

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 6 July 1993

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

MOTION - URGENCY

Transperth; Fare Increase, Multirider Tickets

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): I have received the following letter -

Hon Clive Griffiths MLC

President

Legislative Council

Dear Mr President

I give notice that under SO 72, I shall move at today's sitting that the House adjourn until December 25, 1993 at 9.00am.

I shall move this motion for the purpose of:

- (a) inviting the Minister for Transport to make a statement in this House:
 - (i) detailing the steps taken by him, his department, or any other person under his direction or control or that of his department (in chronological order), to avoid any prospect or likelihood of persons using the fare increase as a means of profiteering or having that accusation made against his department;
 - (ii) the action taken by him or his department to diminish or control the availability of the existing stocks of Multi-rider tickets prior to the operative date of the increase;
 - (iii) disclosing the content statements or agreements made between his department and Multi-rider ticket vendors, or any of them, immediately prior to the fare increase as to the supply of that type of ticket compared with usual allocations to these vendors, and
- (b) generally, what administrative arrangements were made to ensure a smooth transition from the existing fare scale to the new.

JOHN HALDEN MLC

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The member will require the support of four members in order to move the motion.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON JOHN HALDEN (South Metropolitan) [3.36 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until 25 December 1993 at 9.00 am.

Members may recall that I stated in the media on Wednesday last week that Transperth was withholding multirider tickets from sale. I did a series of television interviews with Mr Max Davey of the Amelia Heights Newsagency, who was alleging that his normal weekly allocation of 20, A2 multirider tickets from Newspower were withheld until later that week or the next week. The Minister for Transport came into this House and responded to what one may call a dorothea dixer from Hon Barbara Scott by saying -

I advise the House that Transperth is not withholding multirider tickets.

He then said that I would have the media believe, by what I had been saying that morning, that Transperth was doing that. Later he said, and I quote -

Contrary to Hon John Halden's attempt to mislead the public of Western Australia by saying that people will not be able to buy those tickets, the supply is continuing as before.

He then went on to give the House four examples of people trying to profiteer from the price increases that had been announced by the Premier on the previous Sunday. In each media interview I gave on that day I made it abundantly clear that I did not support, never have supported, nor will support the profiteering that may have been going to happen in regard to this matter. The price increases were alleged by the Premier to be in the order of 11.9 per cent; but, as members know, across the eight zones of Transperth fares, for standard fares the average increase was around 25 per cent, and for concession and student fares it was above 40 per cent, not the 11.9 per cent alleged under a weighted average by the Premier.

After the member for South Metropolitan Region asked her dorothy dixer I rose in the House that same day to give a personal explanation, in which I said that on Monday, 28 June at 10.00 am Mr Brett Inchley of Transperth met with Craig McGrath, the accountant of Newspower, and at that meeting Mr Inchley said he was under direction to withdraw the supply of multirider tickets. I did not make that statement lightly. I had in fact confirmed those remarks with the Managing Director of Newspower that morning - and it should be noted by members that Newspower is the major supplier of multirider tickets in this State.

The Minister could have taken the opportunity to correct what I believe was a series of quite obviously misleading and personal attacks upon me, but he chose not to do so. On this occasion he received another dorothy dixer from Hon Murray Criddle, who asked him -

Did the Minister direct Transperth to stop allocating multirider tickets?

To which Hon Eric Charlton replied -

. . . The flow of tickets to agents has continued so that they can provide those genuine customers with their requirements.

I then asked a series of questions and tabled a letter. I think it is important to read the contents of this letter so that the House understands very clearly that there was no area for misconception in this matter. I faxed a letter to Mr McGrath of Newspower at approximately midday on last Thursday and asked him to confirm certain matters. They are -

- (1) That you met with Mr Brent Inchley, Business Manager for Transperth, on Monday June 28, at approximately 10am at your Belmont headquarters.
- (2) That at that meeting, Mr Inchley advised you that he had been instructed not to supply Newspower this week with its usual supply of Multi-rider tickets.
- (3) That this meant Newspower's normal supply, due on Wednesday, June 30, would be withheld.
- (4) That Mr Inchley said on June 28 that he was happy for Newspower to blame Transperth for this situation and that Mr McGrath was to refer people, with complaints, to Transperth.
- (5) That your normal allocation of 6000 A2 and C2 tickets have not been provided, as is your normal weekly entitlement.
- (6) That Transperth has only provided 4000 A2 and C2 tickets.

In return I received a fax that day from the Managing Director of Newspower which states -

I hereby confirm that the listed events on your fax of today relating to Transperth tickets are essentially correct.

The Minister has said that Transperth was not withholding tickets. Having provided the Minister with appropriate opportunity and time, until that point he had not decided to correct this statement in the House. Following the Minister's being asked the dorothy dixer by Hon Murray Criddle, this matter was complicated further by the Minister's answer to a series of questions I asked. They were -

Did Mr Inchley, the business manager for Transperth, meet with Mr McGrath, the accountant at Newspower, on Monday, 28 June 1993?

The Minister responded -

I have not received information direct. However, I am advised that he met with Mr McGrath on that day.

I have quoted the appropriate statement. I then asked -

Is it correct that during that meeting, Mr Inchley told Mr McGrath that he had been instructed not to supply Newspower with its usual number of tickets. . .

The Minister responded -

I understand that is correct.

I then said -

In response to question without notice the Minister advised the House that Transperth was not withholding multirider tickets.

The Minister said that the supply was continuing as before. I then asked the Minister - I am paraphrasing - whether he saw some contradiction in those statements. He said no and that his responses were totally consistent with the information he had just given me. Anyone who uses simple logic must conclude that those statements are inconsistent; in fact, they are an absolute contradiction. It amazes me that, having said all that and having dug himself into a hole with his own dorothea dixers, the Minister should then have proceeded to attack me in the debate on the adjournment. In that debate I gave the Minister the opportunity to correct his position. Again, he persisted with the line that his statements were totally consistent. I defy any member to prove to me how, using common English, a person can come to that conclusion. On the one hand, the Minister says nothing is being withheld, everything is as it was before; on the other hand, he said, "Yes, there was a meeting. It was said that they would withhold tickets; yes, they did do that." We have the proof in a letter from me to the major supplier confirming that tickets were withheld.

Hon E.J. Charlton: What did you want to have happen?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It seems to me that those two statements are totally at odds with each other. It is incumbent upon the Minister - as I have asked in this urgency motion - to make a statement and to place in chronological order the events that occurred. At the end of that, if the Minister continues to say that the statements are not in contradiction, we will discuss this matter again. All reasonable people must come to the conclusion that the statements are most definitely contradictory. I do not want to suggest a motive as to why the Minister might or might not see that they do contradict each other.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Perhaps the motive is more on your side.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I will get to that. The Minister has made a number of statements in the Press that the decision of Transperth was made to stop profiteering. It may well have been made for that purpose. But there are those who would suggest that it was done to see Transperth's profit increase and that is why it did not supply tickets. I do not say that is correct. I think it is incumbent on the Minister, having made this series of awesome gaffes, to explain to the public why this issue is not about having the supply of tickets withdrawn so that Transperth can increase its profits after the fare increases. It is a logical conclusion to reach, but it could be refuted. This debate provides the Minister with an opportunity later to do that.

Hon T.G. Butler: He could try telling the truth as well.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Transperth could have used a number of administrative steps to stop any profiteering. It could have placed a red bar across the tickets that were to be issued so that after 4 July when the price increase occurred any tickets without a red bar would not be valid or, if used, people would have to pay the increased fares.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Did you tell them about that?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I made it up.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Like you do most other things.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister cannot help making a little attack on me.

Hon E.J. Charlton: I am enjoying it. You are a sitting duck. Every time you poke your head out of the burrow, I am there waiting.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I do not mind in the slightest. If a Minister can get himself into trouble as a result of his own dorothea dixers, there is not much hope for him in this place, and the Minister's own dorothea dixers have got him into trouble. I hope the Leader of the House will stop those dorothea dixers, because at the end of the day the Minister may find himself in enormous difficulty answering them.

Hon T.G. Butler: They were a bit embarrassing for them.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Trying to help you out.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: There are other ways by which Transperth could have avoided this problem. It could have said to Newpower or to the agencies involved, "You can have only the same allocation of tickets that you applied for last week." In that way agents could have done with the tickets as they wanted, but they would have been under demand to supply their normal tickets, as was Mr Max Davies, who wanted only 20 tickets. He was not in the business of profiteering; he wanted to supply his normal clients with the normal level of tickets. Transperth could have looked at the previous four weeks' requirements from the various agents and said, "We could average that number and provide that number of tickets." But that did not happen.

That leads to the proposition that I put forward before, and one I think it is incumbent upon the Minister to answer: Was the withdrawal of tickets - there is no doubt there was - done so that Transperth could profiteer from this arrangement and withhold the tickets until after 4 July? I would never agree with that, and I hope that the Minister would not. However, certain questions need to be answered. In another context, could we imagine that in private enterprise, if a service station decided to withdraw petrol from its consumers until after a price rise, it could charge more for it? If that were to happen there would be a public outcry. On this occasion, rightfully, there is public disquiet. It is not being helped by a Minister who, on the one hand, says Transperth is withdrawing the supply of tickets and, on the other hand, says it is not. Statements of, "Yes we are; no we are not," do not instil public confidence. I can assure you, Mr President, they do not instil in Opposition members any confidence in the Minister's statements.

Hon Tom Helm: Is it called free enterprise?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I have a feeling the situation goes close to breaching some of the requirements of the Trade Practices Act. It is incumbent on the Minister to make a statement to clear up this matter.

From the moment the fare increases were announced he was wrong about the level of increases, the attack on whether I had the correct information and the statement that no multirider tickets were being withheld. The niceties of this Chamber provide Ministers of the Crown, when they become aware of an error they may have made, the opportunity to correct any statements they may have made. I am not unreasonable. As I said in the adjournment debate last Thursday, I would happily have accepted the Minister's correcting the situation in here. We know that he had the information at hand, because at question time at four o'clock he answered a "Dorothea" that Transperth was not withholding the supply of multirider tickets. However, in response to a question asked two or three minutes later, he agreed that Transperth was withholding them. If we were to tread that path for too long, one would have to ask whether the Minister was content with his replies or whether he was leading us up the garden path. I do not know which is the case.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You would have difficulty working that out.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I make no assumptions. I should think these facts, based on the

Hansard record and the information I have tabled, suggest to the Minister that I am not the one with the difficulty; he is. In fairness to the people of this State, he must make an unambiguous statement; one which is not vague but is explicit about the order of events and whether the withdrawal of the multirider tickets is an issue concerning Transperth or the Government. We do not know. I do not want to exaggerate the situation; it is of sufficient concern for me to be presenting the facts and then to await the Minister's response. It is important to ascertain whether a trading enterprise of Government is not profiteering in the way that the Minister alleged a number of people in this State might have been. As I have said before, I do not condone individuals profiteering. I definitely do not condone a Government trading authority withdrawing the supply of tickets in order to increase its "fare box take" to use the jargon, or its profits in the long term.

Hon Tom Helm: Are you trying to say that he doesn't seem to mind using Transperth to increase its profits with the ordinary ticket seller count?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I will not in any way impugn the reputation of the Minister. The facts speak for themselves. It is incumbent on the Minister to come clean - I am not saying that in a nasty way; I use the words loosely - and to make a statement that is understandable.

Hon Tom Helm: You are too kind.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It has been said that I am a likeable lad. The Minister should explain what are, to any fair minded observer, some incongruous and at-odds remarks. He cannot have it both ways, especially as a Minister of the Crown who is dealing with the reputation of a Government agency. One must place the facts of the matter on the record very clearly and concisely.

I refer now to a couple of other matters regarding the questions I asked last week so that I can again make it clear to the House that I am confused by the Minister's answers which I think he needs to clarify. Last Thursday I asked the Minister the following question -

I refer the Minister to the previous answers he has given me today. He said there was no instruction not to supply Newspower with the usual supply of multirider tickets this week and he confirmed his statement to the House yesterday that Transperth was not withholding multirider tickets and that their sale was continuing as before. Does the Minister accept that there is a clear contradiction between his reply and the instruction issued by Transperth? If so, is it his intention to resign?

The Minister replied that his answer was totally consistent with what he had said at the beginning, and that the normal supply of tickets was continuing. He then gave examples of people who had tried to profiteer from the situation. I then asked him the following question -

In response to his statement that Transperth has given the weekly allocation to Newspower that it normally gets, is he aware that Transperth has not provided its normal 6 000 A2/C2 tickets to Newspower, and that it has provided only 4 000?

He was still wrong. I am amazed and bewildered that at the end of a series of questions like that the Minister can say that he is still consistent and that there was no withdrawal of tickets and that, yes, there was a withdrawal of tickets, but his answers are consistent. The Minister should now make a clear statement. The difficulty is that if the Minister continues to answer questions in such a contradictory and vague manner, one has no choice other than to examine every question the Minister answers. It would be much better for this House if one could either seek clarification of the Minister's answer or trust the validity of the Minister's answer. That is not the situation and it is not the case with only this set of questions concerning the multirider tickets. A number of other questions have been asked of this Minister which will be further examined. Although in some ways, at the margin, that can be esoteric, these matters involve the credibility of the Minister and a trading agency of Government. At the end of the day the Minister is responsible for his department's actions. I hope the Minister will take this opportunity to clear up this matter. He may have a mind to apologise to the House about his incorrect

statement. If he chooses to persist, I advise you, Mr President, and the House that I will continue to insist that sooner or later we hear some truth rather than ambiguity about this matter. It is only fair and responsible that any Opposition pursue an important issue on which a Minister has given contradictory answers. I hope the House will support the motion.

HON N.D. GRIFFITHS (East Metropolitan) [4.00 pm]: I join with Hon John Halden in inviting the Minister for Transport to make a statement to the House. The Minister, when he answers questions, has a duty to the House to be accurate. That is particularly important in this House, the House of Review. If we are to carry out our function of review properly, we need to be able to rely on the veracity of the Minister's statements. The Minister may have made a mistake. If he did, I invite him to acknowledge the mistake. If he does, for me, that will be the end of the matter. If he did not, I look forward to his explanation. Hon John Halden has dealt with the facts already. It is very serious to mislead this House. To deliberately mislead it is even more serious. *Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice*, 21st edition, states at page 119 -

The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt. In 1963 the House resolved that in making a personal statement which contained words which he later admitted not to be true, a former Member had been guilty of a grave contempt.

This matter is extremely serious. I trust the Minister will treat it as serious and I look forward to his explanation.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [4.03 pm]: Firstly, I take Hon Nick Griffiths' comments very seriously. I wish he had been a member of this place in the last Parliament. Then he would have taken a greater interest in the comments he just made.

When I heard the President read out Hon John Halden's letter, I expected some new material to be presented following on that which has already been presented to this place. On the one hand, I am surprised with the member taking this action at this time. On the other hand, I should never be surprised by Hon John Halden's actions. Members should understand the way Hon John Halden operates. He began today by asserting that the fare increase was not an 11.9 per cent increase. He supported his arguments by referring to figures. Hon John Halden's opening comments were totally off the mark; the 11.9 per cent increase is absolute. The revenue to Transperth will increase from approximately \$36m to approximately \$41m, an increase of 11.9 per cent. There is no weighted ratio.

Hon John Halden: That is what the Premier's press release said.

HON E.J. CHARLTON: If the member is so keen to research figures and put them forward in his comments, he should do his sums properly. He would then find that a fare increase of 11.9 per cent is the total increase as a consequence of the new fare structure based on the anticipated public use of transport in this State. It is on that basis that I gave the figure of 11.9 per cent increase to this House. The member and anyone else can put forward a figure of a 20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent, or 50 per cent increase in fares. If it does not end up as the figure for the total increase in the amount of funding to Transperth, it is all beside the point. Transperth's recommendation to increase fares was not based on some theory about a fare increase but was based on the total amount of money required to service the travelling public of the Perth metropolitan area and outer associated areas. That is the basis upon which Transperth made its recommendation for fare increases and the figure is far in excess of that which was agreed in the final analysis.

Hon John Halden: You said last Monday on the radio that you had agreed with the fare increases recommended to you by the department for the outer zones of the metropolitan area.

HON E.J. CHARLTON: The fare increases that were agreed to for outer areas bring those fares more into line with the service being provided. Instead of penalising a group which uses the system, the increase is an attempt to undo the irresponsible actions of the

previous Government in not agreeing to recommendations for fare increases by the department last year. Instead of doing it in one fell swoop, this Government, in accordance with its concerns about other matters related to public transport, agreed to the recommendation from Transperth. That destroys the complaint made by the member.

In relation to the specific details referred to by the member last week in a number of questions in this House, it is my view that the member was trying to drum up emotions in the community to build opposition to the increases. His allegations have no foundation. However, that did not stop him from trying to stir people's emotions and worry families about the Government's intentions. His allegations were totally untrue and unjustified. Many of his questions related to the availability of multirider tickets. He had already made public statements about the Government directing Transperth to -

Hon John Halden: Who said who had directed Transperth?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The member said the Government had instructed Transperth to take this action. I responded by saying that I had not instructed anybody to do anything about fares. The second allegation was that the multirider tickets were being withheld. I said in answer to a question that they were not being withheld. Subsequently, as the member pointed out today, I advised the House that Transperth had had discussions with Newspower about the availability of tickets. Before I give the details of that, the simple fact is that Transperth decided not to issue tickets because the demand was higher than it had been previously and Transperth wanted to ensure that nobody rorted the system to the detriment of innocent people. Transperth acted absolutely correctly in taking appropriate action to nip in the bud what some people saw as an opportunity to rip off the system. Everyone knows that when the public announcement was made that fare increases would take place from a certain date, many people believed it was a chance to make a quick buck. Rather than acting to ensure the Government's profitability, Transperth attempted to ensure that the people of this State were not penalised by unscrupulous people having access to an unlimited number of multirider tickets. If Transperth had allowed that to take place, the genuine people who wanted to buy tickets would not have found them available.

Hon Tom Helm: Is there an alternative way of doing that without withdrawing those tickets?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Hon Tom Helm may have some way of doing it. Obviously, Transperth has the people and the operation with the capacity to deal with this in an appropriate way. It held discussions with those agencies and advised that unlimited supplies would not be made available. Should Hon John Halden want to hold discussions with Transperth and advise it on how to operate its business, I am sure it would welcome his great interest. He is very welcome to do so. I have told Hon Kim Chance that should he want to hold discussions with Transperth on this issue and make some recommendations, that is fine by me.

Hon Tom Helm: You are the Minister and you are supposed to know these answers.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Yes, I am and I believe Transperth has dealt with this situation in a most acceptable way, with a great deal of credibility, honesty and integrity. It is an indication of the way in which it carries out its business, which is obviously unlike the way some other people would carry out their business.

Hon John Halden: Who would that be, Eric?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! Even when interjecting it is the custom of this House to refer to honourable members as honourable members and not by their Christian names. I ask members to observe that custom.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: As a consequence of some ongoing frivolous debate on this matter, I have received a copy of some instructions issued by Transperth with regard to multirider tickets. It begins -

25th June

Newspower was instructed to provide the one normal delivery during the week starting the 28th June, to provide the normal consignment stock for that agency.

29th June

This instruction was modified for agencies that had unrealistically high consignment stocks, to provide stocks at about the usual quantity.

In other words, that was to ensure that the agencies did not take advantage by placing high orders and that they modified their requirements for the week to their usual amounts.

Hon Tom Helm: Two different instructions.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Even Hon Tom Helm, as biased as he can sometimes be, must understand that on one day Transperth issued instructions that all agencies should receive their usual order and the next day, because of the unrealistically high consignment, it did not allow them to have those large stocks.

Hon Tom Helm: That is the point. Can you not see it?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Yes, that is the point, and I have already said that it was the proper way to deal with the situation.

Hon T.G. Butler: Stay calm; do not get upset.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: That is not a problem. I am not like little painters' union officials, because I do not get upset.

Hon T.G. Butler: If that is the nastiest thing you can say about me, I am not doing too badly.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Hon Tom Butler is fairly safe. The instructions issued by Transperth continue -

30th June

Sales from Transperth outlets were limited to 10 per customer.

It must be recognised that that is 10 weeks' supply. Surely no-one would want more than that number?

Hon Tom Helm: Not in a free country!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: That action demonstrates the credibility and efficiency of Transperth in ensuring some degree of flexibility in allowing people to buy tickets, far from withholding them. The final note on the instruction is -

Newspower normally distributes by courier each Thursday to replenish to consignment level. Newspower, of its own volition, was closed for stocktaking on the 1st and 2nd of July, so all deliveries were effected earlier in the week.

At no stage did Transperth require Newspower to instruct its agents to limit sales to customers.

The note is signed by Anthony Middleton, who is the chief executive officer of Transperth.

Point of Order

Hon TOM HELM: I ask that the Minister table the document from which he has quoted.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I am happy to table the paper when I have finished referring to it.

Debate Resumed

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The situation has developed to this point as a result of Hon John Halden accusing Transperth of profiteering from the increase in fares. He said that today in this place and he has cast doubt on the credibility of that organisation.

I also inform the House that it would have been in Transperth's financial interests to go down that path to demonstrate in its balance sheet the high income from and the number of passengers using its service. However, it did not take that action. Transperth acted in the most responsible and businesslike manner to ensure that its genuine customers had access to multirider tickets, and to ensure that people seeking unusually high

consignments were not able to digress from their normal practice. It seems that John Halden has been coming from a position in which he wants to establish that somebody was profiteering from this situation.

