

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 5 June 1991

THE SPEAKER (Mr Michael Barnett) took the Chair at 11.00 am, and read prayers.

PETITION - RAILWAYS

South West Suburbs Passenger Service Extension Support

MR THOMAS (Cockburn) [11.02 am]: I have a petition in the following terms -

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

We the undersigned support the extension of the suburban passenger rail service to the suburbs of the south west corridor.

This part of the metropolitan area is growing and is widely recognised as one of the most desirable options for the long term expansion of the City of Perth.

Moreover, as recent international events have shown, it is prudent to minimise dependence on oil and environmental considerations support the extension and enhancement of our public transport system.

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

The petition bears 29 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 63.]

BILLS (7) - INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Treasurer's Advance Authorization Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Dr Lawrence (Treasurer), and read a first time.

2. Honey Pool Repeal Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Bridge (Minister for Agriculture), and read a first time.

3. Land Amendment (Transmission of Interest) Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr D.L. Smith (Minister for Lands), and read a first time.

4. Acts Amendment (Representation) Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Dr Gallop (Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform), and read a first time.

5. Health Amendment Bill

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Wilson (Minister for Health), and read a first time.

6. Dunsborough-Meelup Reserve Bill

7. Transport Co-ordination Amendment Bill

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Clarko, and read a first time.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION

Watt, Mr, Appointment - Mensaros, Mr, Resignation

On motion by Mr Wilson (Minister for Health), resolved -

That Mr Watt be appointed to the Joint Select Committee on the Constitution to fill

the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Mensaros from the Legislative Assembly, and that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Edwardes, Mrs, Appointment - Mensaros, Mr, Resignation

On motion by Mr Ripper (Minister for Community Services), resolved -

That Mrs Edwardes be appointed a member of the Joint Committee on Delegated Legislation to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Mensaros from the Legislative Assembly, and that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly.

HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY BILL 1990

Committee

Resumed from 16 May. The Chairman of Committees (Dr Alexander) in the Chair; Mr Wilson (Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7: Offences relating to reproductive technology -

Progress was reported after the clause had been partly considered.

Mr MINSON: I move -

Page 18, line 4 - to add after the word "embryo" the following -

unless it is aimed at the treatment of a genetic disease or abnormality

I do not mind going on record as saying that although I see a couple of benefits in the in vitro fertilisation program, I would rather we as a society and as a race had never bothered, because the net benefits will not be particularly great. In the long term the negatives will far outweigh the positives. For that reason we might have better spent our research money in far more productive areas of medical research. Had all that money been put into another direction of research we may have done a lot better.

Having said that, and acknowledging the fact that we have that research, I see a couple of benefits. The first is that infertile couples may have the opportunity to have children, and with the use of this technology those children may be of the genetic origin of both parents, or at least one of them. That is a very positive benefit from the point of view of the fulfilment of a human being, for those people who feel very strongly the need to have their own children. A side benefit, and probably one of the most useful benefits, is the distinct possibility that many of the very serious genetic diseases will be able to be treated before the embryo proceeds past the very earliest stages. I understand that the genetic mapping of the human being is now very well advanced, to the extent that the mapping of over 90 per cent of the genetic structure of humans is already complete. I know also that genetic engineering for humans is not yet a reality; however, the time is probably not far away.

Some people have a great many moral and religious reservations about this practice, but I believe that some people watch a little too much television and that the term "genetic engineering" probably conjures up a spectre of the production of monsters with two heads and several arms. We must accept that the general ethos of the researcher is to benefit the human race and the individual for whom the genetic engineering takes place, if it ever does. I say advisedly that genetic engineering is not now a sensible possibility, but I believe in a few years it will be and we have the opportunity now to incorporate a clause in this legislation which will allow it to go ahead instead of having to come back to this Parliament to alter the legislation in the future. I sincerely believe that researchers are undertaking genetic engineering for the right reasons and not the wrong ones. If someone wishes to do this sort of thing for the wrong reasons, they will do it anyway, regardless of what this or any other Parliament says.

As well, even from the very earliest stages of embryonic life the young human belongs to two parents. I ask the Chamber to think for a moment about what now happens near birth, at birth, and for the first few years of a human being's life. Anything that happens to that human being, and any medical treatment and operations carried out on that person, are done with the agreement and at the direction of the parents, who have the legal control, in

consultation with the medical profession and researchers. It is a logical extension of that situation to go back to the very earliest stages of human life, and this is one of the reasons I wanted to have incorporated in the Bill the definition of an embryo as being at the point of fertilisation. Unfortunately that was not accepted; however, we are talking about a period of only 30 hours and therefore I do not think it is particularly important. Perhaps in the future it will become important, but I suppose I will have long gone from this place before that happens.

I believe it is a sustainable argument that, if parents have legal control and discretion over the treatment of their children around the time of birth and from that point until the children are able to make their own decisions, it is quite logical simply to carry that legal onus right back to the earliest beginnings of life. If parents know they have a very good chance of having a child with a severe genetic abnormality and science at that time can offer them a very good chance of correcting that fault, I believe we ought to be able to offer that couple the option of legally allowing the researchers and geneticists involved in the program to correct the abnormality. Every medical procedure carries an element of risk. I know that by interfering medically at that stage one may well cause the death of that individual, but so it is now with many medical procedures and treatments; a risk is involved. I know that if I were put in that situation I would say it was for the benefit and wellbeing of the embryo and that is what I would like for my child. I believe I should be able to make that decision, and the geneticists and in vitro fertilisation operators should be able to carry out the treatment, without contravening the law.

The law as it stands allows for an abortion to take place after the human being is virtually fully formed. I would much rather see an attempt made to correct a genetic abnormality and have it fail at the one or two cell stage, or even at the stage of an egg in the process of fertilisation, if that were possible, than to allow it to go to 15 or 16 weeks and then legally make the decision to abort that foetus. I would much rather have the former than the latter and I understand that the law as it stands would allow that situation to continue. So we are offering the opportunity for medical treatment, even though we are talking about only one or two cells, as opposed to a conscious decision that parents might make to abort what has already gone wrong.

I must confess that I would prefer the former to the latter, and it is in that spirit that I move this amendment. I have had meetings with the representative of the Health Department who is now with the Minister, and if this amendment is rejected it may be that a loose interpretation of amendments now on the Notice Paper would allow this to happen in any event. I look forward to the Minister's comments.

Mr WIESE: I support the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It makes his intention very clear by quite specifically allowing the procedures to take place if they are aimed at treatment of a genetic disease or abnormality, and is a worthwhile amendment. This is the area where future major developments in this type of medicine will occur, and from where some of the major benefits of in vitro fertilisation will be derived. Most members probably are already aware that research work is being undertaken not on humans, but in the field of plant breeding. Plant materials have been developed, and as a result of genetic engineering the world is already deriving benefits. I know exactly what the member meant - work on human material is not taking place and probably will not take place for some years. However, we should be aware that successful developments have been carried out in the plant world. Undoubtedly, that work will continue and we will derive great benefits from it. I do not believe that genetic engineering on humans has been undertaken - except perhaps on an experimental basis in some places.

My concern about the amendment is that some constrictions within the Bill may result in a decrease in research being carried out by doctors in this field. That is a real possibility and represents a real limitation. I agree that some foreshadowed amendments by the Minister will open up the field to a degree and allow some research, but we do not know exactly how much research will be done until we know exactly what is included in the code and how the council will treat the code and work with it. I fear that unrealistic limitations will be placed on research; my fears relate directly to the amendment. If research cannot be undertaken, people will not be able to develop techniques to enable the very thing we are endeavouring to write into the Act - that is, the treatment of genetic diseases or abnormalities. Research must be done to enable the techniques to be developed and perfected. We should not restrict the

development of that research and its techniques. Research into genetic engineering techniques to enable the treatment of genetic diseases and abnormalities will continue. That has been done in the animal world, and it is being done presently. However, a stage will be reached where that technique will be developed as far as it can with animal material; eventually the results of that research will be carried into the human field and the techniques will be applied in the treatment of genetic disease and abnormalities. The amendment provides for that. I support the amendment.

Mr WILSON: Regrettably, the Government cannot accept the amendment. I take on board the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Wagin. I understand many of the points they made. However, I must return to the first principles of the Bill, the ethical considerations, and restate that the major ethical principle enshrined in the legislation is respect for life from the beginning. We are not concerned to promote any research agenda in putting forward this legislation. I do not believe that is an obligation on this Chamber in proposing and approving the legislation. Our major aim in addressing the ethical principle of respect for life is to ensure that in the practice of in vitro fertilisation we are, as much as possible, providing safe clinical procedures.

In respect of the need for research and for changes to occur, provision is made in the Bill for a review of the Act. I refer members to clause 61 under which the Minister will be required to review the operation and effectiveness of the Act as soon as practicable after the expiry of five years from commencement of the legislation. Recognition is given to the development in technology arising from the process of time and the experience of practice. The Act recognises a role for IVF in the fight against genetic disease; it will allow the use of IVF for the benefit of couples whose children are likely to be affected by genetic diseases. Those couples would benefit from the use of donor gametes, or embryos, and thus bypass a known risk of transmission of genetic disease from the parents; or, in future, when pre-implantation diagnosis of embryos is safe and acceptable under the law, these couples could benefit from the procedure also. The procedures of gene therapy, or the replacement of defective genes, that are currently receiving medical and media attention, in the treatment of genetic diseases, are being carried out in children and adults, not embryos. Most scientists are approaching the potential for replacing defective genes and embryos with extreme caution; they would not consider it at all yet. This is because any changes to the genetic structure of an embryo could be transmitted to future generations so that any mistakes made could have serious long term ramifications.

The National Health and Medical Research Council in 1987 published its guidelines for human gene therapy in Australia. These state that "Germ cell gene therapy is ethically unacceptable". Therefore, the NH&MRC would find the sort of treatment being proposed in this amendment ethically unacceptable. Commenting about this type of gene therapy in embryos, Sir Gus Nossal, the Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research, wrote in November 1989 to the Victorian Standing Review and Advisory Committee on Infertility as follows -

Concerning human gene-line gene therapy, our position on this matter would be akin to that of the National Health and Medical Research Council, in other words we consider the hazards and unsolved problems to be too great to entertain this line of research seriously for the human. That is not to say that within a 20 to 30 year framework, our position on this matter could not change.

That is well within the five year period of review which would be allowed if the legislation passes through the Parliament. I am certain, in view of the pronouncement by a person with Sir Gus Nossal's reputation, the Reproductive Technology Council would not be considering approving that kind of procedure at this stage or in the foreseeable future.

I take the points raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding parental authority and the responsibility of the parent for the life of children from the beginning. However, one could say in response to that that genetic disease does not mean death. We can be in danger of devaluing the embryo by risking its coming to birth in the first instance. We must realise that even if an embryo is defective, parents will still choose for that child to be brought to full term. Accepting that parents will have disabled children, we must allow for that position to be adopted by parents - unless we adopt an attitude which is totally discriminatory towards disabilities.

The problem of technology of this kind working in advance of community views and opinion is that we are in some danger of surrendering to a research agenda which can be seen in its extreme form - I admit this would be extreme - as leading to the development of a perfect race. None of us would have that in mind, especially when we look around this House! All jokes aside, this is a serious issue and one we cannot ignore. I take the amendment seriously and I understand the thought behind it. However, in view of what I have said, the Government cannot accept it.

Mr MINSON: I take into account what the Minister has said, and he knows that my agendum and his are not far apart on this issue. This amendment was moved in the spirit that it would not, and should not, ever be used other than with the benefit of the embryo in mind. Like the Minister, I find it repugnant that we might be moving towards creating the perfect race - I am well aware that if that were the case, I would not be standing here.

Mr Wilson: You have had your chance.

