

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 22nd March, 1978

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

Effect: Point of Order

The Hon. R. J. L. WILLIAMS: I rise on a point of order rather than to ask a question in so far as question 45 on today's notice paper, asked by the Hon. R. F. Claughton, is concerned. I wonder whether the attention of the House should be drawn to the fact that question 45(2)(c), and subsequently (3)(c) were asked by me in this House and the questions have already been answered. Is this not a waste of time and money to have questions repeated in the same form?

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no point of order.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. G. C. MACKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [3.51 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 4th April.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 21st March, on the following motion by the Hon. W. M. Piesse—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

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

THE HON. T. KNIGHT (South) [3.52 p.m.]: In reply to the Governor's address, firstly, I believe I should congratulate the Hon. Win Piesse for the speech she made on the evening of the opening of Parliament. I believe it was put very concisely; it was very clear to me—which is unusual in this Chamber. I consider the speech contained a lot of common sense.

The Address-in-Reply debate affords members an opportunity to put before this House and, indeed, before the Government matters which are worrying them in their electorates, and matters which concern the Government of the day. The first subject I would like to discuss is homes for the aged. I have mentioned this matter previously and I have no doubt it will be discussed on many occasions in the future.

The aged of our State appear to have to rely on funds from the Federal Government for homes, hospitals, and the natural care which is evident and obviously needed by those people. It is my opinion the State Government should take some responsibility in this field, even if only by helping to get some of the projects off the ground. Many projects throughout Western Australia are at the stage where they need to be set in motion. However, they are hindered by the fact that the Federal Government will not make any further grants of the necessary funds until July, 1979.

As an example, in Albany we have worked on the establishment of a centre for the frail aged. Its conception was the result of community action, it is to be run by the community, and the raising of the initial finances will be by the community. Last year we had a "ring and give" appeal and the committee, consisting of people from Albany, raised in excess of \$60 000. With the pledges from the Shire and the Town Council of Albany and surrounding shires, it seemed the amount raised would be in excess of \$100 000.

We were to use the old Albany Regional Hospital as our centre. The Government agreed, subject to a reasonable proposal. The cost of renovating the old hospital to make it suitable for a community centre capable of housing 60 people was to be \$450 000. However, the additional \$300 000, which was required to get this project moving, unfortunately could not be made available until July, 1979. As a result the proposal fell through.

We have gone further and found that it may be necessary to build a new community centre which could be cheaper than modifying the old hospital building. The new centre could be built in stages. The Minister for Housing (Mr O'Connor) has made available to the group 2½ acres of land in Albany adjoining the present geriatric unit of the Albany Regional Hospital. However, we are still in some predicament because finance will not be available until July next year.

If money could be made available by way of loan, or by way of underwriting a loan, from the State Government to get projects such as this

moving, I consider the Federal Government would be placed in the position of virtually guaranteeing the allocation of funds; and thus care on the basis I have outlined would be available for old people much sooner than in three years' time, when the money will be made available. In those circumstances I believe the Federal Government would come up with the money to repay the loans granted by the State Government or underwritten by the State Government.

We also had another situation at Lake Grace, in my electorate. Through the endeavours of a small group of people and myself we obtained approval from the Government to use the old maternity wing at the hospital to house aged people. The building has been inspected by myself and Dr Lefroy from the extended medical care centre, and the administrator of the Narrogin Hospital which is the nearest major hospital to Lake Grace. We will go ahead and use that building for the care of up to six old people from Lake Grace. At the moment those people would be forced to leave the area, their children, and their friends, and come to Perth where care is available to them. However, we should be conscious of the fact that those people were pioneers of this State. They want to remain in the environment which they are used to, and not to be sent to the metropolitan area where that type of treatment is available.

We talk about decentralisation and here is a way to make this sort of treatment available for our aged people in country areas to save the cost of transporting them to Perth. Therefore, in a way we are creating decentralisation of activity, if not of industry.

The cost of renovating the maternity wing of the Lake Grace Hospital to a stage where it can be utilised to care for six people is \$17 000. The Government has kindly agreed to allow the hospital staff to assist. For instance, in the evening the nursing sister or matron on duty will include the aged persons' section in her inspection. The secretary of the hospital will attend to any necessary book work and correspondence, and the kitchen at the hospital will supply meals at cost to the aged persons. I believe this service will be gratefully received by the people of Lake Grace.

However, at this stage they are \$7 000 short of the amount required for moving in immediately and making the home a reality rather than something on the horizon. This is a small area in which the Government could underwrite or guarantee a loan, and make the project a reality now instead of in 12 or 18 months' time.

Following on from the care of aged persons, I have had discussions with various Government departments and people involved in the care of the aged. The main problem is the lack of funds for the training of home-care nurses. Apparently the Government has not made any money available for this type of training so that home-care nurses are not able to care for the aged to the degree that is necessary. I think we are all bright enough to see that if home-care nurses were made available in homes for aged people, in order to assist those people to do the things which they cannot do by themselves, there would be a saving to the Government because it would not have to supply homes and hospital wards, or care for those people and give them attention in a hospital situation. I ask the Government to look seriously into the question of making funds available for the training of home-care nurses so that they can care for the aged.

It will be recalled that last year I spoke about the need for mobile clinics in country areas. People with handicapped children, whether mentally or physically, have to travel to Perth—some 600, 700, or 800 kilometres—in order to receive treatment which, at this stage, is available only in the metropolitan area.

I followed up the matter with the Minister and I am pleased to state that the Minister has advised me as follows—

The provision of mobile teams of professionals for handicapped children in rural areas has been a matter of investigation by officers of my Health Department for some time. In fact, the Mental Health Department have already instituted mobile teams to visit such areas as Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany, the South West, Geraldton, the Pilbara and the Kimberley regions. The teams can include a medical officer, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, trained nurse etc.—depending on the availability of staff and the needs of the area served.

The Child Health Section of Community and Child Health Services Branch and Princess Margaret Hospital also have professionals who visit country areas from time to time. These people will assist in the management of the health problems of the handicapped child. These services are expanded as personnel and finance permit. However, in the long-term it is planned to develop Regional Teams based in main centres throughout the State. This will ensure

continuity of management and at the same time obviate against the necessity of long trips to Perth.

He goes on to say—

You will understand that development of these services will depend on availability of the necessary skilled personnel prepared to live in the various Regional centres; and also on improvement in the financial situation.

I believe that this forward planning, in conjunction with the Education Department, is sound, and will lead to greatly improved services to these handicapped individuals.

I am pleased to hear that. It is obvious something is to be done. I raised these matters in debate on the Address-in-Reply and the Appropriation Bill, and apparently the Government has taken notice of my request.

The next matter I wish to raise relates to sewerage requirements for subdivisions in country areas. Last year the Water Supply Department formulated a policy concerning the provision of sewerage facilities, which states—

Any land outside of the Perth Metropolitan Area which is subdivided for urban purposes, is to have sewerage facilities provided unless it is agreed by the Public Works Department that the subdivision, being remote from existing sewerage facilities, is not expected to lead to the development of a settlement large enough to warrant the provision of treatment facilities. (Sewerage is generally considered feasible and warranted for settlements with 100 or more residential units).

It goes on to explain the standards required, the method of costing, and the contributions to be made by the developer and the Government.

At places like Albany, Esperance, Geraldton, and Bunbury, which are expanding at a rather rapid rate at the present time, subdivisions exceeding 100 blocks are taking place. As no deep sewerage is available under the Government's capital works programme, the developer is expected to install a sewage treatment plant and water reticulation with earthenware pipes. This adds approximately \$4 000 to the cost of blocks, which is then charged to the young people buying the blocks for the purpose of building their own home.

I am very concerned about this situation because many young people have worked for years to save \$7 000, \$8 000, \$9 000, or \$10 000 for the purpose of buying a block of land and owning their own home, which could be postponed for another four or five years because of the sewerage requirements. As young people

are paying for the installation of the deep sewerage and reticulation of water to the subdivision—capital works which are usually carried out by the Government—the least the Government could do is exempt them from paying sewerage and water rates for at least five years to make up for the \$4 000 or \$5 000 extra they are paying for their blocks.

We read in the reports of the ANZ Bank and other bodies that there is a decline in home building. Where people have to find an additional \$4 000 or \$5 000 before they can build, which will take them another two or three years, we can certainly expect a decline in home building. This is a retrograde step for the Government to take when young people are paying for works which are usually considered to be capital works carried out by the Government.

On page 66 of the Binnie International Development Study it is stated in relation to backlog clearance—

This is an area where the Board's interests interact with those of other authorities and joint decisions on future policy will be necessary. At present the Board's objective is to sewer all backlog areas. However, the findings of this Study suggest that this objective should be modified to allow consideration of septic tanks as a permanent alternative to sewerage in certain areas.