Hon John Halden: You said that, not me.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The whole argument of Hon John Halden has been that somebody wanted to be in a position or was placing himself in a position to take advantage of the fare increase. However, it has been consistently stated by the Government that no-one was in a position to take advantage of the increase in fares. Therefore, Hon John Halden should be congratulating the people involved for carrying out their work in a very responsible manner so that there was no financial detriment to the genuine passengers using the public transport system day after day. Transperth operated in an outstanding manner in dealing with the public, and it has demonstrated the effectiveness of its operation over a long period. Transperth was aware of the proposed increase in fares, was prepared for it, dealt with its customers in an appropriate manner, and ensured that people who tried to take advantage of the system were not allowed to do so. I can imagine the hue and cry if Transperth had allowed an unlimited supply of tickets to go on the market, knowing that those tickets would not be used in the immediate future. As I have demonstrated, Transperth acted in a credible way, and in response to the questions I have been asked in this place I have given a consistent appraisal of the situation. Therefore, I totally disagree with the comments and accusations made by the Opposition.

By leave, the Minister tabled the document from which he quoted.

[See paper No 421.]

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [4.20 pm]: I am interested in entering this debate to establish a few matters. I hope that I am able to do that. Hon John Halden suggested that he was not an unreasonable person.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am prepared to concede that to Hon John Halden, as long as he acknowledges that Hon Eric Charlton is not an unreasonable person and not someone who would wilfully mislead the House. Hon Eric Charlton has had nine years' experience in this House and at all times that I have been here he has acted in the utmost good faith. He has shown as a Minister that he is prepared to answer questions from either side of the House. That is an important point that we must recognise when we try to sift through some of the comments that were made by Opposition members in respect of matters contained in the urgency motion. Another point that was made on another occasion by Hon John Halden was that he acknowledged that he was confused.

Hon John Halden: Only by the Minister's statements.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am unsure about why the member is confused, but if we are to enter into a situation in this House where members attempt to direct trick questions -

Hon John Halden: They were simple questions, not trick questions.

Hon GEORGE CASH: - to the Minister or to encourage misinterpretation or misunderstanding about the nature or context in which a question might be asked, it seems that we will end up with people being confused. I put to Hon John Halden that given the questions that he asked, and the way they were couched last week, not all of them were asked just to elicit information; some were at least asked and couched in particular terms in an attempt to either confuse the issue generally or, if that was not the case, certainly were asked in the form of trick questions. Having listened to Hon John Halden today I am now more confused than ever about what he was really driving at with his questions. I have had the opportunity to read a number of the questions asked last week; I refer to questions on notice 104, 107, 108 and 109 last Thursday. It seemed to me that the answers to the questions were pretty plain. They were couched in words that I think most members could understand. I question just what the confusion is all about. It may be a bit of role playing by Hon John Halden because he is Opposition spokesman

for transport - and I guess at the start of a new Parliament I could even understand that - but in the end if we want questions answered in a reasonable manner, I suggest that questions should be couched in reasonable terms, and that they should attempt to elicit information so that Ministers are in a position to provide the information to which all members are entitled.

Hon John Halden: Have you read my questions?

Hon GEORGE CASH: I have read some of them.

Hon John Halden: They are the most simple and straightforward one could imagine.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I do not agree with that statement. I acknowledge that I did not read all the questions. I have read some of them and some of the questions by other members.

Hon Kim Chance: I would bet that you could not understand the answers.

Hon GEORGE CASH: When we have questions and answers are given with interjections -

Hon John Halden: There were not interjections.

Hon GEORGE CASH: There were some.

Hon John Halden: During the salient questions and answers there were no interjections. That is clear.

Hon GEORGE CASH: The member would need to point to the questions he believes were salient and to those that were not. We heard interjections in some cases, but putting that aside the point is that if we develop a system where we ask trick questions to catch out a Minister we will not progress this Parliament very far. I must admit that I am still unsure of the confusion about which Hon John Halden talks. However, it is important to note that this House would regard the Minister for Transport as a person of integrity, and that any suggestion that he was not such a person or that he had attempted to mislead the House in any way would be a distortion of the facts. I do not believe that this House should stand for that sort of comment.

HON JOHN HALDEN (South Metropolitan) [4.25 pm]: The contribution by the Leader of the House is unique because as Leader of the Opposition he mastered the art of the trick question. I remember his launching attack after attack on the former Attorney General.

Hon Tom Stephens: Disgraceful attacks!

Hon George Cash: How long does the member want to stay here today?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: His questions were not couched in the reasoned and reasonable way that I have couched my remarks today, nor in the reasonable way I have couched my questions. To respond to the Minister for Transport and to the Leader of the House I refer to the trick questions that I am supposed to have asked. I ask members in all fairness whether this is a trick question: Did Mr Inchley, the business manager for Transperth, meet with Mr McGrath, the accountant of Newspower on Monday, 28 June 1993? My God, that question is tricky; it requires a yes or no answer! The question had great depth and it needed much skill on my part to ask such an engrossing and investigative question. My next question was: Is it correct that during that meeting Mr Inchley told Mr McGrath that he had been instructed not to supply Newspower with its usual number of multirider tickets? That was another enormously tricky question; an intrusive question! I should be an investigative journalist with the reputation afforded to me by the Leader of the House.

Hon Tom Helm: What was the answer?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The answer was, "I understand that is correct." My next question was: In response to question without notice 85 the Minister advised the House that Transperth was not withholding multirider tickets - and so it went on. I asked for

confirmation, and I referred to the answers given to the House which I have just read. Again, no fair-minded person could assume that they were trick questions. For the Leader of the House to argue that they were trick questions is to place in the argument a ridiculous and most obscure point.

I refer now to the letter tabled by the Minister for Transport. I hope that my time can be extended to explain the situation adequately. In that letter the statement is made that at no stage did Transperth require Newspower to instruct its agents to limit sales to customers.

[Resolved, that the motion be continued.]

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I thank the House. This letter states that at no stage did Transperth require Newspower to instruct its agents to limit the sale of multirider tickets to customers. However, I asked the tricky question of the Minister whether it was correct that at a meeting on such a date, involving a Transperth representative and another person, the direction was made not to supply Newspower with its usual number of multirider tickets. The Minister responded that he understood that to be correct. Further, I have confirmation from Newspower that that is exactly what occurred. A stated instruction came from Transperth to limit the supply of tickets. On that basis, one must ask whether the Minister has any idea of what is going on in his department.

The Chairman of Transperth, who seems to have caught Hon Eric Charlton's disease of illogical thought patterns, issued a statement indicating that tickets were not withheld. This followed the Minister's comments that tickets were withheld. This is not a complicated matter; it is not a trick involving mirrors as the facts are before us.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: It is complicated for the Minister.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You're the biggest trick, Mr Halden.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: A statement was issued indicating that Newspower was instructed to provide one normal delivery during the week commencing 28 June, and to provide the normal consignment of stock to its agencies. However, we have exactly contrary comments to that instruction from Newspower and the Minister. If a Minister's contradictory statement does not confuse people, what in God's name will? I am delighted that the Minister has tabled this letter today, as this is a confusing issue.

Hon George Cash said that he could not understand why I am confused. I shall now say some reasonable things about the Leader of the House: He is not a silly man. He did not rise a moment ago to defend his Minister in difficult circumstances, because he understands the matter. Wonderful character testimonies are all well and good, but they will not sort out this issue. How can a Minister of the Crown say that tickets were not withheld and then say they were withheld? Today a copy of a letter from the Chairman of Transperth was tabled which indicated that "at no stage did Transperth require Newspower to instruct its agents to limit sales to customers". People from Newspower indicated who attended a meeting, where and at what time -

Hon E.J. Charlton: It is important that you understand this point: When the member refers to agents having unlimited supplies of tickets, he misses the point of ensuring that customers do not go without. Do you not see that as a fundamental difference?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I am pleased with that interjection, and I will come to that matter.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): It was a constructive interjection.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Indeed, Mr Deputy President. On 29 June an unrealistically high demand was made on multirider tickets. The letter reads -

The instruction was modified for agencies that had unrealistically high consignment stocks, to provide stocks at about the usual quantity.

However, that is at odds with the major supplier. He says that on 28 June the tickets were to be withheld, and that no stocks were available. That is clear. An instruction of 30 June said that sales from Transperth outlets were to be limited to 10 tickets per customer. That is all well and good; it may have been an appropriate decision to make. I

do not claim to have the answers for these administrative procedures. However, a series of avenues are available to control the supply of tickets to stop profiteering; namely, a coloured slash on tickets or the allocation of only the number of tickets supplied in the previous week or the average of the previous month. However, we are not debating that matter any longer. We are debating contradictory statements by the Minister and a statement by the Chairman of Transperth which contradicts what Newspower and the Minister said.

I am no longer confused, and I do not think the House is either. The matter is becoming clear. I wish to be nice and not to be inflammatory.

Hon Graham Edwards: You have been nice all the way through the debate; I think they have taken advantage of you because of it!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That is probably true, and I will try not to let it happen again.

The reality is that the Minister and the Chairman of Transperth do not know what they are doing, and they definitely do not know what they are saying. Absolutely contradictory remarks cannot be made by the Minister, a major supplier and the Chairman of Transperth. One could place a range of sinister conspiratorial constructions on this.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You're doing that.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I do not propose to do that. I have deliberately not mentioned a conspiratorial aspect, but that is a path down which one could easily be led.

Hon E.J. Charlton: This is not a Bell shares or an SGIC issue.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister should not shoot the messenger; I did not write the letters from which I quote.

The Minister and the Chairman of Transperth, an organisation with an expenditure of nearly \$200m a year, on a simple issue regarding the issuing of tickets to stop profiteering, are unable to agree with one another. The Minister contradicts his own remarks from one day to the next. Any person concerned about the management of Transperth will have their concerns heightened by this issue. The letter tabled today does nothing to waylay public concerns on this issue.

I think I understood the Minister to say that the Government had not instructed Transperth in this matter.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You said that.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I have never denied that. I am asking the Minister whether he did.

Hon E.J. Charlton: I told you last week that we didn't.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I want it clarified.

Hon E.J. Charlton: However, you do not accept anything which is said. You want to drum up political activity. You always play on the wing in front of the grandstand.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I would enjoy that, but I am a little overweight!

Hon E.J. Charlton: You want to kick with the wind to both ends.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The situation has not been clarified by the Minister. That profiteering, using the Minister's words, people trying to "make a quick dollar", must definitely be stamped out. In fact, Transperth was particularly generous in allowing people to purchase 10 tickets. Nevertheless, I accept that decision and I will not quibble on the edge. Transperth acted in a reasoned way regarding the avoidance of profiteering. However, does this matter relate to profiteering or Transperth trying to secure a few extra dollars? The Minister assures us that that was not the case, and at this stage I am happy to accept that.

We have a unique opportunity with this urgency motion procedure to progress the debate to its end, to look realistically at the unbelievable set of circumstances which continued at

4.00 pm today with the tabling of another version, although still wrong, of this matter. Who knows what really happened? Some people may think this is trivial, but when on such a relatively minor event one cannot get a straight answer from the Government, it is not trivial. I am not suggesting anything sinister, but there sure as hell is evidence of an inordinately large degree of incompetency. One cannot have statements so clearly contradicting one another. I thank the Minister for Transport for his comment that Newspower normally distributes its tickets on Thursday, and it was doing a stocktake - I presume for the end of the financial year. However, when I spoke to the accountant on Thursday morning, 1 July, he was most aggrieved that the tickets had been withheld and Newspower did not have its tickets. The managing director of Newspower confirmed the letter I sent on Thursday morning. Many questions remain unanswered from the rather unique opportunity provided in this Chamber to debate this matter of urgency, but the Government and the Minister for Transport can be assured that, in spite of the great testimony to the character of the Minister, the Opposition intends to pursue this matter. It is a bungle that should not have happened. Someone should tell us the true story or where we can discover the true story.

Hon Tom Helm interjected.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That is a quaint suggestion, and if I can put it to the member with all humbleness, I do not think it is true. There are no trucks with mirrors involved; the Government is stumbling around with this issue and cannot get its story right. The Opposition intends to pursue this matter, although not through this motion. I thank the House for the opportunity to speak for an extra 12 minutes to put my point of view; in all sincerity I thank the Government for that opportunity. I seek leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Debate resumed from 1 July .

HON DOUG WENN (South West) [4.42 pm]: I thank the Governor, Sir Francis Burt, for the speech he gave - albeit that members of the Opposition wrote the speech for him, and made some fairly blatant mistakes, which I will not go into.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: The Opposition usually does.

Hon DOUG WENN: I meant to say "the Government". Hon Derrick Tomlinson caught me off guard. Someone said he was not going to be here and I was surprised by that booming voice coming across the Chamber correcting me. Sir Francis' departure will be a great loss to the position of Governor. It is very disappointing that he cannot continue in that position for another couple of years. I have had some association with Sir Francis within my electorate and have seen the way in which he talks to people, in particular to children, so I know he is a great asset to the State. He will be missed when he finally retires.

I was unable to be present on the last day of the sitting and prior to the end of the last session, just before Christmas. I would have preferred to be present, instead of being strapped up in hospital. I did not have the opportunity of congratulating and thanking some of my colleagues with whom I worked over the years. In particular, I thank that old gentleman, Hon Fred McKenzie - Uncle Fred, I used to call him. He is one of the greatest people one would want to meet and to be associated with. He gave everyone a chance and was always cordial. Fred is one of those people who was able on the spur of the moment to jump up when someone was needed to fill in a gap in a debate. We all became experts on the railways thanks to Fred, because that was his greatest love and joy.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: He was a good trade unionist.

Hon Max Evans: One of the few.

Hon DOUG WENN: He never gave up his membership of the Railway Officers Union in Western Australia and was always highly respected by its members. I understand Fred is taking off in the next week by train to the Eastern States. Fred loves the engines and carriages that roll across our great country.

One could not find a man as dedicated as the former Leader of the Government in this place, Hon Joe Berinson. He is a man to be admired; one could not sit in this place without admiring the way he went about his duties. It is amazing to hear the present Leader of the Government in this place, Hon George Cash, making statements about fairness and giving a person a fair go when time after time he attacked Joe Berinson through motions in this place. However, Joe was able to fend him off so well that Hon George Cash had to run off and find other motions in order to have a go at him. Joe is a great guy and a great leader, and I am proud to have known him during the seven years we sat together in this place.

Hon Kay Hallahan is now a member in the other place and already has been a great contributor to debate in that place. She is also a person well worth knowing. She did her job thoroughly and I appreciate, and thank her for, the assistance she gave me within my electorate, particularly when she was Minister for Education.

Hon Beryl Jones and I came into this Parliament in 1986 at a time when one had to work one's electorate very hard because there were single person ballots, not the multi-membership or party ballot we have today. We won seats that everyone considered were impossible to win. Beryl made a great contribution to this place. I congratulate Hon Graham Edwards, the Leader of the Opposition in this House. I know Graham will do a great job. He has already started off as a good leader and will get better and better as this session proceeds. Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), I congratulate you on attaining the position of Chairman of Committees. At one stage I contemplated challenging you, but one thing I learnt from my short time at school was how to count, so I did not proceed with that. I have known you for some time and I believe you will do the job as is required. I had a bit of a to do with Hon George Cash, and he is probably thinking, as I was yesterday, where he was 12 months ago. When George stops talking politics he is not a bad bloke.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: That is not often.

Hon DOUG WENN: If one gets George outside and he does not talk about politics, he is not a bad bloke; but when he does talk about politics he does not know what he is talking about. However, one gets used to that after watching him in this place for four years.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Are you saying he is half human?

Hon DOUG WENN: I will not contemplate what the other half is.

As you have just walked into this Chamber, Mr President, I can congratulate you on your re-election to the position of President. At one time I thought I was going to take your job, but it did not work out. I thank those members who supported me. I also thank those people who said they would but did not support me. The House will go on, and one learns a lesson every day. One of the greatest disappointments in politics is losing a damned good worker and friend through an electoral defeat, as happened to me in Bunbury. Phil Smith failed in his attempt to retain the seat of Bunbury. I do not think anyone in the world of politics representing the south west would not recognise the work which Phil Smith did. He was tireless, he believed in what he did, and he worked continually for the electorate. Phil was a member of so many committees that he seemed to go from one meeting to another. I have known Phil to begin the first of his meetings at 7.00 am and attend meetings continually until well after midnight. His contribution to Bunbury overall has been huge.

Hon Barry House: That is all very true, and now Bunbury has another excellent member.

Hon DOUG WENN: With all due respect, I am not talking about the current member. He has been a member for only three months and he must prove himself. We will talk about his progress in due course. At the moment I want to recognise my friend Phil Smith.

Hon Graham Edwards: Rightly so.

Hon DOUG WENN: Phil was one of the original Bunbury 2000 believers and worked on the project with David Smith and me, with the support of people such as Julian Grill. The idea, which was suggested by Ralph Stein, was to put together the Bunbury 2000 plan with the Bunbury office of the South West Development Authority. I understand that some members of the Government now want to disband the authority; however, they are going softly, softly at the moment. They have reduced the powers of the authority - not drastically - by about 50 per cent. Phil's initiatives and ideas for Bunbury are physical proof that he was able to achieve what he believed. The removal of the railway station from the centre of town is one example. That is a matter about which I must speak to the Minister for Transport, because he has a stupid idea about returning the station to the central business area and therefore creating a dangerous situation where travellers must cross major roads around Bunbury. The station was initially taken out of the town to avoid that situation and also to remove the railway line, which divided the town. The Minister must think seriously about any possible move which would reverse that situation. He must not be like another Minister who has been wandering around Bunbury over the past couple of weeks, to whom I will refer in the major part of my speech; he must consult with the people of Bunbury.

Hon Barry House interjected.

Hon DOUG WENN: Hon Barry House says that that is not quite true. I was a taxi driver and owned my own cab in Bunbury for about five years. I picked up people from the Bunbury central railway station and had to drive back along the railway line to where they lived. The station is now positioned centrally. It is possible for anyone to get there without too much discomfort, and a bus service runs from the station to the town centre. The concept created by the Labor Government is great and should be left alone. I implore the Minister that, if he is intending to visit Bunbury and talk about shifting the railway station, he should talk to the general public first, because they have much to say about it.

The King Cottage is for Phil Smith one of the best loves a man could ever have. I have a fair knowledge of Bunbury's history because I was born and raised there and my family originated from Bunbury in the 1830s.

Hon T.G. Butler: You served your apprenticeship as a painter and decorator, and were also a member of the painters and decorators union.

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, I served my apprenticeship in painting and decorating and was a proud member of the union. Phil's knowledge of the history of Bunbury is tremendous. Any time somebody asked me something about which I was not sure Phil and his knowledge would be available within seconds. His ability to recall the history of Bunbury was brilliant and what he achieved around Bunbury through maintaining its history is a great commendation for Phil. He had a great input into Morrissey House. He was able to achieve the construction of a memorial of that building which will remain for a long time. Phil will be remembered as one of the main players in that organisation. He also has been working to save the timber jetty; however, I do not think he will win this one. I think that, as has occurred with other jetties around the coastline, Mother Nature will win this time. Phil has a great record of the heritage of Bunbury and we can call on him for advice on many items, of which he is fully aware.

Hon Barry House: Are you going to mention the silos?

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, the white silos are still there, I must admit. But, no, I will not admit anything to Mr House, because he will probably use it against me at a later date! Phil fought hard to keep the old white silos. They can be seen from the main highway running through the Koombana Bay area. Phil's dream - which will come to fruition if the member for Bunbury and the deputy leader of the coalition stop arguing and work out what they are going to do - is to turn that into a heritage museum for Bunbury and the surrounding districts. That is a great idea. It will take much money, but in time his dream will come to fruition.

Hon Barry House: I would like to have a few dollars on that.

Hon DOUG WENN: The member will knock it down before we get near it.

Hon Barry House: If I have my way, we will.

Hon DOUG WENN: I do not know whether Mr House will have his way. How much will the member have his way on the Bunbury hospital issue? Will he have any say in that matter at all?

Hon Barry House: Absolutely.

Hon DOUG WENN: Or will the member be treated as I and the other members for South West Region were when the Minister floated down there on Friday a couple of weeks ago and made a you-beaut announcement? Not only did he not tell the members of the Opposition, but also he ignored Government members who represent that area.

Hon Graham Edwards: Sounds like the Midland Workshops.

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, I will return to that issue, but I want to complete my comments about Phil Smith. I wish Phil, his wife, Vanna, and his children the best in his enforced retirement from politics. I do not think Phil has gone completely. He is keeping up his involvement in all those community groups. I have a feeling that many of them will come to me for the facilities which Phil used to provide for those people. Phil is contemplating whether to stay in Bunbury or to move to Perth. One of his sons is now in university and the other is finishing his tertiary entrance examinations. Knowing young Cameron, I am sure that he will also be off to university next year. Perhaps our loss in Bunbury will be other people's gain in Perth, because many people will benefit from Phil's belief and involvement in the Labor Party. The campaigns he put together were tremendous. He kept people working hard and encouraged them to put in long hours at the booths and to be part of the community.

One of the unfortunate parts about the loss of his seat is that we lost Government. We lost Government because a number of people now on the Government side made broad statements and promises. It is incredible to see how many of those promises have now been broken. Within the first three months in government the Government broke more than a hundred promises. That is all documented and members opposite will be reminded every time someone mentions the facilities which they said that they would keep and then, immediately following the election, told people they would not get at all. I turn to my own electorate and the guarantee given by the Minister when in the south west.

[Continued on p 1001.]

[Questions without notice taken.]

