

Mr LEWIS: The Government gave a direction to the Governor to institute this Royal Commission to inquire into its own nefarious activities which have been colloquially called WA Inc. That is how important this Royal Commission is. The Select Committee into the Midland abattoirs is a very pertinent part of the Royal Commission's inquiries. If we want the truth to come out, if we want the truth about the witnesses being intimidated and rung up at all hours of the night, as mentioned in the evidence in camera -

Mr Pearce: And bolts falling off their cars.

Mr LEWIS: Quite so.

Mr Pearce: Screws being loose.

Mr LEWIS: Quite so. These matters are rightly to be conveyed to the Royal Commissioners taking that evidence in camera. I cannot see what is wrong with that. I cannot see why the Government has a paranoia about that in camera evidence being conveyed to the Royal Commission. The Government has come in here today to strike out what was sought to be achieved by the officer of this Parliament who sat through that evidence and compiled a report under the direction of the then chairman. That officer has a good understanding of what went on in those in camera proceedings. Rightly, if we want to get to the truth of it, and wrongly if the Government wants to cover up, the officer of this Parliament should have the leave of the Parliament to wait on the Royal Commission and hand up that in camera evidence. It is very important that the record is put straight. Never before has the destruction of in camera evidence been debated in this House, other than when the Standing Orders were renewed a year or so ago, when I commented that things had happened which should never have happened. It was right and proper that the Standing Orders did address the matter of in camera evidence.

Another very important point to that in camera evidence is this: Under the functions of this Parliament and of the Westminster system it is the witness to a Select Committee of this Parliament who has the option to ask the Select Committee to go into camera to hear that evidence if that witness so desires. It became an everyday occurrence in the Select Committee into the Midland abattoirs that it was not the witnesses who asked for the evidence to be heard in camera, but particular members of that Select Committee who moved that evidence be heard in camera because they were so terrified about what might come out. It was not necessarily the witnesses who requested that the evidence be heard in camera.

Mr D.L. Smith: You are a party to a lie and you know it.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

Mr LEWIS: I ask that that remark be withdrawn.

Mr D.L. SMITH: I withdraw it.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr Pearce: That statement does not fit well with the earlier claims by the member for Applecross that he wished to tell the truth.

Mr LEWIS: I shall repeat, for the benefit of the Minister, that on numerous occasions witnesses came before the Select Committee of inquiry into the Midland abattoirs, and,

without a request by the witness that the committee go into camera, a member of the Government who was a member of that Select Committee moved out of hand that the evidence be heard in camera. Is that the truth or not?

Mr D.L. Smith: That is an untruth and you know it.

Mr LEWIS: I shall search the records and the minutes of the Select Committee and bring them to this Parliament to show up the Minister for what he is.

Mr Pearce: Go and get them now. We will suspend the debate. Seek leave to continue your remarks.

Mr LEWIS: It was very important that this matter should be brought to the attention of the Parliament this afternoon. I am very disappointed that the Government did not recognise that the motion which I framed should be brought on. It was framed with good intent in order to place on the record the fact that this Legislative Assembly cannot hand up that in camera evidence because it has been destroyed. I am disappointed also that the Government has tried to be smart; it did not want the motion standing in my name to be debated. The Government thought that with a quick, slick, procedural move it could get its motion through without its ever being debated. Unfortunately the Government has come a gutser and it has been seen for exactly what it is. Rather than let the proceedings of this House take their proper course, rather than suspend Standing Orders, as the Leader of the House did last week when he wanted a motion of no confidence in the Premier debated, he wanted to be smart and try to get through without any debate. He came a cropper, he has egg all over his face, and he has been shown up for what he really is.

MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell - Minister for Lands) [3.38 pm]: It is worth reflecting on why we are debating this matter today. It is because the Royal Commission has requested the Parliament to provide certain information, and the Government, in response to that request, has immediately moved the motion before the House. The only reason the Opposition has moved its amendment is because it wants to perpetuate the deception which has been practised on the public since the Select Committee met. It is worth reflecting that after the report of the Select Committee was brought into this House the Opposition moved a motion calling for it to be debated. That motion stood at the bottom of the Notice Paper for all of one session and was never called upon by the Opposition to be debated. That was the Opposition's interest at that time in debating what the Select Committee had found and what had gone on in the committee. A persistent attempt has been made to promote two lies to the public. One is that the record of the evidence taken in camera was destroyed either at the instigation of the chairman of the committee or of the Government. As has already been indicated, that is a gross untruth. It has no substance whatsoever, yet the Opposition still tries to imply that it is the truth by the format of this motion. The Opposition has also tried to infer that the in camera evidence went all one way when it knows that most of the in camera evidence was about who was actually running the campaign in relation to Midland abattoirs and in relation to a number of other matters which should be of grave concern to the Opposition. The Opposition member on the committee also well knows that the delay in the preparation of the report occurred because he wanted deleted from the final report of the Select Committee a stack of in camera evidence which would have been very damaging to the Opposition. He also knows that the National Party member on the committee wanted to support the majority report, and he was influenced by people who should not have known what was going on in his mind as far as the Select Committee was concerned to support the minority report.

That is the truth of the matter. If I am called to give evidence before the Royal Commission, I will be more than willing to give my recollection of all the in camera evidence, and to talk about the activities of Opposition members on that committee regarding their communication with people outside the committee. We have been playing this game in relation to the Midland abattoirs on two different bases: Members on the other side of the House - who have no ethical rules at all, and do not care about anyone's reputation or have any principles about the parliamentary system - want to bring the Parliament and its Select Committees into disrepute. This is done to have their shallow political way, and to gain kudos which will carry them - and one person in particular - into the Ministry if and when the Opposition is carried into Government. It is a gross disservice and a distortion of the whole parliamentary process for the member for Applecross to carry on that way; if he would tell

the truth, an entirely different perception would be given to the public about the way in which the Select Committee conducted its deliberation, and, particularly, regarding what was contained in the in camera evidence.

I do not for a moment try to conceal that matters of concern were contained in the evidence - this was reflected in both the majority and minority reports. However, a stack of evidence was not complimentary to the member for Applecross, the Liberal Party, its backers or other people who were involved in that episode. Much of this evidence should have been made public, but when this was attempted to be done through the majority report Opposition members insisted that it be deleted and they sought the assistance of the Clerk to insist that it was done. That is the reason that the report was introduced to the Parliament in the early hours of the morning late in the session, rather than earlier at a time when there would have been plenty of time for debate. The member for Applecross is preaching as though he were holier than the holy, and as though his behaviour, and the behaviour of certain Liberal Party backers, were beyond reproach. The Leader of the Opposition and his deputy should realise that this member has attempted to destroy the parliamentary system and to bring the Parliament into disrepute. He has not cared whether in the process he has besmirched the Speaker, the Sergeant-at-Arms or the Clerk at the time the committee was held. He has had an unprincipled approach, and has cared about only one thing; that is, winning personal kudos and scoring political points. I hope the Royal Commission will take the opportunity to delve into some of the in camera evidence. I also hope that the commission will seek evidence from members of the committee on a personal basis rather than through a summons to the Parliament. It should be done through the Parliament and we will be willing to go along to tell the whole truth, rather than a select part of the truth, such as we often hear from the member for Applecross. We often hear his besmirching allegations, his guttersnipe politics and his unprincipled behaviour which on occasions goes close to making him unworthy of being a member of this place.

**MR WIESE (Wagin) [3.44 pm]:** If I was on the farm I would loathe to stand between two rampaging bulls having a little stoush - one could be severely hurt. In considering the motion before the House it is time that the Parliament forgot about the political games and considered the matters with which we are supposedly dealing. This is a very important matter and it deserves to be dealt with in a matter which befits the Parliament. This issue should not be used to play political games, as is happening at the moment. We must refer to what was requested of this Parliament through this motion and what is at the root of the request. It bears noting that the request came to the Speaker from the Chief Executive of the Royal Commission. The request states that -

"To enable the Commission to give full consideration to this issue, it would be appreciated, please, if all records can be made available pertinent to the work undertaken by the "Select Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Sale of the Midland Abattoir Land to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd, and the Establishment of Brick Works on the Site" . . .

The Royal Commission is asking for all records to be made available. We have not heard much talk about all of the records being made available. We have been arguing about whether the Clerk of the House, or any of its officers, should be taken before the Royal Commission. We should be responding to the request from the Royal Commissioners for the records of the committee to be made available to the commission. I wonder why we have a Government motion which, first, seeks to have officers of the Parliament go before the commission to give evidence regarding the committee, and, second, deals with the records. Why on earth has the motion been moved in the Parliament? I certainly do not believe the Leader of the House has attempted to explain to the House why the Government has included that extra provision in the motion which is far and away beyond what the Royal Commissioners requested. That is why I am a little upset. Frankly, the Government brought this motion before the House and it is playing political games - it often accuses the Opposition of playing such games - by going beyond what was requested by the Royal Commissioners. We should be asking, "Why are we going down this path at all?"

If the records are available, the Parliament should make that evidence available to the commission. It appears that neither side of the House has an argument with that - I accept that. However, I have serious doubts about the wisdom of allowing the officers of this House to go before the Royal Commission to give evidence that will be, at best, their memory of

what happened and of what people said five years ago; it would be hearsay evidence. I have grave doubts about the wisdom of this Parliament's approving that our officers be put in that situation. The Parliament should be placing the evidence it has available before the Royal Commission, and it then should leave it to the wisdom of the Royal Commissioners to decide whether to seek the persons who originally gave the evidence and bring them before the Royal Commission. In that case, the commission could determine the evidence it requires in order to come to conclusions regarding the sale of the abattoirs. For those reasons I have grave disquiet about both parts of the motion before the House. The Royal Commission should not be receiving hearsay evidence from the officers of this House. As I understand the legal situation in this country, that would not be allowed in a court of law. Why are we putting the Royal Commission in a situation where it will be seeking hearsay from Legislative Assembly officers? My comments reflect the attitude of the National Party to the issue before the House.

**DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [3.51 pm]:** Members may be interested in the view of a person not attached to the main political parties. I take it from the previous speaker's comments that the National Party will be abstaining.

**Mr Wiese:** You should know us better than that.

**Dr ALEXANDER:** It will be interesting to see what happens. I share some of the reservations expressed by the member for Wagin about procedures this afternoon. It seems we have spent the past hour mainly debating again the evidence of a committee of inquiry held some years back. I was not a member of Parliament at that time and, in any case, it is not appropriate for us to cover that ground. I agree with the member for Applecross that the motion should have been moved and the House should now be considering an amendment to it, rather than the other way around. We all have ideas about what is appropriate procedure and, the Speaker having ruled on the procedure, we are now debating the motion. Nevertheless, I cannot support even the idea of the amended motion.

**Mr MacKinnon:** Do you mean the Government's amendment?

**Dr ALEXANDER:** No, I mean the Opposition's amendment. I have some doubts about the Government's motion, at least as far as the order in which it is moved, but I have more doubts about the Opposition's amendment. The member for Applecross has not produced supporting information on his statement that before last year Select Committee evidence presented in camera could be destroyed only with the Assembly's permission. I am advised that that was not the case; in other words that was a decision for the Speaker of the day. If that is the case - I have nothing before me to show otherwise - paragraph (1) of the Opposition's amendment is inaccurate. I see no point in the House's debating something inaccurate.

**Mr MacKinnon:** With respect, it is not inaccurate. The motion states that the evidence was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly.

**Dr ALEXANDER:** Yes.

**Mr MacKinnon:** How can the implication be -

**Dr ALEXANDER:** I infer from that that the authority of the Legislative Assembly is required.

**Mr Pearce:** The implication is that it was inaccurate and the Leader of the Opposition knows that.

**Dr ALEXANDER:** If one reads something which says "because such evidence was destroyed without the authority of the Legislative Assembly" the implication is that it is inaccurate.

**Mr Clarko:** You have fallen down with that dictionary before.

**Dr ALEXANDER:** I knew it would not be long before the member for Marmion argued about my dictionary. I thought last week was a flash in the pan. The implication in this section is clearly that normally such destruction of "in camera" evidence would require the authority of the Legislative Assembly, otherwise why include that in the motion?

**Mr Pearce:** When I suggested an amendment, in accordance with the normal practice of the Assembly, the Opposition ran 100 miles to get away from it.

Dr ALEXANDER: If it were not for that phrase, I could support the amendment. I have gained the impression over the past couple of weeks that the Royal Commission intends to be smart enough to run its own affairs. It has rejected advice from both political sides and I am sure it is aware of the debate taking place today and will have its people read the *Hansard* transcript. If it were not already aware of the fact that the in camera evidence was destroyed, it will be after this debate.

Mr MacKinnon: If this motion is defeated we intend to write and tell the Royal Commission.

Dr ALEXANDER: Good. We must respond to the Royal Commission's request that all records it requires be supplied to it except those records which cannot be supplied for reasons we have discussed. The situation is a bit "Alice in Wonderlandish".

I refer to the point about the officers of the Legislative Assembly being directed. The motion does not direct the officers of Parliament to give their version of events. It says that if the officers of the Parliament are required to give evidence to the committee, Parliament will give them that permission.

Mr Wiese interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is reasonable. After all, the Royal Commission has power to call the member for Wagin, me or anybody else and I do not see why it should not have the power to call officers in that capacity. I am sure the officers will acquit themselves appropriately if they must answer questions relevant to committees which they have serviced. That would be preferable to the previous words containing the implication that officers would have to not only attend, but also inform the commission of certain matters open to interpretation. I will support the motion, but not the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to. Those of that opinion say "aye", to the contrary, "no". I think the ayes have it.

Mr MacKinnon: Divide.

The SPEAKER: The House cannot divide.

Mr MacKinnon: Why not?

The SPEAKER: I heard only one person vote. Standing Orders state that if only one person calls for a division, I cannot allow it.

Mr Clarko: I said, "aye", but I could not be heard. Members opposite can laugh, but I have seen jackasses laugh.

Mr Pearce: It is disgraceful that Opposition members did not back their leader.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members of Parliament are honourable people and if another member of Parliament supported the Leader of the Opposition in his call, and I did not hear him, that person should tell me now. If he does not tell me honourably that he supported him, I will not allow the division.

Mr Clarko: I said, "aye" very softly because I was finishing a sentence. The Leader of the House can giggle like a fool. He has never said anything softly because he is such a boofhead.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Taylor: We believe you.

Mr Clarko: I do not know whether I should allow you, Mr Speaker, to handle what the Leader of the House says, or whether I should handle the matter and save you the time, Sir. I am happy with how I handle what he says. I said, "aye" softly because I asked the Leader of the Opposition whether we would divide and he said we would. I said, "aye" at the same time, but I had my back turned to you, Mr Speaker.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Members in the gallery should look after their babies' bottles more carefully because members of Parliament should not need to wear helmets. I accept that the bottle falling into the member for Maylands' and member for Northern Rivers' laps was an accident, so we will leave it at that and hope it does not happen again.

Mr Wiese: The bottle did not get the right member.

The SPEAKER: Was the person in the gallery aiming at somebody? To return to the matter under discussion, it is most unusual for the member for Marmion to say anything in the House quietly. However, I accept his word on the matter.

Amendment (as altered) put and a division taken with the following result -

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Ayes (22)			
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr Grayden	Mr Minson	Dr Turnbull
Mr Bradshaw	Mr House	Mr Nicholls	Mr Watt
Mr Clarko	Mr Kierath	Mr Omodei	Mr Wiese
Mr Court	Mr Lewis	Mr Shave	Mr Blaikie (Teller)
Mr Cowan	Mr MacKinnon	Mr Strickland	
Mrs Edwardes	Mr McNee	Mr Thompson	

  

Noes (26)			
Dr Alexander	Dr Gallop	Mr McGinty	Mr Thomas
Mrs Beggs	Mr Grill	Mr Pearce	Mr Troy
Mr Bridge	Mrs Henderson	Mr Read	Dr Watson
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Kobelke	Mr Ripper	Mr Wilson
Mr Cunningham	Dr Lawrence	Mr D.L. Smith	Mrs Watkins (Teller)
Mr Donovan	Mr Leahy	Mr P.J. Smith	
Dr Edwards	Mr Marlborough	Mr Taylor	

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Pairs	
Mr Mensaros	Mr Gordon Hill
Mr Fred Tubby	Mr Graham
Mr Ainsworth	Mr Catania

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Amendment thus negatived.

*Motion (as altered) Resumed*

Question put and passed.

### BILLS (3) - INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Builders' Registration Amendment Bill  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mrs Henderson (Minister for Consumer Affairs), and read a first time.
2. Retail Trading Hours Amendment Bill
3. Prompt Payment of Government Accounts Bill  
Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Blaikie, and read a first time.

### ROYAL COMMISSIONS AMENDMENT BILL

#### *Second Reading*

DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough - Premier) [4.03 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Since the commencement of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters, the commissioners have requested attention to two matters concerning the legislation. The first matter is raised by the commissioners out of caution. It concerns the ability of the commissioners to sit separately when hearing matters within their terms of reference. The legislation does not at present specifically authorise the commissioners to sit separately. As a matter of prerogative power and at common law, Royal Commissions are free, in the absence of restrictions in their terms of reference, to decide how to conduct their inquiry. The terms of reference under which the commission is

operating expressly authorise the commissioners to sit separately. However, some provisions in the Royal Commissions Act, for example, sections 9 and 10, can as a matter of implication be read as requiring the commissioners to sit together and thus override its terms of reference. All members would agree with the commissioners that it would be most undesirable for there to be a risk of a successful challenge to the validity of the procedure of commissioners sitting separately. That would be particularly serious if a successful challenge were not made until the closing months of the commission's work, with the possible result that much of the commission's work would need to be redone. To prevent that possibility, the Bill removes the causes of the possible difficulty and expressly provides that commissioners may sit separately when conducting commission hearings. As it may be desired that some future Royal Commission not be able to act separately, the Bill provides for the terms of appointment to be able to preclude members acting separately. I emphasise that in enabling commissioners to act separately, the Bill is not seeking to change the law but to remove possible uncertainty. It will leave decisions whether to act separately at any point in the hands of the present commissioners.

The second matter dealt with in the Bill concerns the power to search for and seize documents and other evidence. The commission has the power to summons people to attend. However, the legislation does not provide the commission with the power to search for and seize documents and other evidence. The police can assist the commission in collecting documents but police powers to obtain search warrants are limited to situations where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has been committed. However, in some matters the commission will not be in a position to know whether there are such reasonable grounds until after the evidence has been gathered. The Bill therefore provides for the Supreme Court to issue a search warrant on the application of the commission, or those assisting the commission, where there are reasonable grounds for belief that there are documents etc relevant to the commission's terms of reference. The public are protected against any abuse of the power to search and seize conferred by the proposed amendments because a warrant to obtain evidence can be issued only by the Supreme Court. It is anticipated that it will not be necessary for every Royal Commission in the future to have this power. For this reason the Bill provides that the terms of reference of a commission may preclude it from obtaining a warrant. The present commission will have the power. The amendments proposed in the Bill are desirable for the more effective operation of Royal Commissions and are proposed at the express request of the present commissioners. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Nicholls.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - FIFTH DAY

### *Motion*

Debate resumed from 21 March.

**DR TURNBULL** (Collie) [4.08 pm]: I have three points to make in this Address-in-Reply debate. The first relates to the financial crisis in the rural sector of Western Australia with particular reference to the desperate need for a guaranteed minimum price for wheat in the 1991 season. I was pleased to hear the Premier of Western Australia say this afternoon that the Government would support this year's wheat price with up to \$150 million. That is exactly what is needed for the wheat sector of Western Australia. A guaranteed minimum price will give people the confidence they need to plant and to produce a crop which is so badly needed for Western Australia's great export industries.

The responsibility for setting a guaranteed minimum price for wheat has unfortunately fallen back onto the Western Australian Government. As members know, at the beginning of this session of Parliament the member for Stirling, who is the National Party's spokesperson on rural and agricultural matters, introduced the Wheat Marketing Amendment Bill in an attempt to assist the Government to implement a guaranteed minimum price. It is unfortunate that the Federal Government has not recognised that it has as great a responsibility in this area. The present Federal Government is penalising people who are productive and who put some effort into providing for themselves. Last year the Western Australian Government made concessional allowances to the value of \$100 million. Those concessions were made on water charges, transport charges, electricity charges and local



government rates, and were provided to people with low incomes. That amount represents the deficit in the Federal Government's welfare programs for Western Australians. The Western Australian Government also contributed \$4.69 million for emergency financial assistance.