I have maintained this for a long time. The health surveyors and health inspectors in the Albany region are also of the opinion that in certain areas of Albany it would not be feasible to install sewerage as a permanent fixture. However, there are high areas with sandy soils where septic tanks will work from now till kingdom come. I think the Government should be looking at this aspect of the report, because if we put this added cost onto young people who wish to build their own homes we will have a backlog in building. There will be a shortfall and, as a result, further unemployment.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: They can put in septic tanks when the houses are built if they do not have sewerage.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Subdivision is not allowed to go ahead unless the developer guarantees to install reticulation in earthenware pipes and sewerage.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: They are two costs to the householder.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: When a young person buys a block that has been deep-sewered at the developer's expense, the cost of which has been passed on to the buyer, the day those people

take over that block the Government immediately charges sewerage rates. I believe these young people should be granted an exemption for four or five years to help them make up the initial outlay of supplying their own sewerage.

In the last few years regional centres with regional administrators have been set up throughout the State. In Albany, Esperance, Bunbury, Geraldton, and the Pilbara offices have been established for various Government departments and regional administrators have been appointed to each of those areas. A few matters have come up in these areas recently which I believe reveal a lack of foresight on the part of the Government.

A regional centre is established to ensure the provision of all the facilities existing in the metropolitan area. At this stage I refer particularly to speech therapists. I have recently received many letters from constituents, particularly in Albany, who have children with speech difficulties. The only speech therapist available to them is at Kojonup, which is 96 miles, or roughly 140 kilometres, away. The mothers have to travel with their children a distance of 140 kilometres each way for three-quarters to one and a half hours of speech therapy. The woman who has been doing the speech therapy work in Kojonup will be ceasing to do so in the next few months.

In Albany we have followed up the matter and rented an office for the use of a speech therapist. The equipment should be there now, and we have advertised for a speech therapist.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The same query has been raised with me. I understand it is impossible to obtain the services of a speech therapist. There are none available. Have you checked on that?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: We have advertised over the last two weekends, and applications close this weekend.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: How many applications have been received?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I do not know.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I would be surprised if they receive any. It is not the fault of the Government. Speech therapists are just not available.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: We should have speech therapists. If none is available, we cannot do anything about it, but we are always looking for people to fill a need, and the Government should look at jumping in and training some speech therapists to fill this particular need, or calling them in from other States.

If the woman at Kojonup ceases to do speech therapy work, these people will have to travel to Perth. Are there enough speech therapists available in Perth to cater for an influx of country people? However, hopefully we will have a speech therapist in Albany in the next month or two. There are other regional centres in the State where we should ensure that people specialising in particular professions are available to provide those services for country people. The Government should therefore ensure that none of the anomalies now existing are allowed to continue, and should make some effort to establish speech therapy clinics in country areas.

We are now working on a therapeutic pool in Albany. People outside the metropolitan area must travel to Perth to have water treatment, which I gather is very advantageous for asthmatics and sufferers from arthritis and rheumatism. Again, I believe therapeutic pools should be available in country centres.

A short while back members probably read in the *Daily News* that a man was washed off the Gap under the Natural Bridge at Albany. Had it not been for the quick thinking of the national park ranger, the radio telephone operator at the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, the captain of a whale chaser, the first mate who dived in to help the man, and Mr John Bell, the whale spotter of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, we would have had another death on the south coast. I pay tribute to the people who participated in the rescue of that man.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It was a good team effort.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: It was a terrific effort.

Last year I wrote to two Ministers requesting that a helicopter or two be purchased by the State Government for rescue work such as this. In the European countries I visited last year, I found helicopters were used for traffic control.

Last year the Cranbrook civil emergency group decided to carry out a mock rescue in the Stirling Range. A husband, wife, and child were deposited in the Stirling Range National Park, unknown to the civil emergency group, and emergency operations were put into effect. It did not take a great deal of time to find the family. It was planned beforehand that the husband would be said to have a broken leg, the woman a broken arm, and the child a spinal injury, or something to that effect. They were to be brought out of the Stirling Range National Park in a manner appropriate to the injuries they were supposed to have sustained.

They got through all right, but when they tried to carry the gentleman on a stretcher through the park they found it completely impossible. In fact, the idea was put to me as a result of the impossibility of getting someone out—and when people are lost, they are always lost in the most inaccessible areas—that a helicopter would have been ideal in that situation.

Following that the Gnowangerup Shire Council, whose boundaries about the Stirling Range National Park, contacted me. The shire said it also supported the concept of having a helicopter available for civil emergencies, and to be used by the State Government for line spotting, rescue work, surveying and traffic control. In fact, there are a million things for which a helicopter could be used.

If the person to whom I referred had been washed off the Gap at Albany half an hour later than he was, there is no way an aeroplane could have done any spotting. As members know, a plane must move horizontally and must continue to move.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Have you any idea of the cost of a helicopter?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I have a very good idea; but does the Minister have any idea of the cost of a person's life?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is an argument which is put up.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Of course, the point of view varies from person to person.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: People can stay out of the Stirling Range National Park and not put the country to this expense.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Of course they could, but we are all human, and as the Minister is well aware humans are put here to create problems for us.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I do not know whether or not that is the reason, but they do.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: The point is that we will have people in trouble in one way or another, and initially it always falls upon the State Government to help them. If they are lost at sea we have to go out and find them at considerable expense to the State. In that case an aeroplane can be used, backed up by a ship; but in some inaccessible places aeroplanes cannot be used. A helicopter would have been invaluable to assist in the search for the man who was washed off the Gap at Albany, because it could have hovered

over the water and used spotlights to search for him. In that case, a half-hour meant the difference between life and death.

I am putting forward this proposition for what it is worth. The shires in my area support the concept, and other people have come to me and said that a helicopter could be used, even to the extent of the State Government using it for many other purposes.

I know aeroplanes have been used by the SEC and the PMG for line spotting, and they have been used to conduct surveys. I am aware that in many cases the Main Roads Department has chartered a plane to take wages to road workers, and the plane has landed on the road-way. All these little things add up, and I believe if the matter were looked into the Government would be surprised how invaluable a helicopter could be. I will not dwell further on that point.

I will now introduce another old chestnut of mine: the Hopetoun water supply. Those members, who have been in this Chamber for the same period of time that I have been, have heard me bringing this matter up year after year. Last week we saw tabled in this House, a plan of the catchment area for the Hopetoun water supply. I have had a great deal of correspondence with the Minister for Water Supplies over the last 12 months. I have also had correspondence with the Ravensthorpe Shire Council, which covers the area of Hopetoun. I have with me letters written by the Minister, and from which I intend to quote a small portion.

One of the letters refers firstly to my address in this House last year, and it states—

Reference is made to the undertaking given at the concluding debate relating to the Appropriation (C.R.F.) Estimates by the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, M.L.C., to Members that any matters of sufficient importance and relevance would be referred to the Minister concerned.

Obviously the Hopetoun water supply was considered important enough to be referred to Mr O'Connor. In his letter, the Minister for Water Supplies said—

It is therefore in response to this commitment that I have been requested to comment on the matters raised in your address concerning the Hopetoun water supply.

Recent exploratory drilling has located a source of water limited in quantity but adequate for a restricted town water supply in which the use of sprinklers would not be allowed.

Further detailed investigation and design of a scheme utilising this source is in progress and upon completion construction will be carried out as soon as funds are available.

Following a further letter I wrote to Mr O'Connor, we reached the stage where he said—

I can assure you that both myself and the Public Works Department are well aware of the position at Hopetoun and having now located a suitable source for a limited town supply, will ensure that a scheme is constructed—

And here comes the punch line—

—as soon as funds become available.

Hopetoun has been sitting on the south coast for well over 100 years, and I have raised the matter of a water supply for that town on every occasion possible in this place. I daresay other members representing the area have done the same. I cannot think of many towns or small areas in the State of Western Australia which do not have a water supply; yet Hopetoun is still in that position.

I would like to emphasise the fact that I want the Minister seriously to consider giving the Hopetoun water supply high priority on this year's works estimates. I think it is something which is necessary, and it would be a move in the right direction. God only knows, water is such a precious commodity these days that even the people in Perth are realising what it is like to be short of it; however, they cannot realise what it is like to be without it, and that is what the people of Hopetoun have had to put up with for 100 years. I bring this matter forward again for the benefit of the Minister and the Public Works Department and hope the project gains the support it warrants.

I now move on to another point concerning water. The south coast bore field in Albany has been a matter of great concern. I think it has even been a matter of concern to the Public Works Department; and most definitely it has been a matter of great concern to the potato growers in the area. I do not know whether many members are aware that the Grassmere Valley which runs from Elleker through to the shores of the Princess Royal Harbour produces some 6 000 tonnes of seed potatoes each year. These are the most sought after seed potatoes in the State because they are disease free. The reason they are disease free is that during winter the Grassmere Valley is under water, which kills parasites, bacteria, weed growth, and so on. Therefore the Grassmere Valley provides us with seed potatoes that are used throughout the State and are desired for their disease-free qualities.