STATEMENT - BY THE PRESIDENT

Question Time, Degeneration

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): Honourable members, I sat here during the 30 minutes or so of questions without notice today and found myself starting to despair. There used to be a time in this place when members actually asked questions for the purpose of seeking information. The Ministers used to provide that information as a result of receiving some warning that the question would be asked that would enable them to research the answer so that they could genuinely give the response that the member asking the question was seeking.

A long time ago - probably about 12 years when a similar state of affairs occurred in this place - I said that question time should be treated as a time for seeking information and not as a facility for a courtroom style interrogation or as an opportunity for Ministers to make ministerial statements. That state of affairs is as true today as it was when I made that statement 12 or so years ago. I just wonder what members actually believe question time is for.

I have never liked Dorothy Dix questions. When I was sitting down there for 12 years, before I came up to this Chair - I have been in this place for over 28 years - I never found it necessary to ask a Dorothy Dix question. I seemed to be able to survive without having to do that. I am not blaming this Government; its predecessors perfected the idea. However, that does not make it right. As I keep saying, just because somebody else keeps doing something wrong, does not make it right for someone else to do it.

What also happens when a question is asked and a Minister tries to answer it, is that every endeavour humanly possible is embarked upon to ensure that the Minister does not answer it; that he cannot get a word in edgewise. I come back to what I said: I do not know what members expect to get from question time. Ought we to ask the Standing Orders Committee to examine whether we really need question time?

I happen to be one of those people who believe that one of the most important times in parliamentary sittings - bearing in mind that we represent the people in the community, and that it is an opportunity when people can have their queries answered through members of Parliament - is question time. I would be very loath to see our question time abolished. I think we will have to start thinking about it, if honourable members continue to treat question time as a competition to see who can outsmart the other. I wonder whether members go home at night and lie awake trying to think of a smart comment to make in the Parliament the next day. As I have said before, I am here only to make rulings and to ensure that members obey the rules. It distresses me to see a system that I am part of degenerate into a slanging match across the Chamber in the way in which our question time tends to be going.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT - BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

School Bus Services, Albany, Fees Decision

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Minister for Education) [5.38 pm] - by leave: On Tuesday, 29 June Hon Bob Thomas asked me question without notice 71. In my endeavour to provide a concise answer to the member's question, relating to school bus services in Albany, I may have given the member reason to be confused about the current situation.

It is correct that in 1992 the Minister for Education decided that fees should be charged for certain bus routes in the Albany area, and it is correct that I have not reversed that decision. However, the member should have been advised that ongoing discussions over a number of weeks have been held between officers of the Department of Transport and the Minister for Education on the matter. When discussions have been concluded and recommendations made to me, I will decide whether to reverse the 1992 decision.

Hon Bob Thomas: Will that be before the start of the third term?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I do not know.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON DOUG WENN (South West) [5.40 pm]: While looking at the clock I was wondering whether all the time taken up on questions had encroached on my time.

The PRESIDENT: Probably.

Hon DOUG WENN: The Clerks say no; they are definitely looking after me.

Prior to the recess, a number of promises were made by certain Liberal Party members in Bunbury and the south west. They are now well known and well advertised broken promises. It is amazing that some of those members were, for the first time, elected and some re-elected. The massive number of policy turnarounds has kicked the people of the south west hard: The first concerns the Minister for the South West, a position created by the Labor Government and occupied initially by Mr Julian Grill, followed by

Mr David Smith. The contributions from those two people fired up the south west between 1983 and 1993. Many people in the south west truly acknowledge the discussions and achievements undertaken by those two Ministers. I openly admit that some people were very sceptical about the establishment of the South West Development Authority and the Bunbury 2000 project. However, over time, they learnt how to take advantage of the facilities and the knowledge within the ministry and the South West Development Authority. The loss of that ministry is felt. People within the shires of the south west region will openly mention how valuable those people were to them. They are as amazed and ashamed as I am that the Liberal Government has seen fit to drop the ministry for the south west.

Prior to the election, a great hullabaloo was made about the removal of a person from the Bunbury tourism office to Perth. Interestingly, one of the people who made so much noise was one of the advocates for centralising the tourism industry head office; that was Ian Osborne. In his early days as tourism representative for Albany, he made it very clear that he wanted to operate from Perth. However, he was told by the Minister that if he wanted to administer Albany, his office would not be based in Perth; even if he wanted to live in Perth, he had to operate in the Albany district. He then moved to Bunbury. Prior to the discussions about centralising the tourism office in Perth, he resigned and campaigned full time for the seat of Bunbury. This Government, the one which screamed so loudly at the Labor Party for doing that, has reduced the representation in that whole area to one person. Prior to the election, through the work of Bob Thomas, Phil Smith, David Smith and me, the Minister reconsidered replacing that person in Bunbury because of the pressure we applied. However, that was not to be. That office now has a reduced staff of one. The member for that area, who represents the Government, stated that the Government would not reduce the staff; in fact it would replace people. That is another broken promise by the Liberal Government regarding the south west.

Two very big issues concern the south west at the moment: One is the proposed new power house at Collie. I hope the Leader of this House will tell members what are the 24, 26 or 27 proposals before Cabinet. The people of Collie do not trust the Government any more. The member for Collie does not trust the Government either. In fact, it is now history that she crossed the floor last week to vote with the Opposition on a motion that the Government continue with developing a 600 MW power station.

Hon Tom Stephens: She had a real battle in the party room today.

Hon Murray Montgomery: You had four years.

Hon DOUG WENN: The Labor Government was there; the power station was going to go ahead. Hon Murray Montgomery should not try that one. Asea Brown Boveri were ready. However, what has happened now? This Government has frightened everyone away; it is a laughing stock and the people of Collie do not trust it. I admit that I have not had a great deal of time for the member for Collie, but after her action in the other House the other day, she has gone up in my esteem. It is interesting to note that the member for Bunbury stayed in his seat, yet he was 100 per cent behind the power station! I am not sure whether members opposite knew who would be the Minister in charge of that portfolio, but the new Minister has certainly kicked the people of Collie in the backside.

Hon W.N. Stretch interjected.

Hon DOUG WENN: Why was not Hon Bill Stretch saying that prior to the election if he believed it was the truth? Why did Hendy Cowan go there and give a 100 per cent guarantee that a 600 MW power house would go ahead? Why did the member for Collie say the same thing? The then Leader of the Opposition visited Collie and gave a 99.9 per cent guarantee.

Hon W.N. Stretch: It was to go ahead providing the package was viable.

Hon DOUG WENN: Hon Bill Stretch is now saying that the Premier and Deputy Premier did not say that prior to the election.

Hon W.N. Stretch interjected.

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House) Order!

Hon DOUG WENN: Prior to the election, I circulated a press release and challenged Hilda Turnbull on radio to resign if the Government of the day did not proceed with the power house. However, she did not accept that challenge. I wonder whether she knew something that was said, but was not telling the people of Collie. I threw her that challenge because I was very confident about the Labor Government's developing the power station. The commitment which was made to Collie has now been taken away.

However, I must say something nice about the Government somewhere along the line. I refer to the Beenup power route, against which I argued with my Government very loudly. David Smith and I had words at a public meeting on the matter. I congratulate the Government for reversing the decision to place the route through farm land and for examining the alternative route across from Manjimup. I always believed that was the ultimate action to take. I did not believe the argument put to me by certain people from the State Energy Commission of Western Australia. I argued very strongly many times on the issue. I believe the path this Government has taken at this stage is the right one. I have also fought very loudly in the past to transport the mineral sands from Beenup to Capel by rail. I have always believed that was the correct action and I still do. I am rather concerned that the figures show that is not viable. The Minister visited Nannup and gave the people there high hopes about putting the transport of the mineral sands on rail. I do not understand the Minister's motives. I know that proposal sounded good; it geed up many people, including me. However, perhaps because we are in politics we view that with scepticism and cannot see how it can be achieved. I cannot see how the price can be dropped to make it a competitive and viable operation. I hope the Minister is not just speaking nice words to gee up people and to lead them down the garden path. I do not agree with trucks transporting the Beenup produce through Nannup. We can still go ahead with Sue's Road and the alternative route.

The Minister has made noises in Bunbury about shifting the Bunbury City railway station into town to satisfy a few people. I oppose that. I have said before and I will say again that the station is ideally located. It is easy for people to get to and it is a nice looking station. I hope that the Minister has a good think about it because if the station is moved, railway lines will have to cross major intersections again. The lines will have to cross Sandridge Road which is a two lane highway, and Strickland Street which has on it one of the worst intersections in Bunbury. It is the main thoroughfare into the light industrial area. Putting the railway station back into the town means that the railway line will have to traverse a dual carriageway, and the Minister should talk to all of the people of Bunbury, not just a few people, before this is approved. It will be an absolute disaster for road traffic management in Bunbury. The railway line was taken out because of a very bad occurrence and the Minister should leave well enough alone.

Hon Murray Montgomery: Don't you think it should be put out past the bypass so that it does not cross the road at all?

Hon DOUG WENN: No.

Hon Murray Montgomery: So you are happy for trucks to have to wait at the lights?

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, I have no problem with that.

Another disappointment to me was the removal of two members from the Bunbury Port Authority. It did not take long for that to happen following the election of this Government. The removal of one of the members and replacement of him with another person was politically motivated. At this stage, the Bunbury Port Authority is overseeing a \$10.5m dredging program and the construction of a new berth at the Bunbury Port. It will be a huge asset to the city. The present members of the board have, for four years, devoted all of their time to the project, which is something that is not called for in ordinary occupations. They have spent hours and hours at meetings. Hon Murray Montgomery will understand the work that goes into something like this because he was

a member of the Albany Port Authority. He knows about the complete commitment one has to make. I know the removal of one of the members is related to the amalgamation of the Waterside Workers Federation and the port authority. He has become an employee of the board and, under the constitution of the port authority, an employee cannot be a member of the board. That is understandable. He has been replaced by a man who I believe is worthy to take on the union's position on the board.

Mr Ray Anderson is a friend of mine. He has no political affiliations or leanings, but he has been replaced on the board by a fellow called Mr Neville Eastman. I know he has met all of the members for the south west area and is a nice bloke. However, it is interesting to note that he was the campaign manager for Liberal candidates standing for seats in the south west and for the Federal Liberal Party's campaign. I will not cane Neville. However, I make it clear to members that this Government has taken off the board a special person who was involved in an important project and replaced him with a political appointee. This has been done at a time when the authority has a new manager and at a time when one of the members is overseas for three to six months. The Minister could have given a little more thought to the matter and allowed Ray Anderson to stay on the board for another 12 months to see the project completed. I understand that the Minister met with the members when he had a look at the dredging operation and was more than happy with the way the board operates. It is one of the best port authorities in Western Australia. It is profitable and returns funds to the Government annually. I hope he has not removed these people too quickly. We Bunburyites are very proud of the port authority. It brings a lot of money into the town and has a great record with its involvement in the export of mineral sands and other material. The board members should be congratulated. I hope that the two replacements live up to the expectations required of people appointed to the board.

It is interesting to note that prior to this Government's being elected, members opposite screamed and yelled about the appointment of a royal commission and, when it was appointed, were so delighted to see what it thought was the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters kicking us in the backside. Members opposite loved it. However, one of the recommendations of the royal commission was that no Minister should be appointed from members of the upper House. We now have five in this place and a Parliamentary Secretary who does not know what he is supposed to do. He has to put on notice any question asked of him because he cannot answer it.

Hon Tom Helm: Some of the Ministers are a little suspect as well!

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, they are a little. It is also interesting to note that the royal commission recommended that the President and the Speaker be appointed from the Opposition. That recommendation did not go very far at all.

Hon N.F. Moore: I did not see you putting up your hand to do it when in Government.

Hon DOUG WENN: We did, with all due respect. The President of this place came from the Opposition. Does the Minister deny that?

Hon N.F. Moore: No, but it was not your choice.

Hon DOUG WENN: Of course not. As I said earlier, I may not have a great education, but I can count and so can people opposite; that is the way they have played the game to date.

This Government has acted very badly over the Bunbury Regional Hospital in its short time in Government. I asked a question in this place a fortnight ago. Hon Phil Lockyer has referred to members attacking other members while they are not in the Chamber. However, it is difficult to put a subject like this on hold when one has the floor.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Hon DOUG WENN: It is not very often that I have the opportunity to speak on three occasions in such a short time. It seems I get the short straw, because I have been interrupted by question time and then by the dinner suspension.

Hon George Cash: Just ask for an extension. It is not unreasonable.

Hon DOUG WENN: I will. Will Hon George Cash move it for me?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon DOUG WENN: One of the most contentious issues in Bunbury relates to the Bunbury Regional Hospital. The week before last I asked the Minister for Health, Hon Peter Foss, a number of questions about that hospital and I could not believe the answers I received. Among other things, he said -

I will be shortly visiting Bunbury to indicate some favourable news to the region about that hospital.

There are two things wrong with that statement. Firstly, I asked the Minister that question on Thursday and he should have said that he intended to go the following day. The Minister, being the man he is, did not have the decency to advise either Opposition members or his own party members that he would be in town that Friday to make an announcement of the magnitude that he did.

Hon Barry House: That is not right; I was at the press conference.

Hon DOUG WENN: Hon Barry House told me differently the other day. The Minister said that he would be indicating some favourable news in Bunbury. If he comes to Bunbury with any more such favourable news, he will not be very welcome in the south west. His announcement has caused a furore such as I have never seen in Bunbury before. Within a matter of days 4 500 signatures had been collected on a petition.

Hon Barry House interjected.

Hon DOUG WENN: If Hon Barry House is trying to tell me that Ford Campbell is a member of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, he has lost his way. The Minister's news went down like a lead balloon. It has caused so much controversy that it will be viewed as one of the worst decisions this Minister has made.

The Minister also referred to computerised tomography scanners. I have had the experience of going to the Bunbury Regional Hospital and the St John of God Hospital for a CT scan, and am aware of the need to transport patients between the two hospitals. However, it has been stated in a press article that it will be very difficult for an architect to design the proposed hospital to combine the two hospitals, as contemplated. Incidentally, no-one has yet seen any plans for this new building. The Minister said that the CT scans would be carried out in one area. He obviously does not know his job yet and, of course, we should make some allowance for the fact that he has not been Minister for Health for very long. The only other two scanners in Perth are located at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital. All other hospitals requiring this service transport their patients to either of those hospitals. Does the Minister's statement indicate that he intends to close the smaller hospitals and build a major section next to Royal Perth Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital? That is the story he tells in Bunbury when saying that we need to put these units together. I could not believe my ears when the Minister said -

This would make the health care dollar in Bunbury go further and could enhance the quality of health care provided in Bunbury.

The health care provided by the nursing staff of the Bunbury Regional Hospital is second to none; one could not obtain better care anywhere else in Western Australia and I say that from my own experience. I know these people, I live in their community, and I associate with quite a number of them. The Minister should apologise to the people who work in the Bunbury Regional Hospital. He is a disgrace. Anyone who thinks the Minister has a grasp on his job should consider the following statement he made -

A further advantage is that not all Bunbury residents use the Bunbury Regional Hospital, because once they are on the road they may as well go to Perth and get the full services.

That is truly the joke of all jokes.

Hon Barry House: When did he say that?

Hon DOUG WENN: In response to my questions on the Thursday before he went to Bunbury. People do not go to hospital because they want to; people go because they have to. They will not decide once arriving at a hospital that they do not like that particular hospital and, therefore, will travel to Perth. Instantly, people who seek medical treatment in Perth rather than in Bunbury lose the services of their local doctor and the comfort of their friends around them. It is no fun for a Bunbury resident to be in hospital in Perth. The Minister should apologise to the people of the south west for making stupid statements of that nature.

I also asked the Minister whether he had allowed the local community to take part in these discussions. Of course, we all know he has not. He has not provided for one ounce of discussion, other than among Government members. The Minister stated in his answer -

There was no consultation with the Bunbury community and the Health Department was not allowed to consider the matter because the Labor Government saw it as likely to cause union trouble.

The Minister did not know what he was talking about. When the Labor Government was discussing the regional hospital it allowed input from many areas, including the staff at the hospital and the community led by Ford Campbell.

Hon Barry House: Why has Keith Wilson become involved?

Hon DOUG WENN: If Keith Wilson were around today I would ask him that question. He was the Minister responsible under the Labor Government for those negotiations, and the negotiations were stopped by the administration of the St John of God Hospital because it could not deal with certain factors at the hospital.

A Government member: Because he became a Catholic.

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, he became a Catholic and he was instantly on the board of the St John of God Hospital. Now he is reopening the negotiations. I would like to know why he has become involved. This issue has now blown out to almost full scale war in Bunbury. I said at the outset that I am disappointed the Minister for Health is not in the Chamber at the moment, but since this is my opportunity to raise this matter in the Address-in-Reply debate, so be it.

As Hon Phil Lockyer said the other day, one of the good things about this place is *Hansard*, and the Minister will be able to read it later. I will answer any response he might make about my address tonight. The Minister for Health must listen and respond when he is told that this is not only a hospital for Bunbury; it is a regional hospital. It caters for all needs in all areas ranging from Harvey to Collie, and through to Augusta. When major surgery or other needs are warranted, people are transferred either to Bunbury or by flying ambulance to Perth. People know that they are in trouble if they need to use that service. I emphasise to the members of the Government representing the South West Region that it is not only a Bunbury hospital; it caters for the whole region.

A press release in the *South Western Times* on 29 June makes the point -

Current Bunbury regional and SJOG staff to come under the same award and compete for jobs once the hospital is completed in about three years.

That is what I love about the Government's industrial relations policy. The article continues -

There has been a commitment that no staff will be sacked -

That was a commitment by the Minister. As I said earlier, the Minister responded to my questions in that way. The article continues -

- although it's expected the number of positions will be cut.

Is that double Dutch? I do not mean that as an insult to Dutch people who may be listening or who may read this tomorrow.

The next part which I have become very concerned about is that the management of the St John of God Hospital board will not be giving as complete a service as would a Government run regional hospital. The article states -

The ethical basis on which the hospital will be run will be consistent with those of SJOG, meaning no sterilisation or abortion procedures in either the public or private wings.

In other words, people who feel they need to have some family control may decide that the husbands should undergo a vasectomy. However, under the direction of the St John of God Hospital if people want to have a vasectomy they are forced to go to Perth. I can assure you, Mr President, that people do not take that operation lightly. Doctors do not take it lightly and they do not like to take a nip or a tuck; they like to be sure that people are absolutely aware of what they are doing. They like to sit down with people and talk with the husband and the wife to be sure that they know what they are doing. That is, people will be forced either to go to Perth for the operation or to go into small Government hospitals in the surrounding areas. I refer here to hospitals at Donnybrook, Collie, Harvey or Busselton.

Hon Kim Chance interjected.

Hon DOUG WENN: I will not go into the Busselton issue. It would take an hour to explain the way the Minister for Health has treated the people of Busselton. Hon Barry House will agree with me. I am talking about the ethics of the St John of God Hospital in Bunbury. I have not had my next quotation legally tested but I intend to do so. I refer here to sterilisation and abortions. To my mind, under the Australian Constitution, the St John of God Hospital Bunbury in the running of its public wing should not be permitted to influence people in their religious beliefs. Clause 116 of chapter V of the Constitution states -

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

I have not had that checked. I intend to do so. If my understanding is correct - and no doubt I will be told if it is not - the St John of God order cannot enforce in the public sector of the Bunbury hospital, as it will be called, its religious beliefs on anyone. As a member of the public, I have a right to go to the public hospital if I want a vasectomy. As I said, under that system they will fall in the manure. I do not know if any of my colleagues with legal experience can advise me, but I intend to take up the matter with a constitutional lawyer. It is disgraceful that the hospital can do that to ordinary people who do not hold the same religious beliefs.

The article continues -

The new hospital will probably be built on the regional site in Blair Street, though the St John site in the city and even possibly a yet-to-be named third site have not been discounted.

We are being led up the garden path. The Minister does not seem to want to say exactly what he will do. He is lost. When the Minister returns from his parliamentary duties one of the first questions I will ask in this House - unfortunately that will be three weeks away - will be where the third proposed site is. Perhaps later, one of the Government members representing the area will be able to tell me. I do not think so. I do not think they know.

The other day the Minister for Health responded to a question about the unions. He said that the previous Labor Government was looking after its union friends in the district. The unions led by the people working at the regional hospital are not one bit impressed with the whole scenario that the Minister has put forward. They are not impressed to the degree that they claim not enough beds have been allocated to the public wing and that job losses are feared also. That fear extends throughout the community and, undoubtedly, having representation in the hospitals, the unions are concerned about it

also. About five or six years ago the St John of God Hospital built a new section, and every time it builds sections onto the hospital it seems to lose beds. Last time a new section was built, the hospital lost six beds. This time we are talking about 20 beds being lost.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson interjected.

Hon DOUG WENN: They could drop out when we need them, but I do not think so. The south west branch of the Miscellaneous Workers Union claims that the Bunbury region has a bed capacity of 150. The new plan will put added pressure on the hospital waiting lists. I do not doubt that members of the South West Region would agree that the population of the south west is increasing quickly.

Hon Barry House: How many of the 150 beds are closed now?

Hon DOUG WENN: They are all available.

Hon Barry House: I think the member will find that some of them are closed.

Hon DOUG WENN: Not to my knowledge. At a time when we have massive waiting lists at the public hospital, extra pressure is about to be added.