Let me explain to members my view of the difference between a minimum price support scheme for wheat, concessional payments for low income families who are not receiving sufficient support from the Federal Government and emergency financial assistance. There are two distinct differences: Firstly, the people who make an effort, who are productive and who work from dawn to dusk must be assured that having made that great effort they will at least receive the minimum income. Secondly, emergency financial assistance is a reward for failure and it is a counterproductive measure. For many years I have helped to provide social welfare services in Collie and I have tried to ensure that people do not fall through the welfare net. However, the emergency financial assistance scheme actually rewards people who fail. Why should a woman who spends all day and night worrying and working to make sure she can manage on her pension not be eligible for emergency financial assistance? On the other hand, why should a person who does not care and who squanders the small family income perhaps on alcohol, on having a good time, or in the Totalisator Agency Board betting shops, be rewarded by assistance in the form of a gas tank worth \$50 or with payment of an overdue electricity bill to prevent supply being cut off? The same principle applies to large scale welfare. The farmers and the rural sector of Western Australia do not want handouts. They do not want the assistance of the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation. It is an absolute last resort and they do not want to reach that stage. Why should they, when they have worked so hard to produce many of the exports of this nation, and when the Federal Government's policies, such as not honouring the promises in relation to wheat payments from Iran, Iraq and the Middle East, have created the current problems? Those sorts of things are affecting Western Australian wheat growers' potential income in 1991. It would be much more productive for Western Australia, and for Australia as a whole, if a guaranteed minimum price for wheat were set. It is unfortunate that the Western Australian Government must make those promises in isolation when basically it is a Federal Government matter. However, Western Australia has always been an innovative place. After all, the wheat boards began in Western Australia in the early part of this century. The wheat growers of Western Australia, the grandfathers of the men who met outside the Parliament this afternoon, started the cooperative wheat boards of Australia and helped to make Australia the great nation it is in the wheat export market. It is good and fitting that Western Australia should lead the way. I hope that the decision made by the State Government today will flow through to the Federal Government and the Eastern States, and that the Federal Government will finally realise that the farmers do not want patch-up welfare. They want the confidence to grow their wheat and other crops.

The same applies to the Australian Wool Corporation. I have been connected with wool production since I was a small child and I understand why the Wool Corporation was first set up and all the intricacies and ins and outs of the floor price plan. Unfortunately that has now been destroyed, but the Government cannot rest there and say that the farmers and the free enterprise situation destroyed the system and the farmers must pull themselves out of it. There are many ways in which the Government can encourage further activity, such as downstream processing. It should encourage industries in Western Australia to become involved in secondary production. The failure of the wool scouring plant of Australian Wool Processors Pty Ltd is one of the most disastrous of all the industry failures in Western Australia. It was a disaster for the company, for the Government which helped to support it, and for the woolgrowers whose wool is no longer being scoured at that plant. I have been working very hard on finding a way in which private enterprise can ensure that AWP will scour and process wool in Western Australia, and that it will remain in the ownership of Western Australians.

I turn now to other items affecting the rural sector of Western Australia, especially those in my electorate. Unfortunately the picture is not very rosy. In Boddington, along with other significant gold producing areas of Western Australia, the production of gold has dropped because of the Federal Government's introduction of a gold tax. That represents another area in which Federal Government taxes are penalising Western Australia and people who make an effort in their lives. The Worsley alumina refinery company has decided not to introduce

a third pot line because the price of alumina has fallen on world markets. Therefore, it represents a lost opportunity in Western Australia for the production of more alumina and, eventually, the production of enough alumina to lead to the establishment of an aluminium smelter. The drop in the prices of tin, tantalum and spodumene is having a devastating effect on the society of Greenbushes because people's wages depend upon the productivity of their employers.

Mrs Beggs: A wonderful place!

Dr TURNBULL: Greenbushes is beautiful place, and it remembers with fondness one of its daughters. It is fortunate that the timber industry has returned to a five day working week, but that reduction in hours has had a pitiful effect on the workers. The timber workers voluntarily went on a four day working week to ensure that men would not be put off and that there would be enough skilled timber workers when industry production times were increased. However, the Federal Government's policy that people cannot receive increased social security benefits unless their income drops by 25 per cent penalised those people who tried to do the right thing and went on the four day working week because their income dropped by only 20 per cent so they were not eligible for any assistance. Most of those timber workers already receive the family income supplement, and that is a sign that the industry is not productive enough for it to pay its workers a sufficient living wage. It is an indictment of Australia that so many employees now have to rely on the family income supplement, which actually encourages people not to be productive. It will be to the eternal credit of those timber workers who went on the four day working week that they accepted those conditions and suffered that 20 per cent reduction in their income. It is fortunate that they are now working a five day week, but that situation may not last for very long.

I turn now to the District Court convictions of Tony Lloyd for making improper use of his position as a director of Western Collieries, and of Kevin Edwards for being knowingly concerned in Lloyd's crime. An attitude has been expressed that Tony Lloyd and Kevin Edwards were only taking part in what was regarded as -

#### *Point of Order*

Mr PEARCE: I understand the member is about to embark on a course of comment. I remind her and the House that my understanding of the situation is that the convictions which have been much bruited about in recent days will be the subject of an appeal by both those people. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I ask you to suggest to the member that she be very careful about the way in which she canvasses this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is my understanding that there is a strong likelihood that the people about whom the member for Collie is talking intend to appeal. However, to the best of my knowledge they have not yet done so, which means that the matter is technically not sub judice and the member may discuss it. However, having said that I caution the member for Collie and, indeed, anyone else in this House to exercise care in respect of what they might say about cases which we all know are intended to go back to court.

#### *Debate Resumed*

Dr TURNBULL: I refer to the attitude expressed on radio this morning by Hon Graeme Campbell, the Federal member for Kalgoorlie, who said that, "They did what they thought was the proper thing. Those were business decisions made at that time, and were widely accepted." That is the most outrageous suggestion I have ever heard. Western Australia has fallen into a dreadful situation if those actions can be regarded as business behaviours which were acceptable. I repeat Judge Brian O'Dea's statement that Lloyd was a director of Western Collieries and was obliged to act in the best interests of that company. Proper business practices and procedures must not be ignored at any time. The most worrying aspect of the matter is that the working account of Western Collieries was used without the knowledge of the rest of the members of the board. If the R & I Bank would not accept an additional exposure of \$6 million, why should the working account of Western Collieries - which was required for the payment of its employees - have been exposed for \$6 million? Western Collieries was already being raped by Rothwells, so why should that working account have been put at a risk which the R & I Bank was not prepared to accept? It is despicable that a certain person is saying that that was an acceptable business practice at that time. I will be interested to see the results of the Royal Commission's inquiry into this part of the Rothwells' debacle in relation to Western Collieries.

Mr Pearce: Did Western Collieries lose any money over it? Of course it did not.

Dr TURNBULL: I and a lot of people would like to know why the R & I Bank would not accept the risk. Why did it transfer the risk to the working account of Western Collieries?

I turn now to the state of fear which has been created in Collie by the Government's failure to fulfil its pre-election promise made in 1989 that the next power station to be built in Western Australia would be built in Collie.

Dr Gallop: Coal fired power station.

Dr TURNBULL: No. The Government stated on 20 January 1989 that the next power station would be built in Collie. Tomorrow morning a meeting of 2 000 unionists will be held at the sporting ground in Collie to hear the proposals about what will happen to the work force. At the moment no-one knows who will lose their jobs, but it appears from the statements which have been made by the companies that about 400 of the 1 400 workers - or about 25 per cent - will lose their jobs. In December the Government came up with an interesting plan to reduce the cost not of the new coal contracts but the current ones. The proposition was to reduce the price by 15 per cent and the tonnage by 10 per cent, and at the same time the Government slapped on a 4 320 per cent increase in royalties. In total, that reduces the companies' profits by almost 25 per cent. Is it any surprise at all that the companies want to reduce the work force by 25 per cent?

It is interesting that the Government has issued an ultimatum to the State Energy Commission of Western Australia for a 15 per cent improvement in productivity over four years. That represents about a 3.4 per cent improvement per year, and will result in job losses. Until about 11.00 am tomorrow, nobody knows for sure how many jobs will be lost, but the estimate is approximately 400. That number represents approximately 25 per cent of the coal mining jobs to be lost in one fell swoop. The Government has been doing a "Robe River", and I would not be surprised if one day the comments made recently by the member for Pilbara during the Address-in-Reply debate come home to haunt the Labor Party. I refer to the day that the trade unions resumed control. They will take action and do damage again. The problem is that the inevitable result of confrontationist industrial relations is that it does not work. This is unfortunate for Collie which has an extremely good industrial relations record with no days lost through strikes in 22 years. Why should a work force with a record such as that be issued an ultimatum by the Government resulting in a 25 per cent reduction of its work force in one fell swoop? It is not as though jobs will be created to which people can move. Admittedly, the Government has stated that if the old contracts are cut, it will build a new coal fired power station. Western Australia needs a new base load coal fired power station to produce reliable energy for the next 30 years. It does not need 400 miners and mine associated workers put out of work at the one time. These people will end up on the social security treadmill.

If these changes were implemented over a reasonable time, some people may have been absorbed into the development of the new coal mine and the new power station. They could have been absorbed into building the new power station. As it is, a gap of about 12 months will occur, and everyone I speak to involved in construction or in mine development agrees that will be the case. I condemn the Government for its action. I support the unions in Collie - the Australian Metal Workers Union, the coal miners union, the deputies' union, and the staff unions - in their call for a greater phasing in period for the changes to the coal mines to improve productivity, particularly regarding the redundancies. In its haste, the Government does not realise that the companies do not have any financial reserves for redundancies. How will these companies put together redundancy packages? SECWA says that it will send consultants to Collie to ensure that anyone who wishes to take early retirement will understand the redundancy package. That arrangement will be spread over four years. That is great; SECWA will be able to sort that out, but it will not be a smooth transition for the coal industry. That is unfortunate, and I call on the Government to reconsider its ultimatum.

One of the most unfortunate issues has been the decision by the Government to raise revenue by increasing the coal royalties. The Government's defence will be that the gas pays the royalties. However, arrangements for the royalties for gas were phased in over time as developments became more productive. It would be of assistance to companies if the extra coal royalties were not imposed at this stage. The companies and the unions have suggested

that royalties be reduced to allow redundancy packages and the phasing out of people who lose their jobs, and that is reasonable. In that way, perhaps some people will not lose their jobs on 1 July 1991. The people of Collie will remember a number of historical days, one of which was in December 1961. I am sure that the Government will go down in history for its actions in this case and that the date to be remembered will be 1 July 1991, to the eternal regret of the Labor Party. I have great faith that Collie can support the new coal fired power station, and that it will produce the reliable fuel and energy for the power station throughout the next 30 years. Collie is set and able to be an important and vital part of this State's future economic development.

**MRS BUCHANAN** (Ashburton) [4.37 pm]: I wish to raise several matters of concern both to my electorate and to the broader Western Australian community. I address, firstly, the current review of electrical licensing and regulations in Australia. The manner in which electrical work is carried out impacts on the whole community, including those working in the electrical industry and the users of electricity and electrical appliances. It is imperative that very strict measures are employed to protect the safety of the industry worker as well as the consumer. In April last year, the Tregillis report was released as a result of the review of electrical licensing in Australia. The main plank of the report was the need for nationally consistent standards. I have no quarrel with that. The proposal for uniformity across Australia would enable people working in the industry to move freely from State to State without the need to worry about differences in regulations. However, at the same time, proposals are afoot for award restructuring including multiskilling of workers. Workers in the electrical industry are not opposed to multiskilling; they are a very good example of multiskilled workers. In most cases they can perform fitting and installing, and maintenance duties. I have three electricians in my family and the younger ones have gained extra certificates - as well as those normal skills acquired during apprenticeships - to better equip themselves for employment and to keep up with the latest technology.

**Mr Bradshaw:** The member has changed her attitude about the union movement as a result of multiskilling.

**Mrs BUCHANAN:** Not too long ago multiskilling was a dirty word in the labour movement. Most people accept that it is now one of the requirements for Australia to become and to remain competitive. Current changes are being made under the umbrella of multiskilling. However, the qualification that goes with multiskilling is the safety of the electrical workers and the general community who use electricity and electrical appliances. Intimately linked with safety is the need for proper training of workers and strict controls over the industry generally. The Electrical Trades Union of Workers of Australia, under its new banner on the national scene, has expressed concern about matters contained in the Tregillis report. I was approached by representatives of the Western Australian branch of the Electrical Trades Union asking me to draw the awareness of members of Parliament to the concerns that they see arising from the full implementation of the Tregillis report.

In Western Australia electrical work is currently carried out under strict control. Installers must follow the AS 3000 Australian Standard for wiring and other installation work. To properly and safely install, maintain or otherwise work on electrical services, technicians must be well versed in those wiring rules and they must be properly trained in the work. Western Australia has a fairly good record in that respect. The method of training and the system of licensing and regulation has served us reasonably well in the past. Nevertheless from time to time accidents happen, and I refer to a ministerial report which was released in October 1985. The report resulted from a review of the inspection branch of the State Energy Commission, the Electrical Workers' Board, and the Electrical Contractors' Licensing Board. The report gives statistics of fatalities caused by electrocution. Not surprisingly the report shows that the majority of these fatalities occurred in the domestic situation rather than in the electrical working situation. That appears to indicate that the training, licensing and the experience of people who work in the industry protects them from electrocution. The report graphically describes seven work fatalities, one of which occurred at Leinster in 1980 when an unqualified unlicensed electrical worker was killed while working on live gear. This led to a statement by the Electrical Workers' Board -

The man's death highlights the necessity of ensuring that only skilled licensed persons should undertake the work of an electrician.

Another fatality occurred in my own electorate. It did not involve an electrical worker but a labourer, Mr John Dowle. The accident occurred in a cable trench at the liquid natural gas site on Burrup Peninsula, Dampier. The accident occurred in February 1985 and it was reported that the deceased was engaged in laying a danger tape indicating buried electric cable in a backfill cable trench when he stepped into an area of the trench which was alive and received a fatal electric shock. The SEC inspector who attended and made a report found that -

- (a) a trench had been excavated by a back-hoe for the installation of a high voltage cable;
- (b) back-filling and compaction had been carried out and it had reached the stage where the deceased had proceeded to lay the danger tape;
- (c) water had been used to assist in the compaction and the ground was damp. He found that Cables 1 and 2 at the scene were alive at the time of the accident. He was satisfied that they were disturbed during the trench digging operation. He was of the opinion that during back-fill and compaction of dredge fill sand in the trench, the sharp end of the centre section of the galvanised water pipe penetrated the blue active conductor of Cable No. 2. This resulted in this section of the waterpipe below ground becoming alive. Because of the salty content of the dredge fill sand, in conjunction with the water used during compaction, a voltage appeared at the surface level of the trench.

It was determined that the deceased was wearing damp boots which would have enhanced electrical contact with the live trench area. The inspector also said that the cables did not comply with the AS 3000 standards. It was a very sorry episode, Mr Speaker. In the process of carrying out this work on the LNG project, the cables in question had been disturbed on numerous occasions eventually leading to the fracture of one of the cables and rendering the area live. Unfortunately, all this happened before the laying of the danger tapes. It was obvious that insufficient care had been taken by the overseeing company, because the excavation permits had lacked the proper information to alert workers to the potential danger.

Of the seven fatalities detailed in the report, two were caused by unqualified people working on live electrical gear; three were caused by shoddy electrical work possibly carried out by unqualified people; and one was due to the worker's lack of care as he wore inadequate clothing and used an aluminium ladder which is a very good conductor of electricity. The other fatality, which I detailed, was caused as a result of numerous disturbances of cable by people not qualified in electrical work, and because insufficient information was provided to them by the supervising company to warn them of the hazards. The recommendations in this ministerial report focus mainly on matters designed to improve safety in the industry and also for the general public. I am not aware whether all the recommendations of this report have been implemented, but I believe some have. It is obvious that the thrust of this report was aimed at strict licensing and regulatory conditions and controls over the industry. By comparison the Tregillis report seeks to reduce the number of licences thereby reducing regulatory controls. It stated -

There is no evidence to support the claim that licensing is necessary or effective for the purpose of ensuring safety standards in electrical wiring work.

That statement is highly questionable. There will always be some people who flout the rules, but by and large the majority of workers, particularly here in Western Australia, adhere to the conditions of their licence. Of course, the licence can be used as a disciplinary measure for those who do not stick to the rules and regulations. Without strict licensing and regulations there would be far more fatalities by electrocution, both in the industry and in the domestic situation. Tregillis also recommended training procedure changes which have given the Electrical Trades Union cause for concern; so much so it has said that its members will not work with people trained under the new national model. I understand that WA technical colleges are offering both the old and the new courses to try to overcome the problem that that presents. The union maintains that the proposed certificates of competence are not sufficient means to warrant abolition of licensing for electricians. Its view is -

Accountability remains an important reason for the issue of licences and without adequate policing a system deregulated in the manner sought is not in the public interest and disregards the safety imperative.

There appears to be a somewhat gung ho approach to microeconomic reform, mainly in the Federal arena. Recently, I had occasion to question microeconomic reform measures proposed by a Federal Minister which would have had people in the country paying more for electricity than those in the city. I do not disagree with the principles of microeconomic reform, but we should exercise great care when dealing with matters which have an adverse impact on people's lives, particularly such things as the cost of electricity in the country and remote areas.

I would never profess to be an expert on electrical licensing and regulations but having read all the information placed before me, and in particular having read the report that was released in October 1985, I can see very good reasons for the Electrical Trades Union's concerns. After all electricity is one of the most dangerous forms of energy we deal with on a day-to-day basis and it is highly dangerous if we do not use it correctly. People cannot see or smell it but if it hits people they certainly know all about it. Therefore, I urge the Ministers for Fuel and Energy, and Productivity and Labour Relations to examine these matters. I ask that they arrange further consultations with the union to ensure that they are fully apprised of these concerns and to ensure that no problems can arise from the proposed changes.

The second issue I will deal with concerns the continued use of asbestos products. Recently, I called for the phasing out of vehicle parts containing asbestos. Shortly after I raised this matter with the Federal Minister for Industrial Relations, Senator Peter Cook, he released new information on asbestos diseases. I refer to an article in *The West Australian* on 26 February which was headed "Asbestos will kill more than AIDS" and which refers to a report from Worksafe Australia. It reads -

Australia's peak occupational health body predicts that another 6000 will develop the fatal asbestos-induced lung cancer, mesothelioma, in the next 20 years.

The prediction comes after a six-year study revealed that white asbestos could cause the disease.

Apparently that was previously unknown. The article continues -

Announcing the findings of the Worksafe Australia study yesterday, Federal Industrial Relations Minister Peter Cook warned that asbestos-related deaths would far outstrip the toll of the AIDS epidemic. . .

Worksafe is planning an urgent review of national asbestos exposure limits because of its findings on white asbestos, long regarded as much less dangerous than blue asbestos.

The article also goes on to state -

Australia imports up to 10,000 tonnes of white asbestos every year for use in brake and machinery manufacturing.

The matter of asbestos in car parts was originally raised by one of my constituents who works as a motor mechanic. He told me that in the process of replacing worn-out vehicle clutch and brake parts, mechanics are frequently showered with asbestos particles. It was at his instigation that I wrote to the Federal Minister for Industrial Relations asking him to look into the matter of phasing out these vehicle parts. The reason I was specific about this particular type of product was because my constituent assured me that in most cases alternative parts are available at little extra cost. It would be an easy matter to phase out car parts made with asbestos.

My main concern is not only about vehicle car parts but also about other asbestos products. I would be interested to hear what the member for Wellington has to say when his private member's motion is debated in the House. It is a well known fact that airborne asbestos fibres are present in most cities where the concentration of traffic is heaviest. Levels of asbestos particles have in the past generally been considered to be non-hazardous. It would be interesting to see whether that still applies after the release of the review done by Worksafe Australia on the exposure limits of white asbestos. We should be using alternatives to asbestos wherever possible. We should be eliminating asbestos products and making sure that we create a safer environment in which to work and live.

Following the approach by my constituent, my main concern is to ensure the safety of

workers and to give them a safer working environment because despite protective clothing and breathing apparatus being available, it has been pointed out that these things have not always been used. When I made a media statement concerning asbestos car parts the Motor Trades Association was quick to point out that fact. Those devices are not used for a number of reasons, not the least being - particularly in my electorate - the discomfort caused by wearing extra clothing and face masks in hot weather. It would be far better to substitute such products with asbestos-free alternatives which are available. The removal of asbestos vehicle parts from the market would mean a safer environment for the general public in areas which experience heavy traffic and would protect workers not only in the motor vehicle repair industry, but also those who work in road transport and spend a great part of their day driving in the city where the contamination is heaviest.

Mesothelioma was previously held to be a rare and fatal cancer of the lining of the lungs, heart and abdomen. It was considered to be associated with the exposure to crocidolite - blue asbestos. However, following the Worksafe Australia report we now know that white asbestos also causes mesothelioma. Nearly all mesothelioma victims die within 12 months of diagnosis. The annual rate of mesothelioma in Australia is one of the highest in the world and it is increasing steadily. The Worksafe Australia study showed that the higher the exposure to asbestos fibres the greater the risk. This, of course, is obvious; it is logical that this would be the case. However, my contention is that some people are far more susceptible to developing this disease because recently I have noted with great concern that several victims who died from mesothelioma in Western Australia appeared to have had only minimum exposure to asbestos fibres. For that reason I do not believe that we can totally discount the one fibre theory, particularly with blue asbestos, the fibres of which are very hard needle-like fibres easily penetrating the lung tissue. I have not yet had a response from the Federal Minister to my request concerning the removal of asbestos car parts. I am now seeking the support of the State Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations to join me in ensuring that full consideration is given to my request to withdraw asbestos material and products from use in Australia.

The third issue I want to bring to the attention of the House is the so-called fly in, fly out arrangement for employees with particular reference to its being used in the resource industries. The matter is of considerable concern to those people who live in the north of this State and who are interested in developing that part of Western Australia. The fly in, fly out system really does nothing for regional development. In fact, it concentrates the benefits of the resources which come out of the Pilbara into the south of the State. If the fly in, fly out arrangement is to be used the workers involved should be based within the region. In other words, if the mine is so small and is located in a remote part of the State and it is not practical to build a town on the spot, the workers should be located as close as possible to it and not in the south of the State.