Mr MINSON: That is right. The argument I have proposed supporting the amendment is sustainable and I stand by it. However, I also acknowledge that a couple or a person may choose to allow a child with a known genetic abnormality to be born and raised in the knowledge that he or she will subsequently develop a disease. The same is true now of children born with structural abnormalities, rather than the genetic ones under consideration here. The parents have the choice regarding whether they will correct the situation; it is not the decision of doctors or researchers - it is the decision of the parent. That extends even to blood transfusions and that kind of thing. Choice is not removed. If the technology is available, the decision regarding treatment will remain in the hands of the parents; that is a logical and sustainable argument.

However, the creation of an embryo specifically for the purposes of research is something I do not accept. I take into account the argument I have heard from certain sections of the community to the effect that many examples exist in life in which a few are sacrificed by the Government and the society for the benefit of the many. The obvious example relates to war: We send several thousand troops to war knowing that half of them will not return; however, this is done for the ultimate benefit of society. That logical argument can be applied to research in stating, "We will sacrifice a few people for the benefit of the many." I do not subscribe to that theory, although I acknowledge its existence.

I cannot support the creation of embryos for research. However, as was touched on by the member for Wagin, genetic engineering is already possible in the plant world. Also, I understand that this is being fiddled around with in the animal world. Genetic engineering is generally designed to produce a better variety, and could be used to correct abnormalities. I am aware that the activities in the plant world are specifically aimed at producing better varieties.

Mr Wiese: That is not the only case. It is also aimed at incorporating new factors into the plant which were not inherent previously. It is not just to produce better varieties; it is also to modify the variety.

Mr MINSON: Yes, it may make the plant more resistant to disease.

Mr Wiese: It may be to utilise various trace elements, and that kind of thing. It is quite specific.

Mr MINSON: I would not like to see that sort of thing transferred to the human race.

Mr Kierath: Definitely not.

Mr MINSON: That is right. This is a matter of opinion, and I would not like to see that. I know that if somebody developed a method of correcting haemophilia, as a parent I would like to have that available to my child. This would be in view of the fact that I have the chance to refuse the treatment in the knowledge that in 30 years' time the law may be such that the child may sue me for not using the technology! As a parent, if a doctor or researcher said to me, "We have done all this work and I believe we could offer a reasonable chance of success for correcting the abnormality in your child", I would take it. Research has been conducted on plants and animals, but not on humans. As long as the procedure was conducted with good intent, a sustainable argument could be proposed in support of it. Information could be obtained through a procedure as long as an embryo was not created for

the purposes of research; nothing is wrong with attempting to correct a genetic disease and obtain information by observing closely what happens to the embryo. In that way information could be obtained even though the procedure was not initiated for the purposes of obtaining information. A world of moral difference divides this situation from that of the embryo created for research purposes. It was with that good intent in mind that I moved the amendment. I will not be greatly upset if that amendment is not accepted, but I believe it is a moral, sensible and logical amendment to make. Somewhere down the track we will have another amendment like this in front of us and we will have the argument again. Perhaps I will be here, perhaps I will not.

Mr KIERATH: I do not support the member for Greenough's amendment. It does not specify that the alteration of the genetic structure must treat the embryo itself. It could be understood to mean that genetic alteration of embryos could be done to research treatments for genetic diseases. The terminology for genetic alteration at the embryo stage is germ line therapy. Karen Dawson stated that germ line genetic manipulation requires further advances before it can be considered feasible. She said that techniques for removing or inactivating precise segments of the DNA must be devised for germ line therapy to have any chance of success. Professor Jerome Lejeune, who is an expert in fundamental genetics and is the discoverer of the chromosome causing Down's syndrome, maintains that none of the promising developments in possible treatments for genetic diseases involve either embryo experimentation or germ line genetic manipulation. That says it all; that none of it is feasible. I support the Minister's position that genetic alteration of the embryo should be totally prohibited at this stage. That does not rule out action being taken in the future. If any unexpected breakthroughs make possible genuinely therapeutic genetic manipulation the Act can be amended accordingly. In that situation, and on the evidence, I would support that, but because at present no genuine therapeutic genetic manipulation is possible, or even in sight, it may be dangerous to make an exception to this prohibition. If and when such procedures are developed, it would be easy to ensure that the amendment permits what is genuinely beneficial. Rather than have something open ended, I believe the Minister's attitude is a proper and responsible way of approaching this problem.

Mr WIESE: I find some of the attitudes expressed to be quite inconsistent. I will deal with the member for Riverton's comments first. If there is a procedure which is genuinely beneficial and therapeutic -

The CHAIRMAN: I take the opportunity to remind members that we only have five minutes left this morning as the House will go into private members' business at 12 o'clock.

Mr WIESE: Mr Chairman, we were very much aware of that when we started this debate. I hope that at some stage we will have the opportunity to carry on this debate, not 30 minutes at a time but by giving it the time that it deserves. It is probably one of the most important debates to take place in this Parliament in the time that I have been a member.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not disagree, I am simply pointing out the business of the House.

Mr WIESE: I take note of your comments, Mr Chairman.

If the procedure is to be beneficial - and who is to say that at some future stage it will not be beneficial - and we leave this clause as it stands, we will prohibit any genetic procedure conducted on the cell. Clause 7 states that a person, whether or not a licensee, who causes or permits any procedure to be carried out directed at the genetic structure of any cell to be altered while the cell forms parts of an embryo, commits an offence. Unless this clause is modified in the way that the member for Greenough has suggested, we do not allow any of those procedures to occur. We have closed the door. That is why I believe the member for Greenough's amendment can be, and should be, very strongly supported. The Minister's attitude is inconsistent in that he is prepared to allow, and does allow, medical procedures to be carried out on the child once it is born to correct deformities and illnesses, and allows procedures to be carried out in utero on the foetus. But although we have reached agreement that an embryo is a life, we are not allowing procedures to be carried out on it at those first early stages of life. I find that inconsistent. If it is acceptable while the child is in utero, and after it is born, why is it not acceptable at the embryo stage? I support the amendment and if we close the door now we will prevent many of these procedures aimed at the treatment of abnormalities.

Mr WILSON: In response to the member for Wagin, who has become well informed in this area over a period, I will restate my position. We must draw a distinction between the embryo, the foetus and the child in this regard. We must do that because this procedure is now, and into the future, scientifically unsafe. The difference with the embryo is that mistakes made at the embryo stage can affect all future generations. This is the crunch point, the scientific and ethical considerations that we have foremost in our minds. I cannot accept this amendment or the member for Wagin's plea.

Mr WIESE: The Minister is prepared to allow an abortion on a developing foetus, but he is not prepared to allow therapeutic treatment to be carried out on an embryo at the very early stages. If there are mistakes, and it is accepted that there may be mistakes, it is possible to detect those mistakes before that embryo has developed, and a course of action could be taken. If there were an abnormality detected in the foetus at an early stage the majority of parents would have an abortion. Yet, the Minister is not prepared to allow attempts to be made to correct the abnormality in the embryo so parents do not have to go through the dreadful process of aborting the foetus.

Amendment put and negatived.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr Wilson (Minister for Health).

MIDLAND SALEYARDS SITE BILL

Second Reading

MR OMODEI (Warren) [12.03 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The the Midland Saleyard Site Bill is a very important initiative which will secure the Midland Saleyard as a central selling complex for livestock in Western Australia. Further, the Bill seeks to have the saleyard site surveyed and resumed by the Government under the provisions of the Public Works Act 1902. The Bill also indicates that compensation will be payable to every person having estate or interest in the land.

The Midland abattoir and saleyard land was sold by the Government to Pilsley Investment Pty Ltd in April 1986 with arrangements made for the saleyard to be leased back for up to six years. After the permanent closure of the Midland abattoirs in 1980, considerable effort was made in investigating alternative uses for the site. In 1981 the Rural and Allied Industries Council recommended that the Midland Saleyard should continue to operate for three to five years and then the position regarding the location of the saleyard should be reviewed. During this period it was expected that existing country saleyards would expand and other selling methods would develop. However, this did not occur and the Rural and Allied Industries Council and the 1984 Treloar report into Government involvement in the meat industry erred in their projections and indicated that there would be a downturn in the use of the Midland Saleyard and an associated move towards computer selling of livestock. In fact, while computer selling is still in existence and growing steadily, the auction system has had a resurgence and it is prominent in all saleyards in Western Australia selling under the appraisal or live weight system. It is important to note that the auction system is still the benchmark used in setting the price per kilogram for computer aided livestock marketing.

Members would be aware that many questions were asked both in the Parliament and in the community in relation to the sale of the Midland abattoirs and saleyard land to Pilsley Investments in April 1986. As a result of the sale, Select Committee inquiries into the sale of the Midland abattoirs site were held by both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. In examining the short and long term viability of the saleyard, the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly found quite clearly that a metropolitan or near metropolitan sales facility would be needed for at least another 15 years. The Select Committee also found that further steps needed to be taken to either secure the Midland facility beyond a period of six years or to investigate alternative arrangements. At the moment, the saleyard site is held by the Western Australia Meat Commission under a peppercorn rental from Pilsley Investments. I understand from my investigations that the peppercorn rental is due to expire in June 1992 and that further negotiation would need to

take place to secure the saleyard for a further term. Failure to do this would mean that the livestock industry in Western Australia would be faced with a rental or leased commitment to Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd of up to or in excess of \$200 000 per annum.

Members would be well aware that the very low price paid for the saleyard site was concluded on the premise that the peppercorn rental and lease-back of the saleyard would take place for a number of years. There are still a number of questions to be answered about the sale price of \$450 000 which was arrived at after taking into account the cost of demolition of the old abattoir building and the saleyard. One glaring question that has not been answered satisfactorily is why demolition was taken into account when considering the valuation. History now shows that the abattoir building has been gutted with everything of value being sold by the new owners. However, there has been little or no demolition of any of the fixtures on the site which would incur some expense.

It is important to note that action has been taken, at least in part, to secure the saleyard for the use of the livestock industry. On 6 May 1986 the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Mr B.J. Gabbedy, sent a letter to the Managing Director of the Government Property Unit which reads as follows -

This letter follows our meeting of May 6, 1986, and formally requests, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Agriculture, that you discuss with the purchaser of the Midland abattoir and saleyard site, the following:

1. The possibility of extending the leaseback arrangements for the saleyards beyond the six years already agreed. It is likely that there will be a need for a livestock selling complex near to the metropolitan area for up to 15 years. Any form of accommodation after the six years should thus be considered.
2. The covered cattle saleyard areas are not included in the area to be leased back to the Government. These yards are used for cattle sales and continued access should be maintained if possible. Ideally the covered cattle yards should be considered as part of the leaseback arrangements. As before, any accommodation offered by the purchaser should be considered.
3. Continued access to the south-eastern corner of the sheep saleyards for loading/unloading is essential. If possible this access should be covered by a formal agreement.
4. It is essential that the effluent ponds be considered as part of the saleyard leaseback arrangements. Without drainage to the ponds the saleyards cannot function.

The letter goes on to mention that access to the saleyards for agents holding paddocks will continue. In response to this letter Mr Peter Ellett of Pilsley Investments Pty Ltd, in a letter dated 16 May 1986, indicated that it was not known exactly when the saleyard area would be required for expansion of his brickworks and if the saleyard area was not being used after six years, it would be available. He also acceded to the request to the covered cattle saleyard area and access to the holding paddocks. Mr Ellett said the effluent ponds would remain as is as long as the saleyard continues to operate, and he gave a clear indication that the northern end of the site would always remain open to give both the saleyard and the brickworks access to Stirling Crescent. He indicated quite clearly that it was his company's wish that the saleyard operate with a minimum of disruption for as long as the Government wishes.