The bed capacity will not meet the need in the south west. It is interesting that even the administration of St John of God Hospital admits that two years ago it was on the brink of closing. Bunbury would not have had a private hospital at all. I wonder if this sudden rush of blood by the Minister for Health to get down there and resurrect discussions, from which the administration had withdrawn last year, is not to help the hospital out financially. The Labor Government helped the administration out when it expanded the hospital five years ago. The surge of public protest is increasing every day. I have been advised that a meeting scheduled for next Monday has been changed to this Tuesday so the citizens of Bunbury can discuss the whole issue.

Hon Barry House: It was called by the union.

Hon DOUG WENN: And by concerned citizens.

Hon Graham Edwards: Don't you care about unionists?

Hon Barry House: Of course I do.

Hon DOUG WENN: I hope the Minister turns up to face the wrath of the people of Bunbury and of the south west. It is not just the people of Bunbury who are concerned, but the whole south west area. In an article in the *South West Times* headlined "Nurses concerned at Catholic values" reads in part -

The Australian Nurses Federation secretary Stan Combs said there also was concern about operating under the strict Catholic health dictates.

This does not allow abortions or sterilizations, and only supports limited birth control teaching.

That is one of the biggest issues. Also in the *South West Times* Beth Tucker states -

The State Government's decision to co-locate Bunbury's hospitals will disadvantage patients without private health insurance, according to unions.

One of the real concerns among doctors and health administrators in the region is that if they have a private and a public hospital in conjunction many people will drop their private health coverage, which would be an absolute disaster. Those who do not have private health coverage will go into the public sector, and those who do will go into the private sector. One article states that the co-location proposal will mean a five star health care service. I hope the service provided in Bunbury will be higher than a five star rating. Presently, health care in the south west is better than a five star service. It seems that St John of God Hospital is building a motel and that hospital patients will be accommodated in separate units. The whole question needs to be examined thoroughly. Beth Tucker's article states that patients with private health insurance will be disadvantaged. The building will cost \$60m over 20 years and they will save \$50m. Where is the other \$10m coming from? Will the Government foot the bill?

Hon Reg Davies: They might have some mates.

Hon DOUG WENN: The Government does not have many mates.

What happens to the old St John of God Hospital? The suggestion has been made that it be sold off to private enterprise or that the Government will buy it - that is what I believe will happen. What will that cost the taxpayer? The Government could not buy it for less than \$40m.

Hon Barry House: Why would the Government want it? Bunbury already has an empty tower.

Hon DOUG WENN: Hon Barry House should tell me.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: You are telling us.

Hon Graham Edwards: Hon Derrick Tomlinson will have plenty of opportunity to make his own speech.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member has only 39 seconds left as it is.

Hon DOUG WENN: Last week a letter to the editor of the *South West Times* stated -

We have been eagerly awaiting the new regional hospital and its construction was enthusiastically supported by all political parties.

Do Government members remember that? I asked the Minister for Health at question time whether he was aware that the coalition policy for the south west prior to the State election stated that a coalition Government - that is you, Mr House, Mr Osborne and one of the quietest people of the lot, Mr John Bradshaw -

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Hon DOUG WENN: I thank the Leader of the Government.

Hon Graham Edwards: He has a bit to make up for.

Hon Tom Helm: He is a little devil.

Hon Graham Edwards: Tom Stephens was on the same trip.

Hon George Cash: That could be the reason.

Hon DOUG WENN: I started to read a letter to the editor written by Wayne Major of Glover Street, Bunbury to the *South West Times*. The letter continues -

The manner in which the new Minister for Health, Mr Foss, stopped construction of the new regional hospital after three months of work should have set off alarm bells in the community.

A further two months have now passed, there has been no work on the site and we are now told a private hospital will be built alongside the public hospital.

If press reports are correct the public wing will be managed by the private interest and we could be looking at a two tier health system in Bunbury - one for the wealthy and one for the ordinary family.

The regional hospital currently offers top quality health care to all Bunbury people and this should not be threatened.

Could I encourage all Bunbury people to contact their local politicians and express their strong objection to this action.

An article in the *Bunbury Mail* of 30 June states that the Government is under siege over the local hospital plan. This will emphasise the point I was making about the uprising in Bunbury over this issue. The article states -

The State Government is under siege from mammoth opposition to its plan to have a private enterprise operate a public hospital in Bunbury.

Two unions representing public hospital staff have condemned the plan and a petition outlawing a privately-managed facility is already circulating around Bunbury.

Last week Health Minister Peter Foss threw away the plans of the previous Lawrence Government to build a new, independent \$50 million Bunbury Regional Hospital.

Instead, St John of God Hospital will own and run a new \$60 million hospital which will house private and public patients.

The government will enter into an agreement with the hospital to pay for the treatment of public patients.

The Australian Nursing Federation and the Hospital Salaried Officers Association criticised the government for compromising the region's health care to find the cheapest option.

According to ANF state secretary Shane Combs, nurses object strongly to the idea of public hospital beds being managed by the St John of God Hospital.

He said the decision was a further broken promise which would lead to loss of jobs.

"The community of the South West should be gravely concerned about their ability to access current health services if the co-location proposal goes ahead," he said.

HSOA spokesman Dan Hill said the decision had shocked and outraged hospital staff.

"The Government is seeking to cut costs by neglecting its responsibility to provide high quality public health services to the people of the South West region," Mr Hill said.

A member of the nursing staff wrote to the *South West Times* and her letter appeared in the issue of last Thursday. The letter, headlined "Hospital decision violates public's freedom of choice", states -

It disgusts me that the report written in *The West Australian* on June 26, 1993

This letter was written after a meeting with the staff at the regional hospital. The article continues -

is not what was relayed to us at a combined meeting of all the workers the day before.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: By whom?

Hon DOUG WENN: By the management and the Minister.

It is unfortunate that Government members representing that area have been extremely quiet. Prior to the election there was much "Rah rah, rally round, we will do this, we will do that." I have given five examples of broken promises in Bunbury and surrounding districts alone. It is a shame that people such as Legislative Assembly members John Bradshaw and Mr Osborne are now so quiet about the whole matter. They will not be allowed to sit down and leave it all in the lap of the Minister. Perhaps the Minister has not had discussions with those members.

Hon Tom Stephens: Some of the Government upper House members for the area seem a bit quiet about it as well.

Hon DOUG WENN: The matter has been badly handled; it must be looked at again. I call on upper House members of South West Region, Government and Opposition, to give the Minister a good shake and tell him that he is going the wrong way. He should never have stopped the building in its progress. He should never have tried to make new deals. It is time he told us how the financial side of this matter will be handled and what will happen to the old hospital. I emphasise that it is time he told the people of Bunbury and South West Region that they will receive all the facilities that are now available to them. It is up to us as the members representing that area to advise the Minister that he is wrong in allowing the St John of God administration to enforce their beliefs on all people in the Bunbury and surrounding areas about family control - sterilisation and so forth. I

intend to pursue the legal matters under the Australian Constitution and the target of enforcing people to go by their religious beliefs. The Minister must have a rethink about this issue. He should visit the area next Tuesday. If any members think they have not received an invitation, I assure them that they will have one by morning. The Minister must explain those matters to the people of Bunbury. Perhaps if he can do that he will get away with what he is trying to do. However, I do not believe he can. He has not explained it yet; I do not think he will. The people of Bunbury and the south west will not stand for it. They will react in a way that has just occurred in Port Macquarie in New South Wales where the Liberal Government of the day has amalgamated two hospitals, a private and a public hospital. Building cannot commence until the court case is finalised; however, the people of that area have reacted strongly against the proposal by getting rid of the Government members who agreed to the proposal and said nothing about what was happening. I assure members that this little wood duck will stand up tall and strong, and speak loudly on behalf of the people in the area.

Hon Reg Davies: To reintroduce duck shooting.

Hon DOUG WENN: I admit it was much nicer when the member was out on parliamentary duties; however, at the same time I feel safe that he is here. I say again to Sir Francis Burt that it will be a shame for the State to lose him as Governor. I wish him and his wife all the best.

HON REG DAVIES (North Metropolitan) [8.05 pm]: It is a privilege to be participating in the Address-in-Reply debate. I too thank His Excellency the Governor, Sir Francis Burt, for his admirable words on the opening of this first session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament. I made a farewell speech to Sir Francis Burt when he was leaving the job before. He carried out that position with great dignity, as did his wife. Although he will be missed we are at least still considering the position of Governor in this State. That is a step in the right direction. This is also a fit occasion for this Parliament to express loyalty to our beloved sovereign, Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, and to acknowledge the outstanding contribution she has made to the Commonwealth in the 40 years since her accession to the throne. We should pray that she has robust constitution and great strength to deal with what may be her most difficult period since her coronation. Most Western Australians would acknowledge that she has represented a stability so lacking in nations without a monarchy. I also believe that most Western Australians wish her long life and continuing sovereignty over Australia and Western Australia.

Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), I also take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to you on your election to the position you now hold, and to offer my hearty congratulations to the President on his being re-elected to his high office. I would have liked to take the opportunity to say to him all that Hon Ross Lightfoot said; however, I am sure he would admonish me for monotonous repetition if I did so. I wholeheartedly endorse what Hon Ross Lightfoot said in his speech and I hope that I will also get the call quite regularly for saying that. I pass on my sincere congratulations also to the Liberal and National coalition on obtaining the majority of support of the electors of this State to allow them to form Government. The people of this State deserve a Government which is strong, open, fair and caring.

Hon Tom Stephens: We had better have a new election. It was bad luck they missed out.

Hon REG DAVIES: My wish is that this administration will be all of those things because when the electors voted in the secrecy of the polling booths they were not punishing the previous Government for the ills of the 1980s. The promises for openness, fairness and better management prompted many of them to change their minds and vote for the coalition, and to put their faith, aspirations and hope in the conservative Government in the hope that their children and their children's children will have a future in which they will have some control. They want the Government to move away from the social responsibility and the hand-out mentality of the past and to give responsibility back to the individual. I think that is what the people of Western Australia were thinking when they voted for a new Government. They also want this new Government to let

them decide their own destinies, with little Government interference but, at the same time, with the Government using all its resources to create the right atmosphere for this to occur.

Most members would know that philosophically I agree with many of those ideals, but my aim over the next four years is to ensure, in whatever way I can, that this Government keeps faith with the people of this State and keeps those promises with which it went to the electorate. It is those promises which gave the citizens of Western Australia hope for a better future. In addition, I will try to ensure, with the little power I have as the only Independent in this House, that the Government of Western Australia continues to uphold the virtue of hard work and reward for people. It must ensure that they are allowed to obtain the skills they want, because this State desperately needs a future with the correct leadership. This State deserves a Government which will give those people who take up the cudgels a reward for hard work and initiative. Its citizens do not want a Government that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Hon T.G. Butler: Bad luck about that; that is what you have.

Hon REG DAVIES: It is still the early days of this new Administration. I am not impressed with certain of its decisions, but I still have the faith that we will witness a rapid change from the style of the previous Administration. I had the same faith in the new Administration in 1983, expecting it to be a caring and concerned Government. It started out that way, but unfortunately greed got in its path and we all know the result of that.

I congratulate those members who were re-elected to this place and acknowledge and welcome the newly elected members. I listened to many of their inaugural speeches and they have also given me some renewed faith and hope. I feel, from the speeches the new members made, that their constituents, the State and this institution of Parliament will come before their party loyalties and allegiances, and this will be healthy for the Parliament. I look forward with great interest to the voting pattern in divisions. It was an historic occasion last Wednesday week when Hon Jim Scott delivered his inaugural speech in the sense that for the first time a new party is represented in this Parliament. The Greens (WA) party is to be congratulated on its new-found State representation. I hope Hon Jim Scott is the only Greens (WA) member in this Chamber for the next four years. I wish the Greens (WA) and the Democrats every success in future elections. A great deal has been said lately about the little notice being taken of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters, but it is encouraging that at least our electors acknowledge the eminent commissioners' findings of the need for Independents and representatives of minority groups to be elected to this Chamber.

I am grateful to the many thousands of electors in North Metropolitan Region who endorsed my actions during the last Parliament and re-elected me. I imagine they did so in the hope that I would continue to act in a similar vein to the way I acted during the last Parliament. The enormity of the task for an Independent to be elected to this House can never be understated. North Metropolitan Region is the most populous region in this State and I thank the 500-odd volunteers and dedicated supporters who assisted me in the lead up to the 1993 election and on polling day. It would be impossible to thank them individually, but they all know I am eternally grateful for their generosity. I will take some time to thank those people who supported me on polling day. Many of them gave me a full day of their time and they stood out in the torrential rain from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm handing out how-to-vote cards. They did not care whether they got wet; they offered their services in the hope that I would be re-elected as their representative. Among the many volunteers who assisted me in the lead up to the election and on polling day - indeed, they assist me even now - are police officers; members of the anti-duck shooting lobby, particularly Joan Payne and Max and Dorothy Head; people who supported my call for the demolition of the old Swan Brewery; many social justice representatives, including clerics; people from the pesticide control organisations; many service and ex-service personnel; and many of my constituents, some of whom I had never met before. Some of the people who helped me were not my constituents, but they arrived from all

over the State the day before the election, leaving the day after. They wanted to help me by handing out how-to-vote cards, which were correctly lodged and correctly filled out, although I did not have the plethora of people which some candidates had to make sure that that should happen.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Perhaps that was to your advantage.

Hon REG DAVIES: It certainly was.

Hon Bob Thomas: We will leave that up to the Court of Disputed Returns.

Hon REG DAVIES: It is wonderful to be back in this place listening to Hon Bob Thomas' interjections. I am pleased to see him back here and to listen to the contribution he makes to this Parliament.

I will name a few of the people who supported me during the election campaign. I received great support from Audrey Hine, with whom many members would have had contact. Those members who have not, certainly will in the future. Audrey is a great supporter of democracy and of things that are right and proper; she is a great fighter for the underdog.

I acknowledge also the Hayes family; Doug Trevor, with whom many on this side of the House could well have had association in the past; Kim Baldwin; Ron Gilchrist; Katie Gardiner; Lyn and Bob Wood; Peter and Ray Mickelberg; and Avon Lovell. I must not forget to mention my wife and family, and my extended family, who were all roped in. I acknowledge also the great support and camaraderie that I received from the other Independents in my region - all very hard working and worthy candidates, and all female. I mention in particular Kath Mallett, who stood for the seat of Perth; Terry Bolden, who stood for the seat of Wanneroo; Margo Henshaw, who did extremely well in Dianella; and Norma Rundle, a long time supporter, who ran for the seat of Whitford. I thank my son and running mate, Adam, who would have served the Parliament well, as he served me well during the lead-up to the campaign and on election day. This young man turned 21 last Saturday. He possesses a great sense of family values and of community concern. He is also completing his final year of a business degree. I speak not only as a father but also as a friend when I say that I hope he will continue with his political ambitions and will one day gain a seat and be able to represent the people of Western Australia.

While I do not want to overdramatise the task of my being the first Independent elected to this Chamber in my lifetime -

Hon T.G. Butler: And in this Chamber.

Hon REG DAVIES: No, that is not true; certainly in my lifetime. I need to express how difficult it is for someone who genuinely believes that he wants to represent the people of the State in the Parliament but who does not want to be involved with party politics or to be part of any formal political party, because a system has evolved which is designed to cater for party candidates to the exclusion of individual members of our community who believe that they have something to contribute. Prior to my election to this place, the last Independent member elected to this House was Hon Cyril Cornish. He was born over 100 years ago.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: That is not in your lifetime.

Hon REG DAVIES: No. I am getting on a bit, but I am not that old. He also was an MLC for what was then North Province. He won his seat in a by-election, but unfortunately when he contested the seat again he was not successful.

Hon Tom Stephens: In what year did he first stand?

Hon REG DAVIES: I am not sure. It was certainly before I was born, so it was prior to 21 December 1943.

As an Independent member, I am only too well aware of the changes that are needed to the Electoral Act in a number of areas. One area that is of great concern to me is the enormous cost of producing how-to-vote cards - not only the enormous financial cost, but also the enormous cost to our environment, and to our friends and supporters, who get out

in all sorts of conditions to hand them out and who often encounter much antagonism outside the polling booths from voters who get quite irate when people harass them and force these cards into their hands whether they want them or not. It is time to amend the Electoral Act so that candidates, organisations and parties can lodge - God help us - a correct how-to-vote card with the Electoral Commission which can be displayed inside every polling booth so that all candidates will be equal. Equal opportunity and equity is one of the platforms of our society, and this can be achieved only if individuals too are afforded the opportunity to win a seat in our Parliament, and particularly to try to win a seat in our Legislative Council.

While I am on the subject of a seat in the Parliament - and I will not dwell on this for much longer - I point out that the upper House is supposedly a House of Review. However, parties dominate all the way through.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Which party?

Hon REG DAVIES: The party system - the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the National Party, the Greens. They are all party people. I am saying that the supply of resources is influenced along party lines. Little thought is given to the Independents. I find it difficult to operate my electorate office with one staff member. I am required to represent my electorate at various functions and activities and to attend speaking engagements. Sometimes I receive three or four invitations for the same day. Therefore, my electorate officer often fills in for me at one function if I am required to be at another function on the same day, and sometimes my wife fills in for me so that I am represented. That leaves my office with only an answering machine. There is definitely a need for a research officer or additional staff for an Independent with a large metropolitan constituency.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Did you find it any different when you were part of the party system?

Hon REG DAVIES: I thought when I was first elected that in order to truly carry out my task I needed additional staff. In fact, I wrote a letter recommending that all upper House members have a research officer. I think I did that in 1989 or 1990. It was not until I was in a position of some power in 1991-92, when my services were required here quite regularly and I had to speak on or have knowledge about almost every piece of legislation that came into this Parliament, particularly contentious legislation, where my vote was vital, and when I was under enormous pressure, with both the Government and the Opposition wanting - and, in some cases, telling, because of my past allegiances - me to vote in a certain way, that I made representation to the Premier of the day, Carmen Lawrence, who saw the need to give me extra staff. In fact she gave me an allowance of approximately \$30 000 a year for one or more research officers. That was a considerable help. In other Parliaments in Australia Independent members are provided with extra resources, and it is necessary for upper House members to be allocated extra research staff if they are to do their job properly.

I have tended to take on many hard issues over the years and to refer to matters which others are reluctant to touch. Often, I have been the member for Western Australia receiving phone calls from all over the State as people seek advice or representation. Of course, this has made my job a little harder.

I find it interesting that we now have five Ministers and a Parliamentary Secretary residing in the upper House. This situation is contrary to the royal commission's recommendations, although I acknowledge that we are not obliged to follow the recommendations; however, we have followed few recommendations from one of, if not the, most expensive reports ever commissioned by a Government in the State.

Hon Tom Stephens: Certainly the most expensive to be systematically shredded by the Government.

Hon N.F. Moore: Absolute tripe!

Hon REG DAVIES: I acknowledge that it is difficult for any Premier to allocate ministerial portfolios, and that the Government has quite a lot of talent in this House. Also, listening to the new members speak in this House, considerable talent resides in the

Opposition. I am sure it will be a very interesting four years when debate commences in earnest. With five Ministers and a Parliamentary Secretary in this House, it will be difficult to undertake the real business of scrutiny of Government and its legislation. Five Ministers in this House will initiate legislation, and I have difficulty in coming to grips with this situation at the moment. As Parliament proceeds during the next four years, I may see the reason for it.

Hon E.J. Charlton: The reason is that with the quality of members up here we will not need to worry about such scrutiny!

Hon REG DAVIES: I sincerely hope, for the benefit of my children and their children, that the Minister is right as we cannot afford any further disasters, particularly of the financial nature.

Also, I am disappointed with the answer to my first question asked in this House this year. My question related to open, fair and accountable Government; namely, will the Government extend question time? The reply was that the Minister would not answer the question but would make a statement later. That was from a Government that was so critical of the previous Administration for limiting question time to a paltry 30 minutes!

Hon E.J. Charlton: Would you like to see it extended, Mr Davies?

Hon REG DAVIES: Of course I would like to see it extended; that is why I asked the question. Such an extension would give Parliament an opportunity to question the five Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary in the upper House who preside over more than half the State Budget. Therefore, it is terribly important that ample time is available to obtain answers to our questions.

Many issues should be raised during the current parliamentary session, and I congratulate Hon Alannah MacTiernan for her inaugural speech in which she raised the contentious issue of drugs. I may not agree with all her points on the subject, but I support her raising the matter for debate. I hope that debate will continue because the juvenile drug problem in this State should be one of the biggest concerns in our society and in this Parliament. We are quick to apprehend victims of drugs - the users - who are punished as drug takers and addicts. However, we do very little to stem the tide of the drug trade by rounding up the suppliers of chemicals and plants which contaminate our youth and often push them into a life of crime. Sure, we punish the youths for stealing and taking drugs, but so very little is done to stop those persons supplying the drugs.

Recently I spoke to a mother of two sons, both of whom I have known since they were small children when I coached them at T-ball. One of those sons now regularly beats his mother and steals from her - as does his brother - so he can buy drugs and line the pockets of the drug dealers whom we allow to go free. As a society we sit back and do not really produce any real plan for catching the suppliers. Multanovas are set up on the freeway or the back streets to catch the criminal driver for driving 5 kmh or 10 kmh over the speed limit. We have changed our laws to ensure that people are not inebriated behind the wheel of a car. However, drug dealers now lurk in vehicles around our high schools - indeed our primary schools - and the children run to the vehicle to obtain drugs as though it were a lolly or hamburger cart. We do nothing. Even when the teacher hands the registration number of the vehicle to the police, nothing is done because no proof is available. I do not care who or how rich or powerful the drug dealers are, or what position they hold in society; if they are caught, they must be put behind bars because they create a great deal of unhappiness within our society.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Mr Davies, are you concerned that we are not doing enough, or that it is just so difficult to find them guilty?