Recently I met people from the town of Onslow who have had to bear the effects of the fly in, fly out arrangement for many years and they are angry and fed up with a situation in which they receive very little benefit from the resource projects which are located offshore and not far from their town. In most cases the residents of that town do not even have the opportunity to apply for vacant positions because most of the hiring is carried out in Perth and almost the entire work force reside in the metropolitan area and fly to and from the project.

I take this opportunity to comment on the fortitude of the people of Onslow. Instead of sitting back and taking what is dished out to them they have formed a group which is looking at establishing a labour exchange to try to link local residents to opportunities for jobs in the resource industries. Onslow is a typical example of the lack of benefit to regions under a fly in, fly out arrangement. If we are really serious about saving the small towns in Western Australia and boosting their economy we should look very closely at the fly in, fly out arrangement. I am pleased to note that the Government has agreed to review the fly in, fly out arrangement and I look forward to changes being made as a result of that review.

On the question of the fly in, fly out arrangement I recommend to the Government that it consult the Canadian Federal Government. I have undertaken some study on this subject and my understanding is that Canada is somewhat further down the track than is Australia. It has already recognised the need to ensure that long distance commuting, as it is called in Canada, does not deprive local people of job and business opportunities. In some parts of Canada

provincial Governments have legislated to achieve this aim. Canada has a similar situation to that which applies in this State; that is, a large amount of its mining projects are located in the remote north of the country and in many cases are close to its indigenous communities. The Canadians have also done some work on employment among their Indian and Eskimo populations. I understand that currently a Canadian Federal committee is sitting to investigate the problems to which I have referred. I have written to the committee and have asked it to put my name on the mailing list so that I will receive a copy of its report. I am sure its findings will be interesting and of great help to the situation which prevails in Western Australia.

The unemployment rate among the Aboriginal community at Onslow is 72 per cent and one cannot help but have a very great desire to do something about it. It is not a situation which is easily overcome; it has become well entrenched over a long period and one must remember that many Aboriginal families living in remote communities would not have experienced full employment for several generations. Time is needed for those families to overcome that problem. I would like more consideration given to this area and I urge the Government to focus on the problem and to consult Aboriginal people in my area and the Canadian authorities, to draw on their experience and to ascertain whether it can be used to alleviate the situation in this State.

The Pilbara, with its very rich resources, has enormous potential for future development and a great deal of publicity has been given to this subject recently. I hope the Government will ensure that such development is not impeded by allowing the continuation of the fly in, fly out arrangement for workers employed on major projects. A great need exists for planning for the future development of the Pilbara and Ashburton regions, hence my recent call for a strategic plan to be prepared to promote the growth of area. A plan is required and anyone who has observed what has happened in that area in the past few years would understand that development has been undertaken in an ad hoc manner and has been largely dependent on mining projects which happen to come along. A need exists to ensure orderly and sustainable development in the area. Also, the areas in which development can take place must be identified to ascertain where mining can or cannot take place. Consideration should also be given to setting aside areas for conservation and recreational purposes.

I am interested in the Burrup Peninsula which is in my electorate and which provides the onshore facilities for the North West Shelf gas project. It includes some very important Aboriginal heritage sites and some rare fauna and flora and, in addition, many people in the region use the area for recreational purposes. I would like a proper draft management plan for the Burrup Peninsula which would meet the needs of the competing interests.

I have raised these matters with the Government and I hope action will be taken to ensure that the Pilbara and Ashburton regions are not used as a quarry for the rest of the world and that proper planning is commenced immediately so the people in the area can look forward to a better future.

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe) [5.07 pm]: I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the address given by the Governor when he opened this session of the Parliament. I intend to concentrate on some of the economic aspects of the points he made. I note, by way of preface to my comments, that the Government assists the Governor in preparing his address and, therefore, I take the comments he made about the economy as reflecting the Government's understanding of this State's economic situation and also reflecting the Government's policy response to what is a very severe recession in Australia, particularly Western Australia.

When speaking in this House on 17 October 1990 I made a number of predictions about what would happen to the Australian and the Western Australian economies. I shall briefly repeat these: First, I predicted that the rate of unemployment would rise to a level approaching 10 per cent; second, that the teenage rate of unemployment would rise early in 1991 to somewhere between 20 and 25 per cent; third, that the Budget estimate of a growth rate for Western Australia of four per cent was unrealistic and that a growth rate closer to two per cent, at best, would be all the Government could hope for; fourth, because of a slower growth rate it was very likely that the Budget estimates presented to this House would be proved to be faulty; fifth, that the Australian economy was experiencing a severe recession, but that it was not as bad as the 1982-83 recession; and sixth, that this recession was



impacting far more severely in Western Australia when compared with the other States and, indeed, far more severely in comparison with the recession of the early 1980s.

It is of no satisfaction at all to members on this side of the House to note that the unemployment rate in Western Australia is now 9.8 per cent which is the highest rate of unemployment of any State in Australia. Over the past 12 months the number of people out of work in this State has increased by 24 200, or an extraordinarily high 42 per cent. There are now 81 900 people out of work in Western Australia. The tragedy is that the teenage unemployment rate has increased to 26.7 per cent, way beyond my worst fears. Evidence of the state of the job market for young people in this State is borne out by figures relating to the number of registered apprentices without work. In July 1989 the figure was 98. It is currently 273, a 178 per cent increase in 21 months in the number of apprentices out of work! Other indicators show that this recession has deepened dramatically and is far worse in this State than in the other States. The ANZ Bank published a series on job advertisements placed in major national newspapers which show that in this financial year the number of job advertisements in this State has fallen by 34 per cent, the highest decline for any Australian State. Bankruptcy statistics show a similar pattern. For the December quarter of last year the number of bankruptcies in Western Australia increased by 96 per cent, compared to the same period a year earlier. Bankruptcies in this State are running at 25 per cent above the national figure. Again, the figures for this State are far worse than those for any other State. The reality is that the recession has deepened dramatically. It is quite clear, from almost all economic indicators, that it is being felt far more severely in Western Australia than elsewhere.

In the Governor's Speech he made the following statement which reflects this Government's understanding of our economic situation -

The opening of this Parliament occurs at a time when international economic forces and national action to address them have led to a recession and an increase in unemployment.

That is a most extraordinary and ill-informed assessment of our current economic position. It suggests that all of our problems are due to overseas factors and national action by a Federal Labor Government in an attempt to correct those problems. That does not marry with the facts. The reality is that Australia went into recession before other countries. Therefore, how could international factors have caused the recession? The other fact is that the Australian economy is experiencing a far deeper recession than are other nations. Europe, generally, barely has a recession, although the United Kingdom, along with the United States, is facing recessionary conditions. However, the recession overseas is not as severe as it is here. Why is the recession so bad in Western Australia? Are we to believe that local factors had no impact? That is absolute nonsense. For this Government to insult the people and the Parliament by suggesting that international factors and national policies alone have caused this problem is absolutely appalling!

I agree with one point made in the Governor's Speech; that is, that the agricultural situation has turned down far more severely than I anticipated. That was due largely to international factors. This State is relatively more dependent on wool and wheat production and therefore the rural recession has impacted more here. That does not in any way explain the degree to which this State has declined under this Government. There are other factors which explain why the recession is so much worse in Western Australia than in the rest of Australia. The first is the policies of this Government. I refer to the cutting of the Capital Works Program in this financial year by 10.3 per cent in real terms and, in particular, the cutting of \$105 million from the Homeswest building program at a time of declining building activity. This has certainly exacerbated the downturn in the home construction sector.

The Capital Works Program of this Government, particularly its housing program, has been pro-cyclical rather than anti-cyclical. If the Government had set out to get it wrong it could not have got it more wrong. Other factors that explain why this State is suffering, include the fact that we have a depressed property market which will continue to be depressed for at least five years. One of the worst affected areas is the capital city property market. One of the reasons for this is overbuilding in that market caused by this Government and its agencies investing in inner city properties. One fact above all others explains why the recession is so bad in this State; that is, the complete lack of confidence in this State that is evident

throughout Australia and internationally. That reflects the appalling performance of this Government, about which we are now hearing more and more at the Royal Commission. I was lucky to be a guest of the British Government in the United Kingdom recently. I was embarrassed to be told by senior bankers in London that they would not accept the behaviour that occurred in Western Australia from third world countries.

Dr Gallop: What did you do? Did you promote our State?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, I did, and I did it damn well!

Several members interjected.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I felt a sense of shame at the comments and ridicule levelled at the State of Western Australia due to this appalling and atrocious Government.

Mr Pearce: You rat on your State. What did you tell those bankers?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I spoke well of Western Australia.

Mr Pearce: Tell us precisely what you said. What line did you use?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will continue my speech because I have important things to say. I do not have to spend my time relating conversations I found embarrassing and humiliating to Western Australia. In turning to the impact of this downturn on the economy and this State's finances, I point out that the Federal Government has recognised the severity of this recession. The Reserve Bank has indicated that national economic growth will not be the two per cent the Federal Treasurer hoped it would be when he presented his Budget, but will be zero per cent, if we are lucky. The Federal Treasury has also recognised that because of the downturn in the economy, resulting in reduced taxation receipts for the Commonwealth and increased welfare expenditure, the Federal Budget surplus, which was projected at \$8.1 billion for this year will, on current estimates, be only \$1.7 billion.

Similar impacts will occur on this State's Budget. Already the Deputy Premier has been honest enough to concede in the media that we will not reach the four per cent growth rate predicted in last year's Budget. He has conceded that the growth rate will be about two per cent. That will be due largely to the mining industry in this State. If one looks at the impact of a declining economy on the State's Budget, and takes the cash transaction statements released by Treasury for the eight months to the end of February, and does a simple pro rata calculation to the end of this financial year, one finds that the Government is running some \$200 million down on revenue and \$45 million above estimate on expenditure; that is, it is out of order to the extent of some \$250 million. Those figures are not all that different from those appearing in February 1990, but circumstances have changed dramatically. To the extent that the Budget was able to recover during the latter part of the last financial year, that will not happen this year because the economy is so flat, unemployment has risen so much, and business transactions have fallen by such a great degree. I hope the Budget position does improve, but I fear it will not improve sufficiently. My best estimate is that this State Government will experience a Budget deficit this year in the order of \$100 million.

What then, are the prospects for the future? Again I refer to the speech delivered by the Governor, when he spoke about macroeconomic conditions and said, "In 1991-92 the State can expect falling inflation and interest rates." Let us have a look at that statement. The rate of inflation for the December quarter was 2.7 per cent - the highest December figure for four years. For last year the rate of inflation was 6.9 per cent. I agree that the rate of inflation will fall.

Mrs Henderson: It has been falling.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, it has gone up. The last figures went up, so I suggest the Minister should look at them, because she is never accurate. The annual rate of inflation increased during the December quarter to 6.9 per cent. It will fall, and the reason it will fall is because we have a recession in this country and inflation always falls during a recession. My estimate is that it will not fall to much below the five per cent to six per cent range for the rest of this year. That is the best we can hope for. Inflation may come down a little, but that is no credit to the State Government.

Mr Troy: What will the change be in relation to our trading partners?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: At the end of this year we will be worse off. At the moment we do not look too bad. Other things, such as the poll tax in the UK which pushed up its rate of inflation, have affected other countries.

The other point in the quote was that we would experience falling interest rates. This is an indication of the Government's understanding of our macroeconomic position. It is the Government's message to this Parliament and to the people of Western Australia and shows how the Government understands the economy, and that is what I am assessing. The 90 day bank bill rate, which is a free market rate, is currently 11.5 per cent. It has fallen about 5 per cent over the past year. Commonwealth 10 year bonds are at an 11 year low. They have come down as a result of an easier monetary policy over the past 15 months. They have also come down as a result of the effect of a declining economy. There is very little, if any, scope for falling interest rates. They are at an 11 year low. If we consider this matter for a moment, what could bring interest rates down further? If inflation fell dramatically they could come down, but I have already said that will not happen. Another possibility would be a dramatic turnaround in our current account, or our trading results. However, in the six months to December Australia recorded a current account deficit of \$8.6 billion. On those figures it is quite clear that this year the current account deficit will be in the range of \$16 billion to \$18 billion. In a recession that is a very marginal improvement. In fact, given the decline in commodity prices, it could end up as a higher current account deficit. I regret to say that there is no prospect at all of a dramatic improvement in our trading performance which would see interest rates fall this year. The Government has indicated, in that quote from the Governor's Speech, that it does not understand the macroeconomy of Australia. It talks about falling inflation. There may be a minor element of truth there. It talks about falling interest rates.

Mrs Henderson: It has happened.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Minister says it has happened. This was the Government's statement about what will happen. The Minister is so out of touch with what is happening in the economy! There is no prospect of further dramatic falls in interest rates.

I am always fair. I make the point that there are some positive signs in the economy, and I shall relate them to the House. First of all, the Westpac Melbourne Institute "Survey of Consumer Confidence" shows, though tentatively, that perhaps consumer confidence has stopped falling and that there has been some marginal increase over January and February.

Mrs Henderson: Why don't you talk about Western Australia?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Some analysts believe that the rate of increase in unemployment has started to slow. Unemployment is still rising, but the rate of increase may have slowed. There is perhaps a very faint light at the end of the tunnel. The national accounts statistics released the other day show that for the December quarter the Australian economy grew by 0.6 per cent after two quarters of negative growth. It is very true that if we look at those figures, actual expenditure within the Australian economy on investment, consumer expenditure and the like declined by 1.3 per cent. Only the external sector contribution led to an overall growth of 0.6 per cent. I do not believe the Australian economy has turned the corner. In fact it is highly probable that the first quarter figures for 1991, when they come out, will show negative growth again. Nevertheless there is some sign that perhaps the recession will not worsen at a national level by any greater extent.

In the housing sector there are some very tentative signs that housing demand is starting to increase. The indications are that, nationally and in this State, sales figures increased during the month of February. Again, if we look at the figures for actual building starts, they show nationally an increase of 20 per cent for February, and a decline of 2.3 per cent in Western Australia for February. If there is a housing recovery, it is happening more strongly elsewhere; it is not happening here. The recession is clearly worse in this State. This Government does not understand the macroeconomic environment of Australia. There are some signs of an economic recovery in Australia; I believe there will be some signs of an economic recovery at a national level during this calendar year. I particularly draw to the attention of all members the fact that following the recession of 1982-83 there was a

relatively rapid expansion of the economy and a relatively rapid growth in employment. That will not happen this time. It will be very hard to reduce this high rate of unemployment.

I compare the situation now with that of 1982-83. Some of the reasons that we came out of the 1982-83 recession so quickly include these. First, there had been a collapse in world trade at that time. That collapse bounced back fairly quickly. This time there has not been a collapse in world trade to bounce back. Secondly, the agricultural problem of 1982-83 was caused by drought. Thank God it rained; that solved the agricultural problem. This time the agricultural problem is not climatic. Thirdly, the Hawke Government embarked on a very large spending program during its first three Budgets. That option is not available now. The Government cannot go out on a national spending program when we have a level of international debt of over \$125 billion, and current account deficits running at \$17 billion to \$18 billion. That option is not available as it was in 1982-83.

Finally, the housing industry bounced back in 1982-83 largely under the influence of the first home owners' scheme. That scheme has been abolished. All those factors which brought about a strong recovery after the 1982-83 recession cannot and will not apply after the 1990-91 recession. I regret to say that a high rate of unemployment will be far harder to reduce following this recession than it was after 1982-83, or indeed after 1974.

[Questions without notice taken.]

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm*

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Before the dinner recess I was looking at the state of the economy and made the point that in this recession Western Australia is faring dramatically worse than the rest of Australia. I also said that the statements in the Governor's Speech indicate a remarkable lack of understanding on the part of the State Government of the national and international economy.

What has the State Government done in the early part of 1991 to address a very serious downturn in the economy and a dramatic rise in the level of unemployment? A number of policies of sorts have emerged. The Deputy Premier has said that he sees a resources sector revival with \$4 billion worth of new resource projects. I hope he is right and that we get that investment increase. I note that most industry analysts, including the Confederation of Western Australian Industry, have described that figure of \$4 billion as somewhat optimistic. In response to the very high rate of increase in unemployment the responsible Minister said that the Government is taking measures to encourage training. We all applaud training initiatives, but they will do nothing to solve the current unemployment problem. They will not address the problem within the next six months. Training, by definition, is a long term solution and, admirable as it is, it will do nothing in the short term.

The Government has put great emphasis on the work it is doing in microeconomic reform and it released a paper entitled, "Progress and Priorities" in December 1990. Members on this side of the House agree with most of the initiatives under microeconomic reform. However, the point must be made that to be effective the pace of reform must be far quicker. None of the proposals in that document will bring about short term relief for the unemployed. The Government seems to take a very broad definition of "microeconomic reform" and includes within its successes in this category such things as the introduction of the financial institutions duty and Price Check surveys. Almost everything this Government has done or attempted to do is called microeconomic reform. If the Government is serious it can achieve some good through microeconomic reform. I applaud attempts to advance corporatisation for the simple reason that, although corporatisation does not go far enough for many of us, it protects the agency concerned from interference by a Minister. The history of this State in recent years indicates that it is a valid reform, and one the Opposition would welcome, because Government agencies in this State have suffered greatly from interference by Ministers.

An impact can be made in another area. One of the greatest problems we have at the moment is unemployment and it is logical that microeconomic reform would be of the greatest benefit in the labour market. The Government has done nothing in that area. I remind members opposite that 60 per cent of employees in this State covered by award wages are under State awards. The ball for microeconomic reform in the labour market is very much in the Government's court, yet it has done nothing. Recently the Premier noted

that she was somewhat frustrated by the lack of progress in microeconomic reform on the waterfront. I remind members that the ports in Western Australia are owned by the State Government, and the ball for waterfront reform is also to a large extent in the Government's court. The measures introduced by the Government have not gone far enough.

I return to the Governor's Speech and the Government's main thrust and policy response to unemployment, which is in the housing area. It was stated in the Governor's Speech that -

Two recent Government initiatives have been designed to stimulate the home building industry as well as provide social benefits.

They are expected to generate 15 000 jobs in the housing construction and related industries.

Let us examine these initiatives in housing. The first is \$210 million for low cost home loans under the Keystart scheme. There is absolutely nothing new in that. At the beginning of this financial year the Government announced a \$300 million allocation. All it has announced in the middle of this deep recession is that it will continue to allocate the amount not used so far. There is nothing new and no response to the recession. The second announcement was a 70 per cent increase, to \$85 million, in the amount available for Government guaranteed housing loans. These are funds lent by banks to the terminating building societies under a Government guarantee. Let us consider that massive 70 per cent increase announced by the Government: Of the \$85 million, \$30 million has already been allocated and used. The remaining \$55 million allocation was announced in December. Again, it is nothing new. As to the 70 per cent increase, it is arrived at by comparing the \$85 million with the level of constrained lending last year when the Government would not give the guarantee and not allow the \$80 million allocation to be available to the terminating building societies. The Government held down the level last year and has now compared that level with the allocation this year, and has claimed a 70 per cent increase. If this year's figure is compared with the figure two years ago the increase is zero. The massive increase referred to is fictional.

The final aspect of housing policy refers to a Government package to build 1 000 homes. The Government will not build 1 000 homes. It is providing concessions and an interest free component but it is relying on the private sector, private home owners and builders, to build the homes. There is no Government building program for 1 000 new homes. In fact, the Government's building program has been reduced from 2 015 last year to 744 this year. While the Government claims, with a multiplier of four, that its recent announcement of 500 homes to be built in country areas will produce 2 000 jobs, the cutback of 1 271 in the number of Homeswest houses being built means the loss of 4 800 jobs. The Government's major area of initiative has been in respect of housing, but on the basis of what has been said there is absolutely no substance to its policy. This Government has failed in its policy development. It has been said that former Premier Peter Dowding will be remembered as the Premier who launched a thousand brochures. At least former Premier Dowding had brochures. This recession is far more severe in this State than it was in 1982-83. In 1982-83 Australia was in a worse situation, but this State rode out the recession fairly well. The statistics point to the fact that that is not happening this time. Unlike the situation in 1982-83, we cannot expect, for a variety of reasons, to get a rapid recovery. The necessary international factors are not there to generate that recovery, and it is not possible for a fiscally inspired recovery to occur through Federal Government spending, as occurred in 1982-83. The State Government's policy response, as outlined in the Governor's Speech, is absolutely inadequate. Where it appears to have substance in the housing area, it is merely repeating what was announced previously. In other areas it is absolute puff and has no content. It is a sham of a policy.

I conclude by repeating that the greatest problem facing Western Australia is a complete lack of confidence in the State, and in particular in this Government. People do not want to do business with this Government - little wonder! Fortunately the reputation of the State Treasury has not suffered irreparably, and it will survive. This Government has had all sorts of problems and has been forced to call a Royal Commission in an attempt to clear the air. The evidence given to that Royal Commission, which is only a couple of weeks into its operations, has been so damning that the reality now is that the only thing this Government can do to restore confidence in Western Australia is resign.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

**MR OMODEI (Warren) [7.41 pm]:** It appears that members opposite are not very keen on the Address-in-Reply debate. I intend to concentrate entirely on the most important issue in my electorate: The redevelopment of the Warren District Hospital.