It is of further interest to note that negotiations took place in relation to the Midland Saleyard including the securing of 1.55 hectares of Westrail land which involved the then Minister for Transport, Hon Bob Pearce, and the then Minister for Agriculture, Hon Julian Grill. Of greater importance was the fact that the livestock industry in Western Australia was given to understand that there would be no threat to the livestock saleyard at Midland. These commitments were given by a series of Ministers and, in a media statement of 4 November 1986, the then Minister for Agriculture, Julian Grill, said that there was no threat to the livestock saleyard at Midland. He said that its continued existence was guaranteed under the terms of the sale of the Midland abattoirs site for as long as it was needed. Mr Grill also indicated in his Press release that he had written to the Minister for Transport, Mr Gavan Troy, and the Federal Defence Minister, Kim Beazley, identifying adjacent land parcels that

could be used if the brickworks impinged on the saleyard site. That would enable the saleyard to be maintained. At the time, Mr Grill said -

I have said that when the sale is settled, caveats will be placed on the titles to protect the producers and the Midland community in so far as the saleyards are concerned.

On 18 June 1986, a memorandum of understanding was tabled in the Parliament by Mr Grill. This memorandum was signed by the company's executive director, Mr Peter Ellett, and states -

I am fully aware of the possible need to continue the operations of the saleyards in total when part of the six year lease arrangement expires.

In fact I can see no impediment to the brickworks and the saleyard coexisting on the site for the foreseeable future.

To this end, I undertake to liaise with the Government and give every consideration to the continued use of the saleyard subject to only direct interference with the development of the brickworks.

Mr Grill said the memorandum further stated that the owner would give two years' notice to the Government before all or part of the saleyard was resumed. The agreement also extended the availability of the effluent pond and access to the sheep loading facilities and to the undercover sheep/pig lairage area. Mr Grill indicated in a subsequent Press release that he was fully aware of the concerns of the livestock industry and the Midland business community about future access to the saleyard. He said that the Western Australian Meat Commission would continue to operate and maintain the yard and that the Government would not leave the industry in a position of not having adequate selling facilities for its livestock. Mr Grill also said that, in his judgment, the Treloar report, in predicting decreasing throughput due to alternative selling methods, would cause the closure of the yard. History has now shown that this has not been the case and that the auction system is alive and well.

I want to impress upon the House the extent of the commitments given by the Government as late as February 1989 when the then Minister, Mr Julian Grill, in a letter to Mr Andrews of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association meat and livestock committee gave the following commitment -

I am happy to guarantee the following -

- (1) The Government should provide an adequate saleyards at close location acceptable to the industry within or in close proximity to the metropolitan area.
- (2) In the event that the location of the saleyard becomes untenable, the Government and its agencies will relocate them to a site as described above.

Please note that 1 above is in fact Government policy.

You will also be pleased to hear that in cooperation with Bob Pearce I am moving to secure the Westrail land immediately north of this prestige Brickworks in order to facilitate even an alternative saleyard site or to secure the current saleyard site.

I give members of this House this background information to indicate the extent of the commitments given by the State Government to securing the Midland Saleyard livestock selling complex. Members will be aware also that the livestock sales facilities working group which was appointed by the then Minister for Agriculture in September 1989 reported to this Parliament in August 1990 and recommended a series of options for the future use of the saleyard site.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the livestock sales facilities working group for its comprehensive and excellent report which evaluated a number of options available to it. Some of the alternative saleyard locations included sites within the Swan Shire at Gingin - Mooliabeenie - and Northam - Inkpen near Wundowie or Meenaar near Grass Valley. In its final conclusion, the working group believed that the closure of the Midland Saleyard would leave both pastoral cattle producers and sheep and cattle/pig producers from near metropolitan areas and to the north and east without a satisfactory saleyard facility. The working group also strongly favoured a saleyard complex in close proximity to the

metropolitan area. The working group felt that the gains in transport efficiency resulting from a cattle saleyard located north of Perth which could receive road trains and sheep yards closer to the heart of Midland's catchment areas to the north and east of Perth would be outweighed by reduced buyer attendance and competition and extra transport costs to the metropolitan and south west abattoirs, and the metropolitan live sheep export feed lots. The capital cost of country facilities would be considerably higher than for a combined species saleyard. It is important to note that at this stage the estimated cost of a relocated saleyard, based on 1981 values of \$9 million, would be equivalent to \$18.9 million in 1991 terms and I believe that would be an unwarranted drain on the State's funds.

Of greater importance in the livestock sales facilities working group's priority recommendation was that the Government re-establish saleyard facilities at Midland, preferably in the form of a new saleyard on Crown land adjacent to the existing Midland Saleyard or a cheaper option of regaining the existing Midland Saleyard through purchase, land exchange, or resumption with the major redevelopment thereof. Further, sufficient Crown land adjacent to the existing Midland Saleyard should be provided for the above purpose and to facilitate the road train access to the saleyard. Easements would be obtained as required over that part of the effluent treatment system of the existing Midland Saleyard located east of the Helena River and including the drainage pipelines between the existing pipelines and effluent ponds.

This Bill seeks to resume the Midland Saleyard site and to secure the saleyard complex in a tenure which would allow for redevelopment and upgrading of the site to provide the Western Australian livestock industry with a focal point for livestock sales. This is the preferred option of the agricultural sector of Western Australia and will secure the economy of the Midland business district and provide jobs for up to 100 itinerant workers which would not be possible in any of the other suggested options. It is significant that I have received extensive support for the retention of this livestock selling complex at Midland. This support has come from people from all over West Australia, many of whom have an extensive knowledge of livestock and livestock selling. In conclusion, it would be absolute folly for the State Government to ignore the opinions of the Western Australian livestock industry. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bridge (Minister for Agriculture).

MOTION - SCHOOL RENEWAL REPORT

MR AINSWORTH (Roe) [12.18 pm]: I move -

That this House -

- (a) notes that the report of the school renewal committee -
 - (i) does not provide for the removal of bias against country schools;
 - (ii) is lacking in sufficient detail for informed public comment within the time allowed; and
- (b) calls on the Government to abandon the so-called school renewal process and give public commitment to adequately fund the education needs of this State by normal budgetary allocations.

It is worth going back in history a little to see how the school renewal report came about and why it has raised so many concerns in communities through the State. The report was released in August last year. At about the same time, assertions were made about the closure of one school, the Carmel School and, at the same time, it was rumoured - and subsequently proved to be factual - that the Government proposed to close some country hospitals over that summer period. That proposal was later abandoned. If that is coupled with the difficult economic circumstances, particularly in rural areas, which were being experienced at that time and which have become worse since, it is little wonder that the school renewal report was linked, rightly or wrongly, to the closure of the Carmel school. People in country areas were concerned about the continued existence of small schools which they regarded as vitally important to local communities. I do not know whether there was a significant correlation between those two events. It would be a very unhappy coincidence if it was and it certainly has not made the job of looking into this problem any easier. People become

involved in this argument with a preconceived idea that this report is only about school closure. That is not the case, but it has been hard to argue otherwise, when there is evidence of other schools being considered for closure. It is very hard to convince people that there will not be a mass closure of schools. I hope the Government is able to convince the Opposition today that the list of schools for closure is limited, if not at zero.

As part of the renewal process the committee headed by Hon John Halden undertook a tour of various education districts throughout the State and met parents, teachers and community representatives. In the chairman's letter of transmittal to the Minister for Education which is attached to the front of the school renewal report he claims that as a result of the country tours the fears of many people have been allayed. I can assure both the chairman of that committee and members of this House that those fears have not been allayed and, if anything, they have become worse.

I have received innumerable contacts from people in my electorate and from around the State who have read the report and listened to those people who have been trying to sell the concept of school renewal and they are not convinced that what they have been told will be beneficial to their situation. In many cases they have not been convinced that their school is not on the closure list. It is no wonder that this is the case because the report contains a range of broad principles which are open to extremely wide interpretation, but it does not contain specifics which can be related to individual schools.

In this report a great deal of emphasis is placed on curriculum assurance. I would be the last person to argue about the need for an assured curriculum for all students regardless of where they live. We are told that the curriculum assurance document will be released in the middle of this year and at this stage we are not in a position to judge the level of curriculum assurance that will be provided. However, people are examining the school renewal document and are trying to relate it to the curriculum assurance document which, as I said, has not been released. The people who have contacted me have had difficulty in putting those two things together because they do not know what curriculum assurance means.

The school renewal process has been outlined in the report and the major concern of many people is the method of instigation of the review process. It can be by one of three methods. Firstly, the school community can decide that it wants to undergo the review process and participate in the renewal procedure, whatever that means. Secondly, the same process can be instigated by the district office following consultation with various school principals and others. It can nominate a school or schools to undergo the renewal process. Thirdly, the renewal process can be initiated by the Ministry of Education. If a school community, for whatever reason, decides it does not want to participate in the renewal process it does not have any option if the ministry decides it should undergo that process. Regardless of whether the process is initiated by the ministry, the district office or the school community, the ministry has the final say. The community perception is that whatever happens as a result of that process it has no power to reject the decisions made and it has no formal appeal process. Naturally the community can appeal to the Minister, the ministry or to its local member, but the document does not provide for a formal appeal process.

I refer now to the parts of the document which cause me and many of the people who have contacted me great concern. A part of the report deals with equity, which is something we should all agree with. Under the heading, "Executive Summary" the report states -

Equity is a priority and, where education on a per capita basis for a particular school or schools is disproportionately costly by comparison with most schools in a particular geographic area, a review of the school or schools involved may be warranted.

Equity is vitally important because all students should have equal opportunity to education with similar resources and curriculum, regardless of their geographical situation. I am sure that members would not disagree with me. In the same sentence of that report equity is referred to in relation to the cost per student. Again, I would be the last person to argue against the need to provide the most cost efficient service. However, equity of service must be delivered. In some cases, because of the geographic isolation of schools and students, there should be equity regardless of the per capita cost and that is not spelt out in the report. The difference between the needs and the physical situation of country schools, as opposed to city schools, is recognised in a one line statement, but there is no explanation in the

guidelines of the report as to the form that recognition will take. With the equal cost per student being incorporated in the paragraph dealing with equity, the emphasis is on cost savings almost regardless of delivery of curriculum and other assurances. It is important that students, regardless of where they live in this State, have equal opportunity, almost regardless of cost. If my interpretation of the statement in the report is correct, will remote schools which may be regarded as non-cost effective, be judged as educationally deficient? I certainly would not agree that is the case, yet those two things are tied together.

While some small schools lack resources in some areas my experience has been that what they lack is made up for by the enthusiasm of the parents who support the school both materially and in spirit. The dedication of many of the teachers at the schools outweighs any deficiencies the schools may have in other areas. That does not let the Ministry of Education off the hook; it must still make sure that it provides the necessities for the schools. Although they may not be cost effective because the individual cost per student is higher, that is no reason to suggest that they are educationally deficient. I have grave doubts, as have many other people who have contacted me, about the revenue funds that might be generated, and how those funds will be applied. I quote again from the Executive Summary -

funds from asset sales will benefit education generally, as the extra money will be provided to the Ministry as supplementary to the budget allocation.

That implies that when the Government and Treasury are sitting around the table to thrash out the State Budget, they will not consider when formulating the education budget that X number of dollars will be generated by the school renewal process. It is suggested that the Government will consider the budget requirements for education in isolation, make its usual budgetary allocation to education, and then, fortunately, additional funding, over and above the normal allocation, will be available for the education area. If that happened, it would be a most extraordinary situation, but I do not believe it will. I think the Government and Treasury will be fully aware of any amount raised by the school renewal process and they will take that amount into consideration. If there is a tight budgetary situation - and there is every reason to believe there will be - adjustments will be made to decrease the funding from Treasury and the top up funds will come from the school renewal process; in other words, overall there will be no increase in funding. Also, if a certain revenue is expected from the renewal fund from sales of property and if that amount is taken into account when the education budget is first set and those sales do not materialise, that will mean an even greater loss to the education area.

Dr Gallop: You must address the concept.

