

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 4 April 1989

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 3.30 pm, and read prayers.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Assembly Personnel

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Assembly Personnel

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying the personnel appointed by that House.

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Reinstatement

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [3.44 pm]: I move -

That the Sessional Orders enforced during the previous session relating to speaking times, sittings and adjournment of the House, and the Address-in-Reply debate, be, and are hereby, adopted for the duration of this session.

HON G.E. MASTERS (West - Acting Leader of the Opposition) [3.45 pm]: This is a very important motion because it sets out the procedures for this session - albeit, although it is expected to be fairly short, so far as the Government is concerned. I support the motion but would like an indication from the Leader of the House of the Government's intention. I assume that even though the session is likely to be a short one the times set out in Sessional Orders will be adhered to and, likewise, the sitting days. I cannot imagine that having moved this motion and gained the support of the House he would be varying the sitting days or hours at an early stage of the session. Because of some comments I heard earlier, will the Leader of the House give some indication of his intention?

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [3.46 pm]: I am surprised to hear Hon Gordon Masters say he would be surprised if there were any changes to the arrangements.

Hon G.E. Masters: At this early stage.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I think his actual words were that he could not imagine any changes to the matters set out in this motion. I am aware that Hon Gordon Masters has a more vivid imagination than that and has a great deal of experience in this House and would be well aware of the need for some flexibility in the approach to our sitting times and debating arrangements. For the moment, I indicate to members, so as to provide some advance notice, that we are dependent largely on proceedings in the Legislative Assembly for the time of introduction of Bills in this Chamber. I am hoping that we will have all, or by far the majority, of the Bills through the Assembly in time for introduction this Thursday thus allowing debate next week.

By way of advance notice I suggest to honourable members that if it appears that we are able to finish our business by Thursday night of next week rather than coming back on the following week I suggest there could be a sitting on that Thursday night. I ask members to reserve that time with the prospect that something useful might be served by that.

Question put and passed.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

On motion by Hon J.M. Berinson (Leader of the House), resolved -

That Hons John Williams, Robert Hetherington, Garry Kelly, Mark Nevill and P.H. Lockyer by appointed Deputy Chairmen of Committees.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - SECOND DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 29 March.

HON P.G. PENDAL (South Central Metropolitan) [3.48 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved a few days ago by our colleague, Hon Tom Helm. In so doing I place on record my congratulations, first, to the three Ministers in this House who have clearly enjoyed the confidence of their colleagues by being re-elected to the Ministry of this State for another term. I also place on record my congratulations to you, Mr President, for receiving once again the nomination of the Liberal Party to be the President of this House for another term. I have no doubt that you will continue to discharge that duty in the way in which it has been discharged in the past.

I offer my congratulations to Mr George Cash, MLC elect, who has been elected as Leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party in this House. I have no doubt that Mr Cash will be an outstanding leader, one who will enjoy the support of all members on this side of the House. Finally, I extend my congratulations to Hon Doug Wenn, who I understand has been promoted to Assistant Whip on the Government side of this House.

Before I move to the import of my own remarks, I have some brief references to make to two aspects of the remarks delivered to the House by Hon Tom Helm when he moved the motion a few days ago. The first is in relation to the negativity he alleged on the part of the Opposition parties in this State, and the second concerns the role of the Monarch or Queen as he saw it in our scheme of things.

I found it rather curious, coming from a member of the Government, to hear that in his view the Opposition had lost the election for, among other reasons, its alleged negativity. I make that observation because a lot was heard prior to the election about whether or not this party or that party had policies. It was a crowning irony to me, as one of the Opposition spokesmen then, as now, that in at least two areas of policy for which I was responsible, cultural affairs and tourism, both of which were the subject of comprehensive statements of policy by the parliamentary Liberal Party prior to the election, the Government went to the election with no announced policies at all. It is therefore not accurate to say, as the honourable member did, that there was a heavy degree of negativity on the part of the Opposition. Far be it from him to say that, given the position I have just outlined. There were many occasions during that election campaign when the parliamentary Opposition actually announced detailed policies in particular areas in the absence of any Government policies.

The second aspect I want to touch on briefly is the role of the Queen or the Monarch. Hon Tom Helm raised that issue, I suppose quite appropriately. This is one of the few occasions in the Parliament when we actually go through the motions of responding to remarks delivered in this House by the Governor on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. Needless to say I do not support or share the sentiments expressed by Hon Tom Helm. However, there is one area of the monarchical structure which has long puzzled me, and as I grow older it puzzles me even more. This is the appropriate time to wonder aloud for how long the present Queen herself intends to stay in the role of Monarch. In the normal course of events that is not something which would become a matter of public debate, but one of the things I do for my sins is to take an interest in history. I know, as I am sure many other members know, that the Commonwealth, or the Empire as it was known at the turn of the century, paid a fairly high price when a Monarch sat on the throne for far too long. Queen Victoria reigned for well over six decades so that by the time her son had his turn to be Monarch, not only was he an old man, but in many respects he was an ineffective Monarch, largely because, in the eyes of many historians, his mother had held on for far too long.

It is not without significance that the present Queen has held the throne for almost all of the life of her heir apparent, and something more important is at stake. I speak from the vantage point of an ardent royalist and monarchist, not just because of nostalgia, but because the British monarchy in its enduring way has shown a stability and has helped to underpin the

Westminster parliamentary stability which is the envy of the rest of the world. It seems to me that if a Monarch stays too long and keeps in a subordinate position the person who is to move into that role, that monarch runs a real risk of that generation passing that heir by, not only in a personal sense but in a wider Commonwealth sense. Many young people living in forty-odd Commonwealth countries around the world today are not sure whether they have anything akin to affection for the system I am talking about. Their loyalty and affection for that system may well depend on the timing of Prince Charles' coming to the throne.

There has been a historical reluctance on the part of English Monarchs to abdicate for fear that somehow or other that reduces the office to that of any other public office around the country, and for that reason monarchs ought never to abdicate or resign. In other countries which successfully sustain monarchical situations, such as Holland, it is not unusual for Monarchs to abdicate, and to abdicate successfully in favour of equally successful successors.

I offer my congratulations to the Government on having been re-elected on 4 February, albeit under somewhat remarkable circumstances and with an enormous degree of luck. Members on both sides of the House will be aware that on a two party preferred basis, the Opposition parties polled something in the order of 52 per cent, the Labor Party polled 48 per cent, and yet the Labor Party was able to win Government. We are likely to hear from the Government benches the suggestion that there is one way of fixing that. It has long been stated in this House, certainly in the nine years I have been here, that under the system which applied prior to the State election there has never been an election where the party which did not gain the majority of the votes did not get the Government benches. Notwithstanding the fact that there have been distortions, which is conceded on this side of the House, they were distortions in the vote which since the war years never denied the Treasury benches to the party or parties receiving the greatest percentage of popular vote. Under the legislation brought in by those who have championed, in their words, the cause of electoral reform, for the first time in modern history in Western Australia we have the position where the Liberal and National parties, having gained the majority of the votes and the largest percentage of the votes, were not able to win that election on 4 February.

Still discussing the conduct of the election, I want to spend a few minutes today talking about the doubts which still linger in the minds of many people as to the security of the outcome of the vote at all. I have been involved in something like six State elections and probably the same number of Federal elections, perhaps 12 elections in all, and I have had some intimate involvement with campaigning. However, never in those 12 elections have I ever experienced a greater level of voter cynicism and sheer disbelief on the part of the community. I am now not talking just about Liberal Party members; I am talking about a widespread level of cynicism that the result was a true, accurate and proper result. I share that unease and disbelief, not only because of the figures I have just cited, which clearly show that the Opposition parties gained a plurality of votes, but also because since the election that view has been expressed to me on not one or five or 10 occasions but, I would venture to say, 100 times if it has been said once. Given the circumstances and the vote, people cannot believe that the Liberal Party and the National Party actually lost the election. Those people are not saying they doubt the Government was ensconced legally, but they are actually wondering aloud - and they are saying it openly - whether there was a possibility of widespread voter manipulation.

That brings me to the first serious concern I have about the conduct of the election, and that is the use for the first time in Western Australia of cardboard ballot boxes. We must be the only democratic community anywhere in the world that entrusts its voting system and its democracy to something less secure than a Weetie's box.

Hon T.G. Butler: What are you suggesting?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: When I made a comment to a colleague only a few days ago in respect of there being no other country that would entrust the security of its ballot to a Weetie's packet or something akin to that, that person said to me, "But you are wrong because at least a Weetie's packet is closed from the bottom up."

Hon T.G. Butler: What are you suggesting?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am suggesting that cardboard ballot boxes have to go. They are capable of manipulation.

Hon T.G. Butler: Are you saying that the Liberal Party got a higher vote because of the cardboard ballot boxes?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: No, I wonder whether the Liberal Party got more votes - and maybe even the National Party got more votes - and that that was not reflected because of the cardboard ballot boxes. If anyone has any doubt that it is a question of sour grapes on the part of a few people on the Opposition benches -

Several members interjected.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Are members opposite prepared to defend the cardboard ballot boxes against what we had in the past?

Hon T.G. Butler: What are you claiming?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Are members opposite prepared to defend cardboard ballot boxes in respect of the potential for them to be manipulated and interfered with? Are members opposite saying that they are absolutely and 100 per cent confident?

Hon T.G. Butler: I have no reason to believe there was any manipulation because of the use of cardboard ballot boxes.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Hon Tom Butler has more confidence in that system than the Electoral Commissioner -

Hon T.G. Butler: I have no reason not to - you have not proved anything to me yet.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am pleased Hon Tom Butler came in as he so often does so. Does Hon Tom Butler have more faith in the system of cardboard ballot boxes than the Electoral Commissioner in this State?

Hon John Halden interjected.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I have no doubt about that, given that this Government is the first Government in post war history to retain the Government benches with a minority of the vote. How members opposite can keep claiming to be great champions of democracy while still saying that this is an acceptable principle is beyond me.

Several members interjected.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I will not be diverted. I have some doubt about the security of the cardboard ballot boxes and their capacity to remain free from interference and manipulation; even if the potential for criminal manipulation is there, it must be removed. Hon Tom Butler must have seen - I saw him trying to ascertain whether he had made the grade, as he ultimately did; and I congratulate him for that - things which in ordinary circumstances would have made his hair stand on end.

Hon Mark Nevill: At least he was a gracious winner.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is always easy to be a gracious winner.

Hon E.J. Charlton: It has nothing to do with winning or losing.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Exactly. It has a lot to do with whether the election on 4 February was properly reflected in the election of a Government vis a vis the ballots that went into the box. One of the first people who complained to me about the security of mobile booths was one of my constituents from Rossmoyne. Subsequently I wrote to Mr Smith, the Electoral Commissioner, on 14 February - so this is not something I dreamed up for the Address-in-Reply debate - along the following lines -

Concern has been expressed to me that the ballot boxes used in the recent State election were sealed only with a seemingly insecure plastic material.

Doubts have therefore been raised as to whether such seals are sufficient security against possible ballot interference, especially in cases where ballot boxes are shifted from one point to another for example while being used in mobile polling booths.

Mr President, the Electoral Commissioner of this State was not appointed by us but by the Government and in my opinion he is a man of the utmost probity; I in no way cast any aspersion on him. However, Mr Smith must now have sufficient doubts about the use of cardboard ballot boxes because on 7 March he wrote a letter back which was quite startling,

given the position he holds. I do not intend to read all of it because a lot of it is material that is not central to my argument. However, the Chief Electoral Officer's letter read in part as follows -

There are some general observations I can make about the use of cardboard ballot boxes which may be of some benefit to you in considering the transition to this type of box throughout Australia.

Designs for cardboard ballot boxes were developed by the Australian Electoral Commission in the eighteen months before the announcement of the 1987 Federal general election held on 11 July, 1987.

Examination of that option was prompted by steadily increasing storage -

I ask members to remember the following words. The letter continues -

- and replacement costs of the existing metal boxes.

The Electoral Commissioner is saying that one of the major factors in deciding whether we would have Weeties boxes to conduct elections is cost. I put it to the House that cost ought to be of absolutely no consequence at all in the conduct of elections in a democratic community. Costs ought to be at the bottom end of the scale; it should not enter anyone's head that any cost can be spared in order to achieve a truthful and a non-manipulated outcome. However, Mr Smith openly says that one of the factors which led the Electoral Commission to choose cardboard ballot boxes was that it was cheaper. I do not think that members opposite would be any more satisfied with that state of affairs than I am. Mr Smith goes on to say -

To their advantage, cardboard boxes featured lower transport and storage costs, ease of assembly and handling and an attractive appearance.

They were designed to be large enough to remove the need for extra numbers of the smaller metal boxes at every polling place.

The Australian Electoral Commission used the cardboard boxes at the 1987 general election and the Referendum on 3 September, 1988. Their introduction and use has proved successful and acceptable to political parties, candidates and electors.

They are not acceptable to me. I will give a few examples in a minute of why they are not acceptable and are capable of being openly manipulated, and I believe members on the other side of the House will recognise those examples and be able to replicate them from their own experiences. Mr Smith goes on to say -

Other state electoral authorities and this Commission have closely monitored the Commonwealth's use of cardboard boxes, and they are now used by all electoral administrations.

The prototype developed by this Commission for the 1989 State general election was inspected by representatives of the major political parties and was given general endorsement.

My complaint is not against Mr Smith or the Electoral Commission. My complaint is that now, with the experience of this form of ballot box, we must at all costs revert to those secure metal boxes about which everyone had no doubts as to their being tampered with.

I finish the letter with Mr Smith's own observations, which go in some part towards answering Hon Tom Butler's interjections of a few minutes ago, because sufficient doubts must have been raised in Mr Smith's mind for him to have written this -

I am reviewing the design of this State's cardboard ballot box and obtaining comments from Returning Officers on its suitability. This review may result in some modifications such as the strengthening of the base of the box. I will also discuss the design with Electoral Commissioners from the Commonwealth and other States.

Mr Smith finished by saying that any further comments would be welcomed by the Electoral Commission.