Hon REG DAVIES: The biggest problem is that we do not have answers - I do not have the answer. I doubt whether too many members in this Chamber have all the answers, but we need a little intelligence applied to this matter. We must consider our future, which is our children. We need to consider the children's parents. We must spend money to make a concerted effort - be it by way of halfway houses or counselling services - to get these people off drugs and redirected, and we must stem the drug

trade. Therefore, we need to spend more money on a concerted police effort to crack down on them. I would be quite happy if we were to have a dob in a druggie hotline going all the time. I would not care how much money it cost if it reaped some rewards. We certainly need some type of rehabilitation program.

The lady I spoke of is a school teacher. Her school was so concerned about the effect of drugs on young children that a media education week was held, the first in this State. It was decided to have an Oprah Winfrey type show to let parents and other students know what sort of effect drugs have on people. It was very successful. The media got involved, with quite a successful program on Channel 7. This lady faxed me a report of the program. It states -

As discussed with you, we have had problems with two of our boys for the past four years, with what appears to have been no assistance from anyone, unless we actually sought it ourselves and then there didn't appear to be a solution or any support for either ourselves as parents or the boys' problems.

Jarrad has been sentenced to a four months Community Release Order (last Friday) which includes a six week residential Drug Rehabilitation program, followed by community service under supervision - and this is the first ray of hope I have seen in the past four years. It involves having urine checks for the first six weeks and then, if he offends at any time until the order ceases, he will find himself in Longmore, so I hope that is incentive enough to "stay clean" for the next four months.

Unfortunately, with the economic climate as it is, and with few employable skills, I could (but won't) spend the next few months worrying about what will happen to him once his time is up.

When I spoke to her she stated that this was her big concern. As a parent, the first ray of hope was when the judge ordered this penalty. There should be some form of rehabilitation readily available and some counselling services available for the parents. They suffer more than we know not only by worrying about the children but also by being robbed and beaten as a result of the use of drugs by the children.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: What about the Holyoake program? Surely they will be able to use this.

Hon REG DAVIES: It is a bigger problem than one or two institutions can cope with. Holyoake spends most of its time involved with alcoholics. Alcoholism in itself is a problem within our community. That is the type of good program on which we need to spend our financial resources.

Among the issues I would like to see raised in the forthcoming session is the serious matter of the High Court of Australia decision on Mabo. I have found it very difficult to understand and to come to grips with. I believe this issue could lead to divisiveness, hysteria and an increased gap between the cultures within our society. The population at large does not really understand the implications of the Mabo decision. Prominent members of the Government and the Opposition, with their high profile and opposing views, certainly have not helped the debate; in fact, they have only confused and divided people. To be fair, we should look at the principles of the decision. We should take it out of the political forum. Instead of having these divisive media debates, we should have one of our upper House committees look at the effects of the decision on the people of Western Australia, and at the principles to come out of it, and then tell the people exactly what it means for them. It is a very complex issue and we have to the citizens in this State a duty to let them know, unemotionally, exactly what the Mabo decision means to each and every one of them. Then people will not be worrying about statements concerning the sale of their backyards, of their houses or their neighbours' houses, or of somebody building on their blocks of land. That is what a committee in this House can do. We have seen what the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs and Statutes Revision and the Standing Committee on Legislation can do when they get their teeth into an issue.

Members who were present during the last Parliament are well aware of my long term interest in a very important and very serious matter: Sexual abuse of young children. That has come about mainly as a result of my association with the People Against Child Sexual Abuse WA, PACSA. A prominent writer from the University of South Australia, Associate Professor Freda Briggs, is launching a new book entitled *Why My Child?* tomorrow in the function room at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. Dr Liz Constable, MLA, is introducing this publication.

It is disappointing that once again we see another Independent having to take up the cudgels to promote a book which deals with self-help groups to counsel child victims and non-offending parents. It is even more disappointing that the Minister for Community Development was asked to be there for the opening and he opted not to do it. His staff felt that too many people were organising it. There was some difficulty in getting the book here for him to read. Eventually one was shipped over, but he opted out. I was originally asked to introduce the publication but I said, "I think it would give more prominence and credence to this issue if somebody like the Minister for Community Development brought it to the public's attention." The Minister disappointed me. I am sure that Dr Constable will do a very fine job and will create some publicity for the book. Hopefully, it may save some innocent child in the future.

Presently in this State the only person to whom these terribly unfortunate victims can turn is an elderly lady who, although she does her best, is not trained to counsel. She has enormous difficulty getting volunteers together to form a cohesive counselling group. Child sexual abuse can affect somebody from the time it occurs until the day they die. However, we do not do a great deal about it. We must spend money on counselling services for sexually abused children and their parents because generally they do not know who to turn to or where to go when the abuse occurs. I am sure members would be well aware of the lady to whom I refer; she would have rung and abused them when Bills were proceeding through this House. This lady is left to listen to all these stories and do her best to guide the victims in this area without the training or resources to do so. However, we are not doing anything about it. The Minister for Community Development should look closely at establishing counselling services for young victims.

I am always one who is willing to give credit where credit is due. It is fairly well known that Hon Cheryl Edwardes and I have never been close. However, I take this opportunity to congratulate her on being selected as Attorney General. I always favoured Hon Peter Foss as the conservative Attorney General.

Hon Tom Stephens: I personally preferred Hon Derrick Tomlinson.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I preferred Hon Peter Foss.

Hon REG DAVIES: Since her taking office as Attorney General, which is a difficult job, I have had nothing but admiration for this lady. She has carried out the duties of that high office admirably. She has brought hope to many of my constituents who gave up hope of ever seeing justice being done or ever getting justice. They finally have in this State an Attorney General who will listen, who will answer their letters and who will at least direct them in the right area. She is willing to take on the hard issues, and the area of social justice will certainly be a most difficult one. I wish Cheryl Edwardes every success in that job. She is one of the bright lights of the current Government.

Hon T.G. Butler: She is one of the bright lights in a dim Cabinet.

Hon REG DAVIES: It is only fair that I express my admiration for the work she has carried out because I have certainly been critical of her in the past. When somebody is doing a good job it should be mentioned.

I am concerned about an article that I read in *The West Australian* recently in which the new Minister for Racing and Gaming, Hon Max Evans, spoke about his considering allowing children into Totalisator Agency Board betting shops. That would be a retrograde step and a poor move. Most of the TAB agents to whom I have spoken oppose that move, as do most of the punters. The rationale is that if children are allowed to accompany their parents to the races, why not allow them to enter TAB shops as well?

Hon T.G. Butler: Would you prefer to see them outside? Children go to the TAB shops at present but are left outside.

Hon REG DAVIES: It is wrong to have children subjected to that environment early in life. In and around betting shops is no place for children. Generally, betting shops are located close to hotels and that is no environment for young children. The best environment is at home, at school, on the sporting field, or with friends and family. I am also quite impressed with the direction in which our Western Australian Police Force has been heading over the past few months. I am happy to see that we now have a police board.

Hon Graham Edwards: We don't have it yet.

Hon REG DAVIES: We are well on the way to having a police board in this State.

Hon Graham Edwards: I will wait and see the legislation introduced before joining with you in saying that.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Just because you wouldn't do it, Mr Edwards.

Hon REG DAVIES: I am looking forward to legislation which will initiate the police board in this State. I am also happy to see that citizens now have some rights when arrested or when taken into custody. They now have the right to a telephone call and to lawyers. I am pleased that Western Australia is now heading towards a quasi-independent tribunal to examine complaints against the police. My only concern is that I have always thought that having to complain to the police about the police is a deterrent. People are often unwilling to go to the police to complain about them. I would much prefer to see an independent tribunal as the first step for people seeking some form of justice in this area if they think they have been wronged. However, it is refreshing that the board will be put in place. I spoke at great length last year about the surveys conducted by independent companies in New South Wales and other States to find out how the Police Force is perceived by the community. Western Australia is now heading along that line. We must now convince our Government to keep its pre-election promise of more manning, more money, more police stations, more police on the streets, a more human face in our Police Force and no more revolving doors. Youth should not be treated as second rate citizens but as our future leaders. It gives me great pleasure to support the motion.

HON SAM PIANTADOSI (North Metropolitan) [8.58 pm]: I support the motion. I thank the Governor, Sir Francis Burt, and Lady Burt for their contribution to Western Australia. I also congratulate you, Mr President, on your re-election as the overseer of this House. I am confident that most members will get a fair go from you, Sir. I also congratulate Hon Barry House, who was elected Chairman of Committees, and other deputy chairmen. I look forward to a good working relationship with them.

I pay tribute to the former members of this House who contributed so well to Western Australia over the many years they served in this place. They include Hon Kay Hallahan, Hon Fred McKenzie, Hon Beryl Jones, Hon Garry Kelly, Hon John Caldwell, Hon Margaret McAleer and Hon Joe Berinson. All served not only this House well, but also all Western Australians. Whether or not people liked Hon Joe Berinson, everybody respected his ability. He had that uncanny sense of survival and was able to get on top of any situation even under great pressure. I guess everybody in this place will miss him because we all learnt a lot from Joe. My good friend Hon Fred McKenzie was more than just a colleague in this place; we, with Hon Tom Butler, go back a long way, being former officials in the union movement. Nobody could argue about Fred's fairness and honesty. He was always willing to help anybody irrespective of their political allegiances. He always found time to give advice. He always stuck to his guns and contributed on issues relating to the trade union movement, especially matters relating to railways. I miss Fred. Not only was he a colleague in this House and in the union movement, but also he was a friend and mentor.

I welcome my new colleagues on this side of the House, Hon Nick Griffiths, Hon Alannah MacTiernan and Hon John Cowdell, all of whom I have known for many

years. Their first contributions to this place, their maiden speeches, were an indication of their ability. Hon Jim Scott, in his maiden speech, has certainly made his presence felt in the short time he has been here. He and I agree on a number of issues. I welcome the honourable member's input and look forward to hearing more from him. When I talk about the wetlands and conservation in the future, I will not be alone; I have a new friend. I hope that fair play will be the order of the day with our famous Independent - or infamous, depending on where one comes from - Hon Reg Davies. While he may not have the same influence as he had in the last Parliament, I hope he has retained his conscience and his willingness to be fair on all issues.

The contributions made by the new members on the opposite side of this House have been most welcome. Some of the remarks made by them have been like a breath of fresh air. I hope that they are able to move the more conservative elements of their party to act in a way that will benefit all Western Australians.

I cannot help but delve into the past. The cartoons in last Saturday morning's newspaper were an apt indication of the occurrences in this place and were especially relevant to where one gets one's ideas. On the opening day of Parliament there was a rally by what some may call unruly people who interrupted the official opening. However, if one turns back the clock some 15 years - Sir, you, Hon Norman Moore and Hon Bob Pike would have been the only members in this place at that time - I was one of the red ragers who organised a march on Parliament House. The march was over workers' compensation rights and, at that time, was the largest rally that had ever marched on Parliament House. Is it not interesting how history tends to repeat itself? The former Court Government had proposals to cut workers' compensation claims; it seems we are going through the same process again under another Court Government.

Hon T.G. Butler: We are in a time warp.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: It certainly seems that way. Workers, like city business people and farmers, will fight to save their interests when they are threatened. They fought then as they will fight now to save their conditions and working environment. It never ceases to amaze me that some of us never learn anything from these events. Also mooted by this Court Government are massive changes to industrial relations legislation. Those changes were mooted 15 years ago. The infamous section 54B was also put in place by the former Court Government. Is that the next item in line for reintroduction during the 1990s?

Hon T.G. Butler: It will be if there are too many demonstrations.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: It seems as if it may be on the cards. There have been mass sackings in the railways and at Robb Jetty.

Hon N.F. Moore: What sackings? There have been no sackings.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Changes to workers' compensation legislation is also proposed. I hinted earlier today by way of a question to the Minister for Education at proposed sackings in the Ministry of Education.

Hon N.F. Moore: There are none.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: That is not what the Minister said today. What he said is reported in *Hansard*.

Hon N.F. Moore: So you relay it faithfully.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I was not quite sure what the Minister said and asked him the question again. He repeated that the Government was considering as an option replacing the day labour school cleaning force with contract labour. What does that mean? I have a number of letters in my office - other members would have received the same letters - from concerned workers in that industry. To know what is going on, we have only to look at this Government's short history and what it has done to Robb Jetty, the Midland Workshops and schools. It is unfortunate that the Minister for Health is not here; I wanted to ask him the same question, because the same noises are being made in the Health Department. Hospitals are the next area to be targeted. That begs the question:

In what other areas will massive changes and massive lay-offs take place? Changes have already been made in the Building Management Authority and in Homeswest. The Trades and Labor Council recently expressed concern on behalf of its members in a press article. It accused the State Government of changing workers' compensation laws to bail out the private insurance industry. It is happening not only in the workers' compensation area but in all areas with regard to jobs. This Government wants to privatise everything. Members opposite should come clean on this whole issue and lay their cards on the table. They should give as much notice as possible to the people who will be affected by the changes rather than tell them at the last minute even though the feelers may have been out for some time, as was the case with the cleaners. The same feeling is present within the health system. The Government should tell Western Australians exactly what their position is. If it does not do so, one could ask was it just rhetoric when the Liberal Party attacked the former Labor Government about WA Inc and said that it should be answerable to the people of Western Australia? Why cannot the Government respond appropriately and tell the people what is happening? The Trades and Labor Council and the trade union movement will be very active on behalf of their members and will be protecting their interests. The organisation People for Fair and Open Government, which could have been described as an arm of the Liberal Party when that party was in Opposition, recently published the following, under the name of Bevan Lawrence, who is a Liberal Party supporter -

People for Fair and Open Government wish to place on record their complete opposition to the retrospective element to the announcement removing some common law rights with respect to injuries in the workplace.

By applying the new provisions to pending claims where writs have not been issued the law will have an effect on some pending matters and not on others. Put another way different laws will apply to two people injured on the same day dependant on whether they have by 4.00pm yesterday issued a writ or not.

The proposed law has been made without any warning. A worker injured some years ago may have been negotiating to settle his or her Common Law Claim without having issued a writ and now that persons rights are gone. Another who is also negotiating but has issued a writ has his rights untouched. This is clearly unfair.

In a fair society laws should only be retrospective in exceptional circumstances.

The workers compensation proposals should be contrasted with the proposed changes to motor vehicle laws announced the previous day. For motor vehicle claims the law is to apply to all accidents which occur after today.

Mr Kierath should immediately amend his proposal so that it only applies to accidents that occur after today. It is impossible for any fair minded person to support the current proposal.

That comes not from the Opposition ranks but from an individual who is a solicitor and who in the past has supported the Government opposite 100 per cent. A press release was issued also by the Law Society under the heading "Law Society calls for overall investigation of workers compensation scheme" which states -

Law Society President Ted Sharp today called for an investigation independent of Minister Kierath and the Workers Compensation Commission as to matters to do with the announcement on Wednesday of a proposed threshold to common law entitlements.

The following questions should be answered:

"Firstly, Mr Sharp said when, why and at whose instigation this dramatic policy innovation was decided upon?

Secondly, who are the real beneficiaries of such a policy, and who are the losers?

I guess the working class are being made the scapegoats of such policies. Many people in the electorate are concerned about what is happening. I sincerely ask new members in

the Government ranks to look at the other side of the coin and the suffering of many people in the community. They should be reminded about the comment by Bevan Lawrence in his letter when he asked why workers' compensation legislation should be any different from the legislation proposed for motor vehicles. Immediately on taking office the Government applied double standards. It feels it is okay to enact motor vehicle legislation to take effect from today. However, the Government decided to backdate the workers' compensation legislation, which has such an effect on the workers of this State. That is why headlines appear in the newspaper such as "Union anger as Kierath flags Bills". If Mr Kierath continues in the same vein, it will be apparent that the lessons of the 1970s have not been learned. The divisions that occurred in the community throughout that period will again be evident throughout this decade. If that is the path down which the conservative elements within our community have decided to travel, they have not learned the lessons from the 1970s which resulted in the conservative parties being out of power throughout the 1980s. I certainly hope for change on their part.

Much has been made of the Medicare agreement and some of the benefits that the Premier has allegedly secured. I would like to place on record that the re-signing of the Medicare agreement is primarily for further negotiation of funds from the Federal Government to Western Australia. The principles set out in the legislation are now enshrined for both the Federal and State Governments, and both are committed to uphold the principle whereby every individual has right of access to and can receive free treatment in a public hospital regardless of his or her status. Again, we have seen a move from the Court Government through its policies to divert from Medicare. The Government seems to be convinced that privatisation is the only way to go and the only solution for saving Government expenditure. The question must be asked: What price does one put on health?

At least Medicare places a cap on health costs in line with the consumer price index. If the Commonwealth Government insists on forcing the State Government to wait for private health insurance it will be misleading the public. I would say that it would be in breach of the Medicare legislation. Health costs and privatisation would cause an inflation in costs. That is evident because the State and Commonwealth Ministers for Health have for some time been talking about gap insurance. I recall that many years ago the Hospital Benefit Fund would pay 95 per cent or 100 per cent of our costs. We are now battling to recover 60 per cent or 70 per cent of medical costs, so we need further insurance rather than telling the greedy medicos that they can charge prices set out by the Government, and then allowing them to add their own charges.

Hon N.F. Moore: We are not allowed to insure for the gap.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: But that is what the Government is trying to do. The doctors are being pushed that way.

Hon N.F. Moore: Why should I not insure for the gap if I am prepared to pay the premium?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: But the Minister is already insured.

Hon N.F. Moore: I am happy to pay insurance.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I am talking about the recommended charges, which are covered by consumer affairs. What happens when people are overcharged in the retail area where guidelines exist? Those people can be prosecuted.

Hon N.F. Moore: I do not know about that.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The Minister should find out. We will talk about it when he does. In this case the public must pay the penalty. The disadvantaged people will pay again.

Hon N.F. Moore: We are trying to get the private patients out of the public hospitals.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: If and when the Minister decides to have a say on this question I would like to hear his opinion about the charges by doctors which are beyond

the recommended fees. How can a number of doctors charge recommended fees when other doctors charge \$50 or \$300 above the recommended fees? The Minister should find out.

Hon N.F. Moore: The member should tell me; he is making the speech.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I can provide evidence in the form of the bills my wife had to pay when visiting a specialist recently. We had to make up the gap of \$300.

Hon N.F. Moore: Why did you not go to a specialist who would charge what you wanted him to charge?

Hon Doug Wenn: Does the Minister say why did the member not shop around?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: That is about the strength of it. We are asked to shop around.

Hon Doug Wenn: Next we will be asked to call for tenders.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The Minister is already calling for tenders on education.

Hon N.F. Moore: It is a pity someone didn't call for tenders when the member received his education.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The Government is already reducing special grants that should be paid to special schools.

Hon N.F. Moore: Name one!

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I will, by way of questions without notice over the next few days. The Government is running down schools. We will produce the evidence, and it will embarrass the Minister.

Hon N.F. Moore: The member lives in fairy land.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: No, that is part of the Minister's problem.

Hon N.F. Moore: The member has no idea about what has been done.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The Minister's colleague, Hon Phillip Pandal, who is no longer here, had problems. The Minister was overawed by him, so much so that he saw fit to ship him out.

Hon N.F. Moore: He chose to go to the other House.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Only because he had been shafted by his backbenchers, and he is being shafted again in the other House. The Government has done that to the schools.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: By way of questions on notice and questions without notice we will get to the bottom of the situation with the Minister for Education.

Australia's proximity to South East Asia, the fastest growing economic area of the world, gives us an edge on Europe and the Americas and allows us to take advantage of export penetration in those areas. However, to succeed we need support from the Government. It should support Australian businesses to break into some of those South East Asian markets. Our location should allow us to take advantage of those markets.

One of the industries very close to my heart is horticulture; that does not seem to be so with many Government members. Over the last two weeks members opposite have made only passing reference to horticulture. I am amazed at the conservative thinking that still pervades the conservative ranks. They can consider only traditional agriculture. They want to receive the handouts. I see you nodding, Mr Deputy President (Hon W.N. Stretch), because you know that I am right. With your farming background you have been collecting handouts, and Hon Murray Montgomery has received a slice of the cake over the years. The Deputy President has received a slice of the cake. This Government should be all about giving the major slice of the cake to industries with a growth rate of 30 per cent or 40 per cent each year. The wool industry cannot make a sale, and we have problems with wheat and sheep - the old conservative practice in agriculture which is no

longer competitive in many ways. The Government should consider the horticulture industry when addressing the capacity of our neighbours and the growth occurring in the economies of South East Asia. China has an anticipated growth rate of 8.2 per cent, Malaysia 6.9 per cent, South Korea 6.6 per cent and Taiwan 6.4 per cent. We should not forget the expanding economies of Indonesia and Thailand, and at the turn of the century we need to consider the economies of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and others. We have many opportunities to take advantage of those economies.

The Ord River area produces exports of \$40m; it is an ever expanding area. What actions are proposed by the Government to facilitate the export and expansion of the horticulture industry in those areas? None!

Hon Murray Montgomery was protesting what I was saying, but there was no suggestion from him that I was wrong.

Hon Murray Montgomery: You were on this side of the House for 10 years, what did you do?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I always made known my point of view on what was happening in the horticulture industry. Hon Murray Montgomery cannot deny that. That is more than he is bloody doing now.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Order!