Mr AINSWORTH: I suggest that the funding for education in this State has been inadequate for several years. Many members on this side of the House have visited the older schools in this State and it is most unpleasant to see how rundown those schools are and how urgently they need repairing. The condition of some of those schools is absolutely disgraceful. The people involved with them no longer think about maintenance, because that is a thing of the past. The suggestion that the statement in the Executive Summary may mean a reduction in funding from Treasury is an important point. Additional funds are required, but not just funds supposedly held separately from the normal allocations from Treasury. A far greater commitment is needed by this Government and subsequent Governments to properly fund education and to get the priorities right in this State. At the moment they are all wrong. I do not think the money raised from this renewal process will be used in addition to the funds that might otherwise have been available from Treasury. It will be used to offset a decline in the Treasury allocation to education.

One of the parties involved in the renewal process was the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia. Of course, it has a vested interest in ensuring that the education allocation is adequate, both for the students' welfare and to provide for the needs of its members. That is only right. However, after the report was released it was interesting to read an article in the newspaper referring to the union's concern that the report was an admission by the Government of its lack of commitment to adequately funding education. That is precisely what I have been saying. It is interesting to note that the union, which was involved in developing this renewal report, is still unhappy with that aspect of the proposal. It does not believe the Government has made a commitment. Certainly, the union is in a position to make an accurate judgment on that issue. The fact that education has not been

adequately funded is clearly demonstrated by one aspect of the report which states that funds raised will be used only to raise standards in participating schools to the level available in new schools. That implies a couple of things: Firstly, if a certain standard exists for new schools, that must be regarded by the Government as the required standard because it would not spend money over and above that which is necessary. If that is the case, it must also mean that the older schools currently have fittings and so on which are below the standard now accepted as the norm. If that is the case, and I believe it is, this Government has not been addressing the funding needs that it, by implication, admits are required. It has not improved the standards in older schools to bring them to the same standard it now requires in new schools. The Government has not met its responsibilities in this area for a long time. Some of the older schools in my electorate have been behind the eight ball for many years. The Government has abolished the seven year maintenance program, whereby regular maintenance was carried out on schools and, as a result, standards have deteriorated even further. I refer not just to the physical condition of the buildings; the Government has not upgraded the facilities in older schools to the point where they are even vaguely comparable with the facilities provided in new schools. No guarantee is given that under the school renewal process the situation will be turned around if schools participate. No indication is given of the amount the Government expects to raise from this renewal process and, therefore, we are in the dark as to how far that funding will go. I suggest it will not be high enough to cover even half the backlog of work required in some of the older schools. I would be amazed if 10 per cent of the required amount were achieved. Unless a budgetary allocation is made which is over and above those made in the past few years, these old, rundown schools in both city and country areas - although there are many in the country - have no guarantee whatsoever that they will gain anything from participating in this process.

I refer to another issue which was briefly mentioned, but which raises some eyebrows when members of the community read about it; that is, the possibility of restricted commercial access to some school properties. The report does not expand that point. However, if it meant that the school staff would be involved in managing or overseeing the rental, for example, of a portion of the school grounds or buildings, I would have grave concerns. I hope that is not the case. The Government should consider the effect that would have, particularly on small schools with only two or three teachers and a teacher/principal who is already involved in administration. As a result of the devolution of responsibilities teachers have greater managerial responsibility for their schools which has increased their workload - but I will not debate that point at this stage. If they were then expected to take on a rental portfolio for the school property it would create a ludicrous situation. Teachers are not sent to schools to be property managers but to teach students. That should be as far as they go. They do have to manage the day to day running of the school and its internal resources, and that is fine; but anything above that is superfluous and detrimental to the education of the children in that school. I would like clarification from the Minister representing the Minister for Education in this place as to what that reference refers.

Dr Gallop: Where does it appear?

Mr AINSWORTH: I will find it for the Minister. A brief reference is made to the difference between rural and metropolitan schools. However, it is important to emphasise to the House the vital role that small rural schools play in small towns. It is a totally and utterly different role from that of schools in the metropolitan area. I do not mean that people in the country are somehow different from people in the city but that they live in a different environment and their community situation is different making the school a more vital part of the community. I suppose one could say that the community school in a small town is a focal point for the entire community. That is not just my assumption but the case as related to me by many people about their small schools. If there were closures of rural schools - and I emphasise "if" - that may save the Government a few dollars, but it would have a catastrophic effect on whole communities. The community role of such schools is acknowledged in the report, which also states that attention will not be focused on this aspect when determining whether a school may or may not be closed.

I will give an example of what happens when a school is closed in a small community. I have received several contacts from concerned people in the Pingaring area. I have never said to the people of Pingaring that their school is likely to be closed. That suggestion came from other sources. It is a rumour I have been trying to track down. Unfortunately, people

closest to the source do not want to give their names because they are employees of the ministry and fear that if they were implicated in the transmission of that information they would suffer in some way. That is important in some respect because I would like to verify that these claims are accurate. However, the community believes its school is on the closure list for next year.

Dr Gallop: How many children in the school?

Mr AINSWORTH: I think 38 at the moment. I will outline to the House the effect of closing that school. I am not concerned about numbers right now but about the effect on the community. About one third of the students would go to each of three schools all of which are fairly great distances from Pingaring. This would result in an extended bus trip for students. However, it would be technically possible. Once that happened the community would start to disintegrate because the need for people to go into the town would be diminished. If people go to another town because their children go to school there they will shop there and go there after school for school sports or whatever might be happening. Therefore, their reason for going into the local community is lessened. The effect then would be that the local storekeeper, who is probably pretty marginal at present because of the way things are in the community, would see his business go down the drain overnight. The same would apply to services such as the local post office and others. People will not make special trips into the local town just to get the mail or a few groceries if their child is in a school in another town. They will also begin to direct their social and other activities to that town.

The last straw that would break the camel's back would be the closure of the school. That may not concern the Ministry of Education, as its major concern is the administration of education. However, these things cannot be looked at in isolation ignoring the community effect because we are presently seeing major disruption to rural communities. Regardless of the specific responsibilities of the ministry, it must take into consideration more than usual the social and other economic effects on such communities when making decisions about whether to close a school. I have not seen a list of schools comprising a so called "hit list". I am told it exists, but that is hearsay which I cannot verify because of the reluctance of people to talk.

Mr Wiese: Wasn't it presented in the court case?

Dr Gallop: Who won that case?

Mr AINSWORTH: A list was presented to the court in the case related to the closure of Carmel school. I am aware of that, but I am not aware whether that is the same list to which I am now referring, because as recently as a couple of weeks ago an officer from the ministry contacted a friend who works in a small school saying that it was on a closure list. That is all I can tell the House. I do not have detail; I tried to get it, but was unable to do so. I would like those rumours put to rest, if they are rumours.

Mr Shave: They are not rumours.

Dr Gallop: A proper process is followed in closing any school and it was followed by me, as confirmed by the Supreme Court in the case mentioned. The member should not create fears like that.

Mr AINSWORTH: I am trying to say -

Dr Gallop: You are creating unnecessary fears.

Mr AINSWORTH: If the Minister is prepared to listen I will tell him and the House what I am trying to do. I have not raised these fears with people - they have come to me.

Dr Gallop: Ask the Minister; she will give a truthful answer.

Mr AINSWORTH: I have not had an opportunity to ask the Minister a question as regrettably the Minister is no longer in this Chamber. However, that is a side issue. I would like to see this rumour, if it is only a rumour, put to rest once and for all because whether it is rumour or fact needs to be established. It is circulating without help from me, or from any other member of this place, and not because of outside influences but from people who work in the ministry. People who are in teaching occupations and whose livelihoods rely on their jobs who have made plans and commitments for the future, including commitments to the

community, are the ones raising this rumour with me, not vice versa. Therefore, matters need to be made clear to these people.

Dr Gallop: The member should take up that matter with the Minister. He can easily put a question on notice in the other House.

Mr AINSWORTH: With due respect to the Minister who just interjected, he is the Minister representing the Minister for Education in this place.

Dr Gallop: I cannot answer questions like that. Get on with your speech!

Mr AINSWORTH: I did not raise the matter as a question. I have merely made a statement to the Minister representing the Minister for Education in this House that these rumours are circulating. I have suggested that they be put to rest. I have not asked the Minister, "Can you verify that this list exists?" I realise the Minister's position and would not put him in that situation as I had guidance from you, Mr Speaker, about forewarning Ministers representing Ministers in another place of awkward questions and would not fall into that trap again. Another major area of concern which causes me a great deal of worry and which has been reinforced by people who contacted me is the lack of time available to communities and individuals to respond to this report.

I acknowledge that as a result of a question in the House a few days ago to Dr Gallop, the Minister representing the Minister for Education, it was indicated that the one month time limit had been extended to the end of this month, for which I thank the Minister. However, many of the people who have received the report of the school renewal committee have not had sufficient time to digest what is a difficult report, given its lack of clarity and detail, and to understand what the report will mean to their communities. Secondly, many of the people involved with school committees happen to be rural producers and are in the middle of their cropping program, so they do not have the time they would normally have to address this issue in the way that it should be addressed. Many people have said to me that the extension of time is still barely enough time to allow them to respond to the report. In making these comments, I am not trying to score cheap political points from the Government. My concern is for the parents, the school communities and for education, rather than for political interests.

The aim of my motion is, first, to recognise the deficiencies of the report as it relates in particular to country schools but also to other schools; however, because of my constituency I will focus on country schools for the moment. The report also lacks the detail that is required for informed public comment. I have received - and no doubt so also has the Minister - letters from school communities which have made considered responses to this report. Those letters outline the fear and concern that I am raising here - that because of the nature of the report it is difficult to come to grips with it and to respond adequately. The amount of time that has been allowed for response is insufficient because a degree of research into what the report really means is required before a full response can be provided. Given the potential ramifications of this report, it would have been fair and reasonable to expect more than just the one month period that was initially allowed and the six weeks that we have seen subsequently with the bit of dispensation that has been provided.

Dr Gallop: You have ignored in that analysis the involvement that people had in the preparation of the report.

Mr AINSWORTH: In most cases that involvement was quite minimal.

Dr Gallop: The chairman of the committee visited far and wide.

Mr AINSWORTH: I acknowledge that the chairman of the committee visited far and wide, but I point out to the Minister that I attended one of the meetings at which Hon John Halden spoke. He did a very carefully calculated sales job. I admired Hon John Halden for the way he presented his case. He certainly attempted to allay some of the fears which some of the people had expressed. However, I spoke afterwards to some people, not just parents, who might be regarded by some as being less informed about the education system and about what the suggestions in the report might mean, but also with parent representatives and highly experienced school principals and others involved in education. In fact, all of the people to whom I spoke - and I did not select them for that reason - came away from that meeting with grave doubts about the school renewal process. The process of consultation that was undertaken to explain what the school renewal process would mean to individual

schools, and to allay the so-called fears that Hon John Halden claims to have allayed, was clearly not satisfactory and did not achieve the aims that it set out to achieve.

The second part of the motion calls on the Government to abandon the so-called school renewal process. I am not saying that there are not things which need to be done, because clearly there are. However, if those requirements are legitimate and need to be done, they can be done now. We cannot believe that the Ministry of Education has been sitting on its hands for all this time and has not made changes to the system without the school renewal process. We have seen the closure of the Carmel Primary School. We have seen major changes made in the education system to the curriculum, the salaries for the staff of schools and teachers, and a range of alterations as a result of various reports. That has been an ongoing process, and so it should be. Education is not static; it is an area which is alive and which changes with the times. However, we do not need this school renewal process to initiate change. The whole process is far too unwieldy. It is up to the Government to provide the Ministry of Education with the funding that is required to meet the clear needs of schools as they now exist. If the ministry and the school communities identify areas which need to be addressed and where adjustments to the system can be made, that can happen now; we do not need the school renewal process to undertake those changes. What we need more than anything else is an absolutely firm commitment from the ministry and from the Government to properly fund education as the number one priority in the future. The Government should abandon some of the less important projects and programs or put them on hold for a time.