When it was decided that bores would be put down by the Public Works Department for the water supply of Albany and the surrounding region, it was considered that the initial source of supply for the great southern comprehensive water supply would be the Denmark River, which would be dammed. However, now it is being done in reverse; there will be a supplementary supply of water from the dam, but the bore field is now to become the major supplementary source. I have been told this is because the cost of the dam is now in excess of \$40 million.

In 1974 we were told that the highest priority would be given to providing a comprehensive water scheme in the great southern, with the Denmark River being the major source of supply to the scheme by way of a dam which would cost \$18 million. If we do not commence work on the dam for another three years, the cost will be \$70 million. I would think that as the Denmark River appears to be a major source of supply and one we will have to fall back on, then before inflation kills the opportunity to provide a dam on that river action should be taken to commence work. Bear in mind that every \$10 million we spend now will probably save \$10 million, because the same work would cost \$20 million next year. If the dam were built in three stages, the Government could save between \$30 million and \$40 million, compared with what the overall scheme would cost in 10 years' time.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You could say that about every project.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I am aware of that, but we have to start moving in this direction. I know the Premier is trying to borrow money, and to borrow it from overseas sources. Probably money from those sources could be used. I support that concept, because the work we are able to do today will save money tomorrow.

The bore field on the south coast is lowering the water table in the Grassmere Valley. I believe that following a deputation and discussions we have had with officers of the Water Board, they are convinced that we are right. At the moment the board is monitoring each of the pumps in the bore field. It is also monitoring the private wells, the water level of some of which has dropped 12 feet in the last three years.

One farmer, Mr Atwell, was asked by the officers of the department to put in five acres of potatoes as a test case. He was asked to plant the potatoes on an area on which he had lost his potato crop last year, because the officers maintained that loss was possibly due to adverse weather conditions. Mr Atwell has put in the

potatoes, and they are in exactly the same condition as the potatoes were last year. The crop was inspected by senior officers of the department, another local member, and myself, and at that stage it was virtually proved that the water table had dropped because there was little water in a well from which cattle used to drink at ground level. I want to be sure that farmer will be compensated by the Government for the loss of his potatoes. That is my first point. My second point is that if we are going to pump water from the lower aquifer of the Grassmere Valley, then I would like the Government to give some guarantee that adequate compensation will be paid to those potato growers who lose their ability to grow disease-free potato seed. I want those farmers to be assured that the water which is being pumped from the lower aquifer will be reticulated by irrigation to allow them to carry on.

This industry is an important one to Albany. When we consider the history of Albany over the years, we find that industries have not been established there because of a lack of water. We are now taking water that will result in killing an industry which is already there, and which could possibly bring other industries to Albany.

Instead of this we should be getting surface water from the catchment area of the Denmark River by the construction of a dam, which was the original idea of the scheme, and in my opinion is the only method to use. If Albany is to grow, and if the surrounding region is to grow, then I believe we have to make a start on building the dam, even if it is built in three stages.

I feel that would be an economical way of constructing a dam, and we would be able to provide a water supply to Albany, Mt. Barker, Cranbrook, and Tambellup. However, instead it is intended to draw water from the lower aquifers of the Grassmere Valley, and a pipeline from Albany to Mt. Barker is being constructed with the next stage to extend it to Cranbrook and Tambellup. The south coast bore field will be pumped to that degree, and I am afraid we will find that soon there will be no market gardeners or potato growers in that area; we could be faced with a desert in the region unless the Government is prepared to pay reasonable compensation to the growers, or to allow irrigation of the valley.

Several years ago—in fact, I think it was in 1974—I raised the idea of extended medical care services, as this matter was laid down in the Government's policy. It was stated in the policy of the Government that people who were considered capable of being cared for in their homes either medically or mentally should be

permitted to have such care, and if any alterations were required to their homes which were beyond the financial resources of the people concerned the Government would carry out that work.

This scheme was agreed to, and was implemented in 1974. I have mentioned it over the years, and I have been keeping a close check on it. The agreement was that if the general practitioner in the area called in Dr Lefroy, and the latter agreed that a patient was capable of being cared for in the home environment, then up to \$1 000 could be provided for alterations to the home. It was suggested that Dr Lefroy would arrange for a tradesman or builder to look at the house and give an assessment of the cost of installing ramps and handrails, widening toilet doors, and doing all the other things considered necessary for the well-being of the patient in the home environment.

Up to \$1 000 could be spent at the discretion of the extended medical care services run by Dr Lefroy. Above that figure, the Minister's consent had to be obtained.

I am pleased to say that several jobs have been carried out. In fact, I know of one that cost in excess of \$7 000. Over the period many jobs have been carried out costing under \$1 000, and the total spent by the State Government on home modifications and domestic help for those people involved has been \$943 482. That includes the amounts spent on the provision of ramps, handrails, and other fittings for people confined to wheelchairs, etc., including provision to enable them to get into showers and toilet facilities.

No figure has been mentioned by the Minister as to the number of patients sent home under this scheme. In June of last year the figure was 4 116 people. I think it has been a very humane and worthy move by the Government to allow these people to go home. If we had these people in hospital it would cost a lot of money, firstly to build the hospital, and secondly to cater for the patients with the necessary nursing staff and equipment. However, we have done this; we have helped people. I believe people exist better in the home environment with their family around them.

I know of a case involving a little girl crippled in a tractor accident. Mr George Bedbrook, the Administrator of the Royal Perth Hospital Annexe has spoken of her to me explaining that if she falls out of bed a nurse picks her up. If she is at home and falls she finds her own way to stand up. This little girl, who wears modified leg braces, goes to school and plays

with the children there. She runs around somewhat awkwardly and if she falls down she gets up on her own. She has every chance of leading a normal life because of the scheme brought in by the Government in 1974. I congratulate the Government for introducing the scheme.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are entitled to be very proud of your own part because you were one of the instigators.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I am proud the Government saw fit to implement the scheme, as are thousands of other people. We have a lot of handicapped and disabled people in the State and from my investigation into this subject I find it is becoming harder and harder to rehabilitate these people due to the present high unemployment rate. This is understandable because if they are to work in the community and earn their keep it is obvious they will be taking someone else's place.

Three years ago the Government gave the Paraplegic-Quadriplegic Association at Shenton Park \$40 000. Last year the figure was \$80 000 and I am not sure how much will be paid this year. Whatever money is received by the association it seems it will still be insufficient, but Mr Dennis Dorricott, the executive director, who was physically handicapped and fought to overcome his problem, is the driving force behind the association. The association is trying to achieve the sort of thing I would like to see a lot of able bodied people achieve; that is, to work and pay their own way. Because of these people's disabilities they are not as capable of doing certain things, due to a lack of movement and so on. Some are using their feet when we would be using our hands; in fact, some are using their mouth when we would be using our hands. With Government help these people could become practically self-sufficient and would not have to be a draw on State finances. If we do something like this we must be prepared to allocate money so that they can be cared for and receive the training and opportunities available to the rest of the public.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You will find Mr Dorricott will be the first to admit that the Government has been very generous.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: He was. He said the Government was generous and appreciated what he was doing but at the same time, for one reason or another, Government departments are always short of money. I think the Leader of the House will agree that his department and other Government departments would like to

have another \$10 million or so to spend. These people are an integral part of our community and they are keen to be self-supporting.

I have spoken of this next topic before in this Chamber. The term is considered to be a dirty word by members of the Opposition. Whether we like it or not there are dole bludgers in our community who are exploiting the taxpayers. I know this to be true as I have spoken to such people. They have asked why they should work when they receive these handouts. Regardless of what the Opposition has said I know there are people who are exploiting legislation that was brought in at the time of the last Federal Labor Government. It was admirable legislation designed to care for the genuinely unemployed person.

If the Opposition considers there are no genuine dole bludgers its members should move around with their eyes open. I could bring people here who are dole bludgers and I could give names to the Opposition, but I will not do it on the floor of the House.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: What about percentages?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: There are dole bludgers who are exploiting the present situation.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It is possible to meet some but what is the percentage?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: It is a good percentage unfortunately.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: I can say there is a percentage of shopkeepers ripping off the public.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: Members of the Opposition can go about with their eyes closed but if they were in Government and dealing with people who were exploiting the system they would have to do something. I believe the paraplegic and quadriplegic people in our community want to do something to help themselves and are prepared to get off their butts. They should be supported more than the people who are exploiting the Government and the taxpayers of this country.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: Who will make the decision?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I have the floor. I want to see something done about this problem. If we are to continue this way we should look to the Federal Government and ask that certain money be given to our State. We should ask for the money that is normally given to the unemployed. We could then help the paraplegic and quadriplegic people who are prepared to help

themselves and want to help themselves. They want to be part of the community and they want to work in the community. This is one way to help them. It is no use being fuddy-duddies. We should not take away the rights of individuals. It has been put to me that if a person does not want to work we should not be able to force him.