It is not good enough for Mr Smith merely to review the security of the existing ballot boxes. It is not good enough for Mr Smith to say, "We will modify or strengthen those boxes." Nothing short of returning to metal boxes which are capable of having padlocks applied to

them will produce a result in the years to come where people can have every confidence that the ballot has not been tampered with.

I saw other examples of laxity in this election which would not have been tolerated in previous years. I came into Parliament House about 10 days after the election and, in the corridor at the Legislative Assembly end of this building near where members enter the Legislative Assembly Chamber, there were perhaps 20 or 30 ballot boxes crammed full of votes which, presumably, by then had been sealed and were awaiting transfer to what I am told are the vaults in this building. I do not even know if we have vaults in this building. I made some inquiries as to why ballot boxes and papers were in Parliament House anyway, and I was informed that it was part of the Act that we passed which, therefore, I helped pass; but I do not recall a provision which stated that in future ballot papers concerning the upper House will be stored in the vaults of Parliament House.

When I asked why this was I was told it was because the papers were needed in case of the death or resignation of a member. The ballot papers would then be retrieved in order to be counted to find out who would be the successor to any member who had died or resigned. For that reason, ballot papers remain sealed in the ballot boxes on the premises of Parliament House, if not in the vaults. If that is the case, what sort of security is it where one can walk off the street, as I did, into a major corridor of the Legislative Assembly and be confronted with a trailer load of unattended ballot boxes? There was no-one around. Members know this place is like a morgue a week or two after an election as people are busy out scrutineering, rearranging their electoral offices or getting ready for their retirements. Nothing would have prevented me from walking out past an attendant with a couple of boxes and taking them back to my office for some nefarious purpose. Members should think about this. It may be a couple of years before one of those boxes will need to be opened.

Hon Fred McKenzie: How did they deal with it in the past?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: In the past it was not a problem because Parliament House was not a repository for the boxes. It is only since the Electoral Act -

Hon D.K. Dans: Since proportional representation.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is only since proportional representation came in, which is the last election, that the requirement has been for the boxes to be stored at Parliament House.

Hon Fred McKenzie: Going back to the other elections, you would still have to keep the ballot boxes secure for a period in case of disputed returns.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Hon Fred McKenzie is getting a couple of the points I am trying to make crossed over. In those elections the ballot papers were not kept forever, whereas these are, just as the papers for the Legislative Assembly will not be kept forever - they will be kept for as long as the law provides for any challenges to be made.

Hon Fred McKenzie: But where were they kept before?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is a very good point. Maybe the laxity before was tantamount to the laxity now. Members should think of what happens in a close election. Many seats in the last election, some won by us and some by the Government, were won literally by a handful of votes in the Assembly. Melville was won for the Liberal Party by 50 votes. Geraldton was won for the Government by not much more.

One would not even need to walk out with a box to interfere with the voting. The security where I was at Curtin House was not much better. Eventually a few people in uniforms were put on the door to make things look official. I am aware of one case which has been brought to the attention of the Electoral Commissioner, although not by me. It comes from Mr Peter Foss, who will take up his seat in this House, and I quote as follows -

Door security:

... Wednesday night When we arrived at about 8 pm Wednesday night there was a TNT guard on the door. As we came in, a man left carrying a cardboard box under his arm. Semi-jokingly we asked the guard whether the man who had just left had votes in his cardboard box and from his reply it was obvious that he had not seen the man let alone his box and certainly had not inspected it.

What a security system! A man walks out with a box under his arm, the guard is asked, "Has that man got votes in that box?" and the guard says, "What man?" Security seemed to be

increased, at least in a superficial sense, but I am not sure that it was increased in a substantial sense. It was possible for a person to poke his hand through the bottom of those boxes and to pull out votes. It was reported to me that people were able to lift up the ballot boxes and as they walked away the votes would fall out from the bottom of the boxes. I am sure that even Hon Fred McKenzie would not think that is the proper way to conduct an election.

I repeat that in circumstances where people are winning seats by a hair's breadth it is not an acceptable practice, even in southern American countries, to have an electoral system that would make the people a laughing stock. An urgent review is required to ascertain what method is to apply in this State in another three and a half years' time. Perhaps we should have some form of serious inquiry into those mispractices, if not malpractices, that were capable of occurring in the election which has recently been completed.

The third area I want to touch on today is a reference the Governor made in his Speech to the word "accountability". I do this in relation to a matter concerning Rottmest Island and as Opposition spokesman on tourism it is my area of interest. The Government's commitment to accountability does nothing more than pay lip service to that concept. Before I deal with Rottmest Island I will refer to the Governor's Speech. I put it to the House that as comprehensive and as detailed a document as the report of the Burt Commission on Accountability is, it will not solve the problems which beset this State; it does not get to the nub of what the Opposition spent the last six years campaigning on - a subject on which the Opposition spent a huge amount of time during the election campaign. It is one thing to be accountable - and the Government now has a Bill in another place which purports to make the Government more accountable - but I put it to members, because it has been said many times, that that is not the fundamental question which confronts Western Australia at the moment: The fundamental question which confronts Western Australia is the Government being involved in business in the first place which ultimately leads to the call for more accountability on the part of the Government.

We have been told by no lesser person than the Governor that the Acts Amendment (Accountability) Bill will address the major recommendations of the Burt commission and the Western Australian Chemical Industries Authority Bill will reconstitute Western Australian Government Holdings as a statutory authority to conform with the accountability guidelines set out in the Burt commission report. They are sentiments with which I could not quarrel, but I will make a couple of comments about the position. It is an indictment of the Government of this State and it is an indictment of the Premier who now seeks to be so lily white about all these things that there was even a need for an outside commission of inquiry to tell the Government how to be accountable.

Mr President, on that commission there were two senior and respected servants of the Government, and I am referring to the Auditor General, Mr Smith, and to the Under Treasurer, Mr Ross Bowe. I would venture to suggest, with the utmost respect to Sir Francis Burt and the other members of the commission, that Mr Bowe and Mr Smith not only could have told the Government that the commission's findings were the way in which the Government could become accountable, but also that is exactly what those two officers did tell the Government over a long period of time. In other words, why did it take an outside inquiry to tell the Government what its senior and competent officers would have been telling it in the course of their duty, including their statutory duty, for many months?

Accountability is not the fundamental issue which is at stake, and that is revealed in the Governor's Speech. While we now have the benefit of the Burt commission - it is a good report - the fact remains that, in my opinion, the Government is doing nothing but jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.

Hon B.L. Jones: That is what you would like to believe.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am sure that if the member does not know it already she will, in the months ahead and following the disclosure of the antics of this Government, learn that the Government's antics last year look pale in comparison.

Hon B.L. Jones: I don't think you have learnt anything from the last election.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I certainly learnt from the last election. I remind the member of an old saying: "You have learnt nothing, you have forgotten nothing".

Why is it that the Government has found itself in a position to have to be accountable? It is because it became involved in dodgy commercial deals in which it should not have been involved. Mr Dowding said that WA Inc was dead and that he would get rid of WADC and Exim - I will come to Exim in a while. While he was saying that, the resurrection occurred because WA Inc is reappearing in other forms. We are told, in the Governor's words, that the Government is to have a Western Australian Chemical Industries Authority. Members opposite know that authority will come into existence for no other reason than to keep the Government in business. I welcome that and I think it is terrific that the Government continues to go down the road it has unsuccessfully gone down in the past. It proves that the Government has learnt nothing and has forgotten nothing.

Hon B.L. Jones: I said you have not learnt anything.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am saying that the reverse is the truth.

I did want to touch on a matter concerning Exim and Rottnest Island, but I am running out of the time I intended taking. If any members have any doubts about the antics, the skulduggery and the sheer incompetence of the current Government they only have to look at Exim's records. Members should not forget that Exim is soon to disappear, but only a couple of months ago members on the other side of the House believed that Exim was the best thing since sliced bread and they defended it to the hilt.

I do not have time to read to the House the article which appeared in *Australian Business* of 8 March this year under the pseudonym of Pierponte, but if members opposite are ever in doubt about their lack of capacity of members to understand the monsters they set up they should read the article. I have never read an article which is a greater condemnation of any Government's ignorance - and not only the Government's ignorance, but also the ignorance of Mr John Horgan. This was the great entrepreneur they were able to attract to the Labor Party.

Hon B.L. Jones: He did an excellent job.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am pleased to hear that. The loyalty of Hon Beryl Jones is admirable, but the observation was proved wrong. Even the Premier cannot wait to distance himself from this person.

Hon B.L. Jones: That is not so at all.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Is it not? He is trying every trick in the book to get out of paying him.

Hon B.L. Jones: Not at all. You are only reading into it what you want to believe.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is understandable that the present Government is in a real cleft stick. The Government has lingering loyalties to Brian Burke but in order to redeem itself it has to bucket him.

Hon J.M. Brown: We owe a debt of gratitude to Brian Burke, make no mistake about that.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Hon J.M. Brown may owe a debt of gratitude to him but, as my colleague Hon Barry House interjected, the State does not owe him a debt of gratitude.

Hon E.J. Charlton: It has the debt but not the gratitude.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: What Hon Eric. Charlton has just said is spot on; the State has the debt but not the gratitude.

Hon Tom Helm: What debt?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The member is diverting from the subject as he so often does because he does not like to hear the truth. I ask him to read the manipulatory way that even Mr John Horgan and his cohorts at Exim could actually turn a loss into a profit; that is really what this is about.

Hon Tom Helm: Why does he not use his real name instead of a pseudonym?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: If Hon Tom Helm wants to talk about why journalists use pseudonyms that is another question and nothing at all to do with the article that helped make this State, and Mr Berinson, the laughing stock of Australian commerce and business - a laughing stock because of the way Hon J.M. Berinson, and Messrs Burke, Parker and Grill were able to be sucked in to practices which today they must squirm about.

Hon B.L. Jones: That is funny. We are not laughing at all. Was Hon Phillip Pental laughing after he heard the election results?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I certainly was not.

Hon B.L. Jones: The majority of the population did not agree with what you were saying.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon John Williams): Order!

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I certainly was not laughing about an election that gave the Opposition parties 52 per cent of the vote but not Government. I do not want to spend time on this matter, but those who do want to can. It may be that the Minister for Budget Management could do himself a favour and endow the State with a chair or school of Western Australian accounting standards because that is the suggestion made in this article. So abysmal was the Government's record in accounting for Exim - and, after all, the Government was responsible for Exim - that it had the temerity last year, I think a week before the State election, to finally get its annual report together, which annual report was a joke. That is the subject of the article and Hon J.M. Berinson knows about it, I am sure, because the writer made the point -

Hon Tom Helm interjected.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Does that affect the accuracy of his argument?

Hon Tom Helm: I would say so; he was ashamed of the article so he would not put his name on it.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon P.G. PENDAL: That is another piece of proof that Government members have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. What the writer of this article says makes us the laughing stock of Australia is that no company would have had the temerity or commercial incompetence to put forward an annual report which contained such nonsense as that contained in the Exim annual report. If members like, I will read the whole article, but it does not bring any credit on Western Australia and certainly does not reflect any credit on the Western Australian Government or the Ministers of that Government who were involved in that matter. One of those Ministers is in this House, the Minister for Budget Management. I commend this article to members. I ask the backbench members of the Government who have seen fit to interject and defend the Government's actions, if Exim and WADC are corporations of which they are proud, why are they supporting their abolition? Of course, there is no answer.

Hon B.L. Jones: Of course there is an answer.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: This matter has become not only a political millstone around the Government's neck but also a commercial millstone. Let us be rid of the nonsense that we have heard from the Premier on television in the past couple of weeks when he has said that WADC, Exim and all of those things were a huge commercial success and it is just that politically they were not tenable. That is what the Premier has said, as though the only thing that is on the nose about them is some political odour. The fact is that we will hear more about WADC, Exim and all of those corporations in the next week or two. They are being abolished not because they are a political embarrassment but because they led this Government down the path almost to financial ruin, and the people of this State along with them. Have they learned any lessons? They have not, because in the same breath that members opposite say that those things are to be repaired they have the gall to have the Governor come into the Parliament and tell us that we are soon to see a new Government authority that has the expertise to run a petrochemical industry. There will be more said on that matter later.

The final matter I touch on is also an extension of the problem that the Government has had over its irregular business dealings. It is a matter about which there has been an enormous silence. It is to do with Rottnest Island where even fundamental information has failed to come out, and it is a matter which when it appeared on the horizon just prior to the election put the then Minister for Tourism, Mrs Beggs, into a real dither because she knew - certainly from some of the remarks she made through the media - that somewhere in there was an awful lot of embarrassment for the Government.

I refer to the action in the calling of tenders for the lease of the Rottne Island Resort which was held, I understand, by TNT until a few weeks ago when advertisements were placed in a number of newspapers calling for tenders, copies of which I have here. Before I get to the detail of that matter, I must say that a story appeared in *The West Australian* on 29 December headed, "Bond buys lease for Rottne Lodge". The article commenced by saying that Alan Bond had bought the lease of Rottne Island Lodge for \$4.1 million. It went on to say in the third paragraph that the lodge lease had originally been issued for 21 years and was to end in May 2004. However, under an agreement covering the sale the lease would be extended to 2018 if Mr Bond built another 15 units by November of the next year. It does not take a great mathematician to work out that when this article was published May 2018 was virtually 30 years away. That is what was reported quite accurately in *The West Australian* on 29 December - Mr Bond would be given the lease for 30 years.

The next day I was telephoned in Adelaide, where I was staying for a couple of days, and asked for the Opposition's attitude towards Bond buying into the Lodge. I made the point, which was subsequently accurately reported by *The West Australian*, that the Opposition had no difficulty with whomever was given the lease, provided the proper tender procedures were observed. In fact that appeared on 30 December, where it says this -

The WA Liberal Party has supported Mr Alan Bond's purchase of the lease of Rottne Lodge Resort.

The Liberal spokesman on tourism, Mr Phillip Pendal, said he had no objection to the deal provided it went out on public tender.

The article went on to say a few other things, but these words are very important to what I am about to say.