Dr Gallop: Can you explain that?

Mr AINSWORTH: For example, the electrification of the northern suburbs railway.

Dr Gallop: Is that an Opposition position?

Mr AINSWORTH: It is certainly something that the Government should -

Dr Gallop: Is it an Opposition position to abandon the northern suburbs railway?

Mr AINSWORTH: I did not mean to abandon. I said to put it on hold. I said that would be worth considering at this time. I am not saying that is the position of the Opposition. I am trying to say to the House - with no help from the Minister, and I thought he was a reasonable person, but I am starting to have some doubts about that -

Mr Shave: What about the old Swan Brewery?

Mr AINSWORTH: That is another one I was going to come to when I had the opportunity. These programs - and I am not judging them - may or may not be admirable in themselves. However, the Government of the day, regardless of which Government that may be, has to get its priorities right. Those priorities must be the proper funding of education, health, law and order programs, and those types of things. I have no argument with these programs being properly funded.

Dr Gallop: You are considering the deferment of the northern suburbs railway, the old Swan Brewery, and what else?

Mr AINSWORTH: Certainly the old Swan Brewery is another one, and there are doubtless other projects or programs which could be tailored to meet the Budget situation at this time.

Mrs Beggs: You cannot deliver Government services on the one hand and not have community infrastructure keep pace with what is happening with urban development. If you defer the northern suburbs railway you then have to compensate for that with massive road works on the freeway. That is environmentally and socially stupid.

Mr AINSWORTH: I suggest to the Minister that the massive amount of money involved in road works would not be required overnight, but what is required overnight is a substantial amount of money to rectify the lack of funding for education.

Mrs Beggs: We have got an education system that is a Rolls Royce system. You want to look at what the National Party did in Queensland.

Mr AINSWORTH: If it is a Rolls Royce system, the wheels have fallen off the poor old Rolls in many of the areas that I represent.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2.00 pm

Mr AINSWORTH: Before the lunch break I was about to summarise my remarks, but the head of steam I built up has somewhat diminished. However, I shall try to generate some antipathy towards the Minister. To sum up, the remote schools I was referring to must be funded, regardless of whether this renewal report is implemented. There must be a commitment by future Governments. It certainly will be a commitment of my party and my Opposition colleagues when we become part of the new Government. Any funding we provide must come from the normal State budgetary allocations rather than from some of the assets which the school renewal committee's report recommends. The commitment must be not only to fund the ongoing operations of the schools, but also to catch up with some of the renovations, repairs and other capital works programs which have been put on hold for so long. Equally important - and this applies to country schools in particular - is the provision of adequate teacher accommodation, which is sadly lacking in some of the towns I represent, and in many others as well. Adequate funds must be provided for the curriculum needs of all students. The school renewal report gives no guarantee of that. We need to return to a greater degree of stability and confidence in the educational system, from the point of view of the parents, the students, and equally importantly, the teaching staff. At the moment none of these groups has any certainty as to its future or how it will be funded by the Government. Those needs must be addressed fully, and moreover addressed in the normal way from budgetary allocations.

The substance of this motion was to seek two things: A recommendation that the school renewal committee's report provides for the removal of the bias which exists against some country schools; whether that bias is intentional is another matter. The report itself lacks sufficient detail for that informed public comment which we require.

Dr Gallop: Are you saying that the bias has built up because of the tyranny of distance?

Mr AINSWORTH: I think I said a moment ago that it was an unintentional bias; it was not specific Government policy. I would be even more concerned if I believed it was a deliberate Government policy against country schools. I do not believe it is. What I do believe is that as a result of the lack of Government funds and the unintentional focus of effort on things metropolitan, because that is where most of the votes come from, it is a fact of life. There are not sufficient Government members from the country districts screaming out about the inequities. Those things need to be rectified. I call on the Government to abandon the school renewal process as a separate entity and incorporate the positive sides of that proposal in the normal operations of the ministry, and provide adequate funding from budgetary allocations rather than from some extra funding from outside the system.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Minister for Fuel and Energy) [2.05 pm]: As members will know, last year I was the Minister for Education. It is interesting to go back to my experience of that job and reflect upon a couple of features which stood out and in a sense provided some of the background to the setting up of the school renewal committee late last year. Two obvious facts exist in education. The first is that although we continue, and have continued in recent years, to spend record amounts of money in the area of education - indeed our new school program was a record last year, more than \$1 billion was expended in the education area - expenditure is still very tight. This is largely due to the very significant increase which went into the salary package for teachers. Obviously, as most money spent in education is spent on wages and salaries, a fairly significant increase in that package has had a big impact on the education field generally. Despite that fact, the whole issue of resource allocation in education is a major issue for any Minister or any departmental head to grapple with. Although we have these continuing pressures for higher wages, we still have many demands on our education system. In the newer suburbs of the metropolitan area, and in some of the expanding regional centres, we have demands for new schools. As the member for Roe pointed out, as each of these new schools comes on stream, it absorbs the latest in architecture and technology. As a result a lot of money is spent on our new schools. The political and other pressures on Government to build those new schools are very great. The fact that these new schools embody the latest in technology and educational ideas means that the immediate visual contrast between those schools and the older schools grows, and some of the maintenance needs of the older schools become more obvious. So the second pressure is to provide proper maintenance and upgrade existing schools in the education system. Thirdly, there is a demand on the educational system to develop new ideas. In the curriculum area more and more students are staying on in the upper secondary level, and

there must be some way of addressing the issue of an appropriate schooling for these students. As is the case in many areas of the public sector, new ideas carry monetary demands. Any introduction of these new ideas will cost the Government money. We also need to develop new ideas in the area of teaching and in the career paths of teachers. Training components are involved in that, and money will also be needed.

Continuing pressure in the system comes from the special needs of our handicapped students, be they physically or intellectually handicapped. We must also consider the needs of our Aboriginal communities, and the special needs of particular groups of students within the system, such as the highly talented students on the one hand, and those who are not progressing at the same rate as others on the other, as well as the special needs of our remote and rural communities generally.

Having been the Minister for Education, the first observation I would make is that resource allocation is a major issue for any Minister and any departmental head, and those resource allocation issues simply cannot be wished away. The ability to determine how to spend the education dollar so that it produces the best educational outcome for our students is, I believe, the great challenge for any Minister, any Government and any department that is concerned with education. At the same time that we are concerned with spending our education dollar within the Government system we must ensure there is a fair spread across the education system, taking into account the non-Government system as well. With the demands for extra salaries for teachers, the intensity of that resource allocation problem simply grows. In the education area there is no such thing as an easy ride in the sense that we can just spend money without having to make tough choices, because resources are limited but demands are growing. That is an obvious feature of education today.

Mr MacKinnon: The resources have diminished because of your disgraceful management in Government.

Dr GALLOP: Whatever the reasons for resources being scarce, they are scarce. What the people of Western Australia want from the Leader of the Opposition is some honesty about how he deals with the problem of scarcity of resources. That is why he has never broken through in the polls in this State - he does not exhibit that honesty, and I think many of his colleagues are beginning to question his leadership because he does not exhibit that honesty.

The second and most obvious feature that any Minister for Education confronts when he or she goes into the job is the vast differences that exist in the size of schools. As the member for Roe noted, part of the reason for that huge difference in the size of our schools is the wide spread of our population through this enormous State. The implication of the fact that we have very many different sized schools in our education system is that the costs of running individual schools vary significantly. It has been shown quite clearly that smaller schools in our system have to carry all of the overheads that any schooling system must carry; they must provide the same sorts of facilities and the same sort of infrastructure for the students, but with the smaller numbers of students there are quite big differences in the per capita costs of delivering education between those schools.

That is an obvious factor, and I confronted the difficulties it poses for a Minister for Education in the decision I made to close a small school in the outer metropolitan area; that is, Carmel Primary School. That school had just over 20 students and was very close to some very good primary schools which carry larger numbers of students and run very good quality education programs. Many of the students actually lived closer to those larger schools than they did to Carmel Primary School. I respected the views of the students' parents in regard to their education philosophy, but I had to make a decision as to the best way we could spend the education dollar to produce the best result for all students in our State, under both the Government system and the non-Government system. After going through the process of talking to the parents about the matters of concern, I made the final decision that the advice I received from the Ministry of Education that we close the school should stand.

As many members would know, the parents of that school, with some financial assistance from the Western Australian State School Teachers Union, took me to the Supreme Court on the basis that the due processes had not been followed in that case and, indeed, that the parents of students at that school had a right to the type of school that was provided there. It is history that the Government won that case in the Supreme Court and that the court ruled that due process was followed in relation to the procedures used, in that after a very good

meeting with the parents of that school my mind was not changed about the necessity to close the school.

They are the sorts of very hard decisions Ministers must make each year about the education system, and that was one school amongst others that finally was closed at the end of the last school year. In the case of Carmel Primary School, of course, the reason was that the differences in costs between providing an education at Carmel Primary School and providing an education at the nearby schools were such that I could not justify spending those education dollars in that case when the students at Carmel Primary School would get an equally good, if not better, education in the larger primary schools in the district.

Those sorts of hard decisions that Ministers must make result from these two facts: Firstly, education resources are tight, particularly given the pressures coming through demands for higher salaries for teachers and the pressures that always come through as we expand our knowledge of what needs to be done in education. Secondly, there are vast differences in the size of schools and in the per capita costs of providing education in different schools because of the differing sizes. Two things follow from those facts, and these were two conclusions I reached about our education system. Certainly this was the strong advice of many people in the ministry which they had been building up over the years and which lay behind the so-called hit lists referred to in that court case and which go back a number of years within the ministry. The first conclusion one can reach from those facts is that it might be possible to preserve the standards we have in our system of education and to bring about some savings in the system overall. In other words, it might be possible to provide exactly the same standard of education as we are providing to the students in the system and at the same time bring about some savings in education. That is exactly the sort of decision we made in the case of the Carmel Primary School, and those savings could be put to work within the education system to produce better educational outcomes overall.

The second conclusion I reached on the basis of those two facts was that it might be possible to bring about improvements in the quality of education by way of some reorganisation and some creativity in the way we deliver the education system. Many examples of that creativity are already starting to happen in our education system, particularly at the local level where different school communities combine their efforts to create a better outcome for their students. As a student, I attended one of our larger regional State high schools way back in the 1960s. Even in that larger regional high school when I embarked upon upper secondary education I had to make decisions that no student in the metropolitan area had to make about the sorts of subjects I would do, because the resources were not available in that school to offer me all of the subject areas I wanted to study.

As Minister for Education I visited schools throughout the State and it became obvious to me that, particularly in country areas where students are staying on and completing upper secondary education, we need some new thinking about the way in which we deliver upper secondary education in country areas so that a full range of choice is available to non-metropolitan students. It may be possible to bring about improvements in the quality of education by way of some reorganisation. In my mind, then, there were these two ideas. We could achieve savings in education through a better allocation of our education resources, which may mean some rationalisation in the system, and I have illustrated that with the case of the Carmel Primary School.

Mr Shave: Did you say some reorganisation or some re-execution?

Dr GALLOP: I said some rationalisation, and I think that is the proper use of the term. It might be possible to bring about some savings through that rationalisation. The second conclusion was that it might be possible to bring about some improvement by way of reorganisation. The method we had in the education system for dealing with these issues was very ad hoc. One of my responsibilities as Minister was to make sure there was a proper process for determining whether very small schools should be closed. I set up a process to consult with the community on the basis of the advice given by the ministry, so that they could question the advice and tell me whether it was solidly based. In one case, as a result of the process, I reversed the initial decision to close a school because the ministry had not taken into account all of the factors. I refer to the Sandstone Primary School, where the local member brought together good information about the future population trends in the area which led me to go against the initial advice of the ministry. However, that process was only set up for very small schools.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Donovan): Order! The situation has reached the stage where the level of background conversation makes it difficult for me to know whether it is background conversation or interjection. I seek the cooperation of all members so that the Minister can be clearly heard.