Most of us pay rates and taxes. If the unemployed want to take our money they should work for service groups in our towns. They should work for shire councils which are always battling for finance. A lot of the money shire councils spend goes towards the collection of rubbish, straightening out damaged street signs, and wiping off obscene words from toilet walls; things that are generally done by people with idle hands. If the unemployed utilise our money they should work to repay the community that supports them.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Seventy per cent of Australians agree with you.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I know that but some narrow minded people say we should give money to everyone. It has been put to me that one should not be able to force anyone in this country to work against his will. If we cannot do that people who do not wish to work do not deserve a job. However, no work should mean no pay.

Other suggestions that have been put to me by constituents indicate they believe our standard of living should be just sufficient to enable us to live and exist. We pay X number of dollars per week to dole bludgers to enable them to live, and in so many cases we see them in hotels and betting shops spending what are public funds. Any money they receive should be sufficient to enable them to exist, or if the Opposition prefers, subsist. Such people should be given food and clothing. If they live in State Housing Commission homes it should be on a rent-free basis and they should be helped with electricity and water charges.

They should be given the right to live with our support, but once they start using our money they should start working in the community which is helping them. It is community money that is being paid to these people in the form of the dole. I admit there are genuine people who, because of situations beyond their control, cannot work. I believe we have to look after our own; but I cannot accept the idea of able bodied people who are receiving the dole to lie on the beach, to go surf riding, or to drink in hotels. Unfortunately I have struck such people. Dole bludgers do exist and while they exist I will criticise them.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: What is the percentage?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: It does not matter.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It does.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I am explaining the situation and it is important.

An Opposition member interjected.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: I did not bring in the scheme. It appears to me that in this parliamentary session the Labor Party has been trying to give the impression that it is going to work in the interest and for the benefit of the State, so this should not touch its tender spot as it has in the past.

Last year I requested the Federal Government to introduce a national training scheme; not a national service training scheme or a national service defence scheme. I wanted a scheme whereby young people could be put to useful work. There are obviously 450 000 young men between the ages of 18 and 20 in the community each year. I got that figure from the 1975 census statistics. I would assume there would be an equal number of young women. With an unemployment figure of something like 400 000 I believe if we reintroduced a form of national training where young people could work together as a team—which is unusual—and learn to accept responsibility, society would be better off. The training I have in mind would imbue them with a respect for discipline and authority which is lacking in our community today.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: Would you supply them with black shirts as well?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: If we enlist all these young men and women we would have around 800 000 people at our disposal. The females seem capable of handling most jobs men do and they could certainly be used as kitchen helpers, secretaries, typists, telephonists, radio operators and so forth. Such a scheme would fill a blank spot in our community and we would have X number of people no longer unemployed, because many of them who were unemployed could be taken into the training scheme. They would have a job and for the first time they would have the opportunity of receiving a reference when they left; they would probably find they enjoyed earning an income.

These people will have to work extra hard to retain their jobs. Employers will be prepared to take on more people if they know people are prepared to get on with their job. At the moment some people are not prepared to work.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We haven't got the jobs.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: If we gave people the chance to obtain a job and to receive a reference to present to a new employer we would be easing our unemployment problem. If we had such a scheme as I have mentioned we would give people a chance to train under a system similar to the Army and Navy systems.

Last year I mentioned that in the event of a national disaster we would have 400 000 people that the Government could call on to help clear up the situation. I believe this should be considered. I wrote to the Prime Minister and to the Minister for Defence (Mr Killen); and the latter replied as follows—

The Government's policy with regard to national service is that national security may demand compulsory military service; but only in circumstances where a real and direct threat to Australia requires a rapid build-up in military manpower.

That can happen today in our present situation. If something of a military nature happened and we had to be placed on a military standby, everyone would be dragged into the forces as happened in the last war. To continue—

Such circumstances do not exist at present, and the Government is satisfied that recruiting to the volunteer Regular Forces is adequate to maintain them at their highest ever peacetime level: over 70 000. Recruiting to the Reserve Forces is also considered to be satisfactory.

They are missing the whole point. I do not want them for military or defence training, but for training in the national interest so that they will be better citizens and will be given an opportunity to work as a team, which is a big factor. Consider this House. We have two distinct teams here and each is split up into committees, but very seldom do we find that someone as an individual can bring something to the House and have Parliament support it. However, with the backing of the team a member can get somewhere.

This is what the country needs. Its image on the national standing must be improved, and our young people must be taught to give respect and to accept discipline. They must have respect for authority, and if we obtain this the country may also gain some respect in the eyes of the world.

All of us have heard remarks about the behaviour of Australians overseas. I myself did not notice it particularly when I was overseas. Maybe a couple offended, but that applies to

people from all countries. Australia is a magnificent country and, over the years, it has gained a great deal of national respect, due to outstanding military careers of Australians. I believe that at the moment we are drifting away from the respect in which we have been held by the rest of the world.

I believe my idea would solve many of the problems. My suggestions can be twisted and changed, but they should be tried because the community is in great need today.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You can manipulate them; is that what you say—twist them and change them?

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: No Government will find 400 000 jobs in this country. It is impossible and impractical. If we create something like I have suggested we will get somewhere. Last year in Western Australia I think \$44 million was spent on unemployment. In Sunday's paper it is stated that \$500 million had been spent on unemployment up to February. This money would nearly sponsor the sort of programme I have suggested.

The Government would not be out of pocket. Under this scheme the young people would be helping one another and the country, and would be doing something useful. They would be given an opportunity to become respected members of the public. I believe my proposal deserves strong consideration, and I intend to write to the Prime Minister and Mr Killen again, because they have the wrong slant. Everyone in Government today is looking for an answer to the unemployment problem. Something must be done. My suggestion might not be the ideal solution, but we must talk and discuss things and place them before the public. I have talked to many people about it. When I spoke on this subject before I made sure I received some publicity and everywhere I went people asked me what was happening with regard to the national training scheme because they considered it was a damned good idea. People from all walks of life approached me on the subject—farmers, shopkeepers, business people, labourers, and wharfies. It is the only ray of hope I can see on the horizon which will absorb the large number of unemployed people and gainfully utilise them to the benefit of the Australian public and of Australia itself.

I have rambled on for some time and I have covered quite a few subjects. I wished to deal with another, but unfortunately I have not obtained enough facts and figures to enable me to do so at length. It concerns building societies and I will touch on it briefly. The information

I have is that a young person can borrow \$30 000 on today's market, but at the end of his repayment period he will have paid something like \$90 000. I have been told that if the person decides to pay off his loan quicker—he might get married and build a three-bedroom home and then 10 years later have seven or eight children, as I have, and finds he needs a bigger home—he will have nothing left by the time he has paid off the building society loan despite the fact that he will obtain more for his house than he paid for it. This is because of the way the building society finances work. Of the building society finance 5½ per cent is Federal Government money put into the contributory scheme, or whatever it is.

If a person decides to pay off his loan half-way through the agreed term, he may find that he is \$10, \$15, \$100, and maybe in some cases \$1 000 below the principal he borrowed. I asked the building society why and was told that it is because of the way the system works. The first year's payments represent 99 per cent interest and one per cent is taken off the principal. So, by the time a person is half-way through the agreed term he will have paid practically all the interest, but will have reduced his capital by very little.

I believe that there should be some compromise. If I borrowed money over 20 years and paid off the loan in 10 years, I should be given the benefit of 10 years' interest which should be taken off the principal. When I put this to the building society I was told this is not how the system works. They take the money back in such an instance and then lend it again and they are getting interest over 30 years on the one amount of money. This situation needs to be investigated and I intend to take the matter further.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think it is quite that way. I know that if you settle your loan before it is due to be settled, you are required to pay another three months' interest.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: That is right. If a person took out a loan yesterday and pays it off tomorrow he would still have to pay three months' interest. The point I am trying to get at is that I have checked on a particular case in which a certain amount of money was borrowed eight or nine years ago. When the person wanted to pay off the loan he found that the principal was still \$32 more than the amount he originally borrowed. I have rung up the building society concerned and I have been told that it will look at the matter. I was told that there must be

some mistake, but I was also told that the amounts paid in the first 10 years were basically a repayment of interest. After that the principal begins to reduce heavily. I cannot see the sense in that system when we are trying to encourage young people to build houses and to make it easier for them to do so.