So far so good, except that it has since been brought to my notice that Mr Bond was given that lease almost two months ahead of the time when the tender period was to end. In fact advertisements appeared in I think *The West Australian* - I have them here - under the name of "World Wide - Richard Ellis - for sale by public tender - Rottne Lodge Resort". One of the conditions was that tenders would close at 4.00 pm on 10 February 1989. Oddly, but not terribly significantly, another advertisement appeared around the same time. Instead of saying that the tenders would close on 10 February it said tenders would close on 24 February 1989. The difference is only a fortnight, and I am not quibbling about that; it is not central to my complaint.

What is central to my complaint is, how Mr Bond was given the tender way back so that *The West Australian* could report on 29 December that Mr Bond had bought the lease to the Lodge when the tenders did not close until at least 10 February, or, according to the other advertisement, on the 24th? That is a serious question which needs to be answered by the Government. But it goes deeper than that. We were told in that story on 29 December that the purchase through a subsidiary of Mr Bond's private holding company, Dallhold Investments Pty Ltd, is subject to approval by the Rottne Island Authority, chaired by another of Perth's entrepreneurs, Dallas Dempster. We learned from that that the sale of the lease was to be the subject of approval by the Rottne Island Authority. Indeed Mrs Beggs said on that day that the authority would consider the Bond purchase at its next meeting at the end of the next month.

I want to know why it was that the Government and, presumably, the authority have now signed up Mr Bond for a 30 year lease when the Rottne Island Authority Act, which was passed in this House last year, allows the authority to give leases for only 20 years. I refer to section 13. But the proviso is that the 20 year period can be extended with the written approval of the Minister. It is worse than that, because section 13 specifically states that any 20 year period awarded must include any unexpired term of the previous lessee. That, in effect, would reduce the time in which Mr Bond could have got hold of it. But what was the result? According to what we know so far, Mr Bond got hold of it, but not for a 13 year period. I understand the previous lease had run for seven years. He has it not even for the 20 years mentioned in section 13, but for 30 years. The Parliament and the public are entitled to know those answers. I have attempted to get them in other forms and have been unsuccessful. I have also attempted to get the Minister to say if she obeyed section 13 of the Rottne Island Authority Act by giving an extension of up to 30 years in writing, because if she did not give it in writing she has broken the law, and if she has broken the law, so has Dallhold Investments Pty Ltd.

On the face of it favouritism has been shown. That may or may not be the case, but in the absence of the Government's being prepared to come back to me and say, "You are wrong, the real circumstances are as follows," that is what the position appears to be. This comes from a Government which, as late as six days ago, said, "We are accountable." That was said in the Governor's Speech. It is something on which the Government owes an answer, not just to me or to the Opposition but to the public as well.

On that note I support the motion.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Central) [4.47 pm]: I make public our congratulations to the Government, particularly in this House, on its success. That is a very difficult thing for me to do, because I hate losing. It is like playing in a grand final and being knocked over by a point on the siren. However, that is the democracy which we must try very hard to defend. I also endorse the comments of Hon Phillip Pender when he referred to some of the things which take place these days in our electoral system and which need to be looked at very closely.

I would like to comment on three or four items which I consider very relevant and important to the future of this State, and the Government has a responsibility to address them in the very short term. I made a statement last week or the week before on public relations, and I implore the media to research the facts and determine whether what I am about to say has some significance. I refer to land degradation, which is becoming increasingly a public topic as the days, weeks and months go by.

The salinity problem has always been of some importance to people throughout the State and the nation of Australia. We also have some erosion problems and a number of related issues of which we cannot be proud, but we must address them. We will see an increasing amount of both private and public funding taking place to address this problem. While that is very good, what concerns me is the complete lack of coordination in dealing with the problem.

Government departments such as the Department of Agriculture and various related organisations have some input either directly or indirectly. Furthermore tree planting programs are being carried out by a whole host of people such as the Men of the Trees, farmers and voluntary groups from throughout the community. People are out there planting trees for obvious reasons. However I suggest that the exercise of planting trees, although done by people with the greatest intentions, is sometimes not carried out in the most efficient way. In addition other land holders - farmers - are spending vast sums of their own money to address a problem created over a long period of time. Furthermore contractors are making available their own equipment; local shire councils have become involved by putting forward their equipment, machinery, manpower and expertise in helping to address this problem. Those are just a few of the groups involved. Both State and Federal Governments will allocate an increasing amount of taxpayers' money to tackle this problem.

However I am most concerned that, although it is good to see so much activity going on, there does not seem to be anyone coordinating it. Who is coordinating all this activity? There are about 100 land conservations committees around the State, and a great number of enthusiastic people who have practical experience in this matter, who are working to the best of their ability to address the problem. Two or three other people are involved in overseeing what those committees are doing. There is also the Department of Agriculture and the other groups to which I referred, but who is coordinating what they are doing? Who is monitoring the activity to ensure that in years to come it will be of benefit? Who is looking at what is the best and most efficient way of dealing with the problem, whether it is successful and so forth? It is a great shame that a coordinator has not already been appointed. I have already put this problem to the Government and I will continue to pressure the Government until it appoints a coordinator.

That coordinator obviously will play an important role and must be someone who has the academic qualifications and the ability to understand what these various groups and individuals in the community are doing. In addition the coordinator must have some managerial ability to ensure that what is being done is correlated properly. That will be an onerous task but all these things must be properly coordinated. I am absolutely convinced that the public will demand that the Government allocate these increasing funds, and the Government usually responds to what the public desire in one way or another. That is the role of Government and in this case it is to allocate funds to these organisations and

departments which are endeavouring to deal with the problem of salinity. Who will be responsible for spending the money? Where will it be spent? I am afraid that, when it comes to the actual distribution of these funds, money could end up being spent in a manner which is not in the best interests of solving this significant problem.

A vast amount of land in Western Australia is salt affected. Unfortunately people have differing views about the best way to deal with the problem. It is a great shame that even today we do not have a coordinator looking at what people are doing in the different areas. That person could come back in three or four years' time and decide whether what is being done is suitable. There are people in the community with great enthusiasm but there is no-one overseeing the whole thing. In my opinion now is the eleventh hour and the Government has to grab hold of the Department of Agriculture and the land conservation committees, the contractors, the Men of the Trees and everyone else who is concerned and say, "Right, we need to have somebody who will have the backup of the extension people and who will be able to communicate with them to make sure that everything they do is monitored." That monitoring will not involve telling them how to do things but to correlate the various activities taking place and to monitor them over a period of years so that when allocation of funds is increased, it can be done with confidence that the money is being spent the right way. I put it to the Leader of the House and to the Government - as I have done on previous occasions - that it is necessary to take these steps. It is necessary to talk with responsible people to ensure that coordination takes place. I think that the coordinator must have the capacity and the knowledge to bring people together. It is unfortunate that if we do not reach the very few people in this State who have the qualifications necessary to deal with this problem, land degradation will continue to occur.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Plant more trees.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The comment made by Hon Sam Piantadosi is typical -

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is an incredible racket going on in this Chamber. I suggest that honourable members cease their audible conversations and allow Hon E.J. Charlton to address the Chair.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Thank you, Mr President. The interjection made by Hon Sam Piantadosi is relevant. I do not think anyone has an argument about planting more trees. However, what sort of trees and where should we plant them? Those are important questions. The Government said that it was going to plant so many millions of trees along Great Eastern Highway. That will look pretty good provided we do not have too many people driving into those trees and being killed. We should not plant trees too close to the highway. In order to combat salinity we must be careful where we plant the trees, taking into account where the water is moving to. I will not go into a dissertation about the science of it all but in tackling salinity we must be careful about the type of trees planted and where they are placed. That is critical to the solution of the land degradation problem.

The reason that I am calling for a coordinator to be put in place is so that these groups of people will not rush out and do their own thing without being monitored. On that point, I stress the importance of the Government approaching the subject and acting upon it, and I implore the media to get it right when they print a story about some of the activities that are taking place. Otherwise, what we will be doing is building up a momentum of enthusiasm on the one hand and a monument of despair on the other. I am not critical of greenies and other people, but if we do not encourage them in the right direction we will end up with a bigger headache on our hands.

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I refer now to transport and the effect it has on this State. Very little publicity and comment in the Press has been directed to the increase in the price of fuel. In the last two to three months the price of fuel has increased by 5.36¢ per litre, over 20¢ per gallon. It is a significant increase and it does have a direct and indirect effect on the people in this State. An explanation should be given to the public. It is not right that the public should find out at a retailing outlet that the price of fuel has increased and that the commercial user should find out that it will cost him an extra \$500 to fill his tanks because of the combination of increases in fuel. It is the responsibility of the Press to ensure that the public of Western Australia are informed of the reasons for increases like this.

I do not have to go into the detail of the effect that will have on freight costs as it will obviously result in increases in those costs to consumers and in the personal expenses of many people, in particular those on and above the average because of where they happen to reside. I think it is accepted and known that country people in particular, wherever they may live in country areas of the State, whether north, south or in the central area, are obliged to travel long distances. As a consequence of this extra 5¢ a litre they will have a significant cost burden imposed on them at a time when interest rates and all those sorts of things are combining to increase their costs of operation, which have increased far above the inflation rate. This increase in fuel costs on top of an increase in freight rates and costs of commodities that they purchase will go right through the system and will significantly hit those people on the end of the line. We as members of Parliament need to bring home to Government's, both State and Federal, that these camouflaged ways in which they increase the cost of living are unacceptable.

The whole emphasis of the Labor Party has been on the increase in interest rates, which severely affects home owners of this State. Matters always seem to revert to people in the metropolitan area. They have my sympathy, but the fact is that there are other people in the community across the State who are paying in excess of 16 per cent on their loans. If a person builds a home on a farm he does not get a housing loan at 16 per cent, he pays 19 per cent, 21 per cent, or 23 per cent, depending on his costs.

Hon J.M. Brown: Rural housing loans are much less than 16 per cent.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Many people have not got that, as Hon J.M. Brown knows. Those people are paying far in excess of 16 per cent interest and, in addition, there is this massive increase in fuel costs which has taken place in the past couple of months and which has received virtually no publicity. One thing I wish to do today is to bring to the attention of people in this place the fact that this impost has been placed on country people.

My final comment relates to a question I asked the Leader of the House a moment ago as to whether we will see an electoral reform Bill before this Parliament in this session. The whole emphasis seems to be on the fact that we will see legislation relating to electoral reform centred around one-vote-one-value. I can state here and now on behalf of the National Party that we will oppose one-vote-one-value as hard and as vigorously as is humanly possible for us to do and we will be looking to see which individuals in this place agree with such a proposition. The reason for this is simply that it is all very well for those people who believe it is fair or equitable to have one-vote-one-value, but it is not difficult at all to put across to people the total inequality of one-vote-one-value.

If this Government intends to introduce a Bill of that kind into this place I sound a warning to the Government, and to anybody else who will support that Bill because it is in their personal, organisational or political interest to do so, that while they might be successful in doing so it will be on their heads that they will be denying the country people of Western Australia - those people in far flung areas - the number of political representatives they currently have. Anyone promoting that proposition must have blinkers on, or have some other vested interest in putting forward that idea. One of the reasons I have raised this matter in this House is that I read in the uncorrected daily *Hansard* proof of 30 March that Mr Ian Thompson has made a comment which is consistent with comments he has made before and it seems to me that what he has said is held as a general belief.

I also heard Hon Phillip Pandal say today that the Liberal and National Parties gained 52 per cent of the vote and did not gain Government. Some people in the Liberal Party might believe that having one-vote-one-value at the recent or a subsequent election would determine the result of that election in a different way. I point out to members that at the last Federal election, where one-vote-one-value applied, the conservative parties gained in excess of 51 per cent of the vote and did not win the election. If people hold the view in relation to one-vote-one-value that provided a political party gets in excess of 50 per cent of the vote that will mean success for that party, the facts are there for all to see - there is no guarantee of that.

If we have one-vote-one-value in this State because of a rearrangement of boundaries, that does not mean that in one particular area of the State votes one way will be transferred to a final position that will be consistent with a voting pattern that is reflected in the number of seats won or lost because, without going into detail, if the 20 000 voters in a seat are reduced

to 16 000, the 4 000 voters who are part of a Liberal or conservative seat will go to the next seat, and so on. I make the point now so that there might be no distortion of the facts.

I challenge *The West Australian*, in particular, about this matter. I do not challenge the journalists because, while they might write articles, they unfortunately do not seem to me to be the people who are responsible finally for detailing facts to the public of Western Australia. I know only too well what took place last time we had a Bill relating to this matter in this place. There was talk of how the National Party had done a deal with the Government on electoral reform when the fact was that we had had a position that we stuck to right from the word go about wanting the sorts of amendments that are currently in place. I say now that we will not move away from the present position of resisting a change to one-vote-one-value for the simple reason that there are people in this State who, through no fault of their own but because of the very nature of this nation - coupled with political activities which have taken place over successive years and have concentrated the population of Australia into these high density areas around the nation where something like 85 per cent of the people live within 24 kilometres of the coastline in Australia - cover the bulk of the area of this nation. While that situation continues some of us will oppose vigorously any change to the voting system in this State.

No-one can convince me that the one-vote-one-value system has been good for Australia federally. It has not. There is nothing about having a seat the size of Kalgoorlie or O'Connor, to give two examples in this State, which has enabled better Government, better representation, or fairer and more equitable representation. People who advocate one-vote-one-value in this State believe that it will result in more equitable representation, and that whoever gets the majority vote will win Government. On past performances, that is no guarantee; and it will not work that way. When Governments in Western Australia change the present trend and encourage families to move into the non-metropolitan areas by providing education and health facilities, and the population becomes more spread out with an incentive for small businesses to carry out their businesses outside the metropolitan area, then and only then should anybody who is honest be talking about one-vote-one-value.