Dr GALLOP: I developed a procedure by which we could consider the closure of small schools. That is a process which occurs every year in the Ministry of Education. I believe that the process I set up is a good one; indeed it is said to be so by the Supreme Court in the case which went before it earlier this year. Of course, that assisted in respect of smaller schools but not in the case of the wider debate about how we might bring about the better use of resources and a better quality of education through some reorganisation. The first problem to emerge when looking at the issue of the better use of resources in the education system is an obvious one. If any school is closed and a piece of land is sold, that money automatically goes to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. That is not simply because a Minister wants it to happen that way but because our Constitution requires that to be the case. As a result of talking to educators in different States - in South Australia in particular - I was advised that they had brought about some significant changes in the way the system was organised by giving a guarantee to the parents in any school community that funds generated through the sale of surplus education land or through a more efficient organisation of the system would be ploughed back into the area to improve education. It was pointed out to me by the Minister in South Australia, and by the education authorities, that school communities told the Government that if the system were reorganised and because of a guarantee they expected to spend money in the area, they would be very pleased to go about that reorganisation. That brought about incredible changes in South Australia and an improved quality of the education system through the guarantee.

Before I even thought about opening up debate about the better use of school resources, and about school reorganisation - which subsequently won the title of "School Renewal" - I went to Cabinet. I said that I thought this was a debate we needed to have in the community, but that before I launched into the debate I wanted the Government to give people a guarantee that the money saved - or which might be saved - through that process would be returned to the educational system. Indeed it could be returned to the school communities which made the decisions. As you know, Mr Acting Speaker, the Government agreed that the guarantee had to be given.

Mr C.J. Barnett: How would you see that happening if schools were closed as a result of a lack of population?

Dr GALLOP: Obviously, in the annual process of budgeting we would need to set up an accounting system so that savings from the closure of any school would be recorded as such, and the amount of revenue generated as such would be put to the specific purpose of education.

The member for Roe raised a fair point; that is, Treasury could reduce its general allocation to education to the tune of the savings created by the asset sales. That is something that could happen at any time in the Government system. The Minister for Education would need to be vigilant, and the Government would have to be careful to ensure that did occur because in the process our credibility would fall. I acknowledge that can happen at any time - as it can in any area of Government expenditure year by year. A more cost effective way to use education resources should be accepted by all States as an appropriate method of raising money to improve our education system. So, the Government agreed with me that if there were to be any school closures or any reorganisation of schools to bring about improvements, and if savings were made, the money would go back to education and to the local schools.

The second stage of the process I initiated - besides going to Cabinet and winning that guarantee - was to set up a committee which would involve members of the Western Australia Council of State School Organisations, the School Teachers Union, the Civil Service Association, and the Miscellaneous Workers Union to ensure a representative body of educational interests which would be able to consider the question. It was enthusiastically greeted by the interested groups as an issue which needed to be addressed. I asked Hon John Halden, the then Parliamentary Secretary in the area of education, and member of the Legislative Council, to chair the committee for me. As we all know, as a result of that committee's activities the school renewal report was submitted to the new Minister for

Education earlier this year. That report will provide the basis for a very healthy debate about the way we will organise our educational system. I honestly think that the Opposition would be silly to simply disregard that report. The Opposition should take on board the report as it can now be seen as part and parcel of the educational system.

I have given a brief summary of the situation with the setting up of the committee. We reached that point because I had observed that the education budget was very tight and that the resources available were less than the demands imposed on the system. I saw vast differences in the per capita costs of providing education in particular schools, and reached the conclusion that it might be possible to provide the same standard of education as we have now, and at the same time to produce savings. I reached the conclusion also that it might be possible to bring about an improvement in the quality of education through reorganisation. I went to Cabinet, which endorsed the view that any savings from the process of school rationalisation or reorganisation would go back to the education system. I set up the school renewal committee chaired by Hon John Halden. We know the general conclusions reached by that committee. The criticism made of the report by the member for Roe and others involved in the education business is that the report is not specific enough. I believe that if indeed that is a fair criticism - and I think that the report is quite specific about the process to be followed - and the report is not specific enough because it does not pinpoint the schools or areas, that is to the credit of the committee because that is not what it was asked to do. I made it clear when the committee was established that I was not asking Hon John Halden and the committee to go around the State and say that certain schools needed to be closed and others should remain open, or that we would organise a school in a particular way. That is not what I asked the committee to do; I asked it to look at the processes that we could follow if we are to have a proper community-based debate on the way our schooling system is organised to deliver the curriculum to all students throughout the State. The report outlines the process, but it does not outline the conclusions of that process.

If criticisms have been made of Education Ministers and the Ministry of Education over the years, they have involved a lack of proper process by which the changes can be made. The school renewal committee has established a process by which changes can be initiated and implemented as the report outlines the criteria by which we can access different school patterns. It outlines the need for consultation and it gives us a timetable to follow regarding the process. The report is not specific in the sense that the member for Roe wants it to be - it was not intended to be that way. No predetermined pattern was established which we wanted to see emerge.

Mr Shave: Do you have a list of 34 schools?

Dr GALLOP: Every year the Ministry of Education analyses which schools might have reached the point at which their future existence is considered.

Mr Shave: So you concede that a list exists?

Dr GALLOP: Of course it is conceded. Every year the Ministry of Education looks at the process and sends out material to the Minister who makes the ultimate decision. As I said earlier, this is a very difficult decision for every Minister to make. In postwar education history, every Minister for Education has had to make such a decision about schools every year. Every Minister has been through that hard process on the basis of advice coming from the ministry.

Mr P.J. Smith: An average of five schools have been closed every year since 1961 - that is by both Liberal and Labor Governments.

Mr MacKinnon: That certainly isn't 34.

Mr Read: He does not want to listen.

Dr GALLOP: Yes, the Leader of the Opposition did not listen to the point I made.

Mr D.L. Smith: Even if he did, he would not understand it.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition does not have credibility because he does not face up to the hard decisions to be made in Government. The Opposition backbenchers understand that, and that is why they are nervous about the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Lewis: You would be the biggest little boy in this place.

Mr MacKinnon: Do not be sexist!

Dr GALLOP: That is a pathetic interjection.

Mr Lewis: You are a little boy who has never had any dirt under his fingernails.

Dr GALLOP: As a person who worked extremely hard in the Bodleian Library in the United Kingdom for three years to produce a doctoral thesis, with a system of heating which left a lot to be desired, I can take the cake for one who has worked very hard. The problem with the member for Applecross is that he does not have a valid definition of work - his definition is biased.

A view is held in education, academic, parent body and other circles that our education system could be improved. Models exist and the school communities are keen to take them up. Pages 17 and 18 of the school renewal report refer to the models for reorganisation. Firstly, the report refers to preprimary and primary co-location, which is a model which is adopted in some areas. In this case a preprimary centre which is separated from its associated primary school could be located in surplus space at the primary school. It may be desirable to bring these units together as they may work well together. The member for Kingsley raised the case of such a model, and I accepted her argument about a preprimary centre in her electorate; I reversed the decision of the ministry. Secondly, the amalgamation of junior primary and primary schools is seen as desirable by many school communities. In cases of artificial separation of junior primary and primary schools, an amalgamation would be an effective model.

Thirdly, the model of multi-campus schools involves two or more nearby schools operating as one campus of one administrative unit with the aim of providing a more diverse curriculum. Fourthly, the model of consolidation of two schools on one site involves the option of moving students from inferior buildings to those of better quality; this would also provide a more efficient operation and the capacity to provide curriculum and facilities beyond those to be provided by the schools individually. Fifthly, the expansion of age range of a school is another model. As Minister for Education I was fond of our district high schools because they contain students from preprimary right through to year 10. Admittedly, this was created out of necessity in many country areas, but it provides a good model for education for metropolitan high schools. Sixthly, the report refers to the reconfiguration or clustering of secondary schools. This can result in more specialisation as it provides opportunities for students from various schools to participate in courses at one school. In Geraldton some problems are being experienced with language education, and it may be possible through reorganisation in the upper secondary system to offer language components to all students.

Mr Bloffwitch: We were told that it would receive funding next year; is that correct?

Dr GALLOP: I cannot answer that question; I am no longer the Minister for Education.

We can look at these models as a way of overcoming these problems. The seventh model is the establishment of a hub school for years 11 and 12 which would involve a cluster of secondary schools providing specialist courses in senior secondary studies. The eighth model is a joint post-compulsory institution which provides services for communities with limited access to post-year 10 educational programs. This involves a link up with some technical and further education courses. Finally, the ninth model involves the senior colleges. A former Minister who established this idea deserves a great deal of credit - I believe the member for Marmion established the Canning and Tuart colleges, and these have worked very well.

Mr Clarko: It was good Liberal Party policy.

Dr GALLOP: Maybe we can expand that system to years 11 and 12.

Mr Fred Tubby: What about the flak received by the Minister of the day from the then shadow Minister for Education, who now happens to be the Leader of the House?

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the House, when he was Minister for Education, had the grace to acknowledge that the two schools were successful.

These are the kinds of things which can happen. They can be implemented in two ways: One could do what the former Minister for Education in New South Wales did and say,

"Okay, we will do all this", and act hastily and cause enormous difficulties in the system. On the other hand, one could bring about the process of change through community involvement. That is what Hon John Halden's committee has recommended. We must consider all of the excellent ideas about the ways we can reorganise the system; we must allow the process to come into operation so we can bring about some successful innovations to provide a better quality of education, and also, maybe, provide savings which can be ploughed back into the education system to deal with maintenance and upgrading in some of our older schools.

The motion moved by the member for Roe starts with the assumption that school renewal does not provide for the removal of bias against country schools. The situation is quite the contrary; the report makes it crystal clear as did I and the current Minister for Education, Hon Kay Hallahan, since she has been Minister for Education, that the needs of country schools, country communities and country students are different from the needs of metropolitan students and metropolitan schools. The metropolitan area has a different infrastructure and a different context within which education is provided compared with Pingrup, Newdegate or Esperance, for example. The obvious reason for that is the tyranny of distance imposed on us by the geography and economics of Western Australia. The Government acknowledges that difference and that the bias, if one likes, imposed by geography and economics must be tackled. The school renewal committee report is not providing a mechanism by which the Government can ignore that bias and impose some crude form of economic rationalism over the State which will lead to the closing of country schools. This Government and past Governments have done an enormous amount to redress that geographic and economic bias. The school bus service is one example; country hostels is another. The system of country hostels linked to some of our better senior high schools needs more support from country parents because of the excellent services provided by that system. Distance education is another example, the quality of which is acknowledged throughout Australia as being among the best. Another example is the School of the Air. An examination of per capita expenditure on education reveals that generally country areas receive more funding than the metropolitan area; and they deserve more because their needs are greater.

On page 4 of the report it states -

Special attention has been given to country schools; it is recognised that, particularly in those areas where rural populations are declining, the closure of a school may have a cumulative effect on small communities.

The report started out with the assumption and built into its analysis the assumption that country schools are different from city schools. No decision will be made by this Government to bias education against country schools. It would be a great shame if, as a result of the desire to cause some political embarrassment to the Government or perhaps a sense of fear among some country communities, the Opposition did not see the good ideas contained within the school renewal committee report.

Mr Lewis: School renewal is a euphemistic term. It really means school closure.

Dr GALLOP: That is where the member for Applecross is wrong. Two ideas are in school renewal: One is that it may be possible to bring about the consolidation of the education system in an area which will release some assets for sale and will produce savings; that fact is acknowledged. The second aspect is that it is possible to bring about some reorganisation in an area to provide better quality education. Both of those ideas are in that concept. We invented the term "school renewal" because school rationalisation or school reorganisation did not embody what was intended. Both those ideas needed to come under the umbrella of a new concept and school renewal was chosen.

Mr Shave: Are you saying that the sale of assets was not a motivating force with your Government.