If a person borrows \$30 000 and takes the full time to repay it, he pays a total of \$90 000, but if the person decides to pay off the loan half-way through the agreed term he will find he still is liable for roughly the same principal he borrowed originally. He has paid for many years, but has been paying only the interest. This situation must be looked at. Maybe the position about which Mr Dans speaks is different. I have spoken to several officers of building societies and one said that I was the first person to raise the matter which was an anomaly; I intend to follow it up.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Perhaps they cannot understand how capitalism works either.

The Hon. T. KNIGHT: With those remarks I conclude my speech and support the motion.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [4.53 p.m.]: I could not let the opportunity go by without raising some of the problems in my electorate. In the years I have been here we have never had as many problems as we have today. The mining industry is experiencing great problems not only in my area, but in most areas in Western Australia. I do not think members would disagree if I said that the mining and agricultural industries in Western Australia represented the backbone of the State. If they were removed there would not be much else left. Every other industry is in some way, either directly or indirectly, connected with one of those industries.

It seems to me that the problems in which we find ourselves today should have been studied more closely over the past few years by Governments of all political colours. Governments do not know a great deal about marketing systems, but it is quite clear that the marketing system in the mineral industry in Western Australia is not operating in the way we hoped it would. We have had a great deal of success in the marketing of our agricultural products, but certainly we have not had much success in the marketing of our minerals under the present system.

About every second day one mineral or another somewhere in the State runs into bother and it worries me when I read in the Press that the

Premier is rushing off to Japan, because there is no question that our iron ore industry is in difficulties.

It is generally believed in the north-west that Goldsworthy is just about at the end of its tether and that some of the other companies may have to cut back production, depending, of course, on the amount of iron ore the Japanese are prepared to take.

In my area recently there has been a large downturn in the nickel industry brought about by oversupply and a drop in price. In the last six to nine months we have had something like 1 100 men out of work, mainly from the nickel industry. Another 400 in that area are to go by the end of May.

I might say that I am very pleased the Hon. Tom Knight is not the CES boss in Kalgoorlie. At present there are 1 500 miners who cannot go skiing because Hannans Lake is dry. They are looking for work. The problem is that they are miners and it is not easy for them to obtain work in other areas at present.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: At least there are no beaches in Kalgoorlie for them to loll on.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: No, and it is very hot among the prickly bushes, so they may have to stay indoors.

We have evidenced confidence in the area over the last few months because the price of gold has had an upward turn. In these circumstances there is some hope for the goldmining companies to get back into operation. At this stage I might say I was very disappointed that they closed. No doubt other people in Australia were also disappointed, and we did our best to try to maintain the operations of the goldmines at that time. It is plain to see now that had they been in operation today they would have been reaping the benefits of the increased price that is being paid for gold. However, because these mines have been closed for some years now, the companies find it fairly expensive to bring them back into operation because equipment deteriorates very rapidly when it is not in use. The companies are looking for large amounts of money in order to get back into business.

The mines on the goldfields closed in February, 1976. Prior to that—in September, 1975—the main company up there, which is Western Mining Corporation, renewed its goldmining leases for a further period of 21 years. Unfortunately it was in operation for only five months when it put the lid on. This means of course that the corporation holds the leases right through until

1996. I feel that under the Mining Act WMC should be prompted by the Government—at least prompted—and asked about its intentions.

It is all very well to say it would cost a great deal of money for the corporation to get back into goldmining, because that money has to be found. However, we are considering only one particular organisation which holds leases at present. I wonder whether other companies should not be permitted at least to examine the situation and perhaps undertake some sort of feasibility study. If this were permitted, perhaps a bit more activity in the area would result.

While some prospectors under the 1904 Mining Act have to work their leases on a regular basis as otherwise they are liable to lose their claims, it is quite apparent that the large companies are aware that their own leases are intact and that there is not likely to be any challenge; even if they are challenged there would not be much need for them to worry. That is fair enough, because the large companies have spent large sums of money on plant and operating expenses in this area over a period of many years. However, the line has to be drawn somewhere.

It has been mentioned in many quarters on the goldfields that these companies should be compelled to take another look at their situation, because today the State is in dire straits with unemployment and with the closure of various mines in the area.

I have had discussions with some of the companies affected, and it is very difficult to follow their line of thinking. I remember back in January, 1974—which is only four years ago—the price of gold was \$65 an ounce. At that time it was said that if the producers could receive a guarantee through the Government of \$80 an ounce they would be able to make a profit, and they would have no worries about the closure of the mines. At that time this guarantee did not eventuate; however, just about four years later the price of gold rose to \$160 an ounce.

If we believe what we are told that inflation has been going down in the last three or four years, then certainly we would not have experienced a 100 per cent increase in costs. In those circumstances it is a wonder that the price of \$160 an ounce is not a good one, and that the producers are not jumping over each other to produce the gold at that price.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Wages in the last two years have gone up.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Wages in the last couple of years have not gone up by as great a percentage as the prices shown in the Consumer Price Index. Prior to that time perhaps

wages were in line with cost of living. Certainly wages have increased, but not as much as the cost of living has increased.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Increased by 200 per cent.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: We know that BHP is ripping us off; probably that has a lot to do with the matter.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: BHP is earning less than a reasonable percentage of profit on steel production. The figure is less than 3 per cent. What you are saying is typical of the Labor-socialist attitude. You regard a profit of 3 per cent as a rip-off!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Has Mr Pike ever been in a steel mill?

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Has the Leader of the Opposition?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I have been.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Working in it?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Yes.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Both you and Mr Lewis worked in a steel mill.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Lewis was working in one at Whyalla.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Steel production is well down, and you know the reason. If you come to my electorate you will find one shift operating in the small mill.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Let Mr Leeson continue his speech.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't talk nonsense.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: There are gold-mining companies operating in Western Australia. I have mentioned Western Mining. North Kalgurlie is another and Telfer is the third. At the present time North Kalgurlie does not operate as a goldmine; it treats nickel ore for Anaconda and Selcast. By May of this year North Kalgurlie will discontinue the treatment of nickel ore.

This company is interested in getting back into goldmining. I understand the company has had discussions with the Government in relation to reconvertng its plant for the treatment of gold. If it is successful it intends to retain its present work force of 105, and utilise these people to reconvert the plant with some assistance from the State Government. Initially the company will retain these people in employment.

This will bring about a situation where a gold treatment plant is available on the goldfields, and this is something for which many people have been clamouring. Recently North Kalgurlie made a study of its leases on the Golden Mile.

The Government has asked the Goldfields Regional Committee to carry out a study into the feasibility of building what it terms a custom mill—a watering plant on the goldfields—to cater for companies, particularly the small ones, so as to enable them to have parcels of ore treated other than through the State Batteries.

The State Batteries operate very slowly. If one is able to put through 1½ tonnes of ore an hour one is doing very well. If the ore is hard ore, the quantity treated per hour could be reduced to one tonne.

The establishment of a custom mill is a good idea. If through assistance from the State Government, North Kalgurlie can reconvert its plant to treat gold ore, then it has a ready-made custom mill on the goldfields for the treatment of ore other than its own ore. I have been told that this company is interested in contracting out the treatment of parcels of ore from the larger prospectors; that is, if these parcels are available. There are some prospectors in the Ora Banda area and other places who could provide fairly significant parcels of ore for an operation such as this.

I urge the Government to consider the proposal put forward by North Kalgurlie. If we can get some action from this Government, no doubt we will see the reopening of the goldmines in the near future, because there is a tremendous quantity of ore available and the price of gold at the present time is fluctuating around \$160 an ounce. Unfortunately for other industries the American dollar is depreciating, and while it is depreciating the price of gold seems to rise, but not in the last few days. As a matter of fact it has dropped in the last few days, but it is still around \$160 an ounce. Probably the fluctuations in the price of gold in the last few days have been caused by the profit takers on the London market in buying and selling gold.

I think we can look forward to a further increase in the price of gold over the next few months. It is hoped that we can see a return to goldmining operations; we cannot leave the matter for too long. There are too many miners in the area who are out of work, and many are leaving the area each day. When they leave it is very difficult, if not impossible, to induce them to return.

In the last few years we have had the situation of miners leaving the area and the industry, and of recruiting miners from other States and overseas. However, we have found that these new recruits were not accustomed to the work. This

aspect has had a great deal to do with the economics of the mining industry in the area. Once the old miners have left, we find that the calibre of the new miners is not as high. This matter is of great concern to us and to the mining companies. We would like to see some action taking place as soon as possible to enable the mines and the miners to get back on their feet.

I would like to make reference to the construction of a uranium pilot plant, which has been spoken of in Kalgoorlie. I have examined the environmental impact study on the project initiated by Western Mining. I have not read the report fully, but I have checked on the number of men which the company hopes to employ if and when the project gets off the ground. The report shows that a total of 70 men will be employed, of which 39 will be in the Kalgoorlie area. The majority of them will be specialists and will be drawn from other parts of the State and Australia. Thus it will not do anything to ease the unemployment problem on the goldfields.