I make those comments so that everyone will know exactly where the National Party stands on that question. It was reported that for about 40 years there has been a so called gerrymandered voting system in Queensland. It was all right for some people when the Labor Party introduced it 40 years ago, but because the system does not suit them now they want to turf it out and bring in something else. The main reason we are talking about changing the voting system in Western Australia now is not for the benefit of Western Australians. It may be believed by either the Labor Party or the Liberal Party that it would be in their interest to have a one-vote-one-value system of voting; but they are not doing it for the benefit of Western Australia.

I wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer on three occasions asking him if he would, through his organisation, advise the public of Western Australia where the new boundaries were and what the new system was to be. On each occasion he responded positively to my suggestions, but it did not happen until the eve of the election. We have denied the people of Western Australia the opportunity to be informed about the electoral system, particularly when a significant change had taken place. We could not understand why on polling day they voted in a certain way, but they did not know their electorate, they did not know the new system, and they did not know which paper to fill out or how to fill it out. Can we blame them? Nobody told them.

The Government has an absolute responsibility, because it is in charge, to inform the public of Western Australia of the system in place, whatever it is. We have compulsory voting; I happen to favour changing it so that only those who want to cast a vote will cast one. I happen to favour that system. If we are not going to tell people what is going on, we should let only those interested vote. If people are not interested, or do not know anything about it and do not want to vote, they should not vote. But if we are to have this current system where everyone must vote, then at least we should have the good manners and the businesslike approach to inform them what it is all about.

The people of Western Australia in a number of cases have not been told who are the elected members of Parliament. I guarantee the public have never seen in print in the media the names of several members in this Chamber who have been elected to the Parliament of this

State. That is a disgrace. We see headlines in the media about a seat which is hanging in the balance, or speculation about whether the Government will be successful or not, but when all the dust has settled and the final counting has taken place, nobody is told the result. Is it not an unbelievable situation? Then we wonder why the public of Western Australia, for this and other reasons, do not hold much credence in what members of Parliament do and say because of all the innuendoes they hear. The first priority should be to inform the public who are their members of Parliament, and tell them about the electoral boundaries. This should not be in the form of a handout or letter drop coming out before the election, but something in *The West Australian*, or in the form of an insert in one of the major newspapers.

It is not too late now for the Government or for the Chief Electoral Officer to tell the people of Western Australia who are the members of Parliament for the various seats and regions. It may be all right for the people who live in an area to know their own member of Parliament, but what about those who live somewhere else who, for some reason or another, are interested and want to know? Where do they find out? They have to ring up the Electoral Department, and most people do not go to that trouble. Some of the things we do as parliamentarians are printed in the paper, yet nobody is told about the most important things of all. Is it any wonder no interest is taken by the Western Australian public?

Those are some of the comments I have in this Address-in-Reply debate. Although there will be some changes - some of us will not be here after May - we must get on with our main priority, and that is serving the people of Western Australia.

HON TOM STEPHENS (North) [5.37 pm]: I take this opportunity to congratulate the President on his renomination to that position, to which he will no doubt be elected after the formation of the next Parliament. I join with other members in congratulating our frontbench. I am very proud to see them re-elected to their ministerial positions. It was a decision of our Caucus of which we were all extremely pleased. The Chamber has also noted the elevation on the backbench of my colleague, Hon Doug Wenn, to the position of Deputy Whip. I take the opportunity of congratulating him and wishing him well in that seat.

Hon G.E. Masters: What are you going to do about the telephone?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The telephones are a problem, but I have discovered a worse problem. I had never really understood the meaning of the word "cross benches" until I actually sat in this seat.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Sitting across from me.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Sitting across from the honourable member. It is a most uncomfortable seat, it is angular and I can well understand the ambition which drove Hon Doug Wenn from this seat. It is a seat which would make anyone cross. It amazes me that the Leader of the National Party, whom I also take the opportunity to congratulate, has not become an extremely cross member of Parliament, having had to put up with a seat which is exactly the same shape as mine.

Hon G.E. Masters: One benefit is that you do not have Peter Wells sitting directly behind you.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am relieved at that. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might tell us whether Mr Peter Wells is to stay on in his position with Mr Cash.

Hon G.E. Masters: We will look after him very well; do not worry about that. He is a valued member of the party.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I make those comments about this Chamber seriously. I think this Chamber is a somewhat difficult place in which to work as a member of Parliament. My seat probably typifies how bad the place can get. It is impossible to work sitting in this seat.

Hon E.J. Charlton: What about Hon Kay Hallahan's seat? Would that be all right?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am sure it is very attractive; I actually have my eye on the seat occupied by Hon Des Dans. While thinking about Hon Des Dans, people like him and Hon Bob Hetherington probably deserve congratulations for taking the sensible way from this House by retiring. I wish them well in their retirement. If they had to put up with the uncomfortable working conditions -

Hon Kay Hallahan: You forgot about the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: And the other members who retired involuntarily as well as voluntarily. This seat represents to me exactly how antiquated this Chamber has become. It is time the Council assessed the prospect of converting this Chamber into a working Chamber where members can sit at desks, where they can work and concentrate on the business of the House or the business they have at hand rather than trying to trip over one another as they go to and from their seats. Hon Beryl Jones used to have considerable difficulty every time I moved in and out, which was quite regularly. If one compares this Chamber with similar Chambers in other Parliaments, one realises it is time the place was refurbished so that it becomes a working Chamber for us all.

Hon W.N. Stretch: I would have thought you would like the red seats.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: They match my tie.

Hon P.G. Pental: And your politics.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: We have to do something to remind ourselves of our roots.

The discussion of the election and its result has obviously occupied the minds of some of the other speakers. It has occupied my mind as one of the re-elected members of this House. The result was interesting because it highlighted for me - and I think it has for some members opposite - the role played by minority parties, that flood of parties that appeared just before the election and put up as though to be the Trojan horses of the Opposition to try to attract the votes and preferences to get the Liberals over the finishing line. It was interesting because it showed that the Western Australian electorate is a much more shrewd electorate than the Opposition gave it credit for. To do the Opposition a service, people on this side of the House also did not know whether minority parties and candidates were the way to go. The lesson of this election result has demonstrated the power of minority parties to the Opposition; the minority party vote siphoned votes off and the end result was that the Opposition stayed on that side of the House.

Hon P.G. Pental: We still got 52 per cent, even after they were siphoned off.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is a very interesting point. Hon Phillip Pental needs to learn that to focus on that issue is to deny the role of a party such as, for example, the National Party, which had only a small percentage of the vote but which is represented in both Houses of Parliament because of where its members stood and how they concentrated their efforts. They were elected on the basis of the work they put into their electorates and likewise were the members on this side of the Chamber. We focused in a deliberate way on ensuring we won more than 50 per cent of the seats of this Parliament.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Surely the members of this House will not fall into tired ways of interjecting on other members, particularly members who are as good as I am and who rarely interject on others?

Hon P.G. Pental: This is the first time you have been on your feet in three years.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am always amazed by this: When I sit down, they attack me for sitting down; when I stand up, they attack me for standing up. I never know quite how to please members of the Opposition.

Hon P.G. Pental: There is the door.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: One of the interesting features of the election was the informal vote. I think the high informal vote of this State election was one of its most worrying features. There are people on our side of the House who delude themselves into assuming that the informal vote is disproportionately a Labor vote. I put it to members on this side and to members opposite that we need to recall the analysis done on this issue by the Australian Electoral Commission after the most recent Federal election. The Australian Electoral Commission examined the informal vote and found that it looked as though - apart from those people who deliberately invalidated their ballot papers - electors deliberately attempted to vote in such a way that 50 per cent of the informal vote was for the Labor Party and the other 50 per cent was for the conservative parties. There is a lesson in that for all of us. It should be a desirable goal for members of this Parliament, and for this Legislature, to work out a way to eradicate the high informal vote. I am very appreciative that the Western

Australian Electoral Commission, through the library a few moments ago, was able to fax to me its assessment of what the informal vote was in the most recent State election. The informal vote Statewide was 7.35 per cent; in the seat of Cockburn, it was 12.8 per cent -

Hon P.G. Pandal: There was a reason for that.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Was there? Regardless of specific reasons, 7.35 per cent is very high.

I want to refer to some of the points raised earlier by Hon Phillip Pandal. I am afraid I missed a lot of his speech, but I agree entirely with those parts of his speech which dealt with aspects of the electoral process and the difficulties involving cardboard boxes and shirking on expenses in order to economise on the election. Unfortunately I was with the parish priest of Broome when Hon Phillip Pandal completed his speech and I do not know how it ended. Nonetheless I want to take up that point - and I agree with those aspects of his speech raised when I was present in the Chamber - and commend to the House the United States system of mechanical and computer voting.

Mr Deputy President (Hon David Wordsworth), through you I wish to speak to the President and ask him to consider, as the Presiding Officer of this House, the servant of members, to consider whether this Chamber and Parliament would benefit from having here in the Parliament - perhaps in a corridor upstairs - a US voting machine. We could look at it to see whether it provides a model of the way we should go in the future - away from cardboard boxes and away from ballot papers. There may be members in the Chamber who do not know about the US voting system, but as I understand it - and I am not personally privy to any experience with the machine - electors walk into a booth, pull a lever to close the curtain behind them, and they then have the opportunity to select mechanically how they want to vote. They can choose to vote "President, Republican", "Vice President, Democrat"; they can position all the various levers and switch them around, and when they look at it they can see how they voted for all the various office holders. They then flick a lever which records their vote mechanically, and somehow it is all recorded in the machine before they leave.

Hon W.N. Stretch: That is a voluntary vote.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Leaving that issue aside for the moment, I want to deal with the specific issue of reducing the informal vote.

Several members interjected.

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

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The system in the United States of America utilises a mechanical voting booth, and that may be a system which we could adopt here in Western Australia. Hon Joe Berinson would no doubt immediately jump to his feet, as Minister for Budget Management, and express concern about the cost.

Hon A.A. Lewis interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I take up the point made by Hon Phillip Pandal: Hang the cost, it is democracy that we are talking about. This system was introduced in the US in the 1960s in response to shenanigans in the voting process.

Hon A.A. Lewis: You will be chucked out of the Labor Party.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Fortunately, Hon A.A. Lewis is being chucked out of this Chamber and we will not have to listen to his interjections much longer.

Hon A.A. Lewis: When you have been here as long as I have you can start commenting.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Maybe Hon A.A. Lewis could make his farewell speech as a speech rather than by way of interjection during my speech.

Hon A.A. Lewis: I thought I had dealt with you the last time.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Tom Stephens will continue.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. I appreciate your protection, because I have not much more time remaining to me.

The other alternative is the computer voting system which has also been adopted in the United States. I would like to see Parliament, the Government, the people and the media of

Western Australia examine a few of the issues like mechanical voting and computer voting to see which is the best system for the reduction of the informal vote, and the production of a speedy result. We faced a ridiculous situation immediately after 4 February where the Leader of the Opposition was claiming victory and we were claiming victory. While we had good scrutineers who had told us exactly what the result would be, I can well understand the situation in which the Opposition found itself. The Opposition hoped it had got across the line; it knew something weird and wonderful was happening, a bit like the pregnant elephant, but did not know how it had happened. The Opposition thought it would take its position in Government but found it had missed out. I do not want to smirk about it - I suppose I do, really -

Hon John Halden: Notwithstanding that.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Notwithstanding that, the people of Western Australia, let alone the politicians, deserve to know the result of an election a little earlier than they did on this occasion. I am not reflecting on the officers of the Electoral Commission - they did a sterling job - but we have not given them a system which will necessarily produce a quick, fair and honest result. Hon Phillip Pental raised issues about the integrity of the system. I believe mechanical or computer voting can be set up in such a way as to guarantee the fairness and integrity of the system, and the issues that Hon Phillip Pental raised will be a thing of the past. The pencil and paper belong to a bygone era, a bit like the monarchy.

Hon P.G. Pental: But you can still herd people on to a bus to vote under that system, can't you?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I do not pretend that there are not problems with the system of computer voting. The library has very kindly found an article titled Behind the News, which says -

Machine politics

Charges of vote fraud and sloppy technology cloud the role of computers in electoral politics. . . .

Chances are that sometime after you step out from behind the curtain, your ballot will be counted by a computer. If so, it is likely to be processed by a machine whose accuracy and logical integrity have been severely questioned by computer experts whose vendor has been accused several times of helping to throw elections to candidates who would otherwise have lost.

An estimated 60% of American voters cast their ballots in 1984 with the help of a computer. Leading the market for computer-based vote-tallying systems and services is a company that in the past six years has been sued four times of charges of fraud. Although the vendor has never been convicted of any wrongdoing, disturbing questions concerning technological sloppiness, suspiciously complicated programs, and outdated technology remain unanswered.

. . . . At first glance, the job of counting votes seems perfectly suited to the computer; it's a classic dp application involving the repetition of a simple task, adding up the number of marks or holes found on a stack of voting cards. In fact, vote tallying turns out to be a rather tough computing problem, mainly because the hardware and software doing it must be mass produced and yet be able to handle the myriad individual ballot formats of the nation's thousand of voters precincts.

All of that shows that there are problems with computer voting as well but, presumably, from reading the article they can be overcome, and controls put in to ensure that computer voting, which is in my view the thing of the future that has to come in to the voting system, can be done in such a way as to remove the problems that Hon Phillip Pental spoke about, and the problems to which I have just referred of the high informal vote and the long delay in getting a result. I urge the President of this Chamber to see whether the US Government would like to respond to an invitation to position here in Parliament - perhaps on our side of the building - a computer voting system.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Don't you think we should go over and have a look?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Bringing it here is probably a reasonable solution, but if it will not work out I will discuss that other issue later. Certainly people from the media should be encouraged to have a good look at the issue as well.

Hon A.A. Lewis: They don't seem to be very interested in your speech.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will fax them my Press release about it later.

One of the things that has amazed me about the Legislative Council during the time that I have been here, which is now nearly seven years -

Hon P.G. Pental: God, is it?

Hon Kay Hallahan: My goodness.