**Mr Pearce:** A lot of people are asking why you don't defend your electorate, particularly the Department of Conservation and Land Management officers down there.

**Mr OMODEI:** The Minister will have an opportunity to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate. He has been caught out a few times lately. I suggest that he listen because in my short time in this House I have noticed the number of portfolios which the Minister has held and he has made a mess of at least 90 per cent of them.

I direct the attention of the House to the comments made last Thursday by the Minister for Health in response to the Leader of the National Party, where he indicated that he would attend to any issue which could be substantiated in regard to health. He said, in part, "I will certainly attend to it. I always do. There would never be a time when members found me not to be ready to respond to a substantiated need." I refer the House to a letter written by the Minister for Health, Mr Wilson, dated 15 September 1988, to the then Chairman of the Board, Warren District Hospital, which reads as follows -

Dear Mr Bonadeo

It is with great pleasure that I am able to confirm that the Government is to make available Capital Works funds in excess of \$8m. to undertake the redevelopment of the Warren District Hospital.

I would like to place on record my appreciation for the co-operation and input that has been provided by the Board, and Hospital Executive in resolving an appropriate strategy for the redevelopment. I look forward to your further assistance as the project is developed.

If that is not a substantiated need, I will walk east!

I will refer now to some of the 45 medical and nursing deficiencies which have been identified within the Warren District Hospital. For the last six or seven years, the hospital board has forgone a great deal of the repair and rehabilitation of the hospital because it has anticipated that a new hospital will be built. Apart from the obvious structural inadequacies of the hospital and its age, it was last extended some time during the last war, and due to the possibility of air raids at that time it was a very extended design, which is not conducive to today's requirements for a proper medical facility. The design is so widely spaced that at times patients have to be transported in corridors which are open to the elements. Members would be aware that during some months of the year in Manjimup there are bitter winds, which blow up through those open corridors. The nursing staff and the doctors at that hospital have worked above and beyond the call of duty to provide an excellent service, despite the rundown facilities and the hardships they have to endure as a result of the hospital's design. Ambulatory patients are exposed to the wind and the rain in the let down area. There are no isolation areas within the wards for children. The ward system is such that dead people are often kept in the wards overnight because of the inadequate morgue facilities. The labour ward has no showers and no theatre recovery area. There are only six functional single rooms and four, six bed wards in the whole hospital. There is no resuscitation area in the casualty department. The podiatrist uses the board room, and patients are required to line up in the corridor to see the podiatrist. There is also a line-up to get access to acute care beds. Apart from the six bed wards and the four bed wards, there are no facilities where private personal matters can be discussed and where private telephone calls can be made. The labour wards are only partially divided and are very cramped. They are very cold and are not conducive to the good health of newborn babies. There are no facilities for interviewing patients about personal matters. There are no oxygen or suction facilities in the wards. There is only one oxygen outlet. There is inadequate desk space for documenting medical procedures in the operating theatre and elsewhere. It was expected that a redevelopment would increase the capacity and the use of that hospital by at least 30 per cent. The history of this hospital goes back a long way, and I mentioned earlier the letter which the Minister wrote to the board. We now know that because of some of the Government's investments in business ventures, those funds have been redirected.

Mr D.L. Smith: Up to this point it was a reasonable speech but you have lost track of it by bringing in that issue.

Mr OMODEI: When the Minister makes his speech he could perhaps outline why the funds were redirected from the Warren District Hospital in 1988 after the tenders were ready to be released, right down to the light sockets and the colour of the blinds.

Mr D.L. Smith: The funds were not redirected. They were not formally allocated.

Mr OMODEI: Why then the letter from the Minister for Health to the hospital board? The Minister does not respond. I think he has been caught out. We do not get the same response from the Minister for Health. While looking up a speech I made in April 1989, I noticed that on Tuesday, 19 September, the Minister for South-West said that the hospital "will be done next year". That appeared at page 2226 of *Hansard*.

Mr D.L. Smith: I support the hospital.

Mr OMODEI: I am aware that the Minister supports the concept of a hospital. However, while going through some *Warren-Blackwood Times* newspaper clippings I noticed headlines such as "Funds boost likely for hospital redevelopment", "Angry hospital group launches funding fight", "Warren Hospital one of worst in the State . . .", and "Hospital's future is put on ice". A doctor at Manjimup made the comment that the "disaster at the Manjimup Hospital waiting to happen" will probably occur. He went on to explain why. One newspaper headline which concerns me the most is "Wilson ignores invitation". The article reads -

The Minister believes a good service was still being delivered from the hospital and there was no immediate threat to the maintenance and appropriate service level at the hospital.

I must agree. The staff have provided a service above and beyond the call of duty. The article continues -

He said the decision to redevelop the hospital was taken on the basis of the general decline of the building due to age, the high cost of maintenance and the design which is inefficient.

Mr Wilson said if funding was readily available the \$8.4 million redevelopment would have proceeded.

He has assured the Council that standards of health care were constantly monitored and scarce resources were allocated to meet the highest priorities.

While appreciating that Warren District Hospital is in need of redevelopment in the context of a major review of Statewide needs, it was considered that deferral of the project was the most appropriate course of action. . .

I welcome the visits of the Minister for South-West to my electorate. In days gone by the Minister rarely visited my area, and I could not stand in this place and accuse him of not knowing about the issues relevant to my electorate. I know that the Minister has visited Manjimup in the past few months on a number of occasions and he has met the Manjimup hospital board and Manjimup hospital support group, both in Bunbury and Manjimup. I know that the Minister has supported the concept of the hospital redevelopment but why has he done nothing about it?

Mr D.L. Smith: I continue to ask for it.

Mr OMODEI: I quote the *Warren-Blackwood Times* two weeks ago which reads -

Mr Smith, after touring the hospital and viewing the two sets of plans - the original \$800,000 plans and the seven point plan which the board had already rejected - seemed to indicate a preference for the original redevelopment plans.

We have been talking about the Warren District Hospital for at least two years that I have been in Parliament, and extensively in the Manjimup community before that. It is an important matter of great community debate in the Manjimup area. The tenders mentioned were all ready to go to the public. After all this time, the Minister for South-West suddenly visits Manjimup and finds that the original plans were the right plans -

Mr D.L. Smith: I have always agreed to the need for redevelopment.

Mr OMODEI: Has the Minister agreed to the old plans? The newspaper report states that the Minister has a predilection for the old plans.

Mr D.L. Smith: I have said the old plans produced as a result of a Commonwealth allocation of beds is what should happen. The final decision is a matter for the Minister for Health.

Mr OMODEI: I welcome that statement. I hope that the Minister for South-West puts that view to the Minister for Health. We have not had that sort of cooperation in the past.

Mr D.L. Smith: The Minister has sought my views, and I have given him my views.

Mr OMODEI: What about the red herring about Commonwealth funding for a nursing hospital? The effect of that is to delay the project further. I notice that the same article includes the statement -

Funds for the nursing home would come from the WA Lotteries Commission contributing \$600,000, the State Government \$100,000 and local community \$100,000.

Will the Minister for South-West confirm whether this is fact or a figment of his imagination?

Mr D.L. Smith: It is a fact that the package will be put together, partly by the State Government cooperating with the local community.

Mr OMODEI: Has the Minister consulted the local community?

Mr D.L. Smith: Yes.

Mr OMODEI: Has he consulted the Blackwood region regarding distribution of the permanent care beds for the Commonwealth nursing hospital?

Mr D.L. Smith: I am aware of the analysis done by the Department for Community Services and the Commonwealth Health Department. I am aware also of the submissions to that department from the community groups within the region.

Mr OMODEI: I welcome those comments. I hope that the Minister ensures that will become a reality in the run-up to the next Budget. I will circulate his comments to the people in the Manjimup area and the Blackwood region so that they know first-hand that the Minister for South-West at least agrees to the distribution of the permanent care beds in the region. Should the Government not deliver, it will be the eighth or ninth time that it has not. However, I congratulate the Minister for South-West because at least he has gone to Manjimup and seen the hospital and the plans. He has seen the day care centre which was to be engulfed in the new redevelopment and he has given a commitment that the permanent care beds and the aged people in the Warren-Blackwood region will be catered for.

I will continue to push this matter in this place for as long as I possibly can until funds are reallocated in the State Budget for redevelopment of this hospital. On behalf of the people of the Warren electorate, I stress that the Government should bear in mind that this is a just cause for my electorate. The Warren electorate is not only represented by an Assembly seat, but also by three Labor Legislative Council members. The people of Manjimup and the Warren and Blackwood regions are aware of just how little these Council members have done to achieve the aims of the people in this area.

Mr D.L. Smith: That is not fair to Hon Bob Thomas.

Mr OMODEI: He has been a liability to the Government, and the Minister knows that.

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [7.57 pm]: My remarks in this Address-in-Reply debate will relate to the Government's program as outlined in the Governor's Speech, and in the light of some of my analyses of that program and perhaps some of the priorities which I would have rather seen as the legislative program. I also want to comment on broader issues, followed by electorate based issues in particular.

The Government's legislative program, outlined in the Governor's Speech, covers a large number of proposed Bills but when one analyses them they seem to be more in the nature of machinery or minor reform of administrative arrangements than fundamentally significant social or economic legislation. Certainly that is not the case with all of them but from the large number of what I regard as machinery matters, and the large number of matters which are amendments to existing legislation which may be necessary and worthwhile, I am led to



ask the question: To what extent do they really address the serious social and economic problems facing the State in the 1990s? The answer to that question depends on where one stands in the current political debate.

According to the Governor's Speech, and the Government, this is an important legislative program that is central to this State's social and economic problems; it will go a long way with other measures to putting the problems right. From the Opposition we have heard that the program is lacking in every respect and has nothing to recommend it; neither of these points of view is accurate. The legislative program that is proposed is silent on a number of areas of reform which the Government has addressed in internal debate at various times and that are addressed in its platform and policies, yet are not mentioned in this current list of proposed legislation. Clearly it is up to the Government of the day to interpret its platform in a way it sees fit, but not only is the Government proposing pieces of legislation which are controversial in the community and which are not gathering great support from its own grass roots, but also it seems to be downgrading major pieces of social reform legislation. I will take the opportunity to comment on three pieces of legislation which have been proposed for this year and which do not meet basic Labor objectives or its platform commitments and which, at this stage, I see myself opposing. First among those is the East Perth Redevelopment Bill which was introduced into Parliament late last year and which was deferred because of a request from different lobby groups and probably as a matter of convenience. This is not because the project is ill-conceived, but because I see a development authority as being a top-down potentially authoritarian planning body that will not do a great deal to meet the needs of ordinary people who would seek a location in East Perth. I will be detailing my opposition to this and other Bills when they come before Parliament, but I oppose the establishment of a development authority in East Perth, particularly considering that the city centre planning issues which have been discussed many times in this Chamber have not yet been addressed. In other words, we do not have a suitable framework for planning the total area of central Perth beyond the control of the Perth City Council. Everybody is aware of the criticisms made of that council over the years, yet at the same time we are moving to introduce a development authority to cover just one part of that area. While the need for some redevelopment and renewal in that area is undoubted, a development authority is not the appropriate way to go about it.

Mr D.L. Smith: Do you support a development authority for central Perth.

Dr ALEXANDER: Yes, I do, and depending on the form of that authority I will be enthusiastic of such a notion. I mentioned it first in this House in my maiden speech in 1987.

The second piece of legislation which is flagged in the Governor's Speech is "The Government's decision to allow limited mining in specific national parks". I have already spoken publicly on this issue and I will have more to say when this legislation comes to the House. This legislation was put forward as part of the Government's economic program and the justification, I presume, is economic. It is implied that because of the difficult economic times we now face - and that cannot be denied - mining in some national parks is more justified than it might be if the economy were in better shape. That approach ignores a couple of factors. According to my information there are viable alternatives to the deposits proposed to be mined in each of the three national parks, which seem to be the objects of main contention. In the Pilbara there are viable alternative deposits to the Marandoo deposit - not necessarily in that exact location, but in other locations in the Pilbara - which could be opened up just as economically and be just as viable. In the case of Rudall River we are talking about uranium, something which at the moment is not permitted under Labor policy and which, according to the Premier, will not happen while she is in power. That is good to hear, but why in that case consider excising land from Rudall River National Park and therefore open up the possibility of uranium mining in that area? Even if uranium were justified - that is something I would never support - there are deposits in this State which have been under exploration in the goldfields and elsewhere, which I would have thought would have far higher priority than a deposit in a national park. It is my understanding that in the case of D'Entrecasteaux National Park there are numerous alternative deposits outside the park and the areas proposed to be added to the park, some of which are almost on the verge of development by companies like BHP. It makes no sense to consider going into national parks in that situation. The idea of mining and national parks is totally contradictory. People visit national parks on the basis that they are natural environments

which will not be interfered with, certainly not by activities such as mining. Many people argue that mining will affect only a small amount of the park and therefore will not affect its overall quality, but when one talks to people in any way interested in conservation and nature issues they cannot understand the idea of a national park on the one hand and mining on the other.

The University of Notre Dame Australia legislation, although it is still under consideration, is proposed for later this year. I have spoken publicly on this matter and I reiterate that the proposal to grant up to 150 hectares of Crown land to a private university is not only contrary to the Labor Party platform and principles but also is a pernicious idea in that it is quite unwarranted in the current economic climate and really plays into the hands of eventually elitist interests. Even if the proponents of the Notre Dame University says it will provide some places for underprivileged students or those who cannot afford the high fees it will necessarily have to charge - and basically it is clear that this will be a fairly high fee-paying university - it will not be open to the average student and therefore is not worthy of any support from a Labor Government. Those are some of the items on the proposed legislative platform with which I take issue and which underline the difficult position in which I found myself when facing my future in the Labor Party.

I also find that the social law reform areas have not been addressed except to the extent we have legislation, admittedly on important matters such as IVF, adoption and so forth; but in areas of more long standing contention and certainly interest within the Labor Party ranks, there are at least three areas which have been hinted at over the years but which are not addressed. Amongst those are abortion law reform, drug law reform and prostitution law reform. I will look at each of those briefly. I realise the Labor Party allows members a conscience vote on abortion law reform and that it is unlikely that the Government will sponsor such a Bill. However, I see no evidence of perhaps the Government's encouraging one of its members to introduce a private Bill on this matter; so far that seems to have been resisted. Many people in the community would like to see such a Bill come forward for consideration in the Parliament even if clearly it would be a matter of contention on both sides of the House and even if it does not eventually pass into law. It is a matter of great public interest and appears to have wide support in the community; it certainly is high on the agenda of many in the women's movement and elsewhere in the community.

I mentioned the matter of drug law reform and, as the Labor Party platform suggests, there is a strong case for decriminalisation for certain drug offences. That is a matter which should be treated seriously and looked at by the Parliament. A few years ago the South Australian Parliament passed legislation to decriminalise the possession of small amounts of marijuana. The reports I have read on the matter seem to indicate that the social state of South Australia has not decayed as a result. Total moral decay has not resulted from that move as the critics at the time suggested it would. Numerous inquiries carried out over the years by law reform bodies put forward strong cases for reform in this area. The current situation not only encourages police activities to be channelled towards, what I consider to be, areas of low priority and away from areas of high priority, such as white collar crime, but also it is clearly out of kilter with current attitudes and laws covering drugs such as alcohol and tobacco. These drugs are legally available and even if the harmful effects are recognised, an artificial line exists between that and other social drugs, including marijuana, of which the harmful side effects are certainly no worse than, and probably not as bad as, alcohol and tobacco. This issue needs to be discussed by the Parliament. I hope it will be brought forward in the not too distant future. If it is not I intend to introduce private member's legislation later in the year.

Prostitution reform is another matter which has been addressed by a number of reports, the latest of which was released late last year. Indeed, the Government has promised legislation in this admittedly difficult area on several occasions over the last four years. Premier Burke was the first to promise prostitution law reform in 1985 and 1986. That has not happened despite those promises and despite subsequent promises made by various Ministers. I am not saying it is an easy area to address, but clearly the current policy of containment is not working well. It is an ambiguous policy and one which allows for corruption, even if it does not actually occur. Indications are that corruption may occur in a number of areas. Certainly, the potential exists for corruption. While the police are in control of the area of containment an unsatisfactory situation exists. The Government has recognised that problem

but, as yet, has failed to address it. If these matters are not addressed in 1991, when will they be addressed? Is it likely that they will be addressed in the lead up to the election in 1992? It would not appear so. I would have thought that this year is a good time to get these matters on the agenda so they can be considered by the Parliament and by the community.

Decentralisation is another area which deserves the attention of the Government. I am aware that the Government has taken measures with Bunbury, Geraldton, and, to a lesser extent, Albany in an attempt to focus development in those towns. Discussions have taken place over the years for decentralisation to occur and the strengths and weaknesses of that policy are evident. Certainly, the Government has made some contribution to the growth of Bunbury and other towns in the south west. However, it worries me that planning documents drawn up for the future of the metropolitan area simply assume that the Perth metropolitan area will continue to grow unchecked. The latest planning document for the metropolitan area produced by the Department of Planning and Urban Development last year discusses almost without debate the possibility of Perth having a population of approximately two million in 30 years' time, depending on the growth assumption. To me that is a horrifying prospect. Currently Perth has a population of 1.1 million. It experiences growing problems of congestion, pollution and other diseconomies of scale which are clearly evident in housing prices. However, we do not have any positive plans for decentralising some of the future growth of the population away from the metropolitan area.

In the 1970s when the Whitlam Government was in power, decentralisation was a fashionable concept. The ill-fated Federal department concerned with urban and regional development devised various programs for decentralisation. After the ousting of the Whitlam Government in the mid-1970s, the Fraser Liberal Government dropped the decentralisation policy like a hot potato. The matter has never been addressed since. The 1990s is the time in which this issue should be re-examined, particularly in a State like Western Australia which, I am sure everyone will recognise, is far too centralised. The metropolitan area now accounts for about three quarters of the State's population and that proportion grows year by year. It is likely that by the time the 1991 census figures are released next year around 80 per cent of the State's population will be located within the Perth metropolitan area.

Mr Read: Blame the National Party.

Dr ALEXANDER: I will get to the National Party in a moment.

Mr Minson: Are you being nasty about us as well?

Dr ALEXANDER: Not yet. I have to be fair in my criticisms; I will not confine them to one side. Decentralisation has been taken off the political agenda and it is time to restore it. Almost 80 per cent of the State's population is located in the metropolitan region. That figure is probably higher if nearby settlements such as Mandurah, Pinjarra and areas to the north are included. That is an unacceptable situation. The converse of that is the declining populations in most rural areas, apart from the few specific towns which are regional growth centres, including Geraldton and Bunbury. Beyond that it is difficult to name a country town which has grown.

Mr D.L. Smith: The whole of the south west is growing. It is growing in Nannup, Bridgetown and Collie.

Dr ALEXANDER: I am sure the Minister knows the south west better than I do and I am sure growth is occurring in the south west. However, far more growth is occurring in the metropolitan area. Four out of five new households are being set up in the metropolitan area and country areas are attracting only one out of five new households.

Mr D.L. Smith: I do not want to detract from your speech, but I agree with the sentiments you are addressing.

Mr Wiese: You have a funny way of showing it.

Dr ALEXANDER: This matter needs to be brought forward on the political agenda. About half way through last year the Department of Planning and Urban Development produced a Press release stating that it was intending to look at growth prospects for a new centre in the Pilbara. I do not know what happened to that study but I have not seen mention of it since. We are looking at growth centres and growth prospects in areas such as Bunbury in the south

west, Geraldton in the mid west and Albany in the great southern. Why not consider one for the north? We should not consider setting up development initiatives just when there is a prospect of an iron ore development. Why not consider the prospect of a major new centre in the Pilbara? Why not consider a major growth centre in the wheatbelt? These areas deserve equal attention to that which has been enjoyed by the south west, mid west and great southern over the years. Why not consider establishing regional development authorities for the Pilbara and the wheatbelt? The National Party has suggested on occasions that the Government's priorities are set politically. That is no doubt a cynical interpretation, but an examination of the distribution of votes the Government collects from the country reveals that very little support comes from areas located in the wheatbelt. The wheatbelt is certainly an area that is neglected as far as decentralisation is concerned.

Mr D.L. Smith: That is probably the case in the Vasse and Collie electorates.

Dr ALEXANDER: Needless to say, Collie is not a seat which the Labor Party wanted to lose. The question of the wheatbelt is on occasions addressed by members opposite. The member for Avon often waxes lyrical about the growth prospects in the Avon valley. That is something which needs closer attention. However, in addition to my remarks the other day on the question of deregulation, the National Party and the Liberal Party in supporting deregulation of transport are only harming the prospects of growth in some country towns because deregulation does nothing to contribute to decentralisation or regional growth, particularly if it has to do with transport. I have previously raised in this House the question of sustainable development. In a time of recession there is a temptation for politicians from all sides of politics to look at any development project which comes along and to grab it. I have heard people in my party room -

Mr Clarko: I did not know you had one.

Dr ALEXANDER: My previous party room and I thank the member for the reminder. I used to hear these discussions -

Several members interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: We do have some interesting party meetings these days.

Several members interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: It is something the member for Darling Range tells us and it is something which is high on my agenda and I am sure is high on the agenda of the member for Ashburton. We are an alliance rather than a party and it is much more fun.