Dr GALLOP: I did not say that; I said it is true of some in the Ministry of Education. It is the view of educators throughout Western Australia that the possibility exists of reorganising some schools to deliver the same quality of education with a lesser number of schools. That is exactly what I did with the Carmel Primary School. The motivation to implement a more cost effective use of educational resources is legitimate. No Government which is serious

about the proper use of educational resources should ignore that idea. A process is needed so that aim can be properly carried out with proper consultation. If that consultation process reaches the conclusion that it is not possible, the Government will have to respond. That is embodied in the conclusion of the report. No predetermined conclusions are made; an idea exists and a recommendation for putting that idea into practice is made. Ultimately a decision must be made by a Minister and a Government that would have to be made by any Minister or Government as a result of conclusions from such a process.

The motion refers to the fact that the school renewal committee report does not provide for the removal of bias against country schools. The committee was not focused on country schools and that is where the premise of the argument by the member for Roe is not legitimate. The committee considered the schooling system generally. Inasmuch as special account needs to be taken of country schools, the report does that as does educational expenditure year in and year out. The second criticism is that the report lacks sufficient detail to enable informed public comment to occur within the time allowed. The Minister said she would consider submissions received in June even though she set an earlier time limit for responses. The question of detail is misplaced. The report is not targeting particular schools; it is setting up a process. The Opposition would be very silly not to take that process fully into account.

Mr Ainsworth: The lack of clarity I was talking about in my speech is at the bottom of page 10 where the report mentions consideration being given to allowing restricted commercial access to school sites, at an appropriate rent, etc. That is about as clear as mud to most people. They do not know whether you are talking about renting out the backwater of the oval for a hot dog stand or renting the gymnasium for aerobics classes on the weekend.

Dr GALLOP: The member for Roe is being a bit unfair. I do not know the full background to that section, but for some time now community use of school facilities has been a major issue in our education system. Aspects of that debate about the way in which school facilities may be used by outside communities for sporting events have merged into this debate. Cooperation with community groups to do that requires some commercial elements and discussion has already been held about the matter. Before I entered Parliament I was privileged to be on the Beazley subcommittee looking at the issue on behalf of the member for Armadale who was the Minister for Education at the time.

Mr Lewis: One of the worst Ministers we ever had.

Dr GALLOP: In all seriousness, when the history of education is written in this State, the reforms introduced into the school system by the member for Armadale will be hailed as pioneering and innovative and he will go down in history as one of our greatest Ministers for Education.

Mr Pearce: Hear, hear!

Dr GALLOP: Already, the notion of self determination in schools can be seen to be producing good results. Everywhere I went in the schooling system, I could see the results of that concept.

Mr Omodei: Is that why you played down secondary education?

Mr Pearce: Half a dozen Ph D theses have been written about that change.

Dr GALLOP: All Ministers who introduce change of that sort will meet opposition. As I said, when the history books are written, those changes will be recorded as the most important in the postwar period of our education system. I do not think the report can provide more detail on the issue of the commercial use of school facilities. It merely poses the question, as have earlier considerations. Some school communities want to become involved in commercial operations. The member for Wellington will be interested in that proposal because the Harvey Senior High School is involved with its agricultural school and it is one of the best, if not the best, schools in our State. It has a magnificent link between a practical vocational education on the agricultural side of the school and the academic theoretical education on the senior high school side of the school. The principal and the staff of that school make sure that all of the students that go through the school have a vocational and theoretical education at the same time. Commercial operations are already going on within its boundaries. That is a very proper issue for the school renewal report to raise. It has always been a problem. For many years, the Lathlain Primary School raised money

through a car parking operation during football games. Theoretically, that money should have gone into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Mr Lewis: You blokes did not know about it, that is all.

Dr GALLOP: That is happening throughout the State. This year, I visited the Cunderdin Agricultural School's annual fair at which auctions of all sorts of things were being held. I turned a blind eye to those things because if I did not, I would have been silly. That issue needs to be developed in our school system.

The final paragraph of the motion states that the Government should "abandon the so-called school renewal process and give public commitment to adequately fund the education needs of this State by normal budgetary allocations". The Opposition would be very silly to ignore this report because it is very important. It provides a process to tackle a very contentious issue. It provides a process also to bring about some reorganisation, particularly in the upper secondary level of some of our metropolitan schools. It provides the basis for bringing about reorganisation in some of the schools in the metropolitan area where enrolments are declining. Any Government that did not take this report seriously would be a very silly Government.

Mr Lewis: You know where the problem lies, don't you? The title of the program does not tell anyone what you are about. That is a fundamental problem. You have tried to tell the public that the program is "you beaut".

Dr GALLOP: And it will be. When the school renewal committee visited school communities in South Australia it found that parents were extremely pleased with the schools that had gone through the reorganisation process and had used the money to upgrade education. More school communities were knocking on the Minister's door wanting to go through the same process. I acknowledge that there is fear. However, the process of setting up the committee and sending Hon John Halden and his committee throughout the State was meant to overcome some of those fears, to allow people to see that there are no inherent dangers in this program and to let them know that they will be consulted.

Mr Shave: Why not call it "the school rationalisation program"?

Dr GALLOP: That is part of the process, but it is not the total process. It is important that we use the right word to describe the activity.

Mr Shave: To con the public.

Dr GALLOP: It is not conning the public. Andre Malan, a fine journalist for *The West Australian*, had some fun at my expense in an article that he wrote on school renewal and the language used. He missed the point. We needed a different concept because we were not talking about school rationalisation.

Mr Shave: Maybe he was thinking what everybody else was thinking.

Dr GALLOP: Yes, but I have every right to point out that what they were thinking was wrong and over time we will convince them that there is no hidden agenda that will lead to a lower quality of education in this State.

Mr Shave: It is a bit like you standing on one side of a building and telling somebody on the other side to jump.

Dr GALLOP: We are not telling them to jump; we are telling them to enter new buildings that have better facilities.

The Opposition is trying to create fear by misrepresenting this issue and that is a shame. If it gets into Government, it will take on board some of these ideas because they are good ideas. The House should not support the motion. The school renewal committee argues that country schools and the considerations of small school communities must be taken into account. The program provides the detail we need to assess the process that has been recommended to us; it allows for an extension of time for submissions from school communities; and, finally, it gives a commitment to the people of this State that, if there are savings in the process, those savings will go into improving our education system. As I said, one of the reasons the Opposition is not taken seriously by the Government and cannot break through the electorate barrier, despite the difficulties we are having with the current recession, is that it will not be honest about the scarce resources and unlimited demands.

Until it can become serious about those issues, it will not be seen as a credible alternative Government in this State.

MR FRED TUBBY (Roleystone) [2.57 pm]: I enjoyed the Minister for Fuel and Energy's speech as much as I think he enjoyed presenting it. It is a great shame that he is no longer the Minister for Education. He did not have long in that job. I appreciate the work he did while he was the Minister although when he started off he was a bit wet behind the ears. He was just becoming a decent Minister when he was moved aside and given a stack of portfolios with no substance, which is a shame.

I take umbrage at a couple of the points raised by the Minister relating to the setting up of the school renewal committee. The Minister tried to rewrite the history books to show himself in a better light. However, history is likely to be recorded without his contribution. The decision to close the Carmel Primary School was announced in this House in an answer to a question asked by the member for Darling Range. No consultation took place. The Minister made it clear that there was no consultation on the closure of that school. A former Minister for Education, now the Premier, promised a process of consultation which did not occur; nor did consultation occur during the reign of the Minister for Fuel and Energy when he was Minister for Education. The Carmel community was shocked when it heard that the closure was to take place. As a result, news of the closure hit the media which approached me for a comment. On 29 October, two or three days after the announcement, *The West Australian* carried the headline "Western Australian schools on hit list: MP". I said that there were a large number of schools in fear of being closed and they would probably receive the same notification as the Carmel school. The Minister for Education at that time denied there was a list or that there would be any mass closure of schools. The following day, 30 October, after the media had hounded him the previous evening, the Minister, in a knee-jerk reaction, announced the setting up of a committee for school renewal. After the media had chased the Minister on this issue all weekend and an article was published on the Monday, the Minister announced on the Tuesday the formation of the school renewal committee.

Dr Gallop: I was in the process of consulting various players about how it would be set up. I could not announce it earlier because I was consulting various interest groups.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I might believe the Minister, but many others would not because that is quite a coincidence. The Government made that decision on the run. It was a knee-jerk reaction to take the heat off the Government. Thirty-four schools were facing closure and the Government's immediate reaction was to form a committee, which the Government has always done whenever it found itself in a tight corner. That is exactly the action taken by the Minister in this case, and it is typical of the Government's record in the past eight years. The Minister may claim the process was already under way and it was about to be announced, but it was a knee-jerk reaction to a crisis situation in precisely the same way that the former Minister for Education, now the Premier, decided to solve the industrial dispute at Perth Modern Senior High School and John Curtin Senior High School with regard to the replacement of the asbestos roofs. The Government solved the industrial crisis by promising to replace the roofs, but six months later it was found to have been a very expensive option and it was probably not the best way to go. It was found that other schools had roofs in far worse condition. The mind boggles at the expense involved in replacing the asbestos roofs in all those schools. It was a knee-jerk reaction which was a dangerous one causing further disputes when the Government reconsidered its earlier decision. History records that to get out of that dispute the Government finally had to replace the asbestos roofs in those schools, but the roofs in other schools which were in worse condition have not been replaced because no funding is available to carry out the work. That action by the Government could have cost the State a great deal of money at that time, and it will certainly cost a great deal of money over the years as each of the schools with asbestos roofs tries to achieve the same result. This is exactly the same situation.

The Minister for Fuel and Energy claimed credit for setting the agenda and initiating this school renewal process; however, I draw to his attention a letter written on 20 June 1989 by the then chief executive officer, Dr Warren Loudon, to the then Minister, now the Premier, outlining all the things the Minister has referred to in this House today and for which he claimed credit.

Dr Gallop: I said that the Minister for Education has had the idea for many years.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Donovan): Order! The level of background conversation is becoming too high for the Hansard reporter, and the Minister for Fuel and Energy knows better than anybody in this House that interjections are disorderly, and they are especially disorderly if the member interjecting is standing at the rear of the benches.

Mr FRED TUBBY: In the letter dated 20 June 1989 the then chief executive officer points out precisely what has resulted from the school renewal document which caused alarm in schools across the length and breadth of the State. He states -

To date the possible closure of thirty four schools has been explored.

That is the hit list. It continues -

At this stage I am not inclined to proceed with the possible closure of Marvel Loch in view of the marginal savings and the questionable educational benefits of conveying students to Southern Cross, some 40 minutes away by bus.

That refers to 40 minutes travelling although the renewal document states that children should travel for no longer than 90 minutes on bus lines. It continues -

Even so, the remaining fifteen schools, if closed, would yield some \$1.47m savings in recurrent expenditure and an estimated \$9.91m in revenue from the sale of school sites. Concerning the latter figure, please note that \$5.5m would come from the sale of the City Beach Primary School and of the remaining \$4.4m, an estimated \$4.1m would come from four schools.

We are talking about raising money. The Minister was correct when he said that funding for education is at a crisis point. The Government is looking every which way to raise funds to try to keep the State afloat and to keep money within the education system. Flogging off the assets will solve the problem in the short term but it will not solve the problems in the long term. It will save nothing. It should be noted that Dr Loudon referred to "questionable educational benefits". The letter continues -

In addition to these schools, there are a further eighteen for which information is not yet complete. Please refer to the attached sheet which is headed "Closures: Group 2". The missing information should be available shortly. Notwithstanding, if the pattern of the "Group 1" list holds, we might expect in excess of a further \$1.0m savings in recurrent expenditure. The once-off/sale of site savings figure, though substantial in total, has two large items in City Beach Senior High School, (\$9.0m) -

The Government is getting stuck into City Beach, it must be in a safe Liberal seat! It continues -

- and Leederville Primary School (\$1.0m). The remaining sites are of little consequence.