Hon P.G. Pental: It seems a lot longer.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I can assure the honourable member that if it seems long for him it seems long for me. When I arrived here and looked around at the wigs and gowns it never occurred to me that, as well as the wigs and gowns, this Chamber would have a computer screen and keyboard sitting on the Clerks' desk. I am delighted that the computer screen and keyboard is there. I only regret that it is just there and not in front of each of us, as members of Parliament, providing the tools here on our desks for us to be able to work as effective and efficient members of this Legislature. A computer system, with a keyboard and a screen, would provide the opportunity, during Committee debates, of bringing up Bills and amendments before us; calling up Statutes from here and other States to see how they compare with what we have in mind; bringing us *Hansard* from the past to find out what members had to say about specific topics. I am delighted that the Clerk has a screen and keyboard to enable him to do his job properly in this place.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: This is a very unruly House. I wonder if members would allow me to finish my comments. It is time that computer technology was introduced into this Chamber so that we can benefit from the successor to the note pad and pencil, and work in this Chamber in the best interests of the people of Western Australia, who put us here. We could work effectively and efficiently, instead of being locked up with technology that is more in accordance with the wigs and the gowns of the Clerks' table and the President's chair. As I understand it, the Supreme Court has available to it computer technology which is now being moved into the chambers of the court. It is surely time for us, as members of Parliament, to have in this Chamber the equipment that would provide for the smooth running of the Chamber so the members can effectively and efficiently do their work.

One of the issues that I wish to draw to the attention of my colleagues and members opposite is that which relates to the question of offences under the Electoral Act.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, I hope you will take the opportunity of reading some of the comments I made during your absence from the Chamber, when no doubt you were detained on presidential matters outside the House. I did not have the opportunity to ask for your permission to speak about a matter I raised in correspondence with you and, therefore, I hope you will not be offended that I dealt with an issue in this Address-in-Reply debate about which I feel quite strongly. My comments have been placed on the record by way of my contribution to this debate. You will have in writing my thoughts on the introduction of computer technology inside this Chamber, and I hope that you will have an opportunity to think about them in your deliberations with your officers and your brother Presiding Officers.

Hon P.G. Pental: What about the sisters?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Of course, I should have said your brother and sister Presiding Officers. I had forgotten. Of course it is most remiss of me to forget that the Speaker of the House of Representatives is a female.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the honourable member that President Levy from South Australia is also a female.

Hon P.G. Pental: The other one is a mere child.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I understand she is held in the highest regard.

Hon E.J. Charlton: By a minority of people.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is unkind and uncalled for. Some members may not be aware that I have worked in the Federal Parliament and was there at the time when Mrs Joan Child first entered Parliament. She is a woman of high calibre and it was no surprise to me when she was elevated to the rank of Speaker of the House of Representatives. On the subject of Federal Parliament, I guess my exasperation with this place and items such as the furniture and the Parliament itself comes from the experience of having worked in a real Parliament. Sometimes I think we have not appropriated to ourselves the resources necessary to behave as a real Parliament instead of a sham and toy Parliament. I hope we have the opportunity of addressing some of these issues in the near future.

One of the issues initiated by me before the dinner break related to the Electoral Act. Some interjections were made at six o'clock and I will now take the opportunity of briefly referring to them. The interjections were directed to me because I am probably the only person in this House so far who has been charged with an offence under the provisions of the Electoral Act. That occurred in 1980 when I was charged under a section of the Electoral Act as it then was, an Act which had been created by the Court Government. The section dealt with an offence created 12 months before relating to persuading or inducing voters to apply for postal votes. In 1979 I campaigned against the inclusion of that section in the Electoral Act. It flowed from the Kay inquiry of 1978. I had led a campaign in the Kimberley knowing exactly what the clause was all about; I came to Perth and lobbied the parliamentarians on the Government benches, trying to encourage them not to introduce that clause into the Electoral Act. I could see precisely how it could be used as the 1980 State election approached, which would be a rerun of the contest between Ernie Bridge and Alan Ridge. I knew what the section was about when it was finally proclaimed by the Government. After our campaign to defeat that Bill was unsuccessful, I resolved to continue my work with my colleague, Ernie Bridge, to ensure that the people of the Kimberley had the opportunity of making a final decision one way or the other as to whether Ernie Bridge should be the member for Kimberley. It is interesting to note that when I made that decision I rang a very distinguished Perth QC and asked for legal advice on what I could do in my efforts to assist and encourage people to vote.

I said, "I want you to tell me what I can do now that this section of the Bill has been put into the Act; that is, the section dealing with persuading and inducing." He gave me his clear advice and said, "This is what you must do. Never allow your will to override the will of a voter. If you stick by that rule, no court in the land will find you guilty of an offence under this section. However, remember that I am only a QC; I am not a politician. My reading of the current political situation of Western Australia is such that no matter what you do in 1980 you will be charged under these new sections of the Electoral Act because you have a Government that is desperate to stay in office and which is using the provisions of the Electoral Act and introducing new sections of the Electoral Act designed to prevent people from campaigning democratically and achieving electoral results in accordance with their wishes."

I absorbed that lesson because I was just a boy from the bush who was listening to an eminent QC in Perth. I mulled over his advice and decided to get on with the job. In 1980 the people of the Kimberley, with the assistance of people like me, were able to cast votes for Ernie Bridge, and he was elected to Parliament. There would be no-one in this Chamber who would not agree that he is one of the success stories of the Western Australian Parliament. He is a very distinguished parliamentarian, and a man of whom we are very proud. He has converted that seat to our safest seat according to any electoral pendulum. Soon after the 1980 election I received advice that the Police Commissioner at that time, Owen Leitch, was saying on the electronic media that charges would be laid against subversives in the Kimberley who had set out to utilise campaign tactics which were somehow in breach of the Electoral Act. I remembered the advice of the eminent QC and thought, "They are on their way for me."

Hon W.N. Stretch: The sheriff is coming!

Hon P.G. Pental: That is when you started to get a guilty conscience.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Yes. It made me think desperately about everything I had done, hoping there had been no slip up, hoping I had not done anything wrong, and hoping -

Hon P.G. Pandal: And if you had, whether you had covered it up.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: - I had listened to his advice.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr Pandal would not be guilty of deliberate breaches of the Electoral Act. I could understand unwitting breaches, but I cannot imagine that he would set out to commit a deliberate breach of the Act, and certainly neither did I.

Hon P.G. Pandal: So we are both men of honour.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I thank the member. I remember very clearly the day in 1980 when I was feeling a little oppressed with the media heat that was on me as I heard about the approaching march of these police officers from Perth to the Kimberley. Their names were splattered about in the media at that time: Inspector Bill Dunlop and Inspector Les Aitken. They came to the lemon farm on which I was working at the time on the outskirts of Kununurra.

Hon P.G. Pandal: What sort of farm?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It was a citrus farm.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Not a Lenin farm?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The member does make some good interjections at times. It was a citrus orchard belonging to a friend of mine, and on that morning while I was picking lemons and grapefruit in the orchard I was singing a song. I could actually sing it now, but I will not. I was steeling myself because I knew that the police officers would not be far away. They arrived and arrested me at the citrus orchard. They took me to the Kununurra Police Station. It now seems such a long time ago. I asked whether I could make my one phone call south. They allowed me to do that, but the phone lines were down. That would not happen now; they have microwave links. I was trying to phone my eminent QC to tell him that I had been charged and arrested and was in the police station. The only call I was able to make was a local call to a close friend of mine, Jenny Gardiner. She was a social worker and was at that time working for the Department for Community Services. She had also been named in the Press. I knew she had a young baby, so I phoned her early in the morning, at about 8.00 o'clock, and said, "Jenny, they have just got me. I suspect they will be coming for you. You had better get the baby organised." She was brought into the police station a little later, with the baby at her breast, and she was charged and locked up in the Kununurra Police Station. I refused to cooperate with the process.

Hon E.J. Charlton: That is unbelievable.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I believed that Western Australia had gone to its absolute nadir, the pits.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Section 54B, the Noonkanbah convoy, and the Electoral Act - they had gone to the pits of the respected democratic traditions of a State. I was taken in the police van to the Wyndham Prison. My memories of that prison are very real, although not all painful. They burned onto my consciousness as a human being. I went to prison to be there along with some Aboriginal people with whom I had been working. I remember seeing their jaws drop with disbelief as the police van opened and they saw me. They had been told that a white man had been arrested, and they presumed that it was for a drug offence. I remember a very dear friend of mine, Herbert Anthony, whose jaw dropped wide, and he said, "Brother, I am in charge of the laundry. I had heard of this white bloke, and I have given you the worst prison outfit that you could imagine because I thought it was some white fellow. I did not know it was you."

Hon P.G. Pandal: And you are still wearing it!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: So I got dressed up in the prison greens. I remember another chap, Norman Horace, an Aboriginal man, who was a bantam weight champion in his day, who said to me, "Tom, people like you who work with people like us have to expect to end up in places like this." I went to bed that night in the prison dormitory accommodation. The

deprivation of liberty was quite painful. The prison officers were very courteous and respectful, but they were in absolute control of every aspect of our lives. I lay on my prison bed that night, and I made a resolution that I would spend the next years of my life ensuring that the political party and the members of Parliament who had formed a Government which had done such dreadful things to the Electoral Act, and in the State, as would lead to someone as innocent as I ending up in prison -

Hon A.A. Lewis: Worse things than voting against one-vote-one-value?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: - would be thrown out of office. So I spent -

Hon A.A. Lewis: This is all rhetoric.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon A.A. Lewis: At least we are prepared to vote for it, which is more than the Labor Party is.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I do not mind if Hon Sandy Lewis wants to make his farewell speech, but not during my speech.

Sometimes, when one speaks in the Chamber, one is speaking about something one feels very strongly about, and one really hopes that members will take the opportunity of listening and learning a bit. There is something I want to say by way of assuring the Opposition, because I really want members opposite to know about this. There is probably a lesson in this for my colleagues as well.

My energies as a member of Parliament came from that experience. The Court Government created my energies by its opposition to the democratic -

Hon A.A. Lewis: We thought we were giving strong energies to people. Now we know we failed, seeing how much energy you have.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Is there a mechanism to deal with this?

Hon A.A. Lewis interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is a mechanism, and the mechanism will be put into effect shortly. In the meantime, I am very interested in what the honourable member is saying.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Thank you, Mr President. I am sorry to spoil all the fun, but I am not in a funny mood.

My energies have kept me going for the last nine years, ensuring that a democratic party - a party that has responsible democratic traditions - has been in Government in this State; and those energies have come from my experience in the Wyndham Prison, and the prelude to it. It was that that encouraged me to stand for the seat when Hon Bill Withers retired as the result of the gerrymander of 1982. It was that that kept me going in support of the candidate for Pilbara, Mrs Buchanan; that made me work slavishly in support of our candidate for the Gascoyne by-election, Kevin Leahy; and that is what kept me going again during the Northern Rivers campaign. That was because I wanted to keep out of office a party that did not respect the democratic traditions of this State. I must say that for me the fear of a change in the Government is perhaps softened a little because of the knowledge that there would be a coalition Government in which there would be National Party people who would have, it seems to me, a softer side to them. The more human side of the Opposition is expressed, in my view, through the National Party; so if we are thrust out of office at some stage, the National Party in a coalition Government will be the saving grace.

Hon Kay Hallahan: We will not be out of office for a long time.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No. As a result of that experience, I have never wanted to take steps to build up within the community great controversy -

Hon A.A. Lewis interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not know whether Hon A.A. Lewis is endeavouring to upset Hon Tom Stephens or whether he is endeavouring to upset me, but I am in possession of the mechanism that will ensure that the upsetting of me will not last very long. I am not in the habit of stopping people making interjections from time to time when the interjections are intelligent and relevant to whatever comment the honourable member is making; and I am

not in the business of protecting members unnecessarily, because each member is quite capable of looking after himself. However, I suggest to Hon A.A. Lewis that the tactic he is embarking upon at the moment is totally out of order and unacceptable, and if he does it again he will not be in a position to do it again tonight.

Hon A.A. Lewis: That is fair enough. I am quite prepared to go home.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will not pursue this point much further. I simply say that the lesson for me, and I hope the lesson for members opposite if they do form a Government, or even in their role as an Opposition, is not to belt about their opponents in such a way as to create division among the champions of various causes. If in the end they do not have enough human resources to fight to get into office on their own resources, they do not deserve to be in Government. As an Opposition, their way of ensuring that their chances of getting into Government would be increased, and that they would be worthy of getting into Government, would be better established if they followed this advice. I hope as we go into the 1990s they avoid the process of becoming the extremist party that they were in the 1980s. They will do themselves no service if they do that; but more importantly they will do the community of Western Australia no service, because it is only good debate between sensible parties and sensible individuals that is in the best interests of this State.

That was just a way of responding to an interjection on the issue of my being somehow dirtied by the fact that I was charged with an electoral offence. I want the House to know that that charge was dropped because the Crown Law Department realised, when the officers came to look at the evidence presented to them by the police, that there was nothing within the evidence that constituted a mandatory requirement for a conviction, and that is a requirement for my will to have overridden the will of any voter. The people I assisted to obtain postal votes wanted postal votes, and they obtained them through me. A number of other people were charged in the same circumstances, and they included the Liberal candidate who stood against me in 1982, Mr Jim Wilson.

Hon P.G. Pandal: You do not believe anything like that happened in your area during the last election campaign?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No, but an issue did come up, and that is what I will refer to. It is not an issue on which I have gone public before. That issue is now before the Electoral Commissioner, and he will make a decision. It is a matter that all members, including the members on my side of the House, will find interesting. I refer to a letter in response to an approach by Sylvia Hurse, one of our candidates for the Mining and Pastoral Region. She made an approach to the Electoral Commissioner, Les Smith, on the basis of the actions of Mr Don Shedley, who was a candidate for the One Australia Movement. He was known to have been handing out how to vote cards on polling day at a remote community. In response to this complaint, Mr Smith said -

I have now taken legal advice on the matters you have raised.

The primary complaint you sought to have investigated related to the handing out of "How to Vote" cards by Mr Don Shedley who was a candidate in the election.

Section 183(6) of the Electoral Act declares that any candidate who personally solicits the vote of any elector on polling day shall be guilty of undue influence.