Several members interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: The rumours about leadership wrangles are quite incorrect. We do not squabble about our leader because we do not have one. It is a definite advantage.

Mr Read: A good socialist party.

Dr ALEXANDER: Absolutely. The member for Darling Range is the strongest socialist of all of our group.

As I was saying, in a time of recession there is a temptation for politicians to grab any development project saying, "This is the answer to the State's problems", regardless of how ecologically damaging in the long term such a project might be. If we can put to one side the fact that the petrochemical project was clearly a failure and a political disaster, the environmental debate about that plant illustrates my point. A number of people pointed out that there could be serious adverse environmental consequences in locating a petrochemical plant in an area like Kwinana.

Several members interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: Members opposite were not the only people to say that; the member for Ashburton made similar remarks when it was suggested that the plant be located in the Pilbara. The point is that while such a project will provide construction jobs in the short term and perhaps hundreds of jobs in the long term, depending on the scale of the plant, such a plant could be ecologically damaging through atmospheric pollution and be a potential danger to the surrounding population by polluting ground water and creating effluent disposal problems.

We should also look at the question of whether a plastics plant is an environmentally responsible development for us to be promoting in Western Australia where environmental consciousness is increasing. Members should consider the problem of disposing of all types of plastics. Everybody is familiar with the difficulty of breaking down plastics. It is true that the plastic manufacturers are saying that plastic can be recycled and that a small amount of it is being recycled, but a great deal more is being disposed of in dumps around the metropolitan area and in rural areas. It will possibly have a damaging effect on ground water and it is certainly not easy to break down plastic so that it is compatible with the environment.

I ask this House whether a plastics plant, whatever its political pluses and assuming we could get that right, should be promoted on environmental grounds. Should we not be looking at the alternatives? This point is too often overlooked in the rush for new development projects. I am not suggesting we should ban all manufacturing development which some people criticise the Green movement for doing. I do not believe that is what the environmental movement is about. At its best, which is most of the time, the environmental movement is about encouraging viable ecological sustainable alternatives to conventional industrial development. Those alternatives, whether they are tourist-related projects or ecologically sustainable timber development from plantations do seriously address the question of ecological sustainability. That question is far too often overlooked.

Hope for the future remains with the younger generation. When I look at some of the material which is produced in schools today it is quite evident that in the next generation we will have a much more environmentally conscious generation than we have today. I will read to the House a poem entitled, "The Trees" which was written by one of my children when she was 12 years of age. I found it very interesting when I read it and, believe it or not, I did not advise on it at all. It reads -

Here the trees stand tall and proud,  
Looking over the forest - they are the kings,  
Their strong branches stretching outwards sheltering the defenceless animals and insects.  
The leaves sway in the wind, turning gently  
The forest is green - rich with vegetation.  
But now there is a newcomer in the forest - man  
The trees can sense the danger, their leaves tossing and turning in a restless manner.  
The cruel monsters enter the forest opening their metal jaws - machines,  
Hear the trees shout in pain  
Hear their pitiful cries for help,  
But man does not care - man is too greedy to care.  
Slowly what once was beautiful turns into a dull grey city,  
buildings, cars and poisonous gases,  
Gases - strangling the few remaining trees.  
This land that once was beautiful and green, is a victim of man and his cruelty and greed,  
And the trees which once were the kings of the forest, are now the jesters of the world.

The poem illustrates the concern the younger generation has for the environment. It is a concern which many of us share at a very general level, but when it comes to specific decisions about development projects - the way we should be developing our minerals, forests and manufacturing industries - it is a message which is far too easily overlooked. Obviously the poem is written from a child's perspective and therefore it should be seen in that context, but it illustrates two things: First, there is hope for the next generation when it comes to the question of ecological sustainability. Second, instead of asking children to learn from us we should turn things around and start to learn from our children.

**MR WIESE (Wagin) [8.27 pm]:** The economic situation in the rural areas has been well and truly canvassed by this Parliament, but I will refer to it briefly. Announcements about a guaranteed minimum price for wheat have been made today on the steps of Parliament House and within the Parliament by the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture. The promise of a GMP of \$150 will be welcomed by those people who depend on wheat as a source of their income. I hope there will not be any problems in implementing the promises that have been

made. It would be a cruel situation if that happened to all the farmers who at present are heaving an enormous sigh of relief because of the possibility they may get finance to put in a crop in the coming season. A desperate situation exists in rural areas. If farmers do not get finance many of them, and rural businesses, will go to the wall. I hope that by this time tomorrow we will have debated and passed a Bill to bring the situation to a head so that the Parliament can keep the promise it made today. Members of this Parliament should not believe that a guaranteed minimum price for wheat planted in Western Australia this year will solve all rural problems as that is not the case. The situation in rural areas is not just the result of the price growers received for wheat this year or are expecting to receive next year as many farmers not only rely on wheat for their income, but also on wool and sheep. Farmers on the western side of the great southern railway, and to a lesser degree those on the eastern side, depend not only on grain for their income, but also on wool and sheep.

Members of this House should be aware that the situation facing woolgrowers and those depending on sheep for their income remains absolutely desperate. At present, as a result of the abandonment of the floor price scheme for wool and the move to a free market situation, wool prices have dropped to a level not experienced in my memory and perhaps not experienced during this century. The average woolclip in Western Australia is a 22 micron, around 67 or 68 per cent yield. In the past week to week and a half farmers who grow that average yield have received 180 to 200 cents greasy a kilogram for their wool. A woolgrower receiving that price is in a desperate situation as that is less than half of what I received last year as a farmer who grows a similar grade of wool.

Members should be, and probably are, aware that because of the price received for wool last year the majority of woolgrowers are not putting fertilizer on their paddocks this year and are cutting expenditure to the bare bones. Employees have been put off on farms which rely on wool and sheep for their income. If a price of around 180 cents to 200 cents greasy a kilogram is received for wool and the levy, as presently indicated, is set at between 25 per cent and 37 per cent, figures freely quoted by people who should know, that will result in woolgrowers receiving 140 cents or 150 cents greasy per kilogram for their wool which will be an absolute disaster and will result in a great number of farmers who rely on wool, and the businesses that rely on woolgrowers, going to the wall - they will not last another year. The pastoral industry is already facing that situation and many pastoralists are battling for the money to have their sheep shorn. That is how desperate the situation is for people who rely on sheep and wool.

Mr Minson: The wool situation is potentially far worse than the wheat situation.

Mr WIESE: Yes, it is far worse than the wheat situation. The wheat situation is a crisis over and above the situation confronting the wool industry. The wheat industry has been discussed by everyone - media, farming organisation and members of this Parliament. That may be because people thought they could do something to alleviate the situation. However, the situation in the wool industry remains as bad as it was when we were debating the matter in this Parliament during the spring and autumn sessions last year. The situation is desperate and there is no glimmer of light on the horizon. The rural crisis is far from over and I predict it will get a lot worse. I warn the House that as good as it is and as much needed as it is a promise of a minimum payment for wheat will not solve the whole rural crisis and a desperate situation will still exist in rural areas. I say this with great feeling as one who relies on wool and sheep as a source of income.

Mr Minson: I have a bit of a problem about what to do with my sheep.

Mr WIESE: The member for Greenough mentioned the problem in relation to sheep yet the meat and sheep industry has not been talked about much at all. Many farmers have sold sheep for between 20¢ and 50¢ a head. A number of farmers had to go through the trauma of shooting their sheep and burying them in a pit. Farmers with sheep face a dreadful situation. If wool prices stay at present levels that situation will continue and we could well be looking at worse prices in the coming year. What will happen to farmers' incomes, especially those relying on wool and sheep? We are already seeing the results in agricultural areas. The story coming from CSBP and Farmers Ltd, and agents who handle superphosphate and the people who spread it for a living, invariably is that no superphosphate has been put on pastures. That is the first effect and it will result in CSBP and Farmers Ltd putting off 300 personnel. There is talk of superphosphate works closing. This will reflect enormously in freight

income of Westrail and will have an effect throughout the total economic situation in Western Australia.

It will also have another effect which has not been addressed by anyone. Because those fertilisers have not been put on the pastures, next year there will be a lot less pasture growth. Added to that is the fact that many farmers are running far more stock than in the past for two reasons: Firstly, because they were not willing to shoot sheep or sell them off at 20¢ a head and, secondly, because by running those sheep at higher stocking rates they hope to drive their microns down and hence sell their wool at a higher price. A lot of country in the agricultural areas is overstocked. All we need is very heavy rainfall or strong winds next summer and autumn for enormous environmental damage to be done in the agricultural areas. It is very hard to see a solution to that problem, because without sufficient income, super is the first thing to take the chop on those farms. The environmental consequences will have long term ramifications for agriculture and for the environment of Western Australia.

Another matter to which I wish to draw attention is transport. I indicated something about this during question time today when the Minister spoke about transport policies and the need to ensure some sort of balance so that Westrail retains some traffic. We do not want too many of our goods in the rural areas transferred to road. A meeting was called in Narrogin in January this year at the behest of Westrail. Officials came down to Narrogin, met the councillors in the area, and announced that over the next three years the number of Westrail jobs in Narrogin would be reduced by something like 40. It was quite clearly spelt out at the meeting with the councillors, and later at a meeting Westrail officials had in the railway institute with their employees, that by 1994, only one Westrail employee would be left in Narrogin, and that would be the caretaker of the railway buildings. That would represent, over a period of eight years, a drop from something like 230 staff to one person, and this would have an enormous effect on the town of Narrogin.

When we looked more closely at what Westrail proposed, the insanity of it became clearer. I have written to many Ministers trying to point out the ridiculous situation which was being created. I have not had an answer from any of those Ministers which has addressed the problems I raised, so I raise the matter here today. Westrail proposes to cut all the railway staff in Narrogin. In order to cope with the services currently provided by Westrail in bulk fertiliser, grain and fuel transport, Westrail proposes to run trains through Narrogin to Katanning. This applies specifically to fuel. Westrail proposes to drop the fuel in Katanning, put it on road transport, and transport it back to Narrogin fuel depots. Westrail is walking away from the transport of fertiliser, and that will leave Westrail as the carrier of only one product - grain. I dare not think what will happen to Westrail finances if we have a bad harvest, or if the situation which we look like facing this year occurs, where half the crop in Western Australia will not be planted. Westrail will be left with its complete infrastructure in place, trains and everything else, but nothing to carry. It would face absolutely horrific losses, but this is what Westrail proposes.

We are talking about something like 50 million litres of fuel which Westrail carries into Narrogin now. It would have to cart that back by road to Narrogin from Katanning, 100 kilometres down the line. The extra fuel put on road between Katanning and Narrogin will be absolutely massive. Enormous damage would be done to those roads. We should also keep in mind the fact that every drop of that fuel would be hauled right through the centre of the town of Wagin, because there is no bypass, or alternative route.

Westrail is telling us that it is trying to become more efficient, yet this is its proposal. Somebody should put a rocket under Westrail. Somebody in Government needs to address the problems highlighted here, because Westrail has made this announcement. It has not had any consultations whatsoever with the fuel depot proprietors. I can vouch for that because I have spoken to all of them, and I have spoken to the head offices of the major firms involved. They are all quite adamant that they have not been consulted by Westrail in this regard. Westrail proposes to haul the fuel an extra 100 kilometres by train to Katanning and an extra 100 kilometres back by road. In actual fact Narrogin is only 200 kilometres from the major fuel installations in Fremantle. A far cheaper proposal, for the overall economy and the users, would be for Westrail to be taken out of fuel transport and for the whole lot to come through by road.

Let it not be said that I am advocating that should happen. It would be a disaster to put all

that fuel onto the Albany Highway to Narrogin. That would be as insane as Westrail's proposal. This Government should get off its behind, sit down with Westrail and find out exactly what it is trying to do. It needs to tell Westrail it has a responsibility to the overall economy and benefit of this State to put that fuel on rail, bring it to Narrogin and drop it there. If the result of a decision like this is the necessity to maintain a work force in Narrogin and shunt those fuel tankers in Narrogin, that is what Westrail must do.

One of the answers I received from the Deputy Premier indicated that a holistic approach must be taken to matters such as this. I could not agree more. A holistic approach must be taken, and the Government has a role to play in doing that. The members and Ministers of this Government must get their act together to ensure that this sort of stupidity does not occur. I hope I can persuade the Government of this; as yet I have not been successful in persuading the Government to satisfy this need, and I certainly have not been successful in obtaining answers to my letters in which I have raised a number of these matters. Some time in the future I hope Ministers of this Government, to whom I have explained what is happening, will have a proper look at the situation and address these matters.

I praise one member of the Cabinet: I speak of the Deputy Premier to whom I have taken a problem confronting a major firm in my electorate. The way in which he assisted me was excellent. The problem to which I refer concerned one of the major employers in Wagin, and the closure of this firm would have had major effects throughout Western Australia and perhaps even outside the State. Pederick Engineering Pty Ltd was facing a dicey financial situation and needed to alter its manner of operation. The way in which the Deputy Premier assisted could not be praised enough. He gave great assistance and some of the restructuring has already occurred. I have great hope that the firm will continue to maintain a presence in Wagin, and all persons who have machinery manufactured by Pederick Engineering will continue to be supplied with parts for that equipment. The company has supplied machinery to the agricultural sector throughout most of Western Australia and its products are used even in the Eastern States. It will be a great thing for Wagin if Pederick Engineering remains in business in the town, and it will be as a result of the help provided by the Deputy Premier. I thank the Parliament for listening to my remarks. I hope that some matters I have raised will be addressed by the Government.

**MR P.J. SMITH (Bunbury) [8.53 pm]:** In reply to the Governor's Speech, firstly I express my regret at Jeff Carr's departure from the Parliament. Jeff served this Parliament well for 17 years and I had a long and happy association with him. I regret that he left in unhappy circumstances; I am sure that he felt a great deal of hurt, as indeed did the members for Ashburton and Swan Hills. It is interesting that the three members have chosen different ways of expressing concern at the way in which they were removed from Cabinet. I hope that they feel comfortable with the positions taken and that eventually the member for Ashburton will come back to the Labor Party. I have never been in the situation in which I have had to make such a major decision on a moral issue, but many times I have seriously considered my position in the party. All of us in this Parliament, apart from the three Independent members, come into conflict with our parties at times. However, most of us feel that we can work better through the party to improve the party. I believe I can achieve more by staying within the party.

**Mr Lewis:** Were you a little disillusioned by what happened?

**Mr P.J. SMITH:** I was not disillusioned, I was upset. Things like that happen to us all at some stage, and they are very disruptive. The three members concerned are friends of mine and I enjoy their company; I do not like to see them hurt. However, that is the way in which the party system works in this Parliament, and such occurrences are an unfortunate part of the system. Most people expect us to stick by the party in which we are elected.

**Mr Blaikie:** The saving grace is that at the end of the day the Parliament is the most important part of the system.

**Mr P.J. SMITH:** I agree to some degree with the member for Vasse because we are elected by constituents who ask us to come to Parliament to represent them. However, in the main they ask us to represent a party line with the platform presented at election time. Be that as it may, I am sad to see the passing from Parliament of Jeff Carr. However, I am pleased to see the members for Swan Hills and Ashburton still within the Parliament and making a contribution.



This time last year I and others from the Parliament travelled to Zimbabwe, and I reported in the Address-in-Reply debate about what we saw and the ties we hoped to form as a result of that trip. One of the major issues we discussed on our return was the shortage of reading and text books in primary and secondary schools in that country. Dr Judyth Watson and I, aided by others, decided to see whether we could obtain surplus library books in Western Australia to send to Zimbabwe. Dr Watson visited Gutu last year and took 150 kilos of books, and she was overwhelmed with the response to that. In Western Australia the response has been heavier with 20 tonnes of books in storage at the moment, courtesy of the Rotary clubs of Western Australia. The tonnes of books are still coming in; my wife telephoned me to say that about 10 boxes of books have arrived from Manjimup Senior High School and are on my front verandah. I have collected more than 10 000 books from the south west area. The problem now is to get them to Zimbabwe. Qantas has agreed that it will take parcels of books when it has room, and the books will be distributed there by Rotary club associations and the Australian High Commission in Zimbabwe. Also, the Zimbabwe Education Department will be directly involved. I thank the Ministry of Education for directing these books to us and the Rotary clubs of Western Australia for the transporting and storing of them. I also thank the Rotary Club of South Bunbury, particularly Brian Jones, which took two utility and trailer loads to Perth. When it took the first and heaviest load it was on the hottest day of last year. He and other members not only had to load them, but also unload them and, although it was a worthwhile task, it was very onerous in the extreme heat.

I refer to the member for Mandurah's response to the one-vote-one-value issue. I realise the weighting of voting values will always involve some controversy. However, although it disadvantages some people, the one-vote-one-value system is the only fair and democratic method to use. I have heard the member for Mandurah and others advocating the system of first past the post; that is, whoever gets the majority of votes should win the seat. That system is used in many parts of the world and I do not think it is very successful. First past the post is usually the cry of the losers. In the 1970s it was the cry of the Labor Party. I used to hear many Labor Party people saying the Labor Party was not in Government because of preferential voting and that the Democratic Labor Party, or other minor parties, had given their preference to the Liberal Party and that if elections were carried out on the basis of first past the post, the Labor Party would win elections. Since then I have learned that neither the system of first past the post nor preferential voting wins elections; it is the policies and the way people are perceived in the electorate which win votes. Minor parties need a chance to be heard; with preferential voting people can vote for a minor party by putting number one alongside it and their preference can be given to whichever major party they see as being the best for the country or the State. Preferential voting - not necessarily exhaustive as we have at the moment, but optional - is the system we should adopt and stick to. I do not see how we could justify allowing a group, through the first past the post system, with 40 or 35 per cent to say it had the confidence of the majority of people when 60 or 70 per cent of the population did not vote for it.

I refer now to the disclosure of political donations, which I believe will apply to amounts above \$10 000. I was interested that recently a furore broke out when the Federal Government proposed banning electronic advertising. That reaction indicates the importance of political donations these days to cover the expense of parties' electronic advertising. I have no doubt that all parties spend large amounts on television. Television brings the message; it is what people watch, and the best advertising avenue to employ, but it is very expensive. A ban on electronic advertising is universally applauded because most of the people who watch television do not want to see us, or our advertising, on television more so around election time. I am also concerned at the ramifications of the cost of electronic advertising on minor parties. I am sure that whatever happens eventually, somebody will find a way around the ban.

Disclosure of political donations must be made so that people know who is giving big money to the parties. They should know whether it is a party member or a person who has financial influence donating; it might be a donation from a union to the Labor Party or even from a union to the Liberal Party. The revelations so far from the investigation into Rothwells have revealed that large amounts of money were donated to political parties - I am sure it is happening to both sides of the House - and the public and the other parties should know how much is being donated and who is donating it. Big donations always carry the implication

that they are being made not because it is a nice idea for a political party to be elected, but because the donor is interested in what it can get out of the party later.

Mr Bradshaw: You people are hypocrites. When you go broke, you want to change the ground rules. You want to change the ground rules so that you do not have electronic advertising.

Mr P.J. SMITH: Perhaps the member for Wellington is pleased because the political climate has changed and big business is now donating to the Liberal Party and at the next election it will have huge amounts to spend on television advertising.

Mr Bradshaw: You have sent them broke.

Mr P.J. SMITH: Irrespective of what the member for Wellington says, we should all agree that we need to know from where donations are coming. Assuming big donations are given to the Liberal Party next time, members would like to know who made that donation and what is expected in return.

Mr Bradshaw: Again you are being a hypocrite. What about the woodchip cheque you tried to hide? What about the Teachers Credit Society cheque you tried to hide? Some people will still try to hide donations.

Mr Pearce: Your party is desperately trying to pretend it gets its donations from the 500 Club.

Mr Bradshaw: That is a complete fallacy.

Mr Pearce: The 500 Club is a way of disguising the people who make contributions to the Liberal Party.

Mr Bradshaw: That is untrue. It is a club in its own right and if the Royal Commission wants to investigate the 500 Club -

Mr Pearce: It gives you money.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kobelke): Order! I am sure members, realising my great inexperience in the Chair, would not be trying to take advantage of me. Please let the member for Bunbury continue.

Mr P.J. SMITH: I do not think it matters whether people try to hide donations, because political donations are given on a confidential basis. Irrespective of whom they are from there is an urge on the part of all parties to hide the identity of the donor. Whether the amount is \$5 000 or \$500 000, the disclosure of the donor is taboo at present. It is sad and a problem for our parliamentary system if people can make big donations and hide under privilege.

*The West Australian* of 21 March, in its editorial titled "Labor's Trail of Censorship", under the guise of reference to banning all political advertising, attacked the Labor Government for taking away individual rights and so forth. That is fair enough; it is the attitude I would expect the media to take when they and their incomes are under threat. They see the next step as a ban on the print media. However, I was disappointed when they linked the taking away of rights with the fact that in 1989 the Western Australian Government removed tobacco advertising and said that it was a blatant attempt to censor advertising of a product which was being legally produced, sold and consumed. It is fatuous to say that the Labor Party, or any party, is impinging on rights when smoking is a health hazard which has nothing to do with whether the product is legal. Many items which are hazardous to our health are legally advertised and produced. However, when public pressure is applied - there is public pressure not to have political electronic advertising - because of the obvious health hazards related to advertising drugs like tobacco and alcohol, it is disappointing that *The West Australian* tries to link a form of censorship with advertising drugs that are not only health hazards, but also are directly linked with deaths.