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Hon Murray Montgomery is protesting about what happened, but at least I was prepared to speak up on an area that is normally not something in which members on the other side of the House are interested. If the President were here he would recall that many members opposite said that I should not get on my feet and talk about horticulture or agriculture because a commie like me from the trade union movement would know nothing about those industries. That was the train of thought held by members opposite. It is not only the Labor Party that needs to lift its game; the Government must also lift its game. Neither Hon Murray Montgomery, who represents the Agricultural Region, nor his colleagues, with the exception of Hon Phil Lockyer, who has proposed the establishment of a select committee on the fruit and vegetable industry, have spoken on this subject. If members had watched the "Four Corners" program on the weekend they would have seen what is occurring in the Eastern States. This State is still somewhat isolated and protected. Many of our farmers have made reference to what our American allies are doing in our markets. In Queensland and New South Wales the multinational Chiquita Brands Inc is taking over market control of the humble banana. Members of that company unashamedly boasted on the "Four Corners" program that they brought down governments to get their own way and obtain a monopoly on bananas. For the information of members opposite, Chiquita has now secured a 20 per cent stake in the banana trade on the eastern seaboard. I am concerned that it has an agent in every banana producing State in the east and is now looking for an agent in Western Australia.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: How much is it paying?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: It looks as though it has a taker here already. I thought the honourable member would change his attitude in view of the proposal to improve the conditions in this House. Hon Derrick Tomlinson is chasing a quick buck.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: My word; that is right.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The banana industry in this State has cause for concern. Any member who has visited the eastern seaboard and has been fortunate enough to visit its fruit and vegetable markets would see the amount of American produce that is already being dumped. Western Australia does not have a great problem with dumping because it is protected by its isolation. It is not just the beef and wool industries which are being affected; many more producers could go under. I fully support the Western Australian Farmers Federation and other organisations when they talk about dealing with the Yanks and how it seems that we are allies in name only.

The Americans have taken over from Australia in the New Zealand banana market. The Americans have reduced the importation of sugar and beef into their markets, which

gives cause for concern to growers in the Ord River region who had plans to extend their sugar planting. Interested members should obtain a video copy of the "Four Corners" program from the Parliamentary Library. Fyffes Group Ltd, an English multinational, entered into competition against Chiquita. It bought tonnes of bananas from a number of growers in central America which were loaded on a ship. While the ship was in the harbour ready to sail some gunmen took over the ship and unloaded all the bananas. The Fyffes group could do nothing. The farmers were forced to arm themselves and proceed to the port to load and guard their produce. I am sure that most members of this House would not like to see those actions repeated in Western Australia. We must look at protecting our industries. I can be accused of supporting closed shops, if it serves a purpose - like the Deputy President (Hon W.N. Stretch), who supports the Potato Marketing Authority. I have been fighting to get rid of the Potato Marketing Authority for many years. I have not been successful, and I believe more Western Australians should be given a go by looking at other markets overseas so we can safeguard the wellbeing and jobs of Western Australia.

I agree with many of the stances taken by the WAFF and other groups. As I said earlier, we should direct our attention to the South East Asian market to replace markets we have lost. We need to learn more about the culture of our neighbours in South East Asia and what makes them tick if we are to trade with them. Sport is always a good mechanism of achieving that aim. I am glad the Wildcats look like playing in an Asian league. A team of Western Australians will also be participating in a new multinational soccer competition which is run from Singapore. I was at a meeting tonight which made that decision. Western Australia will have two avenues to break into South East Asia and get into business. One needs only to have some contact with sporting clubs in South East Asia and to see their letterheads, which have the names of 20 or 30 sponsors printed on each side of the page, to realise that whether one is a knight or a very successful businessman, all Asians want to be identified with sport. We now have two sources which will open up opportunities in South East Asia.

I mentioned the proposal by Hon Phil Lockyer to set up a select committee to look at the fruit and vegetable industry. One of the matters to be considered is the shortage of land in the metropolitan area. The Minister for Lands will be interested to know that over the next 10 years the metropolitan area will run out of land. Some of the market gardens, both north and south of the river, should be closely examined by the Minister. No doubt horticulture will be forced some distance from the towns. It must be remembered that it is restricted in the areas in which it can operate. We are now faced with the opportunity of selecting horticultural areas of the future. The industry needs ample water, but those areas containing ample water have been secured by the Western Australian Water Authority for future needs. Gingin would be the most suitable area in which to establish a horticultural industry which will provide the kind of income of the past. That would result in a need to allocate another area for future water supplies. No doubt Hon Eric Charlton will have an opportunity to revive the Agaton scheme. It would be by far the most suitable aquifer available for the metropolitan scheme. Now that the Minister is in a position of influence I will come on a tour with him around the countryside.

Hon E.J. Charlton: It will be different from that other Government; you can now look forward with a bit of confidence.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I agreed to go on a previous trip, but family circumstances unfortunately did not allow me. It is an area of interest and one I support. However, I would like to see the Minister convince the Minister for Lands to effect the land swap. That would provide a good water supply and at the same time comfortably accommodate the horticultural industry.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You must have a tour of the sewer.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: The last member of the Court family to whom I extended an invitation in 1979 did not take up my offer. Hon Tom Butler, who is not here at present, will remember it well. I extended Sir Charles Court an invitation on four or five occasions. If young Richard wants to come on a tour I could get in touch with my old

union; I am sure it would not be a problem to arrange. We could organise some of those roaches. The rats are a little hard to come by; they are too quick off the mark.

Mr Chairman -

Hon E.J. Charlton: You mean Mr Deputy President.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Hon Barry House is the Deputy President.

Hon Barry House: You were right the first time.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Members opposite are trying to sidetrack me. If that is the best the Minister for Transport can do, he is starting to crack under the pressure. He may have a win yet; that is not a problem. When we reach Agaton we will not score points because we will be as one on the issue.

Hon Max Evans: Where is Agaton? I am asking for *Hansard* as well.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Near Moora. It just goes to show how we on this side of the House have learnt.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon W.N. Stretch): Order! I suggest the member address the Chair and ignore the interjections.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I am doing that, Mr Deputy President, but it is very difficult. I have found throughout this debate that Opposition members have had to teach members opposite, who are new at the game. They are having rather a hard time, but the present Opposition does not mind sharing some of its knowledge with them for the benefit of Western Australia. That is the difference between us; this Opposition is prepared to do that, yet when the Government was in Opposition it would not share that knowledge.

I hope that when Hon Phil Lockyer moves a motion to establish a select committee of this House to review the horticultural industry -

Hon Barry House: Are you aware that there is a Standing Committee on Government Agencies which has already done much work in that area?

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: Although Hon Phil Lockyer is not here, Hon Graham Edwards is. He will recall that a previous select committee to examine the operations of the markets went on an organised tour. When we first arrived, everything looked smooth. However, when we returned unannounced the next morning it was a different story. Hon Graham Edwards and Hon Phil Lockyer will verify that the people scampered for cover because they were breaking the rules. I do not wish to demean the work of that standing committee, but unless people have some background they do not see the true picture. Hon Murray Montgomery will know how they bend the rules. When he was a truckie going to the markets, he bent the rules. I remember it well; I was there at the same time. We know the industry. We were able to pinpoint certain aspects and get on top of them, but other people who are not familiar with the industry would have great difficulty doing that. I do not mean to be disrespectful to those people, but the market gardeners are a wily lot.

Hon Murray Montgomery interjected.

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: At the next opportunity I will inform the House a little more about Hon Murray Montgomery's operations of that time. As I said, I hope the House will support Hon Phil Lockyer's motion to establish a select committee. It is almost nine years since the last committee examined the industry. The changing nature of the markets locally and worldwide makes it essential to examine this industry. We need to know the intentions of the Americans, and, as I mentioned, Chiquita Brand Inc and others. I am sure that members' colleagues in the Eastern States will provide the same feedback they are receiving from me concerning the need for safeguarding the future of the growers and of all Western Australians.

Finally, I thank my wife and son for their encouragement and support. Without family support I am sure all members here would have difficulty doing their job. During the

past 18 years that I have been associated with the union movement and involved in Parliament, I have been very fortunate to have had Roger, Eric and Mantic in my office, and to them I give a special thanks. At short notice they have always pulled through, especially during elections. I certainly appreciate their efforts, many of which were given in stressful moments. There are also some special friends I would like to thank and who have helped me continuously: To Thao Meng, John Hsu, Claude Basile - my friend the fisherman and whom Hon Max Evans also knows - Tony Vallelonga, Remo Biancotti and Joe Deleo. I also have some special visitors here in the gallery. They include two young people staying up late just so they would not be forgotten - young Mark and my little good friend, Keri Moore, and their parents Tony and Kath. They are former South Africans - conservatives - but they are starting to see the light!

Amendment to Motion

Hon SAM PIANTADOSI: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

But we regret to inform Your Excellency that the House does not support the Government's announced intention of -

- (1) Restructuring the provision of health services and the means by which health services are provided in country areas, with the result that -
 - (a) budgets for country hospitals will be substantially reduced, so reducing the level of health care to country people; and
 - (b) some country hospitals will lose the capacity to maintain an acute bed service, and 24 hour accident and emergency services.
- (2) Consequently the House regrets to advise Your Excellency that it has deep concern that the Government's intention, if applied across the rural areas of Western Australia, could seriously diminish the quality of health care available to country people.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [9.52 pm]: Mr Deputy President, I formally second the amendment.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon W.N. Stretch): Order! Hon Kim Chance has already spoken to the original motion and cannot second this amendment to the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Helm.

SUPREME COURT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [9.53 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill provides for a small yet important amendment. The Supreme Court of Western Australia is about to embark on a delay reduction project incorporating case flow management.

On 3 May 1993 the Government approved the appointment of two commissioners and the consequential additional resources for the process known as the "August blitz". These resources were required to deal with the serious delays in hearing and determining cases in the Supreme Court civil lists. The Government recognises the dilemma the justice system is facing and, in so doing, included in its policy statement "Law and Justice" a

commitment to examine and make recommendations within six months to reduce delays of matters before courts and in the interim appoint commissioners with the same powers as judges to help reduce the delays. The reduction of the civil list delays will allow the full implementation of the civil case flow management systems within the Supreme Court. That system will result in more effective control of the future business before the civil courts.

This Bill enables the judges of the court to make rules delegating authority to registrars of the court, and for the mediation of matters in dispute between parties. The Bill provides the tightened procedures to enable case flow management to be implemented. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Helm.

JUDGES' SALARIES AND PENSIONS AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [9.56 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Under the pension scheme in operation prior to 1987, the base pension of a judge, or the widow or widower of a deceased judge, was determined at the date of retirement or death of the judge as a percentage of the judge's final salary. A pension payable under that scheme was adjusted thereafter in accordance with increases in the consumer price index.

In 1987 the Act was amended to bring in a new scheme for pensions payable in respect of judges retiring, or dying before retirement, after the 1987 amendment came into effect. In those cases the pension payable to the judge, widow or widower was calculated as a percentage of the current judicial salary. The intent of the new scheme was that movement in the current judicial salary would produce corresponding movement in the pensions payable under that scheme without need to refer to CPI movements. Accordingly, the right to CPI adjustments was abolished in respect of pensions under the new scheme.

The amendment clearly removed any entitlement to CPI adjustments of a widow or widower receiving a pension under the new scheme. Unfortunately, it failed to make equally clear the entitlement of a widow or widower receiving a pension under the new scheme to pension adjustments according to movements in current judicial salaries in a case where a judge retires after 1987 and subsequently dies. The result is that doubts have arisen as to the entitlement of a widow or widower in this position to receive any adjustment of pension at all. Clearly that would be most unfair, and it was certainly not the intent of the legislation.

This Bill proposes a minor amendment to clarify the Act and to put beyond doubt the entitlement of widows and widowers in this position to have their pensions adjusted over the years in accordance with movements in current judicial salaries. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Helm.

EMPLOYERS' INDEMNITY SUPPLEMENTATION FUND AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [9.59 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Although these proposed amendments to the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Act were introduced by the former Labor Government during the 1992 spring session, they were not proceeded with owing to the low priority given to them by the former Government. In line with this Government's better management and economic prosperity policy we have accorded this Bill a high priority. Owing to its positive financial impact on the State we are prepared to reintroduce the Bill with minor amendments to provisions controlling the collection and investment of moneys standing to the credit of the supplementation fund. The amendments do not affect the intent of the Bill, which is fully supported by the coalition Government. In addition a number of consequential amendments to this Act and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act have been identified by Parliamentary Counsel and incorporated in the Bill before Parliament.

The supplementation fund is provided for under the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Act, which was established in 1980 to protect employers against workers' compensation claims in the event that their insurer goes into liquidation. The legislation was a response to the 1980 collapse of Palmdale-AGCI Ltd, and recognises the potential financial impact of claims against employers. Following proclamation of the Act, Bishopgate Insurance Co Ltd and more recently National Employers Mutual General Insurance Association Ltd went into liquidation. The fund also meets claims by waterfront workers suffering from asbestos related diseases, as provided for in the Waterfront Workers (Compensation for Asbestos Related Diseases) Act.

The supplementation fund is administered by the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission, and claims are managed by the State Government Insurance Commission. Although the fund continues to satisfy recurring workers' compensation claims against employers who were insured with Bishopgate and National Employers Mutual General, the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission has been negotiating with the liquidators to finalise outstanding claims. Based on negotiations with the liquidators, deficiencies in the provisions of the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Act were identified which, if not urgently addressed, could have serious financial implications for the recovery of costs incurred and the finalisation of outstanding claims. The amendment Bill currently before the House proposes amendments to avoid any negative financial impacts and empowers the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission to finalise outstanding claims.

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission to accept final payment from liquidator on behalf of supplementation fund: The Bill seeks to amend the Act by specifically empowering the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission to accept final payments from the liquidator of an approved insurer in full settlement of existing recurrent and future outstanding claims to the supplementation fund. This provision will enable the commission to negotiate final payments to the supplementation fund, thereby avoiding unnecessary and costly delays to the workers' compensation system in this State.

State Government Insurance Commission to assume responsibility for full claims management: The current legislation provides for payment of claims to be made by the SGIC to the liquidator of an approved insurer, who in turn pays the claimant. The SGIC is required to report to the liquidator regularly. This procedure generates considerable administrative and claims management costs on the basis that the liquidator's charges are additional to the SGIC fees. Such additional costs to the system simply cannot be justified. To streamline the claims payment procedure and contain costs, the Bill provides for the SGIC to be responsible for full claims management, including direct payment of claimants.

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission to control collections and investments: The Bill proposes to amend the Act to transfer power from the Treasury to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission to control the collection and investment of moneys standing to the credit of the supplementation fund. However, on Treasury Department advice the previous amendment submitted by the Labor Government would not have enabled the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission to make long term investments and this would clearly have defeated the intent of the amendment. Therefore, a provision has been introduced which will enable surplus money in the supplementation fund to be transferred to the workers' compensation general fund, which, subject to the agreement of the Treasurer, will be used in accordance with the intent of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. Since the source of both these funds is ultimately insured employers, this provision will not affect the financial position of employers in this State. A reciprocal provision has been inserted which provides that the Treasurer may direct that an amount not exceeding any amount which was transferred to the general fund shall be paid from the general fund to the supplementation fund where an insufficiency exists in the latter fund.

These amendments are appropriate as the current provisions relating to the investment and advances from the fund were introduced prior to the establishment of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission and were intended to separate the investment of trust funds from claims administration, currently managed by the SGIC. The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Commission now administers the Act and has authority from the Treasurer to invest the general fund and other trust moneys. The proposed change of investment responsibility preserves the separation of the investment and claims administration functions and recognises the commission's accounting resources.

The provisions contained in this Bill are necessary to streamline administrative procedures under the Act and introduce a specific power to enable outstanding claims to be finalised. If the amendments proposed by the Bill are not ratified and implemented as quickly as possible, it could have adverse financial implications for the recovery of costs incurred and the finalisation of outstanding claims, to the detriment of workers and employers in this State. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Helm.

ACTS AMENDMENT (ANNUAL VALUATIONS AND LAND TAX) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 June.

HON MARK NEVILL (Mining and Pastoral) [10.06 pm]: The Opposition supports the Bill. Under this Bill, all unimproved values for land tax and other rating and taxing purposes will be determined on the same day and, wherever possible, in the same year. The Bill also enables regulations to allow the payment of land tax by instalment. Over recent years we have had strong growth in land tax, despite a number of measures to contain it. In 1991, Government legislation was introduced to quash all revaluations for land tax and cancel all assessments for the 1991-92 year and reissue them on the valuations of the previous year.

In 1992, there was still a problem with land tax assessments because of the recession and the consequent write-down in property values. Land tax assessments were still rising steeply because of the phase-in provisions which were operating from some years before that, and as rates were phased in over three or four years from the previous valuation, the later valuation in many cases was lower, and the phase in provisions from previous years created an increasing rate burden.

In 1992-93, legislation to freeze valuations at the 1991-92 level was introduced. That measure reduced land tax for those affected by a total of about \$20m. In May last year, the previous Government set up the land tax advisory committee. I think that has only just reported. The previous Government introduced legislation last year which was

similar to this Bill, if not the same; I have not checked the Bill from last year, but to all intents and purposes it was the same legislation. The Valuer General only now under this Bill has the capacity to value all properties in one year. That capacity was not there in previous years. That opens up the prospect of a better system for land tax valuations.

Under the previous system valuations were conducted up to six years apart, and even when this Bill becomes law and the new rates come into force some people will, as in the past, be affected because their valuation had not changed for six years. Therefore, some pain will be attached to the first year of this scheme. Nevertheless, the new scheme will make it much easier to smooth out the assessment without the anomalies of the past. All assessments will be determined on a common date at the end of the financial year. One land tax rate will be set, and this will take into account the change in the valuation base. Unimproved valuations will be undertaken annually. If this is not achieved, a general valuation cannot be adopted by the Valuer General. I understand that the Valuer General has completed unimproved valuations for all the districts within the State, and these valuations will be incorporated in one Statewide valuation for the current 1993-94 financial year. Valuation districts for the gross rental value will be adopted for local government rates, water rates and metropolitan improvement tax purposes. The land tax rate, as I mentioned earlier, will be amended in a separate Bill amending the Land Tax Act.

The Bill before the House will introduce an instalment scheme along the lines of that operated by the Water Authority. Under the scheme people may pay three payments a year, and the first payment must be made within 45 days after the service of notice by post. If the person pays that amount in one instalment, he or she receives a discount. A small discount is made for a person who pays in two instalments, and if three instalments are paid a small interest rate is charged.

I will ask the Minister a couple of questions now rather than doing so during the Committee stage: What formula is used to determine the interest rate on accounts paid by instalment? Will it be the prime rate plus two per cent, or will it be fixed from year to year? When the Premier was in Kobe, Japan, it was reported in *The West Australian* that an increase would occur in the non-central business district rate to compensate for the fall in CBD valuations. Is that correct? If not, what does the Government propose to do about this situation? Also, what will this Bill's effect be on some mining tenements which have peppercorn valuations and are charged no, or only minimum, rates?

HON MAX EVANS (North Metropolitan - Minister for Finance) [10.14 pm]: I thank the Opposition for its support of the Acts Amendment (Annual Valuations and Land Tax) Bill. This legislation was on the Notice Paper when the previous Government was in office and we have brought the legislation before the House.

Regarding the Premier's comment in Korea, this matter was answered in a question on notice. The Premier was misreported. As Hon Mark Nevill realises, if valuations were reduced by 50 per cent, it would be necessary to increase the rates by 100 per cent to achieve the same result. One must apply the same land tax at a flat rate around Western Australia, and that would put many people out of business - it is not on.

The valuation of water rates is different as they may rise by four per cent; however, land tax would go up by a large amount. The job at hand for Treasury and the State Commissioner of Taxation is to find a rate which is fair overall. Some properties are valued at \$5 000, and we are trying to work out how to bring valuations up to date rather than make another 20 000 or 30 000 people pay land tax.

Regarding the formula applying for the interest rate, I will have the information for the member during the Committee stage. I do not have an answer regarding the mining tenements with a peppercorn rental, although I was not aware that such tenements were paying land tax. Does it not depend on the valuation?

Hon Mark Nevill: Most mining tenements pay local government rates, but some affected by agreements Acts are paying a peppercorn rental. I wonder how the valuation applies to those tenements.

Hon MAX EVANS: I will provide the answer for the member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [10.17 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - Transperth Debt - Figures Variation

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [10.18 pm]: I have no great pleasure in detaining the House tonight, but the subject on which I speak also brings me no pleasure. The House must deal with this matter tonight.

On Tuesday, 29 June the Minister for Transport informed this House that Transperth's debt was \$597m. He subsequently informed the House that he stood by that figure, although he gave a slightly different figure of \$583m. I am happy to accept slight variations which may occur from time to time.

Hon Mark Nevill: That is what Tchaikovsky did with his themes.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Those figures were confirmed as recently as Thursday, 1 July. In the debate on 29 June the Minister said -

I remind the mover of the motion and the Labor Party - because they are keen to supply us with the statistics and the background of why this decision is not in the best interests of the people of Western Australia - that in 1982-83 when the Labor Party came to Government Transperth had a total debt of \$43m in today's dollar terms. That debt today is \$597m.

I have always rejected that figure. When I read the Transperth annual report for those two years I discovered that the figures were incorrect. Despite my, and Hon John Halden's, attempts to make the Minister correct the figures, he has consistently denied that the Transperth debt is any different from the \$597m - even allowing for his adjustment - he announced to the House on 29 June.

On Thursday afternoon I told the Minister outside the House that he was wrong and I showed him why he was wrong. I gave him the information that we had and I told him that I would refrain from questioning him on the matter in question time today in the hope that he would come back today and tell the House why the figures I had given on Transperth's debt - they are figures drawn from papers tabled in this House - were so substantially different from those that he had given. To give some idea of the difference, the Minister is quoting a debt of \$597m. I believe I can argue from the accounts that the real debt of Transperth is \$20.219m - a substantial difference.