There is a question of fact involved. That is, whether or not some request or appeal for the vote of the elector was made by Mr Shedley at the time of handing out the "How to Vote" card.

A candidate handing out such cards will place himself at risk of being seen to be attempting to influence or solicit the vote of the elector. The practice is risky and is generally viewed as being undesirable. It does not in itself appear a sufficient basis for an allegation of undue influence under section 183(6), nor is it otherwise an offence. It requires that there be some pressing appeal by the candidate for the vote.

On the material you have presented to me, there does not appear to be any breach of the Electoral Act in respect of Mr Shedley handing out "How to Vote" cards.

I imagine that comes as a surprise to everyone in this House because the wisdom of political parties has taught us not to hand out how to vote cards on polling day because that would be a breach of the Electoral Act. Yet here we have presumably Crown Law advice in the hands

of the Electoral Commissioner making a decision on the Electoral Act that is at odds with the conventional wisdom of the major political parties. We do not hand out how to vote cards as candidates or as members of Parliament because we understand the Electoral Act to prohibit that act. If that is not an offence, then maybe we as a Legislature need to be encouraged to consider what we were trying to do when we enacted that section of the legislation, and to consider whether we want to think again about that section to ensure that it is strengthened or eliminated altogether - if that is what we want to do. That letter was an interesting one to receive. I was happy to share it with my colleagues, and I thought, why not share it with the Opposition, which is no doubt desperately interested in the issue of electoral legislation.

Hon Kay Hallahan: That is very charitable.

Hon N.F. Moore: When we get to the schedule we will know how uncharitable the actions were.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Opposition could find itself not taking steps that might advantage its members because of some misapprehension about the Electoral Act.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: What about the free meals that Premier Burke used to provide in country towns?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The time has come for some steps to be taken to ensure that the informal vote is eradicated from Western Australian elections. As a presiding officer, Mr President, you probably have it within your power to make available in this building a US voting machine for members to look at and become familiar with. Members could then decide whether to suggest in legislation that we move from paperwork to mechanical or computer devices for the people of Western Australia to be able to record their votes. As well as that, I hope the Chamber at an early time will be refurbished so that those members on the cross benches will not be subject to the discomfort which I have found during this sitting, and that at the same time we might soon have in this Chamber computing equipment which will ensure that members stay abreast with the debate, in touch with debates in the past, become familiar with legislation and have it at hand from other Legislatures. In that way we would move more confidently away from the bewigged and begowned and pencil and notebook equipped people of the past into an era where, as members of Parliament, we take our place with colleagues from the corporate sector. We will then move into the computer age in such a way as to make use of facilities that will help us further to serve the people of Western Australia.

I hope that the Opposition has learnt something from my comments to ensure that it desists from moving in the partisan way of trying to polarise Western Australia and create bogey men -

Hon A.A. Lewis: Like the Labor Party bogey men.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Are you in favour of one-vote-one-value?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Instead, we should try to move towards a consensus type of operation which will not polarise the community but lead to a community which is softer in attitudes, one which is able to appreciate the needs of the community, the strength of an argument, and not simply accept that might is right and forcefulness the order of the day. We should move away from that heavy handedness against small individuals left to face the full brunt of the law and who experienced such savage blows against people who were only pursuing their democratic rights and ensuring that other people had that opportunity.

Mr President, I hope that members will have learnt a lot from the experience of the recent elections and not be attracted down other paths. Some talk is around that somehow the Opposition has the wind in its sails ready to block Supply or block the Budget. I hope that the born to rule attitude is one which has gone from its weaponry, and that it realises it is the Opposition. In that process the Opposition, like us, could learn something so that its members can present themselves to the people of Western Australia as a credible alternative that even we could tolerate being in Government at some stage.

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [8.06 pm]: I will be charitable and congratulate the Government on its narrow victory. The congratulations are veiled in that I wish the Government the best of luck for its term of office because I think it will need it.

I also add some words of praise for Professor and Mrs Reid for their work over the last few years. I was very pleased, as I am sure all members in this place were pleased, to hear of their re-appointment for the next two years.

The opening of Parliament was a very low key event and very different from the opening last year, which was the first I had experienced. The feeling this year was almost as if the Labor Government were apologising for being here.

Hon Kay Hallahan: Really! That is a fantasy.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: That feeling was understandable because, as we have heard tonight, if not for 161 votes in the right places the Government would not have been returned - together with the fact that it recorded only 48 per cent of the two party preferred vote. The gall of the State Government was noted, through the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform's sending a message of support to a group of Queenslanders who on 1 April were protesting about the 40th anniversary of the gerrymander in that State.

Perhaps another reason for the low key opening of Parliament was that people in Western Australia in a way - by the perceptions created - could be excused for thinking that the coalition parties had won the election. It is said that the greatest compliment is to imitate one's opposition, so this is a compliment to the Liberal Party and to Barry MacKinnon and his team, and says very little about the Labor Government. Many of the Liberal Party policies and initiatives have been stolen within a very short time of the election and imitated in a very cheap way. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I am talking about legislation introduced in this session relating to accountability, housing, and the disbanding of the Western Australian Development Corporation and Exim Corporation.

I am very pleased to see that the Government has moved to provide a rebate on stamp duty up to \$500 for first home purchasers. The limit of \$80 000 has been clarified. The legislation is a bit like Clayton's legislation because whoever framed it is obviously out of touch with what is happening in some parts of my electorate such as Dunsborough. No building blocks are available in Dunsborough for under \$50 000 and one could not build much of a house on a block for \$30 000.

Hon Graham Edwards: There are many vacant blocks there. I was there a while ago and I was amazed at the vacant land.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: No, there are not. There is only a handful on the market, causing a real bottleneck in supply.

Hon Graham Edwards: I am not suggesting that they are all on the market. I am suggesting that there are many vacant blocks.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I know what the Minister is saying - many blocks are not being purchased by speculators.

Hon Graham Edwards: I am suggesting they are.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Many are being purchased by people who want second homes and who are setting up a home in which to retire. However, they are not really vacant blocks from the point of view of speculators.

This is a very large State. It is hard to imagine that there is so much land and yet we have acute shortages for housing. It is not the land that is the problem but the Government's red tape or the lack of political will to move it that is creating the problem. For once in my life I agree with Gough Whitlam, who was in Western Australia last week and who described the Western Australian Administration as corrupt and incompetent. The Secretary of the Civil Service Association quite rightly took exception to those words because public servants in Western Australia are just as efficient as public servants anywhere else in Australia. I am sure that Gough Whitlam's remarks referred to the political Administration which has administered this State for the last six years.

Another feature of the election was the way the ordinary membership of several union bodies were misled by their leadership and conned into supporting a Government that they did not want to support.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Give us one example.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I will in a moment. The Labor Government has been no friend of honest, hard working, career minded public servants. However, because of political affiliations with the ALP, the leadership of trade unions representing public servants, teachers, nurses and timber workers recommended a few days before the election that they vote for the Labor Party. The actions of those leaders were politically motivated - I am not saying anything about public servants. It is a pity that their membership was not presented with all of the unbiased facts so that they could make up their minds on the way they should vote.

I am concerned about a disease that is creeping through the south west and it is not AIDS, cancer or Ross River virus, even though that has been fairly severe in that area. I refer to the introduction of trade union thuggery by the Builders Labourers Federation on construction sites in the south west. Formerly, the south west was a place in which developers and businessmen could anticipate the costs associated with any project. Trade unions existed to further the legitimate aims of their members and retailers could go about their business without fear of threats or blackmail. All of that began to change with the commencement of the Worsley aluminium construction site, was furthered during the construction of the Austmark tower in Bunbury, and became an art form at the construction sites of CSM Chemicals Ltd at Kemerton and the Centrepont shopping centre in Bunbury.

The Builders Labourers Federation had 16 members employed on the construction of the chloride plant at Kemerton and yet it controlled the entire operation. The local organiser was a Mr McPharland. He is an extremely strong person and the other trade union leaders would not or could not stand up to him. Many examples of the tactics employed at SCM Chemicals are worth noting. Approximately 200 metal trade workers were taken out on strike even though the BLF controls only 16 members on the site. Trade unions, led by the BLF, managed to extract a termination bonus from the company in addition to the original agreement which was negotiated in the Industrial Relations Commission. I believe the project manager paid the termination bonus to get the union off the site. The project manager finished the construction by employing his own workers.

Frequent stop-work meetings were called on the site and I have been reliably informed that 10 per cent of discussions at those meetings involved the topics for which the meetings were called and 90 per cent involved rabble rousing.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Were you present?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I said I had reliable informants.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: You did not provide the information to the assertion you made about so-called affiliated unions of the Labor Party. Now you are saying you want us to believe you again, without providing evidence of the reliable sources.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes. None of us would have anything to say in this Chamber if we did not rely on sources.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: You are misleading the House. Give us evidence.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It seems that these union heavies have been deliberately sent down from the northern areas of this State to establish a presence in the south west because the south west is an expanding area.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Was Stanley Harris one of those heavies?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I do not know; I have not heard his name.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: For two years he was based in Bunbury with a major union and you don't know his name!

Hon BARRY HOUSE: As I said before, the unions tactics became an art form during the construction of the Centrepont shopping centre at Bunbury. That project was shrouded in controversy from its beginning. It began a couple of years ago with a dubious selection process when Mr Tilli was awarded the contract ahead of other applicants. Nobody quite knows how he got the contract, but many rumours abound. The development of land at the railway marshalling yards stumbled along from one crisis to another for a long time. Many of the subcontractors working on that site would work only for cash and others were fearful that they would not get paid for their work. That fear was justified when eventually Tilli and

his company went under. The project was taken over by the Merrifield-Cooksey group and put back on the rails, but it went off the rails again. BLF heavies again appeared on the site and they were again led by Mr McPharland.

It is interesting to note that of the three local organisers I know of on that site, two were Scotsmen and the other a New Zealander; not many people on the site were native to the south west. There was a maximum of 28 BLF members on that site at peak times and during the course of construction there were approximately 50 BLF members. Only seven or eight of these people appeared to be troublemakers during the whole exercise. It is worth noting some of the practices at that Centrepont Shopping Centre. Numerous threats of physical violence were made to workers on the site and also to retailers and shopkeepers. That smacks of underworld operations, and we do not expect such things in Australia. Extortion took place; for example, people were told that the workers would not lift a finger to help unless they were given a carton of cans. These claims are unsubstantiated in terms of documentary evidence but people have been quite willing to come to me and provide these examples. Union representatives on the site took every opportunity of extracting additional money for nothing; for example, a 24-hour strike was called because there was no iced water in the amenity hut. If the union representatives had been serious in their request, it would have taken five minutes to supply that water. However, a 24-hour strike was manufactured on that small excuse. The retailers who had not faced this situation before were either unable or too frightened to do anything about it. General workers on the site who wanted to get on with the job were bullied into situations to fit in with the union's demands.

Qualified tradesmen were also subject to harassment. I know of one carpenter who set up as a retailer in the new shopping centre and was told by an unqualified lout that he was not to build the cupboards in his own shop. Another tradesman was about to fix a cupboard, but before doing so it was necessary to sweep away some rubbish from the work area. He was told in no uncertain terms that he was not allowed to sweep that rubbish away and that the job belonged to another worker. It took half an hour to track down a professional female sweeper, who took one minute to do a job that could have been done by anybody. The result of that exercise was a loss of more than half an hour's time and effort. Another retailer setting up a shop was not allowed to drive his vehicle onto the site and was told that a TWU driver would be required to do that. He was told that the vehicle would be unloaded but there was some delay in that taking place. He attempted to unload the gear from his own truck and was threatened with being blackballed. His truck was eventually unloaded five hours after it was ready for unloading. There are examples of licensed qualified tradesmen who won contracts to work on the site but could not start that work until they joined a union. It is obvious that the unions were more intent on chasing membership than in improving members' conditions.

On the Saturday prior to the opening day on Monday, 13 February 1989, the principals involved in the development were cleaning up the centre for the opening because the trade union work force had not turned up. On Sunday, the following day, the BLF workers turned up because they would be paid at double time rates. A huge argument ensued and the result was a 24-hour strike. The workers were on strike throughout the opening of the centre. The principals returned to work and cleaned the centre as best they could for the opening. The centre opened as planned on Monday, but it was unfinished. It was an embarrassing and expensive exercise for the developers, retailers and the people of Bunbury to have a half completed shopping centre open amid that controversy. In the last week of construction many threats were made to turn up the heat, including a threat of closure and the attempted extortion of \$15 000 in the form of a bonus payment from the contractors on the site. As an indication of the type of person leading this bunch, one BLF shop-steward by the name of Butcher viciously beat up a fellow BLF member in Bunbury. He has been charged by the police with assault over this incident and he is the type of person the BLF uses to frighten people.

Hon Graham Edwards: Shades of the young Liberal movement in the northern suburbs!

Hon BARRY HOUSE: This guy was sacked a week after the opening, but he hung around the site for two weeks and parked his car nearby. He was there on BLF instructions to intimidate the workers and shopkeepers involved in that project. The result of these activities is really important, and we can learn from history. First of all, the good and honest people - shopkeepers and general workers - from the Bunbury area and the south west generally simply do not deserve to be subjected to threats, extortion and blackmail.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Please give one example. Provide the evidence.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I will.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: You said that before.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: These people want to earn an honest living. The developers have estimated that they are facing a \$600 000 overrun in costs. Some of these overrun costs are due to time bombs that came to light following the Tilli collapse, but it is estimated by the developers that the BLF's activities cost more than \$100 000 for the Centrepont development. In addition, although the shopkeepers' costs have not been individually tallied, they will somehow be passed on to the customer as a result of increased rents and prices. It is a no win situation.