In my electorate, psychiatric care within the community has been concerning me for some time. During the eight years I have been a member of Parliament, I have supported many health initiatives and many groups such as the intellectually disabled people and groups which care for them like Pledge and the Activ Industries. I was the foundation chairman of the South West Association for the Physically Handicapped, or SWAPH. That group has

made tremendous gains in establishing a day centre for physically disabled people and is now trying to raise \$150 000 to support them. I pay tribute to the chairperson, Mrs Phyllis Barnes, who is working flat out with the committee to establish this facility and who will be supported by Lotteries Commission funds.

In the main, the \$150 000 must come from the community and I hope people will come good with the money. There have been many other health initiatives, including the setting up of psychiatric services in Bunbury, which provide mental health nursing and on the spot help for people, particularly those returning from and those going to Graylands. Home visits are provided. Recently, the community of Bunbury had a problem with a young psychiatrically disturbed woman. I will not reveal her name. However, she wreaked havoc on the community. Her actions had positive and negative effects. Her husband had tried to cope with her psychiatric disturbance for many years until it became impossible for him. Because he felt guilty he would rent a flat, install his wife in the flat and leave her. The lady was not terribly violent but could become aggressive, particularly towards females. She would spend the next few days walking around the neighbourhood intruding on people's lives and generally upsetting people. By the end of the week her husband would have received many phone calls from aggrieved people and would find another flat into which he would move her. This disturbance of a neighbourhood is a common complaint about which many of us are aware. The positive side was that, wherever she went, the community would try to help her. However, they found in the end that she would refuse to accept psychiatric help even though it was available and they would work together to get her shifted. She is one of many people with psychiatric problems in the Bunbury area. I have estimated that there are about 200 people with psychiatric problems in Bunbury. However, we do not hear about most of them. They receive treatment and take medication and are generally supported by their families and friends. They live worthwhile lives in the community. However, many of them do not. Once they receive treatment at Graylands they return to their home areas and become a problem to their families which are then placed under great stress. Community action is needed to set up support groups for these people. Bunbury is very lucky. It has psychiatric and mental health support, including nursing, but it needs more. I am not suggesting that the Government provides all of that help. I am suggesting that the people of Bunbury accept these people as belonging to their area. The community should not ship them off to Perth whenever they are a problem. We should try to help them in their home areas.

In recent days I have contacted the family support group for schizophrenic disorders and the Bunbury community group. Those groups are trying to obtain funds through a grant from Homeswest or through local government to set up a hostel or semi-permanent or permanent housing to accommodate these people who do not have homes or whose families are in crisis and need help. Perhaps those centres could provide 24 hour help in reminding patients to take their medication and, when difficulties arise, direct them to the right people. I hope that the people of Bunbury will accept that challenge and support those groups which are already offering help.

Finally, I refer to a problem that is not necessarily a Western Australian problem but is one I have been trying to solve for about 10 years. In recent days there have been stories in the newspapers about possible changes to the tax system to provide remuneration for people who do housework. Apparently a Federal parliamentary committee is asking for submissions on this matter. It is interesting that it is considering the payment of housewives for the work they do. I am aware that there are many house husbands; however, I will refer to women because it is women who are usually involved in housework.

Mr Lewis: Are you referring to income splitting?

Mr P.J. SMITH: No, it is not income splitting. For many years I have discussed this matter with my colleagues, most of whom have indicated that the idea sounds great but that it would not work. However, there is a way that it would work. At the moment people who receive the family allowance -

Mr Lewis: It is a pittance.

Mr P.J. SMITH: It may be a pittance, but I want the member to hear me out. A major problem that I have found with many women is that they feel they are under an obligation to work. Many of them would prefer to stay with their families and look after their children. However, depending on the incomes of their husbands, many believe they have to work to -

Mr Lewis: Because of the state of the economy.

Mr P.J. SMITH: I realise that; but that is not always the case. Many women are highly trained and should be in the workplace. Time and time again I hear of ordinary families needing extra money, particularly when their children are in high schools or at universities. I believe they should be paid a spouse carer allowance to stay at home. Perhaps it could total \$100 a week.

Mr Lewis: Where does that come from; the breadwinner's salary?

Mr P.J. SMITH: No, from taxes. That is the problem and why people say it will not work. They could be paid, say, \$5 000 a year to stay home.

Mr Lewis: Why couldn't the breadwinner pay the person staying at home that salary?

Mr P.J. SMITH: That is income splitting.

Mr Lewis: That is what you are talking about.

Mr P.J. SMITH: Income splitting means the more money one earns the bigger the tax break. I do not believe in income splitting.

Mr Lewis: People will pay higher taxes when you give them something at the other end.

Mr P.J. SMITH: Of course, that is the problem with tax deductions for medical benefits. The people who earn the most get the biggest benefit.

Mr Clarko: They pay more, too.

Mr P.J. SMITH: That is right.

Mr Clarko: It was a Labor Government under Hawke that lowered the maximum tax rate from 60¢ in the dollar to the top rate now.

Mr P.J. SMITH: That is true; I agree with all of that. Perhaps, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Kobelke), I will be allowed to complete my remarks. If we pay people to stay at home and give them extra for their families, it would not be tax free. In fact, we would pay them the tax threshold of approximately \$5 000. Everything they earned above that would be subject to a tax rate of 24¢ in the dollar or more. The spouse rebate would cease. Unfortunately, taxes would have to be increased to pay for this. I know that is a problem, but I believe it would relieve many of the difficulties that people find themselves in in bringing up their families, not just in times of recession but in other times.

Mr Strickland: You are advocating taxing Peter to pay Pauline.

Mr P.J. SMITH: That is what the tax system is about. It taxes those who have, to help those who have not. I will certainly put in a submission to this committee and see what it comes up with. As I said, a series of interesting articles have appeared in newspapers over the past few days. At this stage, the idea has my support and I would like to hear from people how it could work.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley) [9.19 pm]: I am pleased to respond to the Governor's Speech and in doing so it is interesting to compare it with the speech made in 1990. One item in the 1991 Governor's Speech also appeared in the 1990 Governor's Speech; that is, the issue of freedom of information. The Governor stated in 1991 -

The Government has indicated its intention to introduce a complementary pair of Bills to address the complex issues surrounding the question of public access to information, and protection of privacy.

The proposed Freedom of Information Bill will establish standards and a mechanism for public access to documents held by the State Government and its agencies.

I support the introduction of a freedom of information Bill; however, I cannot understand the reason for the delay. If there were a real commitment to introducing this legislation, the Bill would have been given some priority.

Mr D.L. Smith: The Bill will be introduced this session.

Mrs EDWARDES: I know that the Minister is working on it. However, he has been working on it for some years. It was part of an election promise in 1983. However, it was not introduced in the first term or the second term of the Burke Government. The Attorney General also referred to this legislation in 1985.

Mr D.L. Smith: It will be introduced in the first term of the Lawrence Government.

Mrs EDWARDES: Perhaps during the first term of the Lawrence Government but it certainly was not introduced after the Minister and the Premier highlighted the issue last year saying that it would be introduced in the spring session. The Government made a big hoo-ha about this legislation at a meeting in Albany in August 1990 and said that it would be introduced in the spring session of Parliament. The spring session came and went without the introduction of that Bill.

Mr D.L. Smith: Difficulties arose in discussions with various agencies, especially in the law enforcement area. It will certainly be introduced in this session.

Mrs EDWARDES: Freedom of information legislation is based on the principle that members of the public have a right to know and/or question the basis of Government decisions. That applies to both individual matters and matters of public importance. It arises in several areas. For instance, when I was practising as a solicitor one of my clients needed to obtain his medical records from a public hospital. He could not take the action he wanted to take without that information. In no way were we able to enforce access to the information in his medical records at the public hospital. The records and information dealt only with that individual and he had every right to access them.

The second matter came to my attention only this morning, but I am sure that members in this place receive similar information from time to time. The letter I received this morning highlighted a situation where an individual was taking action against a Government instrumentality through the due processes of the law. After a pre-trial conference, during which the Government solicitors stated that he did not have an action against that Government instrumentality but against "so-and-so", a subcontractor, all attempts at getting the name of the subcontractor to enable him to either further enjoin or take separate action against the subcontractor were to no avail. This person has a right to receive that information. Freedom of information is absolutely essential. It has been introduced in other States of Australia, and the Opposition supports it. The Opposition introduced freedom of information legislation in this Parliament in 1989 but did not receive support from the Government. Even though the Minister referred to it as legislation the Government could accept, it obviously was not serious about the matter because the Bill lapsed at the end of the parliamentary session. The importance of freedom of information legislation was emphasised by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, in his report of a Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct, in which he stated -

Secrecy and propaganda are major impediments to accountability, which is a prerequisite for the proper functioning of the political process. Worse, they are the hallmarks of a diversion of power from the Parliament.

Information is the lynch-pin of the political process. Knowledge, is, quite literally, power. If the public is not informed, it cannot take part in the political process with any real effect.

Apart from the fact that individuals in this State require access to their public and private documents, it is also an important aspect of the political process, especially as the procedures of Parliament tend to decline more and more so that Ministers cannot be questioned about what they are doing and how they go about certain activities. Under the parliamentary system there is an increasing trend towards corporatisation and we need to make sure that individuals have access to public information. On 12 January 1985 it was reported in *The West Australian* that a spokesman for Mr Berinson had said the Government was not deliberately delaying the introduction of the legislation. It was further stated that the Government was keen to investigate the Victorian legislation and the proposed South Australian legislation to iron out the loopholes. In 1986, at the 37th national conference of the Labor Party held in Hobart, the following clause 42 was drafted to the Labor Party's platform -

Ensure effective freedom of information legislation granting the public full entitlement to the disclosure of government and administrative decision making, subject only to strictly limited requirements of essential security and individual privacy, and that the legislation is administered in keeping with its spirit and its objectives.

The following clause 43 was also passed -

Regular tabling in parliament of full information on the operation of government and semi-government agencies. Records resolutions and recommendations of conferences of Australian, State and Territory ministers and officials to be tabled in their respective parliaments.

Clause 44, passed at the same conference, reads -

The introduction of legislation facilitating a right of access by individuals to documents relating to themselves in the possession of the private sector.

The Labor Party is committed to introducing this legislation and I hope that action will be taken, as promised by the Minister, in this session of Parliament. On 21 September 1989 the Minister was reported in *The West Australian* as follows -

The Justice Minister, Mr Smith, confirmed last night that the Government would introduce its freedom of information legislation in the first parliamentary session next year.

I remind members that on 1 May 1990 the Governor's Speech included the following statement -

... the Government has proposed a number of measures designed to make the processes of government more open and accountable to the people of Western Australia. These measures include -

The introduction of freedom of information legislation this year to extend as far as possible to the people of the Western Australian community the right of access to Government information.

As I mentioned earlier, on 14 August 1990 in Albany there was a great hoo-ha over the fact that Western Australia would be the first State to enact separate freedom of information legislation and privacy legislation. The following extract appeared in *The West Australian* -

Dr Lawrence said the Freedom of Information Bill would allow general access to government documents.

It was further stated -

The freedom Bill was part of the legislative program for the spring session of State Parliament.

Mr D.L. Smith: The desire to introduce privacy at the same time as freedom of information has slowed down that process.

Mrs EDWARDES: Why?

Mr D.L. Smith: Because we have had to introduce them in tandem and deal with a range of issues which the community in general and groups in the community want us to address in that legislation.

Mrs EDWARDES: Freedom of information and privacy, and I would go so far as to say data protection, Bills are absolutely essential if we are to prove to the people of Western Australia - who have very rightly become cynical not only about this Government but also about politicians and the processes of Government - that we as members of Parliament and the Government are committed to providing openness and accountability in Government.

Mr D.L. Smith: I hope that the privacy Bill will extend to data protection.

Mrs EDWARDES: That must be an absolute priority of the Government, and if the Government will not introduce that legislation we promise that we will introduce it again in this session of Parliament to highlight our belief that it is very important.

Mr D.L. Smith: I agree that it is important. It is also important that we get it right. I hope that when you see the final format of the Bill you will agree that we have got it right.

Mrs EDWARDES: We will wait until we see the format of the Bill. I have every confidence that the Government will have gone through the processes of communicating with and listening to members of the public and other interested bodies and groups which would be likely to have an interest in and a say about this matter. I hope that once this Bill is

introduced into the Parliament there will be time for community debate about the issue. However, that will mean another delay.

An important reason for this legislation was highlighted by the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. This was also highlighted to me when I was door knocking last week. It became evident to me that people in the community have had enough of the processes of Government and of Parliament, and that we as members of Parliament and members of the Government must lift our game to ensure that people are aware that they will be given that openness and accountability in Government which they desire. The commission stated -

For democracy to be "government by the people" an informed electorate is essential. This can only happen if people are guaranteed access to information of government - what decisions are made, how they are made and why they are made.

For citizens to believe in the democratic process, they must believe they are part of the process.

For citizens to believe that the process is just, it must be seen to be just. Fundamental to this is for a citizen to have access to information.

I look forward to the Government's introducing those pieces of legislation.

I now turn to another matter which I regard as extremely important; that is, road safety. I have spoken several times over the past few years about various aspects of road safety: Access to and from schools; the lowering of the speed limits around schools; and cross walk attendants. I will speak tonight about bicycle safety. Several things can be done as part of a package plan to help save young lives on our roads. That package could consist of community based training parks, an expanded bicycle helmet rebate scheme, and school storage facilities for bicycle helmets. I do not normally support legislation which compels people to do things, but road safety is one exception. I also support the idea of making it compulsory for all bicycle riders to wear helmets. That practice is not popular among adults. While primary school students may be compelled or coerced into wearing bicycle helmets, high school students are more aware of their rights and responsibilities because they are being taught those in schools, so they may decide that they will not wear helmets, particularly because of peer pressure. Even if their parents make them wear helmets, often once they get around the corner and out of sight they take them off. The police officers in my electorate have told me that they often stop cyclists who are carrying their helmet in their hand. Recently, a Warwick Senior High School student received head injuries when he was knocked down by a car. Those injuries could have been avoided had he been wearing a helmet. I encourage the State Government to make road safety measures a priority. I also encourage the Government to extend to high school students the Bikewest bicycle helmet rebate system. That scheme is presently under review for primary school students, and I support the retention of that scheme.

I also request the State Government to upgrade school storage facilities. In some schools the lockers are not large enough to store bicycle helmets, so students must attach their helmets to their bicycles, and they are often stolen. At some schools the principal allows students to leave their helmets in the office, but that creates a problem for the principal and at a large high school it may create a problem for the students, who may have to walk an entire block - as is the case at Woodvale Senior High School - from one end of the school to the other to pick up their helmets. It is a disincentive to students to use helmets if they have to carry them around with them because there are no proper storage facilities and they do not want to risk having them stolen.

I also encourage local governments to make road safety measures a priority. I support the development of road training parks where communities work with private enterprise. That is not a new concept. It is working successfully in Singapore and at Lynwood. The cost to the city council of establishing the park at Lynwood was only \$8 000 because it received corporate sponsorship to the tune of nearly \$32 000. That park is essential in teaching young children or students, either by schools, the community or parents, the road code and how to use our road system safely and properly. The park takes up only half an acre, and has asphalt roads which are three metres wide, controlled by traffic lights and have markings on them which are identical to those on normal roads. I commend these parks to all members as a worthy community project which they should support and sponsor in their communities.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Certainly a socially responsible business community would do so.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes. Businesses have participated in the sponsorship of that bicycle park, even at a time when they are hurting.

The other road safety issue is children's crossings. On 27 December 1990 I tabled a petition calling for the installation of a children's crossing on Hepburn Avenue in Kingsley. People fought vigorously to have Hepburn Avenue made into a dual carriageway, but the problem has now arisen that students who attended either of the two primary schools in Kingsley and who have now been allocated to attend the Greenwood Senior High School must cross Hepburn Avenue. Hepburn Avenue has an increasingly heavy traffic flow because of the vehicles which come off the freeway, and also because access through Karuah Way from the freeway is not a very long distance away, and cars continue to speed, perhaps as they were doing on the freeway. Therefore, school children who attempt to cross Hepburn Avenue do so with some difficulty.

The Minister's response after the petition was tabled was that the matter should be referred to the school crossings road safety committee. The assessment was that a guard-controlled children's crossing was not justified because crossings were limited. The Minister stated that three primary and seven high school students were observed crossing in the area. Several problems occur at that intersection, one being that as cars come from Karuah Place east into Hepburn Avenue the drivers look west to gauge the flow of the traffic and are not aware of the students crossing at that point of the median strip. It is difficult to select a time to proceed when students recognise that a car is about to turn and is in the centre of the road. The Neighbourhood Watch group at Kingsley has taken on this issue of real concern. The area coordinator who was on holidays on the first day of school, 30 January, at 8.00 am observed 35 high school children crossing Hepburn Avenue in groups of four to six. When six or so children tried to cross the road, the median strip proved inadequate for them because they were wheeling bikes. Children and bikes were left on the road.

The statistics I possess are relatively old because they apply to the time before Hepburn Avenue became a dual carriageway making it more accessible to road users. In 1988 the Main Roads Department undertook a traffic flow analysis for Hepburn Avenue. I refer now to the traffic flowing west in the vicinity of the access being called for by the community. During the morning peak hour on Tuesday, 488 cars were counted, 923 on Wednesday, 908 on Thursday and 921 on Friday, representing an average of 917. The afternoon peak hour would not be relevant to students coming home but I refer to the hour during which students would be coming home; the volume of cars during that hour was 742 on Tuesday, 770 on Wednesday and 762 on Thursday - and this is only one way.

Travelling east at peak hour in the morning the statistics show 431 cars on Tuesday, 631 on Wednesday, 676 on Thursday and 637 on Friday - an average of 657. In the afternoon the figures were 763 on Tuesday, 805 on Wednesday, and 798 on Thursday; an average of 789 cars. I urge the Minister to recognise that crossing Hepburn Avenue is particularly hazardous for students. It is not a safe area. The access or bicycle pass into Hepburn Avenue at this section is perhaps in the wrong position; it may have been suitable for Hepburn Avenue when it was a single carriageway. As a dual carriageway, it creates further problems because cars move to the centre of the carriageway to turn east. I am very aware that when I look west to see if cars are travelling east, and then move to the centre to prepare to turn east, I should then look to see whether students are starting to cross. The students are also looking west, and as soon as they see a break in the traffic they forget about my position at the centre and start to cross the road. As I said before, the median strip is not adequate to accommodate the students who wish to cross the road wheeling their bikes. They cannot fit on the median strip; they cross in groups creating an extremely dangerous situation.

Mrs Beggs: The police will be going out to that area tomorrow. I received the letter from the Neighbourhood Watch person. The whole issue of crosswalks around schools is serious. I have been involved with that issue many times with P & C associations before I became a member of Parliament. I have been on the other end of the argument many times. An announcement will be made soon on the issue by the Minister for Police. It is a serious issue, and I refer not only to school crossings but to the whole problem of speed limits around schools, and the many other issues which need to be addressed in a comprehensive way. I think that the member for Kingsley will be very happy about what will happen in the next couple of months.



Mrs EDWARDES: I am pleased to hear that because I have been calling for lower speed limits around schools for 18 months. Many of my speeches in this place have made that call. I have issued many Press releases, and I have attended many meetings not only with local councils but also with P & C associations. The Minister will recall that I tabled a petition calling for lower speed limits around schools. Access to and from schools is atrocious and that problem should be taken into account when schools are being designed. Access creates many problems. Perhaps consideration could be given to lowering the speed limits at or around the times when parents drop off students. That may be one resolution.

I am pleased to hear that the police will go to Hepburn Avenue tomorrow. We do not want an accident to occur in our area; it is sufficient that we see children knocked off bicycles and receive head injuries. It is so unnecessary. It creates social and economic costs not only to families but also to the community. I thank the Minister, and I look forward with interest to hearing the decision about the Hepburn Avenue problem and the wider issue of access to and from schools.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply thus adopted.

*House adjourned at 9.47 pm*

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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**TROCHUS SHELLS - LOMBADINA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**  
*Licence Application Rejection*

71. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Has an application for a trochus shell licence by the Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation been rejected by the Fisheries Department?
- (2) If so, why?
- (3) When was the application made?
- (4) When was it rejected?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

(1)-(4)

Previous responses by the Fisheries Department to the Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation inquiries indicated that under the existing policy it was unlikely any further trochus licences would be issued. However, I have this week advised the chairman of the corporation Mr Basil Sibosado that I will be initiating a review of the existing trochus fishery policy.

**SWAN BREWERY SITE - HIGH COURT ACTION**  
*Government Involvement Cost*

73. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Planning:

What was the cost to the State Government of its involvement in the High Court of Australia action in relation to the old Swan Brewery site?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

As previously advised in answers given to questions 1038 and 1182 last year, the High Court ordered that the respondents pay the appellants' legal costs. The appellants have yet to submit their claim.

**KOONDOOLA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE - GOVERNMENT STUDY**

76. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) What is the current status of the study the Government is undertaking into the Koondoola regional open space?
- (2) When will the study be completed?
- (3) Who is conducting the study?
- (4) What is the purpose of the study?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

(1)-(4)

The study has not been formally commenced. The matter is still the subject of discussion between the Department of Planning and Urban Development and Homeswest. A full brief is being prepared for consideration by the State Planning Commission in the near future.