As far as I am concerned the establishment of this plant will result in 8 000 tonnes of radioactive tailings being dumped at the north end of Kalgoorlie—a part of the town which up to now has not been disfigured by the mining companies. This matter concerns me to a large degree.

I am also concerned about the large number of people who have come into my office and said that the day the uranium pilot plant of Western Mining starts to be constructed in Kalgoorlie, that is the day they will leave the town. I am wondering how many people there are in this category. If a total of 70 men are to be employed on this project, would that number offset the number of people who decide to leave the town? Would the position be any better? It is difficult to gauge, because the reaction to the establishment of the project is lukewarm. Those who are in favour of the construction of the plant favour it in the main because of the unemployment situation. I feel that we are having this uranium pilot plant pressured on us at the present time.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Senator Wheeldon seems to think it is a good idea.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I have not discussed this matter with Senator Wheeldon.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Are you in favour of the plant being put there?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I would want to know a great deal more about it before I am in favour.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Are you not in an ideal position, as a resident of the area, to learn a lot more about the plant very quickly?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I do not know how the Minister gets on, but I cannot get much information from the company. What about the Minister having a crack at getting the information and telling me next week! The company has undertaken an environmental impact study, but one does not learn a great deal from that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You should try the library.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I have read up on the matter and I have listened to experts, as no doubt has the Minister.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: There was a full page article in *The Bulletin* by Senator Wheeldon three weeks ago.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I am not concerned about the matter at the present time, but concern will arise in the future. All I am saying is that from the statements that have been made there will not be a great deal of employment from the construction of a uranium pilot plant on the goldfields.

My main concern is to get the goldmines into operation again, and this is something which everybody wants. There is no argument about that, but there is a great deal of argument in respect of the construction of a uranium pilot plant—for and against.

I have made mention of the goldmining situation, and have drawn the attention of the Government to it. Certain things will take place in the next few weeks. I hope the matter will come up for consideration quickly, so that we can start to get the goldmines back into operation. I am anxious to get the miners, whom I represent, back to work again.

THE HON. O. N. B. OLIVER (West) [5.14 p.m.]: I support the motion and in doing so, I extend my congratulations to the Hon. Win Piesse for the subject matter of her speech in moving the Address-in-Reply motion. I believe her speech contained a lot of substance, although the Leader of the Opposition felt it lacked realism.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No, I said it was a very good idea but that I did not think it would come to fruition.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The Hon. Win Piesse mentioned that we were at the cross-roads in our economic and social development and I strongly endorse those sentiments.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I prefer to say that civilisation is at the crossroads of the technological revolution.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I endorse her remarks because they concern two basic fundamentals to our lifestyle and they are complementary to each other, and both involve the individual. In our democratic society the individual is the backbone of our economy, and is of paramount importance.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: He certainly does not get equal votes.

The Hon. D. K. Dans interjected.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I will reply to members opposite, although I would prefer not to. I refer members to today's issue of the *Daily News* which contains the result of a Gallup poll. At the moment, the Opposition is carrying out a market survey to ascertain the reason for its loss of electoral support. Market surveys involve the filling out of questionnaires, and I presume the people conducting the survey did not ask only people who voted Labor at the last election to fill out the questionnaires, otherwise they would not obtain the results they wanted. The result of the Gallup poll contained in today's newspaper is quite interesting. For example, 61 per cent of the people polled believe that unemployment benefits are too high and that young people prefer not to work.

By the way, the poll is copyright to Australian Public Opinion Polls (the Gallup method). I will also tell members the other side of the story. Some 69 per cent of all people polled believed the economy was in a depressed state. People also stated that, in their opinion, the dole was too high, the dole was given too easily, people on the dole should be made to work for the money they receive, etc.

Incidentally, I do not know whether any members from this Chamber were asked for their opinion, but I was not asked for mine.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: What would you have said?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I would have agreed with the majority opinion on the dole and I also would have stated the economy was in a depressed condition.

I believe we have reached a critical stage, where we need to reinstate a sense of real values. I strongly recommend we encourage our young people to shoulder their responsibilities in order that they maintain their self-respect.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: In order to give them jobs.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I have been wondering about the status of the individual in our society today, and our moral values. It has been stated that the reason for the high incidence of separation and divorce among married couples is that it is better to take the easy way out; as soon as something starts to go wrong, a married couple can apply for a divorce, and that is the end of it. Recently I was discussing this matter with a woman who said, "Heaven help us if we had not had some sort of discipline in our marriage, because we would have been divorced 30 times."

We cannot seem to get through to members of the Opposition on these matters. I listened with intent to the Hon. Des Dans' speech because he said he was seeking co-operation. I was very interested to read his speech. I do not know whether he had read their research document, or whether his request came naturally; I prefer to believe the latter.

We must get the message across to our young people. Let us take the situation of West Germany, where social-democratic forces are at work. They are a nice group of people with whom to deal. It has been a fairly successful nation. That country is experiencing a severe recession, the effects of which are spilling over to the countries which purchase steel.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They are very unhappy about the American dollar sliding.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Yes, and they are very interested in supporting it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you not be?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The point I make is that the Opposition does not understand that in business one must take risks. Risk is the catalyst of capitalism and it leads to discipline. There is no better way to measure reward than under such a system.

It is also interesting to note our work force is growing at a greater rate than that of any other State; surely we must take some form of satisfaction from that.

Last year I spoke about parliamentary preoccupation with law-making and regulation-making and not enough to the giving of leadership. A very interesting article is contained in this week's *The Bulletin*. It is the report commissioned by Premier Wran which spells out the problems of the bureaucracy in the New South Wales system. I do not know whether members have read this article; certainly, I would be interested to know whether members of the Opposition are prepared

to quote what Mr Wran's Public Service experts have to say on the matter of unemployment in NSW by the year 1981.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Read it out.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I had not intended to, but I quote from page 14 of *The Bulletin* of the 21st March, 1978.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is growing at 10 per cent, is it not?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Yes, I think so. I will quote from page 14—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If it is in *The Bulletin*, I would not read it if I were you.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I thought the Leader of the Opposition liked *The Bulletin*.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I quote as follows—

THE DRAFT of a confidential economic report submitted to the Premier of New South Wales projects an unemployment rate of 10.3 percent in 1981.

He is not particularly worried about it because it is not as bad as the depression years, when unemployment ran at 30.8 per cent.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: He did not say that.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The report of experts said that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Last Sunday's *National Times* said he had not released the report.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The article states it is only a draft report; they may adjust the figures later.

I believe that we as a Government and as a Parliament should be giving more leadership to the community, not only in regard to our standard of living and the quality of life referred to by the Hon. Win Piesse but also to industry. I believe this to be of paramount importance.

I believe we need less "experts" to instruct us on economic matters. Many of these people are academics, without practical experience. Experts are in abundance. They are people who, for a high fee, are prepared to show us how to do something we either already know or would never want to do.

I have no hesitation in declaring my belief that the fundamental cause of today's uncertainty is excessive Government control of demand.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Did his experts say they were not worried about 10 per cent unemployment?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: This publication came to my hand only in the last half hour. I refer the honourable member to it.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I have read the article, but I cannot recollect such a statement.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I do not know whether I actually said they were not concerned about it. From memory, I believe the text compared the 10.3 per cent unemployment with the figure of 30.8 per cent which applied in the depression years.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I thought you said they were not concerned.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I do not think I said that, because I doubt whether there is a single person in Australia who is unconcerned about the unemployment problem, whether he be an academic expert or otherwise.

We have heard a great deal about inflation. We have been used to hearing inflation being referred to as a demand factor. However, at the moment it is mainly derived from costs, and therefore is a cost factor. This raises other questions. Should the Government adopt a more expansionary role in its economic policy? A certain amount of urgency is attached to this question because of the stimulus provided by the new personal income tax scales which came into force in February and which, if it is taken up by the community, could restore business confidence and further improve the economy.

The scope for further growth in total output appears limited, and opportunity for reducing the number of unemployed will be diminished if we do not take that responsibility.

Moreover, the potential benefit to productivity and profitability of increased turnovers would also be foregone. We all know that in Australia productivity stood still for three years while wages jumped 70 per cent and Government spending—or alternatively the spending of our money—rose by 140 per cent. Predictably, the backlash against such inflationary policies had to be severe.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: You have forgotten about the international factors which produced similar situations in other western countries.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I will come to that in a moment, although I was not prepared to discuss it.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I thought you were blaming the workers and their increased wages.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I will get onto that as well.

Simultaneously, with the inevitable inflationary outcome of deficit Government budgeting and excessive wage demands, we saw a fivefold leap in the price of petroleum which, while it affected other countries, fortuitously did not affect Australia too badly because we had secured sufficient quantities of a particular category of petroleum as a result of continued exploration over a period to time.