It seems also that an offence may have been committed. Under State legislation it is an offence to force a person to join a union; yet subcontractors and workers were forced to join trade unions in this development by intimidation.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Give one example.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The problem for me in this whole issue is the threat to the future of the south west, which is on the brink of many new developments. For example, in the Kemerton Garden Estate there is talk of an aluminium smelter being constructed and also a pulp mill nearby. Many tourist projects are in the pipeline in the area and Barrack Silicon is presently negotiating the second stage. Many problems are looming for the Barrack Silicon project, which I will refer to in due course

The State Government's response to this has been totally inadequate. A shopkeeper by the name of Mr Collins - here is the example for Hon Sam Piantadosi - received a visit from two representatives of the Minister for Labour in response to complaints and accusations he had made. Mr Collins was interviewed for 15 minutes, during which neither of the officers took any notes. At the end of the interview they walked out and said they would follow it up. The Minister for Labour was quoted as saying that no shopkeepers would come forward with complaints. That shopkeeper was willing to document his complaints but the officers were not interested in writing them down. There is something wrong with the system.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Who was the Minister?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Mr Troy.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Were they members of the union? You are talking about union thuggery.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I am talking about members of the Minister for Labour's staff investigating a complaint. Apparently the Deputy Premier, Mr Parker, was of some assistance during the SCM disputes and the Premier, Mr Dowding, was approached during the time of the Centrepont problems. It does not appear as though there has been much reaction there.

Hon T.G. Butler: Did that shopkeeper complain to you?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes. I have it in writing, and I can read out some of the letter if that is what the member wants.

Hon T.G. Butler: Did you take it up with the Department of Industrial Relations?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes.

Hon T.G. Butler: What did they say?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I have not received a reply. It is obvious that in this situation the State Government's hands are tied because of its affiliation with the trade unions and the ALP.

Hon T.G. Butler: You are being absolutely ridiculous. You are nearly as ridiculous as Mr Masters.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The first problem arises because the State Government has not deregistered the BLF. In 1972 the State Liberal-National Party Government commenced proceedings to deregister the BLF. When Mr Burke became Premier one of his first actions was to abandon this bid to deregister the BLF. In 1984 when the matter arose again I believe the present Premier, Mr Dowding, was then the Minister for Industrial Relations.

Hon T.G. Butler: Mr Burke did not abandon the plan.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Who did?

Hon T.G. Butler: No-one. There was no suggestion that the BLF be deregistered in Western Australia, other than from Mr Masters.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The Labor Governments in New South Wales, Victoria, and the ACT deregistered the BLF.

Hon T.G. Butler: They were deregistered everywhere.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: If we on this side of politics were in a coalition Government at the moment we would already have procedures in place to deregister the BLF.

Hon T.G. Butler: And to gaol people.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: There would already be legislation in force to -

Hon T.G. Butler: They would gaol people.

Hon G.E. Masters: Some of them have been gaoled.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The comment I made earlier to another member applies equally to everyone, and as I have often said, members do not have to like what a member says but they do have to listen to it, in the knowledge that the member will in turn ultimately have to listen to you. I suggest that members let Mr House finish what he has to say, which will give an early opportunity to those who wish to refute what he has to say.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I am sure that if we were in Government we would have already introduced legislation to enable the holding of secret ballots in union affairs. That has been done successfully in the United Kingdom. We would have moved to address some of the difficulties with the arbitration system. We believe that if workers go on strike, they should not be paid during that time, and that the leaders of the unions who call for strike action should endure the same sort of deprivation of salary as do their members. If they are to be paid while on strike, then legitimate reasons for that payment must be given.

The largest project under construction at the moment in the south west is Barrack Silicon, and it is just beginning to experience problems with the unions. Members will remember that this project has been raised in the Chamber on a number of occasions, and it has already had a fairly muddied history. The silicon plant eventually ended up at Kemerton, via Wundowie, Pinjarra and Picton, and after a lot of political interference. The Kemerton construction site is now up and running and is just over 50 per cent completed. However, since 1 March there has been industrial action, which has caused the loss of 15 per cent of productive time for the last month of construction. The developments on this site show signs of following the trend on other sites in the south west such as SCM and Centrepont.

The contractors for the Barrack Silicon project tried to head off some of this trouble in November 1988 by going to the State Industrial Relations Commission, which is the umpire in disputes of this nature. The commission handed down a site agreement for this site. One of the current points of contention is an application by the union for severance pay. The commission made it clear that severance pay in any form was not permissible under the commission's wage fixing principles. The commission's decision said -

"For such a claim to be pursued or agreed to in the absence of such changed circumstances would constitute a breach of the relevant awards and the Commissions' Principles and call into question the offending parties' place in the existing system.

The claim is refused and is not to be pursued other than by means available through the Commission processes and without resort to industrial action."

Since November the contractors have abided fully by that agreement, but for some reason the union has decided not to. This appears to be part of a union push into the south west and a campaign for severance pay. The south west is getting an ugly reputation for this type of trade union activity, which is becoming a threat to future projects.

There is another important aspect to the Barrack Silicon project. Barrack Silicon is a new export industry, which is trying to build a reputation overseas for reliability and credibility. Negotiations are currently taking place for the second stage of the project to go ahead, but some concern has already been expressed overseas about Barrack Silicon's ability to supply.

This concern had also been expressed at the beginning of the project, and it now seems that the credibility of the project is being placed in doubt. The project also involves some exposure for the taxpayers. Members may be aware that when the silicon project Bill was debated in the House, one of the clauses was that the State Government would pay the company \$1.1 million per month for any delays occurring up to six months after 30 June 1988. So that represents the possibility of \$6.6 million for the taxpayers to have to front up with if there is any further delay in this project. That amount of money may sound like small fry compared with the losses we have heard about during the last six to 12 months connected with Rothwells and other financial institutions, but it represents a lot of school classrooms, hospital beds and other things that could have been bought with that money.

I am concerned about developments such as this in the south west. I live in the south west and I have a lot of faith in its future. There is an immense amount of potential, but that potential is being put at risk by these sorts of developments, which are due to industrial action taking place on projects in the south west. I do not want to see the creation of trade union thuggery, as I have previously used the term. I want to see the trade unions performing their rightful and sensible role in society and not being used for blackmail, extortion, and all the sorts of threats of which we have seen examples.

Hon T.G. Butler: Such as what? I understand you are the shadow spokesman for industrial relations. What is their correct role?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: With that proviso and those few warnings about the threat to the projects in the south west and the future of the south west, I support the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [8.40 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Sport - Rowing, Kings Cup

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Minister for Sport and Recreation) [8.41 pm]: Before the House adjourns I want to place on record my appreciation and congratulations to all of those people who made such a magnificent contribution to the staging of the national rowing competition, the Kings Cup, on Wellington Weir last weekend. It is unfortunate that that event wrote itself into the record books not because of the racing but because of cyclone Ned, which visited upon the area and washed out the event.

In recognising the efforts of those people and in bringing them to the attention of the House, I want to convey to the House and place on the record that it was one of the most magnificent community efforts that I have ever seen go into the staging of a national event in this State. It was absolutely tremendous to see the way in which community groups such as the local authorities, schools, industry groups and sporting clubs came together to make a contribution to the organisation of the event and the venue at Wellington Weir. Because of that very great community spirit and voluntary effort it must have been a tremendous blow to those people to see the event cancelled because of the inclement weather caused by the cyclone. Those people should take a great deal of pride in their effort and in the tremendous community spirit that was engendered in the area. In no way should they feel responsible for the fact that the event was unable to be held. That was simply a factor beyond their control.

I have mentioned the community groups but would like to single out a couple of people. One is Tom Jones, who recently retired from Parliament as the member for Collie. He did a huge amount of work, and his contribution was recognised by the naming of the access road into Wellington Weir after him - it is called Tom Jones Drive. I would also like to recognise the Australian Rowing Council, its Western Australian association, and its acting President, Mr Bill Cooper, who, along with many of his colleagues, put in many hours of work. I also want to recognise our regional officer in Bunbury, Mr Geoff Toy, who works for the Minister for Sport and Recreation and who contributed countless hours in the evenings and on weekends working shoulder to shoulder with all the community groups to stage this event.

If members are down that way they should call in and look at the facility provided by those community groups. Most of the work was done on a voluntary basis and I am sure members

will appreciate the colossal amount of work that went into the event. It must have been a tremendous blow also to those young athletes who came to Western Australia to compete and who worked so hard for so long, many of them training for nine or 10 months for this event. I congratulate the athletes as well, and the many officials who came here from the Eastern States, for the way in which they accepted the loss of that event. It might not be a tremendous thing in world or even in Australian terms, but that event meant a great deal to the people of that region and to the people who travelled so far to get there, only to find that because of the cyclone they could not compete. I feel I have done some justice to their tremendous spirit by placing these remarks on the record in this House and by publicly commending them all for their admirable community spirit.

HON W.N. STRETCH (Lower Central) [8.45 pm]: On behalf of members on this side of the House and as one of the upper House members for the region I would like to add my congratulations to the people of Collie and the surrounding districts for staging the King's Cup Rowing Regatta. The adjoining shires also had people on the organising committee and it really was an effort of combined will through virtually the entire south west region that made the staging of this event possible. I, too, pay great tribute to Tom Jones. No-one could have worked harder to get the event staged in Collie, and he gave tremendous leadership to the team when all the impossible things started happening. Early in the preparation of the course Tom Jones was the trouble shooter who seemed to be able to find things like the unobtainable ropes that enabled them to pull the snags out of the course.

To give the House some idea of the scope of the event, it was estimated that it cost somewhere in the vicinity of \$7 million to transport the athletes and the boats to the venue. When I was there we were looking at the boats stacked up on the bank on that dreadfully bleak and windy day, and someone estimated that \$5 million worth of boats were sitting on the foreshore. The foreshore itself was a credit to the people. A few months ago it was forest running down to a stumpy, gravelly, washed bank. Thousands of tonnes of sand were dumped there to create a beach from which to stage the event.

I agree with the Minister that people who go to the area should turn down Tom Jones Drive and have a look at the venue. If they try to visualise what was there several months ago and look at what is there now, they will have some idea of the sweat that went into creating that venue. As a result Western Australia now has for the first time an international standard rowing course and we hope it will be used in the future. We are sure we will not have any more cyclones at that time. It was just very sad that those three or four days of inclement weather should have coincided with the regatta - we could not have had worse conditions for rowing. I have spent many years in a rowing eight and I know that one can row in most weathers but it was truly impossible on the days of the regatta. Gales were blowing down the course and it really was very depressing for everybody.

The spirit of the competing crews was commendable. I did not hear many complaints, although some people were very disappointed. Some of the athletes were trained to a very high peak of fitness and, as members would know, when people train to that level tempers may fray and trouble can break out. I saw no incidents at all of ill will, bad temper or bad sportsmanship, and it is a credit to the young people of Australia that they could put up with such difficulty for so long. A young niece of mine sat down there waiting for the schoolgirls' event for nearly 24 hours before she could compete. However, she was one of the lucky ones; for some there was no racing from midday on the Saturday until the regatta was officially cancelled on the Sunday night, except for a few that were able to race on the Monday.

It was a great disappointment to the people of Collie that the event could not be staged to a successful completion, as a huge amount of work went into it - even into simple things such as the catering. Catering seems a simple thing when one is eating a hamburger, but the logistics of getting that food out there in those weather conditions required a sterling effort and it was a great credit to those people. I would like members on this side of the House to be associated with our congratulations and sympathy to the people of Collie for staging such an event and really putting Western Australia back on the rowing map.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.49 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

BOYANUP RAILWAY MUSEUM - WESTRAIL

Leasing Fee

2. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Boyanup Railway Museum, operated by volunteers, has to pay \$140 a quarter to Westrail for leasing the land on which the museum stands?
- (2) Will the Minister consider waiving this fee, or its reduction to a token or peppercorn amount, given the high community service which is provided by the museum?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The annual rental is \$572, and as this is a nominal charge only which compares favourably with that charged for land leased by the Hotham Valley Tourist Railway (WA) Inc at Pinjarra and Dwellingup, it is not proposed to waive or reduce the amount.

ENERGY - KWINANA POWER STATION

Coal Reversion - Kwinana Town Council, Concern

3. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the concern by the Kwinana Town Council over the State Energy Commission's decision to revert to coal at the Kwinana power station?
- (2) Is the reversion a permanent or temporary measure?
- (3) What steps have been taken to consult the Environmental Protection Authority on the move?
- (4) If none, will he arrange for this to occur and then make the EPA's report public?
- (5) Is he aware of associated concerns that other industries are seeking permission to convert to coal burning?
- (6) Will he make a public statement outlining Government policy on these matters?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Coal has been used at Kwinana power station in varying quantities since the late 1970s. Increased energy demand has resulted in the need to burn coal at Kwinana at a higher rate than in the recent past. The rate of coal burn in the future will depend on the availability of alternative fuels.
- (3)-(5) The Environmental Protection Authority has been kept informed of the State Energy Commission of WA's fuel policies for Kwinana power station over many years. The EPA is currently reviewing emission standards in the Kwinana area. SECWA and other industries have been contacted and will be required to comply with the standards set down.
- (6) Government policy is clear. Any industrial activity will be in accordance with EPA requirements.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

5. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Will the Premier indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

As the member is aware, the Rottnest Island regulation referred to has been amended so that no restriction is placed on the normal activities of the news media or photographers.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

6. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Treasurer:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

7. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Attorney General:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

8. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers,

that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?

- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon Kay HALLAHAN replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

10. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

Please see answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

11. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

12. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

See reply to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

14. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

15. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Regional Development:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

16. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

17. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of

or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?

- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

18. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

See answer to question 5.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - PHOTOGRAPHERS

Sanctions - Regulations

21. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Minister indicate those Statutes or regulations which, like previous regulation 54 under the Rottnest Island Authority Act, make any demands of or impose sanctions against the news media, or commercial photographers, that they either seek permission to take photographs or make requests for payment of a premium for such a privilege?
- (2) Are there any guidelines and/or regulations in place, or in a draft form, which require news media or other photographers to avoid taking pictures of objects or scenes which may put the department, the agency, or the Government in a bad light?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

See answer to question 5.