**SMITH, MR ROBERT - SURVEILLANCE PAYMENT**  
*Minister for Housing's Departments, etc*

86. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Housing; Construction; Services; Heritage:

Has any Government department, agency or statutory authority under the control of the Minister either directly or indirectly since February 1983, made payments for services rendered by Mr Robert Smith or any firm with which he is associated, in relation to surveillance, in the broadest sense, of any member of Parliament, former member of Parliament, public servant or other employee of any Government department, agency or statutory authority?

Mr McGINTY replied:

See the Premier's reply to question 78.

**SMITH, MR ROBERT - SURVEILLANCE PAYMENT**

*Minister for Community Services' Departments etc*

87. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Community Services:

Has any Government department, agency or statutory authority under the control of the Minister either directly or indirectly since February 1983, made payments for services rendered by Mr Robert Smith or any firm with which he is associated, in relation to surveillance, in the broadest sense, of any member of Parliament, former member of Parliament, public servant or other employee of any Government department, agency or statutory authority?

Mr RIPPER replied:

See the Premier's reply to question 78.

**STATE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - BORROWINGS OR ASSETS SALE**

*Minister for Mines etc Departments or Agencies*

144. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Mines; Fisheries; Mid-West:

(1) Has any of the Government departments or instrumentalities (agencies) under the Minister's responsibility -

(a) borrowed money from, or

(b) sold any assets

to the State Bank of South Australia or any of its subsidiaries during the last three years?

(2) If so, will the Minister detail such transactions?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.

**STATE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - BORROWINGS OR ASSETS SALE**

*Minister for Transport etc Departments or Agencies*

146. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Transport; Racing and Gaming; Tourism:

(1) Has any of the Government departments or instrumentalities (agencies) under the Minister's responsibility -

(a) borrowed money from, or

(b) sold any assets

to the State Bank of South Australia or any of its subsidiaries during the last three years?

(2) If so, will the Minister detail such transactions?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.

**STATE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - BORROWINGS OR ASSETS SALE**

*Minister for Agriculture etc Departments or Agencies*

147. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Agriculture; Water Resources, North West:

(1) Has any of the Government departments or instrumentalities (agencies) under the Minister's responsibility -

(a) borrowed money from, or

(b) sold any assets

to the State Bank of South Australia or any of its subsidiaries during the last three years?

- (2) If so, will the Minister detail such transactions?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

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

**STATE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - BORROWINGS OR ASSETS SALE**  
*Minister for Lands etc Departments or Agencies*

148. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Lands; Planning; Justice; Local Government; South-West:

- (1) Has any of the Government departments or instrumentalities (agencies) under the Minister's responsibility -

- (a) borrowed money from, or  
(b) sold any assets

to the State Bank of South Australia or any of its subsidiaries during the last three years?

- (2) If so, will the Minister detail such transactions?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

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

**STATE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - BORROWINGS OR ASSETS SALE**  
*Minister for Housing etc Departments or Agencies*

149. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Housing; Construction; Services; Heritage:

- (1) Has any of the Government departments or instrumentalities (agencies) under the Minister's responsibility -

- (a) borrowed money from, or  
(b) sold any assets

to the State Bank of South Australia or any of its subsidiaries during the last three years?

- (2) If so, will the Minister detail such transactions?

Mr McGINTY replied:

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

**STATE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - BORROWINGS OR ASSETS SALE**  
*Minister for Education Departments or Agencies*

151. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister representing the Minister for Education; Employment and Training; The Arts:

- (1) Has any of the Government departments or instrumentalities (agencies) under the Minister's responsibility -

- (a) borrowed money from, or  
(b) sold any assets

to the State Bank of South Australia or any of its subsidiaries during the last three years?

- (2) If so, will the Minister detail such transactions?

Dr GALLOP replied:

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

**FOXES - ELECTRIC FENCES**

159. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for Agriculture:

Did any of the electric fences for foxes which were recently considered for assessment prove satisfactory and practical?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

Initial assessment of electric fencing for foxes was not encouraging and no field work has been undertaken. Research priority has been given to lures and baiting techniques.

**DELOITTE ROSS TOHMATSU - CONSULTANT EMPLOYMENT**  
*Minister for Mines etc Departments*

163. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Mines; Fisheries; Mid-West:

Has the firm Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu been used as consultants for the departments within your control during the periods -

- (a) 1983 to 1986;
- (b) 1986 to 1989;
- (c) 1989 to 1991?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (a)-(c) No.

**DELOITTE ROSS TOHMATSU - CONSULTANT EMPLOYMENT**  
*Minister for Agriculture etc Departments*

166. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Agriculture; Water Resources, North West:

Has the firm Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu been used as consultants for the departments within your control during the periods -

- (a) 1983 to 1986;
- (b) 1986 to 1989;
- (c) 1989 to 1991?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (a)-(b) No.
- (c) Yes.

**DELOITTE ROSS TOHMATSU - CONSULTANT EMPLOYMENT**  
*Minister for Housing etc Departments*

168. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Housing; Construction; Services; Heritage:

Has the firm Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu been used as consultants for the departments within your control during the periods -

- (a) 1983 to 1986;
- (b) 1986 to 1989;
- (c) 1989 to 1991?

Mr McGINTY replied:

- (a) No.
- (b)-(c) Yes.

**SCHOOLS - ROLL CALLS**  
*Government Policy*

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

What is the Government's policy in respect of roll calls at schools?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The school principal is responsible for ensuring that staff verify students' attendance at least twice daily - at least once during the morning session and at least once during the afternoon session. Absences are collated and recorded daily.

**SEWERAGE - KING POINT SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT**  
*Water Authority of Western Australia - Replacement Plan*

181. Mr WATT to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) What stage has been reached by the Water Authority of Western Australia in relation to finding an alternative design and plan to replace the King Point sewerage treatment plant?
- (2) Has a timetable been prepared for the completion of planning and its implementation?
- (3) If so, what are the details?
- (4) In view of the very strong publicity expressed opposition, will the Minister give an undertaking that effluent will not be discharged at the South Coastal area known as "The Sandpatch"?
- (5) Will the Minister given an assurance that the tertiary method of treating effluent will be given serious and genuine consideration?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) The Water Authority has employed a consultant, Kinhill Engineering Pty Ltd, to carry out preliminary environmental and feasibility studies on a range of options. These studies are anticipated to be completed by mid-April. The authority will seek feedback from the community on the results of these studies prior to adopting a final preferred option.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The design investigations to date have determined that the authority will require a new treatment plant and disposal scheme in operation by December 1994. To meet this commissioning date the following broad timetable of events will have to be achieved -

Commission WWTP and disposal scheme	Dec 1994
Award contract for construction of WWTP and disposal	Jun 1993
Call tenders	Feb 1993
Obtain EPA approval of public environmental report - PER	Jan 1993
Forward public environmental report to EPA for approval	Jun 1992
Commence detailed design	Apr 1992
Commence preparation of public environmental report	Apr 1992
Appoint consultant for stage 2 environmental study	Jun 1991
Forward notice of intent to EPA	May 1991
Obtain consultant's report of stage 1 study	Apr 1991
Appoint consultant for stage 1 feasibility and environmental study	Nov 1990

- (4) The consultant, who is undertaking these studies on behalf of the authority, is carrying out a comprehensive review of all appropriate disposal options. Until this work is completed and the entire community has had the opportunity to examine all the relevant facts, it would be inappropriate to rule out any option for effluent disposal.
- (5) Both myself and the executive of the Water Authority are committed to ensuring that the finally adopted solution represents the most appropriate and cost effective for both the local community and the State as a whole, and as such the disposal of tertiary effluent needs to be considered.

#### TRAINING GUARANTEE LEGISLATION - VALIDITY

184. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

Will the government query and if necessary contest the validity of those provisions of the Commonwealth's Training Guarantee and Training Guarantee (Administration) Acts 1990 and/or the practice based on the implementation of these Acts which compel State Government agencies and instrumentalities - even the Legislative Assembly - to spend a certain percentage of the payroll for "training" purposes?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

The validity of the training guarantee legislation has already been considered by the Solicitor General and it is not considered that a challenge would succeed.

#### MINES DEPARTMENT - HYDROGEOLOGICAL SECTION ABOLITION

##### *Groundwater Resource Assessment Funding Suspension*

185. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has the Minister received comments from the Western Australia branch of the International Association of Hydrogeologists expressing concern about the State Government's suspension of funding for the groundwater resource assessment by abolishing the hydrogeological section of the geological survey in the Mines Department in the last budget?
- (2) Does the Minister agree with the association that the viability of development projects within the State will be reduced if investors and developers need to fund major groundwater investigations?
- (3) Will the Minister strongly advocate with Cabinet the urgent reinstatement of funding for the hydrogeological section?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) No.

- (2)-(3)

Not applicable.

#### TRANSPORT - BUNBURY CITY TRANSIT

##### *Subsidy Payment - Passenger Statistics Variation*

189. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the amount of subsidy to be paid to Bunbury City Transit this financial year?
- (2) Have the number of passengers altered since the service was introduced?
- (3) If so, what has the variation been?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) The shortfall subsidy relevant to the operation of the service in 1990-91 is estimated to be \$919 000.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The total number of passengers carried is as follows -

Jan* to June 1986	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
213 996	506 401	519 728	543 467	541 209

\* Service commenced 20 January 1986.

## WATER AUTHORITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS

### *Outstanding Payments*

191. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) What is the current amount owed by the Water Authority for capital works projects?
- (2) What is the break up of the outstanding loans borrowed for sewerage, irrigation, drainage, etc?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) As at 8 March 1991 the amount owed by the Water Authority for capital works projects was \$694 949 451.
- (2) Apportioned as follows -

	\$
Water	299 370 568
Sewerage	363 747 497
Drainage	23 841 503
Irrigation	<u>7 989 883</u>

\$694 949 451

## AIRSPACE CONTROL - MELBOURNE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY PLAN

194. Mr COURT to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Government support the plan for airspace throughout Western Australia to be controlled from Melbourne under a Civil Aviation Authority plan to streamline the services?
- (2) If not, what action has been taken by the Government to oppose this move?
- (3) How would this move affect aircraft movements in remote parts of Western Australia where local knowledge is of critical importance?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) I refer the member to my media statement of 5 March and to articles which appeared in recent editions of both *The West Australian* and the *Sunday Times*. I have asked the State Department of Transport to analyse and evaluate the impact of the Civil Aviation Authority strategy on Western Australia. I am in the process of making informed and strongly argued representations to the Federal Government opposing the Civil Aviation Authority strategy.
- (3) The analysis we undertake will help us provide a well informed answer to this question.

## PRISONS - PRISONERS

### *Perth Transfer for Visitations Policy*

197. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

- (1) What is the Corrective Services Department's policy regarding the transfer of prisoners kept in non-metropolitan detention centres to Perth for visitation purposes.
- (2) How many prisoners from Albany Regional Prison are transported to Perth each year for visitation purposes?
- (3) What is the ratio of department staff to prisoner during these visitations?



- (4) Do prisoners wear civilian clothes or prison uniform on these outings?
- (5) What is the cost to the department of these visits -
  - (a) per prisoner;
  - (b) per year?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (1) In the absence of receiving regular visits at the prison where the prisoner is placed, prisoners may be permitted a temporary transfer for the purposes of maintaining contact with family or friends.
- (2) Eight - over the last 12 months.
- (3) Standard escort of two officers.
- (4) Until recently, prisoners were transferred in civilian clothes. All prisoners are now transferred in prison clothing.
- (5) Nil. Prisoners travel on regular escorts.

**GRASSHOPPERS - WINGLESS GRASSHOPPERS**  
*Kalgan Land and Conservation District Problems*

198. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Are wingless grasshoppers causing problems in the area of the Kalgan land and conservation district?
- (2) If so, what steps is the Minister taking to resolve the problem?
- (3) Will the Minister consider appointing an entomologist on a permanent basis until the problem is resolved?
- (4) If so, when will the appointment be announced?
- (5) If not, what are the Minister's reasons?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Wingless grasshoppers are an annual problem in the high rainfall areas of the State. They cause little damage to agricultural crops or pastures but can seriously affect tree establishment programs and may cause some damage to established trees.
- (2) The Department of Agriculture has carried out extensive research on the control of wingless grasshoppers, including biological control, and has developed a successful control program which is based on treatment of the juvenile stages of the insect in the period September-November. The department demonstrates the methods of control as part of its ongoing extension program.
- (3) The Department of Agriculture already has an entomologist who spends part of his time working on the wingless grasshopper problem. A submission has been lodged with the Rural Industry Research Development Corporation to employ another entomologist who will be responsible for investigations into grasshopper pests including locusts and wingless grasshoppers.
- (4) If the submission is successful the entomologist will be appointed in the new financial year.
- (5) Not applicable.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT - EXEMPTIONS FROM PROVISIONS**  
*Greenburg, Ms Robyn*

201. Mr WIESE to the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Will the Minister table a list of all current exemptions from the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act with the reason for such exemptions?
- (2) Are any further exemptions proposed?

- (3) Was the group of companies associated with Ms Robyn Greenburg granted an exemption to enable them to provide financial counselling to persons on the basis of their gender?
- (4) If yes, when and by what means was the exemption made?
- (5) If not, when did the Equal Opportunity Commission first become aware that Ms Greenburg's companies were practising sexist discrimination and what action did the Commission take and when?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (1) The only exemptions from the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act are those granted by the Equal Opportunity Tribunal under part VIII division 3. The tribunal has granted one exemption to the Minister for Education to allow the retention of gender linked deputy principal positions in schools. The retaining of gender linked positions was to eliminate consequences of past discriminatory practices of the ministry. Exemptions are not to be confused with exceptions. If the member would like a list of exceptions I will arrange for those to be sent by mail.
- (2) There are no present applications before the tribunal.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) The Commissioner for Equal Opportunity can only take action against any person or company on receipt of a written complaint. The commissioner has not received a written complaint that Ms Greenburg's companies were practising sex discrimination in the provision of services.

#### LAKES - WATER LEVELS

##### *Lake Mariginiup, Lake Joondalup - Long Term Viability Protection*

206. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Water Resources:

What are the current water levels of Lake Mariginiup and Lake Joondalup and what steps are being taken to protect the long term viability of these lakes and their wildlife population?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

The water level in Lake Mariginiup was 40.9 metres AHD on 22 March 1991 and the water level in Lake Joondalup was 16.36 metres AHD. Lake Mariginiup was at the preferred minimum level while Lake Joondalup was below the minimum level. These levels are a consequence of the weather conditions we are currently experiencing. They are above the lowest recorded levels and are not expected to affect the long term viability of the lakes and their wildlife. The levels will recover with a return to more normal weather conditions.

#### GASTROENTERITIS - PIGS

##### *Forman, Mr A.J. - Carcasses-Living Pigs Transfer Studies*

209. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of recent studies by Mr A.J. Forman published in the *Australian Veterinary Journal* of January 1991 indicating that transmittable gastroenteritis has been proved to be transferred from pig carcasses to living pigs?
- (2) Has it now been proven by those studies that this disease can be spread even after the carcasses have been frozen for periods of up to 30 days?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The report indicates that it is possible for transmissible gastroenteritis to be spread from frozen pig carcasses to live pigs under experimental laboratory conditions.

**BICYCLES - TRANSPORT POLICY**  
*Budget Reduction - Road Safety Measures*

213. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the Government's bicycle transport policy?
- (2) Was the bicycle transport budget reduced from \$1.5 million to \$680 000 in the 1990-91 Budget?
- (3) If so -
  - (a) why;
  - (b) which programs have been cut?
- (4) What action is the Government taking to ensure that roads are safer for cyclists?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) The Government's bicycle transport policy is as per the Australian Labor Party's 1989 State election promises which stated that -
 

A Labor Government is committed to meeting the desire of Western Australians for greater bicycle safety for families and children and as a goal will reduce the bicycle accident rate by half by the year 2000.
- (2) Government funding for Bikewest in 1989 was \$1.51 million of which \$1.01 million was a Consolidated Revenue Fund allocation and \$500 000 was a non-recurring funding allocation for special projects. Government funding for Bikewest in 1990 was \$680 000.
- (3)
  - (a) Funding for Bikewest was reduced as part of the Government's overall budgetary reduction measures.
  - (b) Expenditure reductions have been necessary across a range of activities in which Bikewest is involved.
- (4) Bikewest, in association with other Government agencies, is continuing to plan for safer cycle routes, upgrade and expand the network of off-road cycling facilities, educate motorists into better and more tolerant driving habits, provide safer on-road cycling conditions such as sealed shoulders on roads, wider kerbside lanes, traffic calming and on-road bicycle lanes.

**AIR TRANSPORT - DEREGULATION**  
*WA Passenger Air Services*

215. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has Cabinet made a decision regarding the deregulation of Western Australian passenger air services?
- (2) When will such a decision be announced?
- (3) Does the Government intend to place so many restrictions on the new player/s that their entry into the market will be non-viable?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1)-(2) The Government has decided to open the Western Australian jet routes to competition, as announced last week.
- (3) The Government does not intend to place any restrictions on new entrants. There will be a continuing requirement for all operators to obtain a licence from the Department of Transport to enable monitoring of the network and to provide a means of addressing problem areas should they arise.

**ROADS - ALBANY HIGHWAY, BECKENHAM**  
*Wimbledon Street Rerouting Plans*

217. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When were residents first made aware of plans to reroute Albany Highway through Wimbledon Street, Beckenham?

- (2) Are there any proposals to change this longstanding planning decision?
- (3) Do these proposals call for the widening of Albany Highway, Beckenham, to six lanes?
- (4) How many homes would be destroyed if these proposals were accepted?
- (5) Who put forward these proposals?
- (6) Is the Main Roads Department preferred option based on the Wimbledon Street deviation?
- (7) Would there be an increased cost if the alternative to the Wimbledon Street option were pursued?
- (8) If yes to (7) -
  - (a) would the Minister detail this increased cost;
  - (b) would the Minister outline the grounds on which it is justified;
  - (c) do these reasons stand up to a thorough economic analysis?

The answer was tabled.

[See paper No 203.]

**FISHING - RECREATIONAL FISHING CONFERENCE**  
*Conference Papers and Public Submissions*

218. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Why was the recreational fishing conference of 20 October 1990 held only 10 days before the closure date for public submissions on the recreational fishing discussion paper?
- (2) Given this extremely short period between the conference and the submission deadline, why were the conference papers not available -
  - (a) at the conference;
  - (b) from the Fisheries Department the next working day?
- (3) Why are the conference papers still unavailable?
- (4) Is it planned to release the conference papers only a couple of days before the recreational fishing final report?
- (5) If so, would the Minister outline the reasoning behind this timing arrangement?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) The recreational fishing forum was originally scheduled for 6 October 1990. However, with the National Football League grand final, which was put back one week following the West Coast Eagles' drawn match, the date of the forum was rescheduled at short notice to 20 October 1990 to avoid a clash.

The member should be aware that the 20 October 1990 forum was not the only such occasion when the public could have direct input. There were a number of other regional forums prior to 20 October 1990. Over 200 people attended a very successful forum, including representation from many of Western Australia's leading recreational fishers. In fact, the recreational fishing forum attendees on the day, noted with a great deal of disappointment following a question from the chairman of the WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council, that not one Opposition parliamentarian was present. The lack of real interest in recreational fishing by the Opposition was substantiated by their non-attendance at the forum. Those attending the forum were given ample opportunity to submit late submissions. My understanding was that late submissions continued to be received by the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee until early January 1991 and these have been taken into account.

- (2) (a) Many papers were delivered by speakers who are an integral part of

the recreational fishing public of Western Australia. Many presenters were not professional conference writers with the result that the proceedings had to be extracted from the verbal records of presentations.

- (b) The Fisheries Department does not have the resources, nor was the priority given to produce instant proceedings.
- (3) The forum proceedings are in press. The proceedings of the forum were made available to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee in draft form. The level of public submissions and priority given for their consideration has not allowed the forum proceedings to be finalised at an earlier time.
- (4)-(5) The forum papers will be released as soon as publishing is completed. I anticipate that the final report of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee will be presented to me in May. The committee received in excess of 1 400 public submissions with a number of major submissions being gratefully accepted after the due date. The level of public response underpins the importance of recreational fishing to many Western Australians. It is anticipated that the forum proceedings will be released well prior to the final report being presented to me.

#### GNANGARA MOUND - TREES

##### *Drought Stress Claim - Water Levels Protection*

221. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is the Minister or his department aware of the claim reported in the *Wanneroo Times* of 19 March 1991, that trees on the Gnangara Mound are showing signs of drought stress?
- (2) If so, can the Minister advise what steps are being taken to protect the water levels of the mound?
- (3) If not, can the Minister investigate and report back to Parliament?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes. The article in the *Wanneroo Times* of 19 March 1991 quoted a media statement released by the Water Authority dated 13 March 1990.
- (2) The drought stress is a consequence of the current weather conditions and is consistent with what is happening in some other areas of the south west. There is little that can be done about the weather situation. However, over areas of the Gnangara Mound where ground water is abstracted, the Water Authority manages water levels by controlling private and public ground water abstraction. The authority has turned off three public water supply wells in areas subject to stress in an effort to minimise the problem. Also, the authority has pumped 400 000 kilolitres of ground water into Lake Jandabup and Lake Nowergup.
- (3) Not applicable.