Hon Max Evans interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind members that there is no extension of time in this debate. The member's time is ticking away, so let him go.

Hon KIM CHANCE: To make it clear - the Minister for Finance has made a legitimate interjection - the \$20.219m debt which I claim is the correct figure is the liabilities quoted in Transperth's 1991-92 annual report less the provisions which I think the Minister identified at about \$413m. The Minister has quoted the debt of transfer quite frequently. There are several references to \$597m. We have given the Minister ample opportunity to correct this misleading information.

People might say that this debt properly belongs in Westrail's figures. There is no secret that it belongs in Westrail's accounts and I showed that to the Minister on Thursday. On Tuesday, 29 June, the Minister said -

The public transport system in Western Australia has been dead in the water as a consequence of the previous Government's inability to demonstrate any business

acumen. We have seen the previous Government allow the debt to blow out to \$597m.

In fact, Transperth's debt is nothing like \$597m. We told the Minister so. He has consistently refused to come back and tell the House the real situation. It is very easy to make a corporation look bad if figures are quoted selectively. If the figures are taken in context - the context is to go to Westrail's corporate accounts and not to Transperth's accounts - the total assets of Westrail over that 10 year period that the Minister quoted have increased from \$465m to \$922m. Those are the assets to balance the debt. If we take what the Minister said and look only at Transperth's accounts and impute almost \$0.6b worth of debt, and look for the assets in Transperth's accounts, we will not find it. If that were the case, it would be reasonable to allege that Transperth was badly maintained during the 10 years of Labor's control. We have public accounts and an Auditor General to ensure that our accounts are correct. The figures are tabled in Parliament because we have a right to expect that the accounts represent the true situation. That is why we have them. I ask the Minister again - I give him this opportunity in this debate - to advise the House of the situation regarding Transperth.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [10.24 pm]: I thank Hon Kim Chance for raising the point at this time. I received some further information following my discussions with him outside the Chamber at the end of last week. I intended to take up this issue with him later tonight. However, as he has mentioned it in the debate on the adjournment I have much pleasure in responding to the points he has just raised.

The variation in the figures relates to the \$597m which I quoted last week and which I revised when I got an updated 1992-93 position, but not the final position of Transperth which I quoted as \$583.309m. At the time, I mentioned that this figure includes \$442.5m for debt relating to suburban rail services and \$140.809m for debt relating to the bus and ferry services, giving that total figure. The current figure does not include an amount of approximately \$15m for the capitalised interest relating to the northern suburbs transit system. Although part of the capital costs on the northern suburbs system, the capital interest was funded from Westrail's internal funds and did not require additional borrowings. As the member correctly stated, the figures for the suburban rail services are listed in the financial reports in Westrail's annual report for 1992-93, with the bus and ferry services debt being reported by Transperth in its 1992-93 annual report.

Hon Kim Chance: But there is not a 1992-93 annual report.

HON E.J. CHARLTON: That is what I said. It will be quoted in that way. The reason for the debt of the rail component of the urban transport system being recorded in Westrail's annual report is that the Metropolitan Perth Transport Trust Act does not provide for Transperth to acquire railways and, therefore, debt figures relating to the suburban rail system must be included in Westrail's annual report. The crux of the matter is that Transperth provides that total debt figure because it must service that figure. While the member is correct in stating that the actual debt related to Westrail and that the component of the urban transport system provided by Transperth is recorded in Westrail's annual report, the servicing of that debt is the total responsibility of Transperth. The figures that I quoted to the House last week about the amount of funding that is required to satisfy its annual commitments relate to the servicing of that debt. Under the Acts of Parliament relating to Westrail and the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust Act, that debt is required to be recorded in Westrail's operations.

I will demonstrate the accuracy of having Transperth state its commitment to servicing the debt by referring to the value of the sale of the old diesel rail system to New Zealand. While the value is recorded in Westrail's assets and liabilities operation, the commitment of Transperth in that case forced it into making up the difference between the written down value and the value for which the stock was acquired. While legally it is required to be registered under and recorded in Westrail's annual accounts, Transperth has to service that amount. The only reason the figure is in Westrail's annual report is the legislative requirement for it to be so.

On the one hand, we could continue the debate and say that it really is not a Transperth debt but a Westrail debt, and that issue could be accurately pursued and well founded. On the other hand, it is pointless saying that it is not a Transperth debt when in fact Transperth must service it. That is why Transperth refers to it as its debt; it has the responsibility to service the debt as the years go by. That is why it is recorded in the consolidated revenue fund to make up the difference between what fares bring in and what must be contributed from the CRF. At the end of every year that is part of that component. When it comes down to dollar terms, while it is recorded in Westrail's annual statement, it is Transperth which must service that debt. That is why the total debt for Transperth, while it is not recorded in its balance sheet, must be serviced by the operations of Transperth. That is consistent with the legislative requirement of those two operations. I confirm my previous advice to the House that these debt figures represent the level of outstanding borrowing and lease obligations relating to the public transport infrastructure and do not include previous provisions of superannuation, annual or long service leave and insurance. Details of this liability for 1992-93 are not yet available, although these provisions totalled \$413.675m in 1991-92.

Adjournment Debate - Transperth Debt - Balance Sheet, Minister's Ability to Read

HON MAX EVANS (North Metropolitan - Minister for Finance) [10.31 pm]: Hon Tom Butler is not here; however, he asked whether I could read a balance sheet. I thought I should reply to the notes I received from Hon John Halden last week. On the balance sheet under Transperth's capital - debt is capital when the State contributes - the general loan and capital works fund figure is \$1.4m and the loan funds and original value figure is \$134m. That is money which the Government has put in. The amount included at the bottom comes only from trade creditors and provisions for long service leave and superannuation. All Government bodies such as the port authorities and Transperth do it in this way. I do not quite agree with that and I am looking at some way around it. The capital amount is there on which they are paying interest. That is the total debt they have raised at that stage. Hon Eric Charlton has explained that the rest of the cost or capital expenditure has gone to Westrail because of a limitation in the Act. Borrowings from the Government have not been shown as a liability because they are not a liability; it is the capital of the Government.

Hon Kim Chance: If one wanted to display that, would it not have been far more accurate to show the growth and the recoupments paid from Transperth to Westrail? I believe it was presented in that manner to give the picture of something which was quite incorrect, and it was used in that way in the debate.

Hon E.J. Charlton: An extra \$40m is required as a subsequence for Transperth.

Hon MAX EVANS: I only wanted to indicate to Hon Tom Butler that I can still read a balance sheet. The debt of the State is contained in that.

Adjournment Debate - Dunlop, Sir Edward (Weary)

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [10.33 pm]: I want to have written into the record of this Council some words of respect for the late Sir Edward Dunlop and some words of sorrow at his passing. Sir Edward, or Weary as he was affectionately known, was one of Australia's greatest men; to many he was a hero. I am sure members are aware that he passed away last Friday. Sir Edward was born at Stewarton, Victoria in 1907. He became a qualified pharmacist and a specialist surgeon. During his younger days he was an outstanding sportsman with a passion for rugby and was, I believe, more than a handy boxer. Sir Edward joined the army in 1939 and in 1940 was posted to Palestine. He served there and in Greece, Crete and Tobruk. Along with other troops he was called home by the then Prime Minister, John Curtin. On the way Sir Edward travelled with field force troops and despite having no weapons or equipment their ship, the *Orcades*, was diverted to Java to help stem the Japanese tide sweeping down through Asia. In Java he was given the task of converting a large empty school into a hospital. Shortly after completing that task Sir Edward was given an opportunity to escape, but elected to stay with the hospital staff and its patients. With capitulation he began a long period of incarceration and care for his fellow

prisoners and others in need of medical assistance. He and his colleagues fashioned surgical instruments from knives and forks, and made drips from bamboo shoots. They worked under incredibly bad and coarse conditions treating cholera, dysentery, malnutrition, malaria, tropical sores and ulcers. The treatment for many was performed without drugs and in an environment of hostility from often brutal guards. Amputations were often carried out by the light of oil lamps. Sir Edward was a man of tremendous compassion and courage. I will relate to members a story told in his own words in his diary -

On 17 April 1942 the increasing harshness of the Japanese flared to extreme brutality. Capt. Nakazawa demanded the immediate break-up of the hospital with most of the patients to go to prison along with those medical staff not needed for the few remaining. All were required to move at once. In order to dissuade him, I conducted him with his guard to demonstrate the serious illness of many patients. First amongst these LA/C 'Bill' Griffiths, blind with a shattered face, amputated hands, and a broken leg.

Capt Nakazawa motioned to the bayonets of his guard. There was a tense moment as I interposed my body before Griffiths and glared at Nakazawa.

I am told by people who were there that he put his body between the Japanese guard's bayonet and the patient. That it was told in such restricted terms in his own diary is a further measure of the man. It was moving to see that same man, with no hands and who was blind, interviewed on television the other night following the death of Weary Dunlop. Many tributes have been paid to this great man. It was stated in Saturday's *The West Australian* -

Prime Minister Paul Keating said Sir Edward typified many qualities Australians prized - courage, determination and generosity.

Opposition Leader John Hewson said Australia had lost one of its finest citizens and greatest heroes.

Perhaps some of the best tributes came from people such as Vivian Bullwinkle, the only nurse who survived the dreadful massacre in 1942 of Australian nurses by the Japanese on Banka Island. She stated in an article in *The Weekend Australian* -

"He never saw bad in anyone. He was always able to find something good, even in the Japanese. He had a tremendous amount of love within him."

Another fine tribute was paid by Donald Stuart, a Western Australian author, a man who himself was a prisoner of war. The jacket of his book "The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop" states -

Australian writer and prisoner-of-war, the late Donald Stuart, wrote: 'We built a railway from near Bangkok to near Rangoon . . . thousands of us POWs . . . starved, scourged, racked with malaria, dysentery, beriberi, pellagra and the stinking tropical ulcers that ate a leg to the bone . . . when despair and death reached for us [Weary Dunlop] stood fast, a lighthouse of sanity in a universe of madness and suffering.'

Weary Dunlop also served in Vietnam. I met him on a number of occasions and treasured that book which he autographed and in which he wrote a message. I was keen to have recorded in the *Hansard* record of this Council some words about Weary Dunlop because I am sure many Western Australians, including past members of this Chamber, owe their lives and their wellbeing to him. Australia owes this man a great deal. My speech will not help to repay that debt, but it will record our appreciation for a great Australian.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.40 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**HEALTH SERVICES CONCILIATION AND REVIEW BILL -
REINTRODUCTION**

182. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Government be reintroducing the Health Services Conciliation and Review Bill?
- (2) If so, when?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) Yes, the Bill will be reintroduced, with some amendments.
- (2) This will depend on the ability to obtain drafting priority.

OBSTETRICIANS - BOOKING FEES, ELIMINATION

183. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the Minister be enacting to stamp out the practice of certain obstetricians charging public patients any sort of booking fee?
- (2) If so, how?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) I hope that elimination of the practice of charging booking fees by certain obstetricians to patients wishing to be treated as public patients will take place through alternative measures to legislation. I have expressed my personal disapproval of the practice which I consider unethical. If the medical profession is to retain credibility in its discipline of its own members then I believe it must act. Because the issue is primarily professional I have discussed it with the Australian Medical Association on several occasions. The AMA has indicated its own concerns to obstetricians on the ethical issues involved and has requested the practice be ceased. I recognise that the practice is said to be justified as being to offset the rising costs of indemnity premiums for obstetricians. I do not accept that as a proper response. The AMA and the Health Department are currently negotiating on a number of initiatives which it is anticipated will deal with the cost of professional indemnity insurance. The results of those negotiations are expected to be known shortly but will involve both short term and longer term strategies to resolve this matter. If the profession does not deal with the matter, then I will consider legislation.
- (2) Not applicable.

MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING PROGRAM - ASSESSMENT CENTRES
Breast Cancer, Treatment

197. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Why is Western Australia the only State not to have established assessment centres to provide ongoing and appropriate treatment for women screened through the Government Statewide mammography screening program?
- (2) What occurs in other Australian States and Territories?
- (3) Is there any data to indicate that women diagnosed with breast cancer have not been treated appropriately?
- (4) If so, what proportion of women so diagnosed have not been treated appropriately?
- (5) What is the consequence for those women?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) WA is the only State to have started off the program with provision of a mammography screening service as the primary component. Women were then referred to their general practitioners for follow up and referral to specialists.
- (2) All other States started with assessment centres, and provided screening at these centres. The Northern Territory has not yet started a specific service.
- (3) No.
- (4)-(5) Not applicable.

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION - NEW STATIONERY
Designer and Producer; Cost

201. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Who designed and produced the new stationery for the Minister for Education?
- (2) What was the cost?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1) The new stationery was designed by Cogent Advertising and produced by State Print.
- (2) \$969.69.

HOSPITALS - PRIVATE HOSPITAL (DAY HOSPITAL) LICENCE
Procedures Advice

202. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Health:

On 19 May 1993 *The West Australian* carried an advertisement containing a ministerial determination relating to private hospital (day hospital) licensing. Would the Minister advise exactly what procedures such a licence is designed for?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

The Ministerial Determination - Hospitals Act 1927 - states "any elective surgical or medical procedure which involves the administration of a general, spinal, epidural or major regional block anaesthetic, or neurolept sedation, is professional attention for the purposes of the definition of 'day hospital facility' in section 2(1) of the Act".

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - WOMEN'S CANCER PREVENTION UNIT
New Premises - Mammography Screening Unit, Mirrabooka, Opening Delay

203. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When was the women's cancer prevention unit given permission to move its head office to larger premises?
- (2) Why has this move not occurred?
- (3) Why has the mammography screening unit, that was scheduled to open at Mirrabooka in April, not commenced operation?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) February 1993.
- (2) Negotiations have not been completed regarding leasing of alternative premises.
- (3) Because larger premises are needed for the women's cancer prevention

unit to enable reading of the increased number of X-ray films that will be generated by the opening of the Mirrabooka mammography screening unit.

RESERVES - DRAINAGE RESERVE 39667, PLANTAGENET LOCATION 5110
Creation Purpose; Width and Length; Lease Renewal

204. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) For what purpose was drainage reserve 39667 on Plantagenet location 5110 created?
- (2) What is the width and length of drainage reserve 39667 and where should it be located in relation to Plantagenet location 4947?
- (3) Does the lease give permission for the leaseholder to enter the reserve at any time for the purpose of excavating it?
- (4) Is permission also given for the leaseholder to deposit excavated dirt from the drain onto private property adjacent to the drain?
- (5) When was the lease last renewed and for what length of time?
- (6) Did the Department of Land Administration receive advice from the Department of Agriculture and the Albany Waterways Management Authority recommending that the lease on drainage reserve 39667 not be renewed?
- (7) If so, why was the advice ignored?
- (8) Has the lessee indemnified the Minister against all claims for damage to property or persons arising from the use of the land?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

- (1) For the purpose of draining water from a large swampy area on adjoining Plantagenet location 3699.
- (2) The reserve is 10 metres wide and some 345 metres in length and is wholly located within Plantagenet location 4947 as per the attached plan. Its existence preceded the creation of location 4947. [See paper No 442.]
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No.
- (5) The lease is on annual renewable basis - at the will of the Minister.
- (6) Yes.
- (7) Subsequent Crown Law advice determined that the lease should be renewed.
- (8) Yes.

[See paper No 442.]

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - SOUTH WEST HEALTH REGION
Nurses, Employment Statistics; Doctors' Fees, Budget Proportion

205. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many nurses were employed by the Health Department in
 - (a) hospitals;
 - (b) community health offices
 in the south west health region at 1 January 1993?
- (2) How many were employed at 22 June 1993?
- (3) What are the Health Department projections for nurses employed at 30 June 1994?

- (4) What proportion of the region's Health Department budget was consumed by fees to doctors in
- (a) 1990-91;
 - (b) 1991-92; and
 - (c) 1992-93 (estimate)?
- (5) What is the Health Department's projection for the proportion in the 1993-94 budget?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

		Actual FTE
(1)	(a) Hospitals	587.03
	(b) Community Health	52.63
(2)	Hospitals	582.64
	Community Health	50.94
(3)	Hospitals indicative budget at 1 July 1993	582.09
	Community Health indicative budget at 1 July 1993	52.12
(4)	(a) Nine per cent;	
	(b) 10 per cent;	
	(c) 11 per cent.	
(5)	Eleven per cent.	

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - GREAT SOUTHERN HEALTH REGION
Nurses, Employment Statistics; Doctors' Fees, Budget Proportion

206. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many nurses were employed by the Health Department in
- (a) hospitals;
 - (b) community health offices
- in the great southern health region at 1 January 1993?
- (2) How many were employed at 22 June 1993?
- (3) What are the Health Department projections for nurses employed at 30 June 1994?
- (4) What proportion of the region's Health Department budget was consumed by fees to doctors in
- (a) 1990-91;
 - (b) 1991-92; and
 - (c) 1992-93 (estimate)?
- (5) What is the Health Department's projection for the proportion in the 1993-94 budget?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

		Actual FTE
(1)	(a) Hospitals	427.49
	(b) Community Health	31.90
(2)	Hospitals	428.37
	Community Health	34.90
(3)	Hospitals indicative budget at 1 July 1993	442.82
	Community Health indicative budget at 1 July 1993	34.90

(4)	(a)	1990-91	9.93%
	(b)	1991-92	10.23%
	(c)	1992-93	12.20%
(5)		1993-94	
		Indicative budget at 1 July 1993	10.74%

INCINERATORS - STEPHENSON AND WARD INCINERATOR*Government Hospital Waste; Heavy Metal Sources; Waste Categories*

208. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Which landfill/s receive/s flyash from -
 - (a) Government incinerators; and
 - (b) the Stephenson and Ward incinerator?
- (2) During the years 1990 to mid-1993, have any Government hospital incinerators incinerated waste from sources other than Government hospitals?
- (3) If yes, what or who are these sources and what was the nature and quantity of the waste?
- (4) What waste originating in Government hospitals or their grounds is directed to the Stephenson and Ward incinerator and why?
- (5) What are all the sources of heavy metal known to the Health Department to be incinerated at the Stephenson and Ward incinerator?
- (6) Has the Stephenson and Ward incinerator accepted the following categories of waste -
 - (a) waste from industrial manufacture of pharmaceutical drugs;
 - (b) radioactive waste;
 - (c) computer tapes;
 - (d) X-rays; or
 - (e) hydrocarbon solvents?
- (7) For each of the above categories of waste, does the Stephenson and Ward incinerator currently accept them?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) (a) Mirrabooka and Henderson landfill sites.
- (b) I understand City of Canning landfill.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No details of materials are held but the hospitals receive medical waste from organisations such as Silver Chain and confidential papers from Government agencies.
- (4) Waste from hospitals without incinerators.
- (5) I understand that only medical waste is burnt in the incinerator. Some medical waste will contain trace amounts of heavy metals. The precise source and amounts of these metals is not known.
- (6) (a) I understand, yes.
- (b) Yes, but the radioactivity was well below the level set by the Radiological Council as being safe for disposal by incineration.
- (c)-(e) Yes.
- (7) To the best of my knowledge the operator now only accepts medical and similar waste, such as pharmaceutical products.

HOSPITALS - NORTHAMPTON DISTRICT HOSPITAL*Downgrading, Member's "Extraordinary Misrepresentation of the Figures" Comment*

214. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Was the Minister accurately reported in the *Geraldton Guardian* of Wednesday, 23 June 1993 when it was reported that he said that Hon Kim Chance had used "an extraordinary misrepresentation of the figures" in relation to the downgrading of the Northampton District Hospital?
- (2) If so, which figures used by Hon Kim Chance does the Minister regard as an extraordinary misrepresentation, and why does he so describe them?
- (3) Does the Minister still regard the figures used by Hon Kim Chance as an extraordinary misrepresentation?
- (4) If the Minister no longer regards the use of those figures as either extraordinary or misrepresentative, will he retract that part of his published statement?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

(1)-(2)

Yes. The member has made an extraordinary misrepresentation of figures in comparing Northampton District Hospital with metropolitan public hospitals such as Royal Perth Hospital, Swan Districts Hospital and the Kalamunda District Community Hospital. The metropolitan hospitals conduct surgery. They purchase and maintain highly technical equipment, employ specialised staff and treat patients with conditions at the higher end of the health care cost spectrum. The major service provided at Northampton is primary health care and such care is at the lower end of the health care cost spectrum. The reality is that Northampton District Hospital treats lesser medical conditions with the more serious cases sent to Geraldton or Perth. The comparisons made by the member are between very dissimilar service providers and, therefore, misrepresent the real circumstances.

(3) Yes.

(4) Not applicable.

YOUTH - CONSERVATION CORPS, LANDCARE, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAM PROJECTS

216. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many Youth Conservation Corps/Landcare and environmental action program projects are currently under way and what are the projects?
- (2) How many, and which, Youth Conservation Corps/LEAP projects have been completed?
- (3) How many officers in the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training service the Youth Conservation Corps/LEAP projects?

The answer was tabled.

[See paper No 422.]

MINISTER FOR HEALTH - MINISTERIAL OFFICE STAFF
Telephone Contact with Health Department Officers, Protocols

220. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Health:

Does the Minister have a set of protocols he and members of his

ministerial office staff follow when making telephone contact with officers of the Health Department?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

Matters relating to policy issues are generally directed through the Commissioner of Health or one of the Assistant Commissioners of Health. For routine and administrative matters contact is made direct with the relevant officer.