PERCY MARKHAM COLLECTION - VINTAGE AND VETERAN CARS

Sale

23. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for The Arts:

- (1) Has the sale yet taken place of the Percy Markham collection of vintage/veteran cars?
- (2) If so -
- (a) which cars have been sold;
 - (b) what was the sale price of each;
 - (c) to whom will the proceeds be paid; and
 - (d) what steps have been taken to honour the previous Minister's promise that the cars must remain in WA?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) (a)-(b) See answer to question (1);
 - (c) the proceeds are to be retained by the museum; and
 - (d) in accordance with the previous Minister's wishes the 10 cars from the Markham collection have been offered for sale by tender, as one lot, and to remain in Western Australia. The successful tenderer will be required to provide details of proposals for their display in Western Australia. Tenders close on 5 April 1989.

ROADS - CANNING HIGHWAY-SOUTH TERRACE INTERSECTION

Traffic Arrows - Installation

25. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of representations made to his department for traffic arrows to be installed at the intersection of Canning Highway and South Terrace, Como, to assist South Terrace traffic turning into the highway?
- (2) If so, will the matter be investigated and when will the outcome be known?
- (3) Can he advise the approximate number of vehicles making turns into Canning Highway from both sides of South Terrace in each of the past five years?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

- (1)-(2) The Main Roads Department recently made minor adjustments to the signal timing at this intersection. I understand that this has overcome the problem experienced by motorists turning right from South Terrace.
A further improvement to the signal installation will be undertaken in 1989-90 when right turn arrows will be provided for traffic turning right from Canning Highway into South Terrace.
- (3) A 12-hour manual count in August 1985 is the most recent on record and showed that westbound traffic in South Terrace included 357 vehicles turning right and 804 vehicles turning left. Eastbound traffic included 1 115 vehicles turning right and 471 turning left.

ROADS - BURSWOOD ISLAND BRIDGE

Current Status

28. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the current status of the Burswood Island Traffic Bridge, in relation to -
 - (a) its cost;
 - (b) its proposed starting date for construction; and
 - (c) its proposed opening date?
- (2) Has all work relating to the rerouting now been completed?
- (3) If so, what has been the total cost of this?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

- (1) Details of cost and project timing have not yet been finalised. However, the Government remains committed to building the bridge at the earliest practicable date and in the most cost effective manner. Construction is expected to be under way within five years, given Budget and technical considerations.

- (2) The work is progressive and comprises many phases up to the commencement of construction. A report on the general alignment is nearing completion.
- (3) Answered by (2).

TRANSPORT - RAILWAYS
Boyup Brook-Katanning - Closure

29. Hon A.A. LEWIS to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Government intend closing the Boyup Brook to Katanning railway line?
- (2) If so, when?
- (3) If the Government intends closing this line, will the railway reserve be sold to the adjoining landholders?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

- (1) As rail services have not operated on this line for a number of years, formal closure of the line would appear appropriate.
- (2) As a railways discontinuance Act is required, the timing of formal closure of the line will depend on the Government's legislative program.
- (3) The disposal of rail reserve land following formal closure is the responsibility of the Minister for Lands. Decision on utilisation of the land would be made following a full investigation of possible alternative uses.

AUTOPSIES - WEEKENDS
Work Cessations - Delays

31. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is it correct that autopsy work resulting from sudden deaths cannot be carried out on weekends because the relevant authority ceases to operate on weekends?
- (2) If so, is he aware that the delays in autopsy work that result from the weekend work cessations create delays in the making of funeral arrangements and cause prolonged distress and anxiety for families of the deceased?
- (3) As autopsies can be regarded as essential services to the community, will he undertake consideration of having such work conducted over the weekend periods, thereby helping to alleviate the distress of many bereaved people.

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1)-(3) Inquiries with the Health Department reveal that post mortem examinations in Perth are performed on weekends as a matter of urgency and routine. I am advised that there are no undue delays in the performance of post mortem examinations.

WATER RESOURCES - WATER PIPE
Ord/Fitzroy Rivers - Feasibility Study

32. Hon H.W. GAYFER to the Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Water Resources:

Would the Minister please table -

- (a) the feasibility study and plans;
 - (b) the costing; and
 - (c) the phasing,
- of the proposition to pipe water south from either -
- (i) the Ord River; or
 - (ii) the Fitzroy?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

Discussions commenced late last year with South Australian officials regarding the feasibility of piping water from the Kimberley. As these discussions are continuing, I am unable to provide specific details as requested by the member.

EDUCATION - SCHOOLS

Transportable Classrooms - Shortages, Departmental Provision

34. Hon MARGARET McALEER to the Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Education:

In the light of an apparent acute shortage of transportable classrooms at the beginning of the school year, what provision is the Ministry of Education making for new transportable classrooms?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The shortage of transportable classrooms at the beginning of the school year was exacerbated by the contractor on the new Tambrey Primary School in Karratha going into liquidation towards the end of last year. This meant that five temporary rooms had to be retained at Millars Well Primary School this year.

Arrangements have since been made to purchase five new units. In addition, other rooms will become available later this year as various construction projects are completed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING - MASTER MEDIA AGENCY SYSTEM

Expenditure

12. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the Government's decision to create a master agency contract to handle the advertising and promotion programs of all Government departments and agencies and ask -

- (1) How much has been spent on air time and print media space via Marketforce Pty Ltd in -
 - (a) each of the last three years; and
 - (b) the current financial year?
- (2) Will he list the Government departments and agencies responsible for that expenditure?
- (3) Will he list the headings under which the expenditure was made or the nature of the advertising or promotion campaigns involved?
- (4) Will he arrange as a matter of urgency for a full disclosure of the production costs incurred by all Government departments and agencies for such campaigns as -
 - (a) the care and respect program aimed at seniors;
 - (b) the family strategy;
 - (c) the law and order package featuring the Commissioner of Police and the Leader of the National Party;
 - (d) the R & I Bank's program of reassurance featuring Mr David Fischer and Mr Des Guilfoyle;
 - (e) all other Government or semi-Government advertising or promotion campaigns?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) The master media agency system has been in operation since July 1987; that is, a matter of 21 months -

- (a) figures are therefore not available for each of the last three years; and
(b) figures are not yet available for the current financial year.

Total expenditure for the financial year ending June 1988 was \$10 425 143 with the majority of expenditure being undertaken by the Tourism Commission, the Public Health Department, the SGIO, the Lotteries Commission and the R & I Bank.

(2)-(3)

The information requested by the member will take considerable time to collate and I am not prepared to allocate resources to this general task.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I'll bet you're not.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: If the member has any specific concerns and he raises them with me I will have them investigated.

- (4) Production costs are not assessed as part of the master media agency system. All production costs are incurred by individual advertising agencies employed by Government departments and instrumentalities and are internal matters for advertising agencies and their clients. Advertising expenditure for both media and production will be itemised in all departments' annual reports as a matter of public record.

SWAN BREWERY SITE - PARKING BAYS

Public Assurances - Maximum Number

13. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Is he aware of public assurances given by the Minister's predecessor over the number of car parking bays being provided opposite the Swan brewery site?
(2) Will he inform the House of the maximum number of bays intended for the site?
(3) What is the maximum number of levels involved and how many of these levels are below ground level?
(4) What is the guaranteed maximum height that the car park will protrude above the ground level?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(4)

The Minister for Planning has provided the following reply -

I am not aware of the "certain public assurances" to which the member refers. It is intended that parking will be provided for about 200 vehicles. However, the final dimensions and design of the car park are yet to be determined.

RURAL ADJUSTMENT AND FINANCE CORPORATION - ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Transfer

14. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Budget Management:

I refer to an article in the *Farmers Weekly* dated 29 March 1989, which might not be a paper on the Minister's reading list, but which discusses the transfer of the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation from the responsibility of the Minister for Agriculture to the responsibility of the Treasury over which, I suppose, the Minister has some control or, at least, some input.

- (1) Will the change of this administrative responsibility cause difficulties in respect of State and Federal funding, bearing in mind that RAFCOR

is mainly financed from the Department of Primary Industries, the Federal body?

- (2) Can the Minister for Budget Management give this House an undertaking to study the fiscal ramifications of this change of responsibility to ensure that Western Australia's share of such relief funding for farmers is not cut back in any way?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

I do not have my list of allocated Statutes with me, and the first thing I have to confess is that I am not sure whether this authority has been allocated to my own portfolio or to that of the Treasurer. The fact that I am not even sure on that point will preface my further confession that I am not in a position to provide an answer to the detail of the honourable member's question. I will take it on notice and make sure that he receives that information.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE - FEDERAL-STATE DEALINGS
Ministerial Responsibility

15. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Budget Management:

Could the Minister indicate whether Federal-State financial dealings fall within his interest or that of the Treasurer?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I do not think the question can be answered in as simple a form as it is put. There are many aspects of the financial relations between the Commonwealth and State which are left to individual Ministers to negotiate. On the whole, however, Commonwealth-State financial relations are dealt with by the Premier. That certainly was the case when he was both the Premier and the Treasurer. I am sure that he will continue to play a very active role in that respect, but I would expect that the Treasurer will have a role to play as well.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - MINISTER FOR BUDGET MANAGEMENT
Responsibilities

16. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Budget Management:

We have had this ongoing debate for some years. In view of the fact that we will have a lot of new members in the House in the next session of Parliament, I ask the Minister once again if he could prepare a list of his responsibilities as Minister for Budget Management, otherwise we will go on with the airy fairy business of passing responsibility from the Treasurer to the Minister for Budget Management ad infinitum.

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

Although this question, as everyone will notice, is entirely without notice, it will indicate my state of preparation if I say that I am in a position to table that information at this stage. The information has been provided to me by the Clerk and I will have it circulated.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT - GINGER'S, NORTHBRIDGE
Head-Tail Dice Game - Prosecutions

17. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Would the Minister inform this House whether he is aware that members of his department attended an establishment known as Ginger's in Northbridge where, I understand, a game of head-tail dice was conducted last night and, if so, are prosecutions to follow? If not, I take it that the Minister will not object to me commencing a game in this Parliament when the House rises tonight.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I assume that that action may have been conducted by members of the Police Force, but I ask that the question be placed on notice in order that I can clarify the situation and provide the information the member seeks.

ELECTORAL REFORM BILL - NEW LEGISLATION
Government Intentions

18. Hon E.J. CHARLTON to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Bearing in mind the statement made by the Leader of the House in the other place is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill on electoral reform in this session of Parliament?
- (2) If not in this session, when?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

There will be no such Bill introduced this session. The timetable for its introduction will require consideration by Cabinet and that has not yet been given.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD AGENCY - NANNUP
Application

19. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Has the Minister received a request for a Totalisator Agency Board agency in Nannup?
- (2) If not, is a minimum shire population required to establish either a full blown TAB agency or a sub-agency in a hotel?
- (3) Would the Minister give the House some idea of the general guidelines? He may be aware some of the people in small towns feel deprived if they cannot place their bets.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(3)

I do not receive applications of that nature. If the member places his question on notice I will pursue the information and provide it to the member.

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION - REPORT No 34
Product Liability

20. Hon A.A. LEWIS to the Attorney General:

Has the Attorney General read the Australian Law Reform Commission paper No 34 on product liability?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

Not recently.

Several members interjected.

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION - PRODUCT LIABILITY
McGuinness' Newspaper Article

21. Hon A.A. LEWIS to the Attorney General:

I do not think it is a matter for levity.

Hon J.M. Brown: From your side.

Hon A.A. LEWIS: Or from any side. The Attorney General is a member of the Standing Committee of Attorneys General and I understand that the matter has been discussed by that committee. I assume that if the Attorney General attends those meetings he would know what has been discussed.

Has the Attorney read McGuinness' column in *The Australian* of last Thursday which discusses the Australian Law Reform Commission and says that we should do away with, "self-aggrandising meddlers" in the process of the law in respect of product liability and class actions?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I really think I should expand on my earlier response to Hon Sandy Lewis. The fact is I do not recall this particular report of the Australian Law Reform Commission and I add to that that I have not read McGuinness' article.

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION - REPORT No 34
Product Liability - McGuinness' Newspaper Article

22. Hon A.A. LEWIS to the Attorney General:

Will the Attorney General obtain some advice on both the article and the Law Reform Commission report in order that the people of Western Australia can understand where the Attorney General stands in regard to these matters?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The various Law Reform Commissions in Australia, let alone internationally, produce a great number of reports in any year and the extent to which work can be applied to considering them really relates to their subject matter. In particular we would always be interested in reports dealing with any subject matter which is currently before the Government for attention but where the exercise would be of academic interest only - where, for example, it is directed not at State legislation, but at possible Commonwealth legislative action - it would not necessarily be the best use of the very limited resources of my office and department to go into the proper study that would be required by some of the reports. That is all the more the case with the reports of the Australian Law Reform Commission because they tend to be very comprehensive indeed.

If there is something in the report which the honourable member would particularly like to draw to attention, or if there is a point of view which he would like to express, I would be interested to hear it and I would have the view he is pursuing made the subject of further advice to me.

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION - REPORT No 34
Product Liability - Adoption, Price Increases

23. Hon A.A. LEWIS to the Attorney General:

I thank the Attorney General for his conciliatory answer. Does he realise that if the Australian Law Reform Commission's report No 34 and the report, I forget its number, on class actions are adopted, all white goods, motor vehicles and farm machinery will automatically double in price? It maybe something his department should look at.

The PRESIDENT: That question is just about out of order; it is seeking an opinion and I do not know whether the Attorney General wants to answer it.

EVENTSCORP - MINISTRY FOR SPORT AND RECREATION
Control - Transfer

24. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Will EventsCorp be transferred to the control of the Ministry for Sport and Recreation?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

EventsCorp is not an area of my responsibility and the question should be placed on notice and directed to the Premier.

BOOKMAKERS - TURNOVER TAX
Western Australian Turf Club - Reduction Advice

25. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

As one week has now elapsed can the Minister confirm whether the Western Australian Turf Club has been advised of Cabinet's decision to reduce bookmakers' turnover tax?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I advise the member that the Western Australian Turf Club was advised informally before the decision was made public. It has since been advised formally.