Recently I listened to a discussion between the Federal Shadow Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr Keating) and Mr Agnew. It was remarkably similar to the remarks made by Mr Dans the other day. When I heard the debate I thought to myself, "Heavens, how the Canberra Labor Party has changed its whole philosophy". I sat listening intently because I was hearing a new philosophy. Then I heard the other speaker.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: He is one of their rightist members.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I suppose so. Later, during question time, it came out that while they favoured a private enterprise mining industry, they believed that if a company found minerals of any significance the minerals belonged to the State and the State would take them over. I liken that to the situation where I purchase a \$1 lottery ticket and win first prize. Then, along comes the Lotteries Commission, which says to me, "Give us back the \$10 000, and here is the \$1 you invested."

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I think you are misrepresenting Mr Keating.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: They have some brilliant economic staff on the other side!

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Goldmining and other types of mining are undertaken by no liability companies, and if one invests in them the best idea is to put one's shares in the bottom drawer and forget about them, because it is a risky business.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I thought you believed in risks.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: So many Opposition members are making speeches on economic matters I presume they intend to continue in this vein next week.

One of the things that has brought about this situation of inflation and then the Government's reaction to it was a programme of demand control by money restraints. I believe these money restraints are a barrier to normal growth.

Our Government in Western Australia recognises that there is a need to promote demand. Late Monday evening we heard the announcement

that there would be additional funds for housing in Western Australia, and this is an excellent example of the Government giving leadership to private enterprise to get on with the job of rekindling demand and consumer confidence.

Another typical example is the impending visit of our Premier to Japan this weekend to support our exporting industries.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: You people were not very impressed when Gough Whitlam used to go overseas to boost our trade.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is because he was not very good at it.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The problem is that one must have confidence in one's trading partners. In our society one must have confidence in one's partner in any business transaction. If there is no confidence and there is uncertainty as to whether someone will double back on his own tracks, no business is undertaken.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Business does not trust socialists.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Mr Whitlam's own people were even less impressed with his visits overseas.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: The farmers seem to like the Chinese socialists very much.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: We know what happened on Mr Whitlam's visits overseas; he wandered around the Greek islands. I do not know what the attraction is there. Some people tell me it is nice looking at these old ruins, but Mr Whitlam looked at them while his own country was in ruins.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You have been there, have you?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: No, I have not.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You are talking again about something you know nothing about.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Bjelke-Petersen is there at present; it must be pretty common.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Unless there is a re-creation of demand and the position is reversed, our economic situation will worsen. The Court Government should be congratulated on its actions in giving the lead to private enterprise.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You are really saying that the Government is creating demand. I am very interested to hear that from the Government benches. We will have to tell Malcolm Fraser.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I will not go into it again, Mr Deputy President. I cannot get through to these people because they do not understand ordinary working life. They do not understand business. How can we expect to convince them on this subject? I thought I was convincing the Leader of the Opposition, but eventually I realised it must have had something to do with this confidential report.

I would like to put forward my reasons for supporting an expanding economic policy. The first reason is that industry is operating below capacity at the moment. I have heard people talk about three shifts as against two shifts.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I told you.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Unless we can get industry operating at full capacity, the cost per unit is higher. One does not have to be an economist to understand that.

My second reason for supporting this policy is that we are creating in this country and throughout the world a developing protectionism. Mr Dans' West Germany is a leader in this field. Protectionism as we know it adds to the cost of goods to the consumer, and particularly in the country of origin.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It has been in the Liberal Party policy since 1866.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The third reason is the escalation of unproductive spending which members of the Opposition know full well happened when the previous Federal Government went on a mad spending spree some three or four years ago. Business has not yet recovered from that spree.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Who do you think benefited by the Government's expenditure?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: While we are standing still, protectionism is growing. While we are standing still the frustration of the young people is mounting.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Obviously you are not doing very well; Government members are listening.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: While we stand still we make a habit of recession and prepare ourselves for further decline.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Who is to blame now? Don't tell us it is still the Whitlam Government.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I agree with the statements made by the Premier of Western Australia in Melbourne last year when he had this to say at an international gathering—

We have seen the world become a rudderless ship—drifting aimlessly, deprived of goals, and an easy prey to forms of political/economic warfare.

The leadership of rising demand has been replaced by a paralysing uncertainty.

The biggest need of all is the rediscovery of commonly accepted goals for the future.

The first requirement is that we should expand our essential investment programmes and community interest structure by as much as 25 per cent over the next two to three years. I imagine that suggestion will be popular with the Opposition. All I am asking for is an increase in Government spending, and it will merely alter the time scale as referred to by Mr Knight this evening.

I advocate this programme for two vital reasons. The first is that consumers are too frightened and investors are too uncertain to act with any speed at all. The second reason is that the Government, acting now with speed, will help to deflate industrial costs by giving work to spare capacity and later, when the real recovery comes, the slack can be taken up in a relatively productive private sector.

While giving a primary role to the Government, I believe also that some of our large private enterprises can act in the same spirit and in the same way because of their strength, their borrowing capacity, and their ability to plan in the long term.

The second requirement is fiscal leadership. It stands to reason that recovering demand requires a recovering money supply. Money supply must be matched with demand, just as demand must be matched with productive capacity.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: That is why the Liberal Government has a tight clamp on it.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: If the honourable member looked at *The West Australian* of yesterday's date he will see there does not seem to be any problem at all, because the banks have been asked to lend to anybody.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: That is why the businesses are complaining so much, is it?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The third requirement is tax leadership. Something is seriously wrong where a Government punitively taxes a company, and also punitively taxes the after-tax profit it passes on to its shareholders. In round

terms a shareholder is lucky to receive \$1 in \$8 of company profit. The Government first takes at least \$4 of the \$8.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: What about all the bonus share issues?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Oh, we don't like to talk about them!

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: It absolutely astounds me that people just cannot understand the situation in regard to shares, dividends, and bonuses. The company that actually creates work and gets on with the job is taxed heavily by the Government if it can make an extra dividend payment.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You have not heard of bonus shares.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The point I would like to make is that the Government takes \$4 of the \$8. If it is prudent, the company uses \$2 for capital expansion so that it can produce more goods and employ more people. The final situation is that the individual who receives \$2 is then taxed on that amount and finishes up with \$1.

It is high time that dividends, already taxed, were made tax free. Such a move would transform the prospect of attracting investment and rapidly developing the industries of Australia so that they can catch up with the rest of the world.

These comments may serve to explain to some extent why investment allowances, although planned in the right direction, and other similar incentives, while very valuable, have little beneficial effect when profits are severely taxed after they are earned.

The fourth requirement for recovery I would call wage leadership. The era of unreal wage demands cannot be repeated in the future unless we wish to invite disaster. The desire for higher wages is universal. There is no long-term way to obtain higher wages except by working for them.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: So you are to remove the incentive from the worker?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Let us by all means peg wages to real products.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: What about prices? Are you going to peg those too?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: Did I not mention the fact of capitalism, and that it measures its own reward? How many times do I need to repeat it? Cannot Opposition members understand capitalism? Have they read so many socialist books that they have not had time to read anything about capitalism? Let us face the grim

necessities and the requirement to move wages either up or down. In this way we may achieve a great deal more wage realism than we have achieved in the past, and this will be to the benefit of every worker in this country.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It would increase demand?

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I said it would benefit the workers.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That does not include you, I assume.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Who will buy all the additional products? You will not give the workers extra money to buy them.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: In conclusion, what I have said is not intended to imply that Australia is losing ground. I believe we are holding it and that there are signs we have begun to move forward. Frankly, probably Opposition members are hoping we will not move forward.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I would be very glad if we were moving forward.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: The survival of the Australian manufacturing industry and the employment opportunities that it produces rely heavily on productivity improvement. It is vital that both worker and management understand that productivity is more than a stimulus to increased production. Western Australia is ideally suited to lead Australia back to recovery, and to solve the inadequacies of our present economic situation. We live in a State which is comparatively rich, it is large in area, but is sparsely populated. We are relatively free of racial problems and inbuilt hereditary class differences which contribute so much to the totally-absorbing internal conflict of other countries.

We have, one and all, a grave and urgent responsibility to resolve our current conflicts and to face the emerging problems of the future with confidence and as a united people. It appears that the opinion polls show a fairly united opinion about this. The Opposition cannot even take notice of those particular opinions.

All I can say is that the challenge is ours and we must accept it. Western Australia is still a lucky State.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: We have not done too well in the last four years.

The Hon. O. N. B. OLIVER: I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Tom McNeil.

House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

DENTAL THERAPY CENTRE

Newborough School

37. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Health;

Which schools are serviced by the dental clinic located at Newborough Primary school?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

Newborough Primary School.

Deanmore Primary School.

Our Lady of Counsel Primary School.