HOMESWEST - LOCKYER, ALBANY, REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Sewerage, Common Trenching of Utilities Inclusion; Water Authority of Western Australia, Work Program

225. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is it practical for sewerage to be included in common trenching in the Homeswest redevelopment in Lockyer, Albany?
- (2) If so, what discussions have the Water Authority of Western Australia offices had with other Government agencies to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to the use of common trenching in the redevelopment?
- (3) In which areas in Lockyer does the WAWA expect to be undertaking work necessary for the redevelopment in the years -
 - (a) 1993-94;
 - (b) 1994-95;
 - (c) 1995-96; and
 - (d) 1996-97?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Water Resources has provided the following reply -

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The Water Authority has no work program directly relating to the Lockyer redevelopment, as the development is the responsibility of the developer.

HOMESWEST - LOCKYER, ALBANY, REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Underground Power, Installation Intention

226. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Is it intended to install underground power in the Lockyer Homeswest redevelopment project in Albany?
- (2) If so, has consideration been given to common trenching with other utilities?
- (3) In what areas will this occur in the years -
 - (a) 1993-94;
 - (b) 1994-95;
 - (c) 1995-96; and
 - (d) 1996-97?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Minister for Energy has provided the following reply -

- (1) No, not at present, but discussions between SECWA and Homeswest are continuing.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SEAMAN, PETER - VOLUNTARY FULL TIME PREPRIMARY PROGRAM FOR FIVE YEAR OLDS, REVIEW *Vocal Opponent*

121. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Education:

Is Mr Peter Seaman, who has been appointed by the Minister to review the full time education program for five year olds, the same person who frequently featured in the media last year as an active and vocal opponent of the program?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The members of the task force were chosen by the chairperson, Hon Barbara Scott. She chose the people she believed were appropriate to review the program. They have produced a document which outlines the issues to be considered by the community and they will report to me in due course. I do not know Mr Seaman and I have no idea what his views are on this issue. I understand he has the capacity to be involved in making recommendations to me on this subject.

SCHOOLS - YANCHEP DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL *Upgrading*

122. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Education:

Given the promises made by the Liberal Party in the lead-up to the last election, will the Minister assure me that -

- (a) the Yanchep District High School will be substantially upgraded following the allocation of funds in the 1993-94 Budget; and
- (b) that the school will be assured a future in its present location?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

This is interesting and it is a pity that the State School Teachers Union could not get it right.

Hon Graham Edwards: That's right - blame someone else.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is a fact. The member sounds like an apologist for that organisation.

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Yanchep District High School is in desperate need of some money being spent on it. I remind the member who asked the question that a Labor Government was in office for the last 10 years. This school is in a deplorable state because of his Government's inactivity and neglect of it over the last 10 years. At the request of Hon George Cash I visited the school and have seen the deplorable state in which the previous Government left it. I met with the staff and parents and told them what the Ministry of Education is proposing in the event that finance is available in the forthcoming Budget to upgrade the school; that is, the provision of \$1.6m. I told the school community what the \$1.6m would provide if that is the course it wished to take. The school community then asked me to consider closing down the high school part of the district high

school with a view to bussing the high school students to Wanneroo. That had not crossed my mind until it was raised by the parent group at this meeting. I told them that, rather than make a decision then, a community consultation group, chaired by the local district superintendent, would be established to ascertain the community's view. The group is yet to report to me and when it does I will take into account its view.

The suggestion that I broke a promise is nonsense. I did not make a promise about spending that amount of money this year because, as the former Minister knows, everything is subject to the budgetary situation. I am hoping we can find enough money to upgrade this school this financial year. As I said, I am waiting for the community group to tell me whether it believes it should be a primary school only and have the high school students attend the Wanneroo school or whether it should be retained as a district high school. I will take into account the community's view, assess the situation in accordance with the Education budget and make a decision accordingly.

If the member opposite wants to score points on what this Government might do about the Yanchep District High School, I suggest that he inspect it. He will see a monument to the previous Government's neglect of schools over the last 10 years. Hundreds of schools in this State are in desperate need of money for upgrading. Something like \$400m of work is needed on our schools to bring them up to a reasonable standard to service the students in our community. The previous Government's lack of action is an absolute disgrace. It does not do the member any great service in asking this question.

LOTTERIES COMMISSION - GRANTS, CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Disabled Persons, Access to Buildings Policy

123. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Does the Lotteries Commission, as a matter of policy, still insist that when grants are made to clubs or associations for buildings, access be provided for people with disabilities?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The member is obviously referring to the Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club -

Hon Graham Edwards: I am referring to a policy across the board.

Hon MAX EVANS: I do not know whether there is a policy. If the member puts the question on notice I will provide him with a reply.

LAND ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF - PORT KENNEDY RESERVE

Squatters Removal - Environmental Protection Authority Approval

124. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that his department has begun removing squatters and their residences from the Port Kennedy reserve?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the operations have caused severe erosion problems in the heritage listed dune system at Becher Point?
- (3) Has this operation been approved by the Environmental Protection Authority?
- (4) If not, why has not the Department of Land Administration sought environmental clearance for this work?
- (5) Will the Minister halt this operation until the environmental aspects have been assessed?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I will attempt to answer the five parts of the question, but I indicate to the member that when he wants information it is sometimes better if some notice of the question is given.

(1) Yes.

(2) No, although I understand the land conservation district council for the area has been contacted and is discussing the matter with DOLA.

(3)-(5)

Until such time as I can ascertain whether any discussions were held with the EPA, I cannot answer these parts of the question. I suggest that these three parts of the question be put on notice. In the meantime, I will seek further information for the member.

WESTRAIL - CENTRE
Alterations and Relocation

125. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Some notice of my question has been given.

(1) Can the Minister confirm that alterations/renovations are planned for the Westrail Centre?

(2) How extensive are these renovations?

(3) What is the projected cost of the project?

(4) In what financial year or years does, or will, the project come to charge?

(5) What is the breakdown of the total cost for each of the financial years?

(6) In what year was the previous alteration or renovation carried out to the part of the Westrail Centre affected by the current project?

(7) What was the cost of the last alteration or renovation?

(8) Can the Minister explain, in the light of Westrail's apparent financial problems, why work over and above normal maintenance would be carried out at this time, if that is applicable?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for advance notice of the question.

(1) Alterations are taking place to relocate personnel within the building to new work areas as a result of the adoption of a divisionalised organisation structure in 1992.

(2) Work involves floors three to six inclusive to varying degrees. In the main it involves furniture and office partition relocation, together with the consequent reorganisation of telephone, electrical and computer services. New partitioning was installed on the sixth floor. In addition, the telephone switchboard staff are being shifted from the second floor to the upper ground floor.

(3) The cost of office relocation is \$350 000 and the cost of the switchboard relocation is \$40 000; a total of \$390 000.

(4)-(5)

The cost of office relocation in 1992-93 was \$55 000 and the estimated cost for 1993-94 is \$295 000. The cost of the switchboard relocation in 1992-93 was \$5 000 and the estimated cost for 1993-94 is \$35 000. The total cost of these two areas in

1992-93 was \$60 000 and the estimated cost for 1993-94 is \$330 000.

- (6) The previous floor alterations and relocation were carried out in 1991 and 1992 as the result of the restructure of the engineering branches into one branch. This involved all floors - upper ground to six inclusive. It was undertaken to relocate the mechanical branch from Midland to Westrail Centre.
- (7) \$312 000.
- (8) The expenditure on alterations to complete the process of moving to a divisional structure is an investment for the future of a commercial Westrail in a fully deregulated transport environment.

WESTRAIL - CATERING SERVICES

Privatisation Plans

126. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Can the Minister confirm that Westrail intends to privatise its catering services?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

It was publicly stated at the time of the Government's decision to endorse the Westrail plan for the future, at the end of April, that the Westrail task force at head office was reviewing all the operations at head office. No final decision has yet been made.

**EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT
OF - TRADE UNIONS, PAYMENTS**

127. Hon B.M. SCOTT to the Minister for Education:

Can the Minister confirm whether amounts of money were paid to trade unions in this State by the former Government through the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training; and, if so, what is the Minister's attitude towards the future of such payments?

Point of Order

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: Mr President, I believe that question asks for an opinion, and I ask you for a ruling.

The PRESIDENT: I must admit that I was not listening too closely to the question. Would the member read the question again.

[The question was repeated.]

The PRESIDENT: The question is okay.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

Thank you, Mr President. I thank the member for giving me some notice of the question, which gave me time to do some research on this matter. The research that I did was quite disturbing. It appears that, from December 1985 to January 1993, at least \$1.054m was paid to the Trades and Labor Council of Western Australia through a variety of grants for projects and staff funding. From February 1989 until November 1992, at least \$172 000 was paid to the Metal Trades Federation of Unions, also to fund staffing and a variety of projects.

Hon Tom Helm: Money well spent!

Hon N.F. MOORE: It represents an absolute and total waste of taxpayers' money - as the member well knows - paid by the previous Government to its political allies.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Question time is not a time to enter into debate about issues. If a member does not like the answers that a Minister gives to a question, the member can take the appropriate action. As I keep saying, you do not have to like what members say here, you certainly do not have to believe it, but you do have to listen to it.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I will repeat those figures, in case members opposite did not understand them. From December 1985 to January 1993, an amount of \$1.054m was paid to the TLC, and from February 1989 until November 1992, an amount of \$172 000 was paid to the Metal Trades Federation of Unions. Some individual payments to the Trades and Labor Council were in excess of \$80 000. This use of taxpayers' money allowed funds for much needed development and expansion of vocational education to be squandered in order to fill the coffers of the previous Government's political allies.

Hon Mark Nevill: Wait until you find out how much we gave to Aboriginal people. Then you will be screaming!

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is an interesting comment, because the member and his colleagues from the goldfields also screamed very loudly about the enormous waste of money in the Aboriginal industry, and the most vocal critic is their Federal colleague, Mr Campbell.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister, for goodness' sake, do not get into a discussion as a result of interjections from the other side, because you will allow yourself to be lulled into a false sense of security. I got the feeling last week that the action we took when people started to defy the rules here was not a bad idea, and maybe we should do more of it. I suggest that you ignore the interjections and answer the question asked by Hon Barbara Scott.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Thank you, Mr President. I apologise for getting carried away by that question that was asked of me.

It appears that there was little, if any, ministerial monitoring of the use of these grants, and few guidelines were in place to ensure accountable spending of these moneys. I am advised that payments were organised by the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training at the request of previous Ministers. Quite a number of these grants are recurrent grants, renewable yearly. It appears that large amounts of money were handed over year after year to provide ongoing funding for programs whose value and output were never assessed in any substantial way by the Minister. It is this sort of handout mentality evident in the actions of the previous Government which has helped to put this State into its current economic shambles.

Point of Order

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, in the first days of this sitting of the House you made clear your attitude to dorothea dixers and long statements by Ministers. The Minister is clearly reading a long statement to the House, which falls into the category of your ruling.

The PRESIDENT: I did not make a ruling. I suggested that Ministers answer questions as concisely as possible. I am a bit inclined to be sympathetic to your suggestion, but it is not a point of order. I suggest to the Minister that he give the answer without giving us a history that has nothing to do with the question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon N.F. MOORE: Mr President, in fact I had reached the last sentence, and it is regrettable that I was interjected on at that point. This practice of giving

out money to the trade union movement will cease while I am Minister for Education.

ROADS - PERTH-ALBANY ROAD REDEVELOPMENT
Stage 2, South of Mt Barker, Commencement Date

128. Hon MURIEL PATTERSON to the Minister for Transport:

Now that stage 1 of the redevelopment of the Perth-Albany road, north of Mt Barker, has been completed, when does the Main Roads Department envisage the commencement of stage 2, south of Mt Barker?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of her question. It is worth mentioning that stage 1 of the redevelopment, north of Mt Barker, included reconstruction, widening, improvement to drainage, kerbing, and a primer seal of the road surface. This work commenced in January 1992 and was completed in April of that year. The length of road involved was 1.8 km and the work cost \$2m. The section south of Mt Barker, which includes similar construction requirements, will also involve a major realignment to the east of the railway and eliminate two rail crossings. This work is estimated to cost \$2.4m for the 3.75 km section, and, subject to funding, will be considered for inclusion in the 1995-96 road program. The environmental clearances for the work are yet to be obtained.

STATE SUPPLY - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND
Balanced Budget, Minister's Briefing

129. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

I refer to the Treasurer's Budget bungle last week. Did the Minister for Finance receive a briefing or any advice that the consolidated revenue fund Budget had in fact balanced after earlier predictions of a deficit?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

No.

POWER SUPPLY - FUTURE OPTIONS
Energy Conservation; Demand Side Management; Cogeneration

130. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Leader of the House, representing the Minister for the Energy:

Some notice of this question has been given. In respect of the statement by the Minister for Energy on ABC radio that a possible 24 options were under consideration in deciding the State's future power supply -

- (1) Do the options contain -
 - (a) energy conservation;
 - (b) demand side management; and
 - (c) cogeneration?
- (2) If the options being considered do not contain all of these alternatives, why have they not been addressed?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Energy has provided the following concise reply -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.

MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING - NICOLAY, MR
Minister's Inability to Read Balance Sheet Claims

131. Hon T.G. BUTLER to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

How has the Minister responded to claims by the President of the WA Racehorse Owners Association that he obviously could not read a balance sheet?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I have been trying to reach Mr Nicolay by phone to ask him if he would like to personally explain his words to me.

PRIVATISATION - PUBLIC TRADING ENTERPRISES
Tax Compensation Review, Discussions; State Government Insurance Office

132. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance:

I refer to the review of tax compensation arrangements for the privatisation of Government agencies, the result of which was announced yesterday by the Federal Treasurer, and ask -

- (1) Has the Minister or Treasury officials engaged in discussions with the Federal Treasurer or Treasury in relation to the review generally, and specifically in relation to tax compensation for the privatisation of the State Government Insurance Office?
- (2) Over what period have those discussions taken place?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

(1)-(2)

The discussions took place with the previous Government for two or three years. It is nearly two years now since that Government made a move to privatise the SGIO, and I presume it talked about the R & I Bank at the same time.

Yesterday, about 6.00 pm, the Federal Treasurer, Hon John Dawkins, raised the matter of Federal Government compensation for loss of revenue resulting from the sale or privatisation of public trading enterprises. He said that the Federal Government had paid compensation for bodies such as the Government Insurance Office in New South Wales, and the State Bank of Victoria when it was sold to the Commonwealth Bank. For the information of members, the compensation was based on an estimation of the future taxable profits of a public trading organisation for the five years after it was sold, and on the current rate of primary tax, which was 39¢ last year but will be 33¢ next year. For example, if the profit was \$30m for five years, or a total of \$150m, the State would be compensated one-third of that amount; namely, \$50m.

The Federal Treasurer is now saying that the Federal Government has given away benefits to the States and has not recouped anything since those enterprises were privatised. The Federal Government did not give much away - it did not give the money in cash back to the States but rather offset it against debt owed by the States to the Federal Government. In other words, it was a straight contra arrangement.

The Federal Treasurer said that he realises Western Australia is looking to privatise the SGIO and the R & I Bank but that the Federal Government would compensate for only one of those enterprises. The Premier of Tasmania said his State was well on the way to privatising the Tasmanian Government Insurance Office and would take up the matter of compensation with the Federal Treasurer as Tasmania had already outlaid many millions of dollars in preparation for the privatisation of that organisation. The Premier of South Australia said he was also

disappointed, as prior to the Premiers' Conference he had put forward a proposal regarding splitting the State Bank of South Australia into a bad bank and a good bank. He wanted to privatise the better assets of that bank, so he too will take up the matter of compensation with the Federal Treasurer, and Western Australia will do likewise in relation to tax compensation for both the R & I Bank and the SGIO.

As Hon Mark Nevill is obviously aware, if no compensation is payable there is little real benefit to be gained from privatising these organisations. The Federal Treasurer admitted this; this was quite strange, as he had been trying to encourage privatisation.

RACING INDUSTRY - TAX RELIEF, RACING AGENTS
Western Australian Turf Club, Minister's Letter

133. Hon T.G. BUTLER to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Did the Minister write to the Western Australian Turf Club in May committing the Government to tax relief for the racing agents?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The benefits for the racing and gaming industry came in last year and we have agreed to carry those benefits on. There has been no change in policy. Peter Austin has beat up a story which Gino de Mori will put right tomorrow. Liberal Party racing policy last year advocated that the concessional rate be decreased from six per cent to five per cent, and that the bookmakers' tax and the Totalisator Agency Board take at totalisators on course be adjusted. These are policies which the Labor Government brought in under last year's Budget.

Hon T.G. Butler: Did you write in May to the WATC committing the Government to tax relief?

Hon MAX EVANS: I have committed it to the present policy. There are no changes. I have committed the Government to pay next year what was paid last year.

ROAD TRAINS - TRIAL, BEDFORDALE HILL ROUTE

134. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has a road train trial been conducted for the route from the Bedforddale Hill assembly area down Albany Highway, left at South West Highway, proceeding on South West Highway toward Byford and then right into Thomas Road proceeding to the Kwinana industrial area?
- (2) If so, when did such a trial take place?
- (3) Did the trial involve a road train comprising a semitrailer with a trailer behind and with a total length of 26 metres?

Hon N.F. Moore: Would you like to know the number plate of the truck?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: I will ask that tomorrow. To continue -

- (4) Is it the case that road trains are up to 36.5 metres in length?
- (5) Is it the case that trucks of up to 24 metres in length are now allowed to travel through the metropolitan area?
- (6) Is it the case that the train used in the trial was not laden?
- (7) Did the trial train have a police escort?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) It is not accurate to say it was a trial; it was a test run. Trials have not yet started.

Hon Tom Helm: Another trick answer!

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Some people take this seriously. The test run was held in the area and on the route described by the member.

(2) I do not know the exact date, but it was some weeks ago.

(3) Yes, that was the approximate length of the train. Obviously the honourable member is suggesting that a vehicle of that length is not a genuine road train. A road train can be of any length. A road train combination comprises one trailer behind a semitrailer with its own bogey attachment, so in this case it was a genuine road train. Road trains of that description are used for carting high density products and therefore one does not need a large area capacity to get the weight.

(4)-(7) Yes.

EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - CLEANERS *Contract Cleaners Replacement*

135. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister confirm it is the Government's intention to replace all cleaners within the Ministry of Education with contract labour cleaners?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I cannot confirm that because the matter is being considered along with a range of other matters in the pre-Budget context. The Government could look at a number of options. One is to have contract cleaners; another is to increase productivity among the existing day labour work force. From my point of view it would be preferable to increase productivity in the day labour work force so that we get appropriate savings. However, the whole matter is being assessed in the context of the Budget.

UNEMPLOYMENT - CURRENT RATE *Participation Rate; Training Programs*

136. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Employment and Training:

(1) What is Western Australia's current rate of unemployment?

(2) What is Western Australia's current participation rate?

(3) What training programs has the coalition introduced to assist the unemployed, particularly the long term unemployed, to acquire the necessary skills to re-enter the work force?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

(1) If my memory serves me right, and it is not always brilliant, I think the unemployment rate is 9.5 per cent. We are the only State which has a rate less than 10 per cent.

(2)-(3) The participation rate is about 68 per cent. Again, it is the highest in Australia. The member will have to forgive me if that figure is not accurate; however, it is in that vicinity.

Hon T.G. Butler: Do you see what you have inherited?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am very pleased that the trend for the unemployment rate is going down.

Hon Graham Edwards: It is going down because of some of those plans that you rubbished.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is something that we should be very pleased about. The fact is that the current Government is putting in place policies to reduce unemployment in Western Australia which will mean -

Hon Graham Edwards: Are you saying this is due to your policies?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I said that I was delighted that the rate was coming down and that it would continue to go down under a Government which had the right mix of policies which would encourage the private sector to invest in Western Australia.

Hon Graham Edwards: Do you mean to say that we have another farce?

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is only through the private sector investing in Western Australia that we will get the creation of proper jobs, real jobs, not the sort of jobs that are talked about in this question; that is, programs to get Government funding to create a whole range of activities in which people get involved and which exist until the money runs out. The bottom line is that if we are to do anything meaningful about unemployment in this State, we have no choice but to encourage the private sector to spend its money. When that happens, it will create real jobs. The dozens and dozens of schemes that the previous Government invented were designed to keep people out of the unemployment queues for a little longer. The bottom line is that there is no point in creating more of those schemes. They will not help. What will help is to get the private sector to invest. The only thing that will bring about the investment we so desperately need is the Federal Government's preparedness to do the right thing by taxation and other broad based economic policies.

EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - DAY LABOUR WORK FORCE, REDUCTION

137. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Minister for Education:

As the Minister confirmed that it is his Government's intention to reduce day labour within the Education Ministry, can he please confirm to the House the number of those jobs that will disappear and how many jobs he intends to replace?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I did not say I would reduce the day labour work force; I said that it was one of the options being looked at by the Government. Rather than privatising the system, there could be some productivity increases in respect of the day labour work force currently employed. I did not say that we would be reducing the numbers in the day labour work force.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: They have already been told.

Hon Mark Nevill: The schools would be corporatised before you know it.

Hon N.F. MOORE: If they were told, they were not told by me and they certainly were not told by the Ministry of Education. They might have been told by the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, but they are no longer running the country and neither is the Opposition. There is no truth in the question. I did not say that we were getting rid of the day labour work force.

Hon Graham Edwards: Did you mean it?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I said that there were a number of options being considered by the Government. The Opposition will know in due course when a decision has been made.