#### TRANSPORT - PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES, COUNTRY AREAS

##### *Pensioners - Financial Assistance*

223. Mr HOUSE to the Minister for Seniors:

- (1) Are public transport services outside the metropolitan area very limited?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that pensioners in country towns like Denmark are reliant on taxis for their total transport needs?
- (3) What financial assistance for travel is available to pensioners within the metropolitan area?
- (4) Will the Minister consider providing a subsidy to those pensioners in country areas who have no choice but to use taxi services?
- (5) If so, what steps will the Minister take?

(6) If not, what are the Minister's reasons for not providing this assistance?

Dr WATSON replied:

- (1) Outside of the metropolitan area Kalgoorlie has a public intra-town transport system. The Department of Transport also subsidises private operators in Port Hedland, Geraldton, Mandurah, Bunbury, Albany and Esperance. This subsidy supports the local transport industry and assists operators to provide fares for commuters comparable to those in the metropolitan area. Seniors' Card holders and pensioner health benefit card holders in these areas receive concessional fares. Westrail operates an extensive network of inter-town transport services, especially in the south west of the State.
- (2) Where there is no public or private bus service pensioners without a private car could make use of a taxi. As well a large number of country areas are funded for community buses through various sources including the home and community care program, Lotteries Commission of Western Australia and service organisations. Many country areas also have pools of volunteer drivers to assist people with specific transport needs.
- (3) Direct financial assistance is provided to pensioner health benefit card holders and Seniors' Card holders who are eligible for a 50 per cent concession on Transperth services. Pensioners and other people with severe disabilities, in metropolitan and country regions, are eligible to receive assistance under the subsidised taxi scheme. This scheme provides a subsidy of 50 per cent off taxi fares - up to \$25 a trip - for 100 trips per year. Indirect financial assistance is provided through the sources referred to in (2).
- (4) As Minister for Seniors I do not have the legislative mandate to authorise transport concessions or administer them through the Office of the Seniors' Interests. Transport concessions are the responsibility of the Minister for Transport. I will raise this issue with my colleague the Minister for Transport.
- (5)-(6) Not applicable.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### RURAL CRISIS - MEETING

#### *Government Assistance*

36. Mr OMODEI to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Did he meet members of Parliament, representatives of a pastoral house and the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation last week to discuss the current financial crisis in the pastoral areas of the State?
- (2) If yes, what immediate action has the Minister taken to assist pastoralists and their families where carry-on finance has been restricted by lending institutions?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

(1)-(2)

I met representatives of pastoralists in the areas referred to by the member for Warren, along with members of Parliament and officers of RAFCOR. This came about through the approval of the Deputy Premier and his agreeing that the meeting should take place and requesting that officers of that organisation attend. The agreed position was that officers of RAFCOR would look at the organisation's administrative functions which, in one form or another, were making it difficult for applications to be processed in the speed and manner in which the industry requested. That was the follow-up course of action being considered by RAFCOR; however, I do not know the results of this consideration. At the end of our discussions I spoke with the pastoralists and a member of this Parliament who gave me the impression that they were satisfied with the discussions.

Mr Omodei: Have you put a time limit on it?

Mr BRIDGE: Yes; we are talking about a matter of days because that aspect is critical. I do not know whether the Deputy Premier can tell us anything about what has transpired.

Mr Taylor: I am sorry, but I did not hear the question as I have just arrived.

Mr BRIDGE: Speed was an important feature of our discussions. The meeting was very constructive and a follow-up course of action is being taken by RAFCOR.

**AUSTRALIAN NATIONALISTS MOVEMENT - RACIST CAMPAIGN AGAINST  
LIBERALS ALLEGATION**  
*Police Inquiry*

37. Mr CATANIA to the Premier:

- (1) Has she seen claims by the Leader of the Opposition that he would ask the police to investigate claims that a neo-Nazi group was hired to campaign against Liberal MPs?
- (2) Has the Leader of the Opposition yet substantiated to the Premier any of the allegations he made last week which cast a slur on every member on this side of the House who so abhors such racist activities?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I invited the Leader of the Opposition last week to provide me with any information which he and the member for Nedlands may have on this alleged campaign - the campaign is real enough, but I refer to the alleged connection of my party to the campaign - and he has failed to do so. It is clear that he never had any intention of providing that information to me despite his demands that we investigate the matter. The Leader of the Opposition seems to take comfort in his allegations from the fact that they are made by jailed Australian Nationalists Movement leader, Jack van Tongeren, writing from Fremantle Prison, and Mark Ferguson, who is in Pardelup Prison Farm. The Leader of the Opposition seems to believe that they are a good source of information.

Mr MacKinnon: No, I do not.

Dr LAWRENCE: The credibility which the Leader of the Opposition gives these people is amazing, especially when one looks at a photograph of one of them in last week's *Sunday Times*. Members who read this newspaper would have seen the picture of Mr van Tongeren and would know what the group is on about. Behind Mr van Tongeren in the photograph are posters reading, "Jews are Ruining your Life", "Media Cover-up - Holocaust a Lie - Seek the Truth", "No Asians" and "White Revolution, the Only Solution".

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to associate himself with those people, and if he wants to give them credibility, that is his business.

Mr MacKinnon: No, I do not.

Dr LAWRENCE: However, he could have been honest enough to provide the material that he claimed he had, in order to make it available to be investigated further, as I invited him to do. He chose not to do that for reasons which remain a mystery to me.

Mr Pearce: I had a telephone call on the weekend, from somebody who was in a position to know, who said that the campaign against Ross McLean was funded by three Liberals who had opposed Mr McLean's politics in the Liberal Party.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: It is clear that members on this side of the House have been prepared to say publicly what they think of the campaigns and what they think

about the people who ran them. People have been pursuing Mr McLean since 1980 with an appalling series of campaigns during his time as a member of Federal Parliament. As a member he dared to stand up against some virulent comment from members of the then Liberal State Government about the immigration of Vietnamese people to Australia.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: The Leader of the Opposition was asked to provide the information he had. He did not. I have had no option but to ask the Minister for Police to consider whether the Commissioner of Police might report on the course of the inquiries; that is, of course, if the police take them seriously enough to inquire into them.

Mr Shave: We asked you to do that last week.

Dr LAWRENCE: Normally, the report on such an investigation would not be made public. This would be done so that the slur the Leader of the Opposition deliberately sought to cast on members on this side of the House could be removed. On this matter the Leader of the Opposition has shown himself to have no moral fortitude at all.

#### WHEAT - GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICE *Constitutional Difficulties*

38. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

In her speech to the protest rally outside Parliament House this afternoon she indicated that some constitutional difficulties existed in the application of a guaranteed minimum price of \$150 per tonne for wheat. Would she advise the House what those constitutional difficulties are, because section 12 of the Wheat Marketing Act clearly allows the State Minister for Agriculture to direct the Australian Wheat Board in relation to wheat grown in this State?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I will be happy to do that. I do not have the specific details with me, but the general problem under the Constitution is that a guarantee of that kind might be seen as a bounty; that is prohibited under the Constitution. However, it is possible that the legal question can be remedied, although I am not 100 per cent certain about that yet. The initial response from the Federal Government was that we could not do that. I am not saying that we should not or cannot do so, but that is the preliminary assessment.

#### POLITICAL DONATIONS LEGISLATION - 500 CLUB *Liberal Party Funding Speculation*

39. Dr EDWARDS to the Premier:

Would the State Government's proposed legislation requiring political parties to make public all donations remove the speculation about the 500 Club's role in fund raising for the WA Liberal Party?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I was surprised to see the Liberal Party's State President and members in the Chamber today disassociate themselves from the 500 Club. I know that it may be convenient to do that at the moment because the Royal Commission may be asking, and has asked, parties to provide the records of donations made to them for the purposes of election campaigning and the running of their parties.

Mr Minson: Who has disassociated himself?

Dr LAWRENCE: Members sitting in this House kept saying "It is not ours" over and over again.

Mr Minson: We did not do that at all.

Dr LAWRENCE: Would the member care to elaborate on the relationship between the Liberal Party and the 500 Club?



Mr Minson: We said specifically that it was a separate organisation, which it is. If the Royal Commission wants the records of the 500 Club, it should ask for them; they are not our records to give.

Dr LAWRENCE: The same President of the Liberal Party is recently on the record as telling the member for Floreat that the public perception of the Liberal Party is that of a group which is tired and becoming increasingly irrelevant. I must endorse that. This is not surprising when the Liberal Party is clearly prepared to flirt with the truth in the way that it has on this issue and that in the previous question. Whether members opposite are talking about the alleged campaign which they are running from the prisons of this State courtesy of the Australian Nationalists Movement or whether they are talking about the current desire to disassociate themselves from the 500 Club, the comment is endorsed.

Several members interjected.

Dr LAWRENCE: It was reported in the Press in 1987 that one Mr Bob Pike, MLC, had attempted to have the 500 Club -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The next opportunity for a question will be given to the Opposition provided that I have an opportunity to hear the answer to the last question. If that is not done, we will all have an early dinner suspension.

Dr LAWRENCE: I was attempting to remind members opposite that the relationship between the 500 Club and the Liberal Party is sufficiently close that in 1987 the Liberal MLC, Mr Bob Pike, attempted to have the 500 Club endorsed as a subcommittee of the State Council of the Liberal Party. If that is not the Liberal Party's, I do not know whose it is. Many reports since then have clearly linked the 500 Club with the Liberal Party. As recently as last week the Leader of the Opposition attended a meeting of the 500 Club. At one stage the party was very sensitive that the 500 Club was being called sinister, because it was not directly related to its fund raising campaigns, but clearly was meant to support them. Members opposite can duck and weave all they like on that question, and the operations of the 500 Club may well remain a mystery to some members opposite, but it is clear to anyone in the community that if members opposite are serious about either providing material to the Royal Commission - which I doubt they are - or making sure that all political donations are out on the table, that is an organisation whose donations would certainly be subject to scrutiny if we had disclosure legislation. It is now clear why members opposite seek to dismiss that legislation.

EDWARDS, MR KEVIN - ROTHWELLS LTD  
*Government Support Statement*

40. Mr LEWIS to the Premier:

Does the Premier support the statements made by former senior Government officer, Mr Kevin Edwards, who said that the Government's action in continuing to support the survival of Rothwells Ltd is totally defensible; that they had done nothing wrong; and that the present Government had failed to defend itself on the matter?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

Mr Edwards is obviously entitled to express a point of view and it is clear that at the time large sections of the community believed it was necessary to support Rothwells. Large sections of the community, including *The West Australian* newspaper and others - not perhaps as directly as Mr Edwards is saying - thought that to allow a bank of that kind to collapse was inappropriate. Subsequent events have shown that Rothwells was in no condition to be supported, nor should it have been, and that is where I part company with Mr Edwards. But that is with the virtue of hindsight and having had a very careful investigation by Mr McCusker of the state of

Rothwells. I remind members and it is noteworthy that Mr McCusker made it clear that no-one was in a position to know the full extent of the problems that existed in Rothwells, and it took the inquiry over 12 months to establish that. It is important that members opposite show for once that they are capable of some fairness in this matter and do not attempt to exploit the feelings of a man who has just been before the court and who has attracted a severe penalty. I know members opposite seek to do that sort of thing all the time, and I am not surprised to hear them doing it tonight.

**WESTRAIL - FREIGHT SERVICES, ALBANY REPORT**  
*Project 26*

41. Mr READ to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the article in the *Albany Advertiser* of 21 March critical of Westrail's intentions for the future of freight services to Albany?
- (2) What is the status of Westrail's so-called project 26; and
- (3) What are the Government's intentions toward the provision of freight services to regional centres?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(3)

I thank the member for some notice and for providing me with a copy of the article. I admit to not having seen it in my Press clippings. I understand that the article is based upon the recommendations of an as yet unreleased draft report undertaken by the combined central regional development advisory committee which was entitled "Westrail in the Central Region". The Commissioner of Railways has been asked to comment on the draft report and I requested him to ensure that the committee was made aware of the Government's position on this matter. Project 26 was undertaken by Westrail at its own initiative to see how it might achieve a certain rate of return on the value of its assets devoted to freight. I emphasise very strongly that at no stage has it received any formal endorsement from me or from the Government, nor will it in its present form. As part of its microeconomic reform agenda the Government is seeking to reduce the total social cost of general freight within the State. This process does not involve looking at individual transport agencies in isolation and it certainly does not involve the reduction of service delivery to any region or town. Both rail and road form a part of this process and it is conceivable that it is in the community's interest to increase and not decrease rail services.

Mr Wiese: Why did Westrail tell its employees in Narrogin that it was going to put off 40 men?

Mrs BEGGS: It was responding to the project 26 recommendations.

Mr Wiese: It was talking to the men and telling them that it was going to put them off.

Mrs BEGGS: If what the member says is true -

Mr Wiese: What I say is true.

Mrs BEGGS: That is not my understanding. It is my understanding that Westrail's project 26 is a discussion paper.

The Department of Transport has been instructed to conduct a study into the total social cost and benefit of all the commodities currently carried by Westrail and the alternative modes of transporting these goods, particularly road. That study will involve consultation with community groups and local government. Until that time Westrail has been told that the current level of general freight services is to be maintained across the State.

Members opposite, particularly National Party members, cannot have this both ways. On the one hand they ask for the deregulation of transport for

certain commodities carried by Westrail so that their constituents can have freedom of choice on how they transport their goods; on the other hand they put forward objections to discussions about the Westrail services which should remain. The National Party must find a policy that will represent its constituents' interests fairly because it cannot have two bobs each way.

#### WHEAT - GOVERNMENT UNDERWRITING COMMITMENT

##### *Legislation or Regulation*

42. Mr MINSON to the Premier:

With reference to the Premier's announcement today that the State Government will underwrite the State's wheat crop, will she confirm the commitment and will she indicate whether that will be achieved by regulation or legislation?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

I am happy to confirm the commitment that I indicated to the farmers today and advise Parliament that the detail of that is yet to be worked out. The fair expectation is that there will be a maximum amount, a ceiling, to which the State might be exposed. There are constitutional problems and it may well mean -

Mr MacKinnon: Do you mean a ceiling on the total amount paid?

Dr LAWRENCE: Yes, that is right.

Mr MacKinnon: How do you work that out per tonne?

Dr LAWRENCE: That will come before the Cabinet next week and will be discussed with the Western Australian Farmers Federation.

Mr Shave: Did you tell the farmers that?

Dr LAWRENCE: I did say that. We are talking about a total amount in other words; the point at which it is triggered and the point at which the trigger exits. It will depend on the total production, where the triggering price is set, and what the current price is. A suggestion in some quarters is that if the Government underwrites the wheat price in this way there will be incentive to overproduction. It is my understanding that that is not correct, that at \$150 a tonne farmers would have no incentive to increase their yield, but obviously we have to protect against that too. To have an unlimited amount of money guaranteed by the State would not be accepted by members of this Parliament, nor by the community generally.

Mr Blaikie: It is a qualified underwriting.

Dr LAWRENCE: Not at all. The Farmers Federation and the farmers understand very clearly. The proposition they put to the Federal Government included a total cap; they were talking about \$410 to \$450 million. They were not looking for an open-ended commitment, any more than the local Farmers Federation is - nor will they get it - and they understand that too. Those details will be before Cabinet. The question of whether it will be by regulation or legislation is being examined as part of that process and that may well be tied directly to the constitutional question; whether we can do it by way of an Act of our own Parliament, and thereby avoid the question of its being a bounty and therefore unconstitutional, is a question I hope to have resolved in the next 24 hours or so. Clearly we will do whatever we can to prevent a conflict of that kind and to enable us to act independently as a Parliament to achieve the outcome that all of us want - I know the National Party does; I am not sure of the view of the Liberal Party; it has been fairly silent on the issue -

Mr MacKinnon: We share the views of the Nationals.

Dr LAWRENCE: You support the Nationals? If we do bring in legislation or regulation we can expect the unanimous support of the Opposition parties?

**PLANNING - NORTH WEST CORRIDOR STRUCTURE PLAN**

*Submission Deadline Extension - Property Resumption*

43. Mrs WATKINS to the Minister for Planning:

In view of the very grave concerns expressed by east Wanneroo residents about the north west corridor structure plan, will the Minister -

- (1) extend the submission deadline from 26 April until the end of June; and
- (2) advise the House whether residents east of Wanneroo will have their properties resumed for urban development?

Mr D.L. SMITH replied:

- (1) I will be instructing the Department of Planning and Urban Development to extend to 26 June the deadline for receiving submissions from residents who live east of Wanneroo Road. That is effectively three months from today and two months from the original deadline.
- (2) I give the member an assurance that there will be no resumption in order to achieve either residential zoning or residential development. The one exception to that would relate to roads and to community facility land which would be acquired in the ordinary way when and if those roads and community facilities were developed.

**WHEAT - GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICE**

*Federal Opposition, State Challenge - Funding Source*

44. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

- (1) If the minimum price for wheat were declared a bounty and the Federal Government attempts to nullify the policy, is the Premier prepared to commit her Government to challenge in the appropriate courts of this land such a decision by the Federal Government?
- (2) Will the funds provided under such a guarantee come from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the General Loan Fund or from a Commonwealth-State agreement?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) I think we could get around the bounty question by the way we implement the guarantee. I raised that as a possible difficulty. If that proves not to be the case, we should take on that question in the appropriate courts. I would be amazed, though, if the Federal Government decided to do that. However, we should challenge the decision if that arises. At the moment we are looking for a way around it. If we cannot and have to do it in a way that appears to be unconstitutional, it is worthy of challenge.
- (2) It is very unlikely that we would fund the guarantee from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It would be more likely to be funded from the General Loan Fund at the time of appropriation. That is a matter for Cabinet to discuss. It is almost impossible to expect there would be any State-Commonwealth agreement. Frankly, I think it is more likely that pigs might fly.

**HOUSING - BRITISH PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY**

45. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Housing:

Does the Minister have any intention of implementing the British Government's public housing policy that has been described by the member for Cottesloe as a brilliant success that would work well in Western Australia?

Mr McGINTY replied:

The member for Cottesloe painted a rosy picture of housing in Britain following his return from a tour of that country. He was reported in the *Post* on 19 March under the heading "Follow the Brits in Housing: MP" as follows -

The British government's housing policy is a brilliant success and could work well in Australia, said Cottesloe Liberal MP Colin Barnett. He is just back after a two-week tour of Britain at that government's expense.

"The right-to-buy policy has been outstanding," he said. "The whole process of privatising public housing is working well."

Unfortunately, the member omitted to mention a few relevant facts. The member failed to add that Mrs Thatcher's "right-to-buy" policy was marked by a growing inequality, increased urban decay and rising homelessness.

Mr MacKinnon: Have you been there to study it?

Mr McGINTY: I have been to Britain. I have seen public housing in Britain. A period of massive decay occurred in Britain under Thatcher. Public housing stocks in that country have been destroyed. That is the system that the Leader of the Opposition's colleague praises and urges us in this country to adopt.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You have misunderstood what I said.

Mr McGINTY: I have not misunderstood anything. The member is a thatcherite and he supports her policy of destroying our public housing system. I can scarcely describe as a brilliant success a system which has been based on the non-replacement of Government stock. Public housing in Britain which has been run generally by councils has been sold and has not been replaced. It was estimated in 1989 that, because of the privatisation of public housing in Britain and the extent to which the Government allowed its public housing system to run down, it would cost in the order of 20 billion pounds to restore what was left of public housing to a state that was reasonably habitable.

Mr C.J. Barnett: There is no relationship between right to buy and destruction.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McGINTY: There has to be. There are two dimensions of the policy. One is the right to buy, and I am dealing with the problems that that has created. The second problem, which is still part of that same system which has been described as a brilliant success and which has led to the great inequalities in Britain, is the non-replacement of the housing stock. That is a disgrace. What is left of the public housing stock in Britain is that which has run down and that which cannot be privatised because no-one will buy it as it is the least desirable of British housing. We have seen exploding waiting lists in Britain, and homelessness has become a major problem under the privatised housing system. To answer the question by the member for Nollamara, that is not the sort of system that we should adopt here. By contrast, in this State we have a Government which is committed to affordability in housing, maximum access -

Mr Omodei: Getting people into caravan parks! That is your policy.

Mr McGINTY: The member should look at the initiatives that have been taken here and stack them up against the system advocated by the member for Cottesloe and by the member's interjection.

Mr Court: The situation here is as confused as your tie.

Mr McGINTY: I thank the member for the compliment; I like it. This Government is concerned about affordability, encouraging home ownership and encouraging the maximum level of public housing to meet the needs of the less fortunate in our society. It is those people whom this Government is targeting with its housing program.

Mr C.J. Barnett: This Government is anti home ownership.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McGINTY: Encouraging home ownership is hardly anti home ownership.

Mr C.J. Barnett: If you oppose the right to buy, you oppose home ownership.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have been trying for some minutes to wind up the Minister so that he will sit down and allow somebody else to have a chance. The member for Cottesloe has been deliberately provoking him. We are working at cross purposes.

Mr McGINTY: It is appropriate that the people of Western Australia think long and hard about whether they want to support a party that has publicly indicated that it will destroy our public housing system.

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