TRAFFIC ACT

Amending Legislation

38. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic;

(1) Is it correct that a Bill to amend the Traffic Act will be introduced this Session?

(2) Will it contain proposals for motor cyclist training and licensing?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

(1) It is the Government's intention to amend the Road Traffic Act this year.

(2) There are such proposals under consideration.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Student Hostels

39. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

(1) In 1977 (or the financial year 1976/77), for each of the undermentioned student hostels conducted by the Community Welfare Department—

(a) Gilliamia Hostel, Onslow;

(b) Weerianna Hostel, Roebourne;

(c) Oolanyah Hostel, Marble Bar;

(d) Moorgunyah Hostel, Port Hedland;

(e) Amy Bethel Hostel, Derby;

(f) Community Welfare Hostel, Fitzroy Crossing;

(g) Charles Perkins Hostel, Halls Creek; what was—

(i) the total salary and wage payment;

(ii) the average staff number employed;

(iii) the average number of students in residence; and

(iv) the total annual operating cost?

(2) What is the estimated operating cost for the current accounting period for each hostel listed?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

(1) (i) For the 1976/77 financial year the total salary and wage payment was—

(a) 91 780

(b) 70 074

(c) 65 418

(d) 61 778

(e) 87 586 (Now called Derby School Hostel—not Amy Bethel)

(f) The Department for Community Welfare does not have a Student Hostel at Fitzroy Crossing.

(g) 62 876

(ii) For the 1976/77 financial year the staff numbers employed were—

(a) 8 staff items (4 child care staff and 4 domestic)

(b) 8 staff items (4 child care staff and 4 domestic)

(c) 8 staff items (4 child care staff and 4 domestic)

(d) 8 staff items (4 child care staff and 4 domestic)

(e) 10 staff items (6 child care staff and 4 domestic)

(f) refer to (i) (f) ,

(g) 8 staff items (4 child care staff and 4 domestic)

All items were filled continuously.

(iii) For the 1976/77 financial year the average number of students in residence were—

(a) 50

(b) 35

(c) 30

(d) 45

(e) 38

(f) refer to (i) (f)

(g) 40

(iv) For the 1976/77 financial year the total annual operating costs including salaries and wages listed under (i) were—

(a) 146 729

- (b) 113 348
- (c) 106 942
- (d). 109 105
- (e) 144 560
- (f) refer to (i) (f)
- (g) 112 917

(2) The estimated operating cost (including salaries and wages shown in brackets) for the current accounting period for each hostel is—

- (a) 153 860 (93 260)
- (b) 121 560 (73 060)
- (c) 99 310 (57 510)
- (d) 116 760 (68 460)
- (e) 162 830 (99 530)
- (f) — — refer to (i) (f)
- (g) 120 300 (60 940)

AUSTRALIAN RURAL BANK

R. & I. Bank Participation, Commencement and Facilities

40. The Hon. MARGARET McALEER, to the Leader of the House representing the Treasurer:

- (1) Is the R. & I. Bank of Western Australia a participant in the Australian Rural Bank, and, if so, on what basis?
- (2) Can the Treasurer give any indication of when the Australian Rural Bank will commence to operate, and in what form, including the facilities in each State?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) The R. & I. Bank has signified its intention of participating in the Australian Rural Bank. An agreement in principle has been reached for the R. & I. Bank in conjunction with three other State Banks to take up a combined equity position equivalent to that of one major trading bank.

The Government regards equity participation and Board representation by the R. & I. Bank in the new Australian Rural Bank as a most important step which will complement the special role of the R. & I. Bank in supporting the rural sector in this State.

- (2) The target date for the Bank to commence operations has been indicated as July 1, 1978. The Australian Rural Bank is designed as a refinance institution, borrowing funds for lending to banks and other existing institutions who will, in turn, on-lend to the individual

primary producers. It is believed that the Head Office will be established in Sydney, New South Wales. The individual banks and other lenders in each State are expected to process the applications received by their customers for consideration by the Australian Rural Bank.

41. *This question was postponed.*

RAILWAYS

Kewdale Terminal

42. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

Has Westrail any intention of handing over all or any portion of its Kewdale Freight Terminal operations to a private entrepreneur?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

Nothing has been presented to the Minister.

43. *This question was postponed.*

COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOL HOSTEL

Port Hedland

44. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Education:

In 1977, at the Port Hedland High School Hostel—Hardie House—what was—

- (a) the total salary and wage payment;
- (b) the average staff number employed; and
- (c) the number of students in residence?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (a) \$59 088
- (b) Four full-time plus nine part-time.
- (c) 61.

45. *This question was postponed.*

TOWN PLANNING

Santa Maria Land

46. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Attorney-General representing the Minister for Town Planning:

Will the Minister advise what plans the Government has for the area of land north of the city known as Santa Maria?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

The Minister is not aware of the specific bounds of the area referred to as Santa Maria. However the Government has approved an Improvement Plan under the provisions of the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act for an extensive area south of Gngara Road. Notice of approval of the Improvement Plan was published in the *Government Gazette* on 10th June, 1977.

It is the Government's intention to acquire the land for future recreation and Government requirements in accordance with the provisions of the Metropolitan Region Scheme and the Improvement Plan.

POLICE

Special Branch

47. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Further to the reply to question No. 10 on the 16th March, 1978—

- (1) Is the Minister for Police correctly reported in the *Daily News* of the 18th January, 1978, as having said with reference to the W.A. Police Special Branch "He believed some files were necessary for security reasons, but there was no special branch in W.A. similar to the South Australian group"?
- (2) Does the Minister for Police now acknowledge the existence of a special branch?
- (3) If so, when and how was he informed of its existence?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) There are Police officers engaged on special duties related to matters of security and the Minister for Police and Traffic has never denied this.
- (3) See answer to (2).

DENTAL THERAPY CENTRES

Schools: Directive to Staff

48. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister responsible for a directive to staff of school dental clinics not to speak with visiting Members of Parliament?

- (2) If not, who is responsible for this directive?
- (3) For what reason was the directive issued?
- (4) Has a similar directive been issued to other sections of the Public Health Department?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No such directive has been given.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) No.

MOTOR VEHICLES

Licence Plates

49. The Hon. D. W. COOLEY, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Further to my question No. 32 of the 21st March, 1978, and recognising that there is some controversy among the motoring public regarding the new number plates, will the Minister now offer motorists resident in the metropolitan area the choice of ordinary number plates, as against those which read "W.A. State of Excitement"?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

This matter is under consideration.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RAILWAYS

Kewdale Terminal

1. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

I should like to ask a further question in relation to Question No. 42 which appeared on the notice paper today, the answer to which was, "Nothing has been presented to the Minister." I ask the Leader of the House to request the Minister for Transport to contact the Railways Commission in order to ascertain the answer to my question so that it may be provided at the next sitting of the House.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON, for the Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, replied:

May I ask that the question be put on notice. I believe that it may be put on notice as a subsidiary question.

DENTAL THERAPY CENTRE

North Innaloo School

2. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

I have previously given advice of this question. In reference to the school dental clinic under construction at North Innaloo School—

- (1) Was the Education Department consulted when plans for the clinic were being drawn up?
- (2) (a) Was the principal of the school consulted during the planning process; and
(b) was his opinion sought on the plan as finally adopted?
- (3) Why was it decided to construct the clinic as a separate unit instead of being incorporated with other alterations requested by the school?
- (4) What is the cost of the clinic being constructed at the school?
- (5) Has an estimate been made of the cost of building alterations as requested by the school?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) Yes.
- (3) Because the funding of the dental health clinic is unrelated to the funding of the alterations to the school.
- (4) \$25 672.
- (5) Yes.

PRISONS

Act and Regulations

3. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Leader of the House representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Will the Minister advise—
(a) Whether the Government intends to amend the Prisons Act and/or the Prisons Act regulations this session?

(b) Whether the Prison Officers' Union has or will be consulted on the matter?

- (2) If the answer to (a) is "Yes" and (b) is "No", will the Minister give reasons?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

Notice was given of both this question and the previous one and I thank the members for that. The answer is as follows—

- (1) (a) It is intended to amend the Prisons Act to rectify some current anomalies and consequential amendment to the regulations may be necessary.
(b) The Prison Officers' Union is represented on the departmental committee which is examining the whole of the Prisons Act with a view to updating the legislation.

- (2) Answered by (1).

DENTAL THERAPY CENTRES

Schools: Directive to Staff

4. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Leader of the House:

This question is further to the question that the Minister answered regarding visits by members to dental health clinics. I have visited the Newborough School clinic and the staff checked with the department. They were told that they could not speak with visiting members of Parliament. Would the Minister ensure that the department is advised that such a course of action is not in accord with Government policy and should not be continued?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

I will obtain a copy of the question from *Hansard* and see that it is sent to the appropriate Minister.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Thank you.