This is all about saving money and trying to get the State out of its Budget crisis; it does not have much to do with improvements in education. It continues -

In all of the above, the approach has been to first assess whether there appear to be savings which warrant further analysis. Where this appears to be positive, the next and overriding consideration is whether there are educational benefits which would warrant the considerable effort involved in pursuing a possible closure.

Once again, doubt is expressed about the educational benefits. The priority appears to be money. It continues -

In addition to the above, there are twelve junior primary schools and early childhood units which could be amalgamated with primary schools. Such a move might produce \$0.5m savings in recurrent expenditure. Given the certain trauma involved and not always certain educational benefits -

Once again, reference is made to the "not always certain educational benefits". It continues -

- in such a move and the relatively low savings, I don't consider these amalgamations should be pursued at this time.

One of the key recommendations from the school renewal document is that the amalgamations should be pursued at this time. The document continues -

I think it important to note that in order for closures to succeed it will be necessary to demonstrate to school communities that the savings are being redirected back into education - if not entirely, then to a large degree.

Dr Gallop: What does this letter mean? It means that the origins and background of this concept do not lie in some desperate effort to overcome losses from WA Inc, but emerge from within the education system about how we can organise it better. That is exactly what you are proving.

Mr FRED TUBBY: Would the Minister say that an abundance of funding was available for education in 1989?

Dr Gallop: Yes, records amounts were spent on education at that time.

Mr Pearce: Certainly, there had been considerably less funding in education in the two years before that. I was Minister at the time and I am aware of these things.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I have heard about that previously. I know a person who is completing a doctorate and I can guarantee that his thesis will not be flattering to the Leader of the House because I have had an input.

Mr Pearce: It does not mean that anyone will believe you.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I continue -

Without such an undertaking, school closures will be very difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Clearly retaining revenue from the sale of assets would necessitate a new approach by the Government, but one not without precedent elsewhere in this country.

Of course, that is referring to South Australia. It continues -

It is to be expected that resistance by Treasury would be substantial.

I can guarantee that it will be substantial. It continues -

If we are to proceed along this line it will require absolute commitment. To begin the process and then waiver would be disastrous. The hostility and resentment which will be generated, no matter how carefully and sensitively we implement procedures, should not be underestimated.

That is the key paragraph, because if the Minister is correct in thinking that the school renewal committee would be the best way to proceed - I give him credit for thinking along those lines - this is the best way out for the Minister. The obvious way out for the Minister is not to make decisions; to fob it off on the local communities; to let local communities decide for themselves which schools they want to see close.

Dr Gallop: That sounds like a pretty democratic idea to me.

Mr Pearce: Are you opposed to local communities, rather than the Minister, having a say about what happens in schools?

Mr FRED TUBBY: How can schools in the Mt Walker, Hyden, Narembeen and Kondinin area, where a number of schools are all about 30 kilometres apart, make that decision? I lived in that area for a number of years. I could not name one of those schools which would voluntarily opt to close so that the other schools in the area could have a renewal program and, therefore, benefit the whole community. If the Minister thinks the motivation will come from the local communities, he is living in a fool's paradise. His first option is that the initiative will come from the local community. I believe that is not an option.

Mr Pearce: I will give you an example. For a long time the people at the Williams District High School fought to have that school remain open rather than have people travel to Narrogin. They did not want to lose that school. After about three years of community debate, the people asked me to close the Williams District High School so that all the students could go to Narrogin. Communities will often make decisions which are different from what one may believe is correct, and if communities want to make those decisions, that is up to them. If the people in a particular area do not want to have a school closed, other options will have to be considered.

Mr FRED TUBBY: That is a fair point, but where did the initiative come from?

Mr Pearce: In that case it came from the local community.

Mr FRED TUBBY: After it was pushed by the Minister, I think.

Mr Pearce: Not at all. We had no view about it.

Dr Gallop: As a result of the Barrett-Lennard report on agricultural education, there was a proposal to split off the agricultural wing of the Harvey Senior High School and set up a separate wing. When I first became the Minister for Education, I approved of that separation, given our commitment to the Barrett-Lennard report. However, as a result of representations from the local community, and from the member for Wellington, who made quite proper points about the integration between vocational and theoretical education that occurred at that school, the Minister who followed me has reversed that decision. The local community had a very clear view about the way its school should be organised.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I am saying that in the main, across the length and breadth of this State, the Minister will not get local communities to make the decision that their schools be closed. They will not sacrifice their schools in order that the remaining schools will benefit. I guarantee this will not occur. It would also be inequitable.

Mr Lewis: Have you ever heard of anyone sacking himself?

Mr FRED TUBBY: That is right. The second option is that principals and district superintendents will make the decision. This is also not a viable option. The only viable option is the third one, where we have some overall planning or responsibility. We must look at education on a Statewide basis because the Ministry of Education is responsible for providing education in this State on as fair and equitable a basis as is possible. I suggest to the Minister that once the former Minister for Education - the Leader of the House - got through with the Ministry of Education there was no-one left with the capacity and the ability to plan for the future of education in this State. Thousands of years of experience went out the window. We cannot successfully run a State education system when the people in every little school and community run around trying to make their own decisions about what is best for the State education system. Those people will try to look after their own interests and not worry about anyone else. We need some overall planning. When the Leader of the House was the Minister for Planning, planning in this State was a disaster. The Ministry of Education was also a disaster when the Leader of the House was the Minister for Education. The Leader of the House had no concept of long term planning. I do not deny that some schools will have to close, but that has been the case for 50 years. I started in a school with 10 children, and after six months it closed down. I then had to travel 30 kilometres on a school bus for the next nine and a half years, and I did not enjoy that at all. It was not a very gratifying experience, but it had to happen. I am not saying that some schools will not have to close, but in order to be fair to the whole community, school closure must be looked at on a long term basis. How on earth can we set up consultation groups within local communities - which the Minister claims will be set up - which will take into account all the long term planning ramifications? Community groups do not have the expertise or the access to statistical data that is required.

Dr Gallop: You are a frustrated central planner.

Mr FRED TUBBY: The Minister is not wrong. I believe we need a great deal more planning, because that is what we are lacking, and a bit more forethought.

Mr Pearce: You are not talking about planning. You are talking about centralisation. You, my friend, are a Canberra centralist, if you put it in a national context. You have been engaged for too long in the old thinking of the Education Department. No-one thinks like that in the Ministry of Education any more.

Mr FRED TUBBY: This State has just over a million people. We cannot have 20 000-odd people all running around in their local communities making decisions, because at the end of the day that will cost a whole heap more. I am not saying that in the process we should not point out to local communities -

Several members interjected.

Mr FRED TUBBY: The former Minister for Education wants to get into the act - a further disaster!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Donovan): Order! I ask members to be more cooperative with Hansard; I know the Hansard reporter would appreciate that. It would be helpful if the Leader of the House and the member for Melville were to conduct their meeting elsewhere so that the member for Roleystone can continue with his speech. If none of that is possible, I may have to call on the new Sergeant at Arms to assist me.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I am not saying that in this process there should not be consultation. I am saying that the local communities do not have all the expertise, planning information and statistical data they require in order to make long term decisions. We do not know what will be the effect of school renewal. We do not know what demographic changes will occur even in parts of the metropolitan area. All we can do is make the best decision we can, based on the available statistics and information. Local communities do not have the resources to make that decision. Those resources are available in the Ministry of Education, and it can make long term decisions. The decision to close a school must be based on certain criteria, and that decision must be discussed with and sold to the local community. This Government has failed because it has not done that. The Government decided to close the Carmel Primary School and announced that decision in this Parliament. The Government then tried to run around and plug up the cracks in the dyke as they appeared.

Dr Gallop: The local community made a representation to me, but I was not convinced by it.

Mr FRED TUBBY: That was after the event. My information is that there was no consultation between the community and the former Minister for Education.

Dr Gallop: I could have changed my mind at any time.

Mr FRED TUBBY: It did not affect the decision which the Government made. The local community must be convinced. People are reasonable, and if there is a good argument, they can be convinced. However, we need some criteria, and that is what this report has not pointed out. This report has not laid down any criteria for the closure of schools.

Dr Gallop: It has.

Mr FRED TUBBY: No, it has not. No local community in this State will be able to read this report and say, "We should be careful because in three years our school could be facing closure." The report states that if a local community believes that a school should be closed, it can form a committee and the Government will go ahead and do it.

Mr Kobelke: It is not a manual for school closure.

Mr FRED TUBBY: It is a manual for school closure, in order to try to raise some money for the State Government. That is precisely what it is about. Does the member want me to again quote from the letter from the former chief executive officer, who has had more experience than any person in this House in education, and who time and time again in that letter disputes that there will be any educational advantage? This process is all about money.

Dr Gallop: You cannot take one aspect of the whole process and convert that into the total definition. That is the mistake you are making.

Mr FRED TUBBY: I am saying there should be some criteria for country schools and some criteria for city schools. Schools would then know exactly where they stand, and the people who are concerned that their schools may be closed would know that when their school population falls below a certain point, the school is in danger of closure. That has always been the case in the country. When a country school has less than 10 children, the first thing that a farmer who is looking for a person to work on his farm does is not check what farming experience that person has but how many children he has to put into the local school to keep the school open. That has been going on in country areas for years. Parents try to start children at school the year before they turn the right age in order to keep the local school open. When I was at Pingelly, after I came out of college, the Popanyinning school remained open solely on the basis that the principal teacher had half a dozen children of his own at the school which kept the population up to 10. Had the teacher been transferred the school would have closed, so the community there loved that teacher and begged him to stay, which he did for years.

Mr Pearce: If that doesn't work, you send a deputation to the Minister for Education and ask him to change the bus routes to pirate kids from a neighbouring school.

Mr FRED TUBBY: Exactly. Now it is all up in the air because people do not know what the criteria are. The North Dandalup Primary School, which has 58 children, is concerned, as is the Karlgarin Primary School, which has contacted me. Many schools from all over the State are worried. There is no way that these schools are under threat, and I think the Minister would accept this, simply on the basis that the children live too far from another school site and would have to travel for more than 90 minutes. However, people have the perception that these schools might close because they do not know the ground rules any more. The same applies to schools in the metropolitan area. We need to set down some criteria.

Also, I believe schools which are to be closed must be given 12 months' notice. The only mention of this in the report was by the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations delegates to the committee, right at the end, where it says that one of the other criteria which should be considered is to give 12 months' notice. I suggest that the Minister should - and when we are in Government we will - write into the Act a provision that the Minister cannot close a school in the State without giving a clear 12 months' notice. We must do that, because it gives parents an opportunity to make alternative decisions. If they do not want to send their children on a 90 minute bus journey to the next town or drive halfway across the suburbs to take their children to another school, they can either move house or make arrangements to send their children to a private school. They need a reasonable time to consider these options, not the six weeks the Minister gave the people at Carmel Primary School. Setting criteria and giving 12 months' clear notice are the two things the report does not cover and which would solve many of the problems and relieve much of the stress being felt by communities in both metropolitan and country areas.

I do not dispute the models of reorganisation. There is no way I can dispute any of them, because we considered those in our policy formulation well and truly before this document came out.

Mr Ainsworth: They have already been occurring, in many cases.

Mr FRED TUBBY: That is right. There is nothing new there, and for us to dispute them would be flying in the face of reality; so I do not dispute them at all. In fact, I accept most of them. If we have to force some schools to close these are the options we must consider; but we must not close schools simply on the ground of economics; we must take into account the educational objective. In each of the cases I highlighted, Dr Loudon pointed out that the educational benefits are questionable.

Dr Gallop: Let us take the case study of the Carmel Primary School. The school was closed and an equally valid system of education was offered to all of the children who attended that school, and savings were made that could be spent generally in the education system. That is a saving, but the saving becomes an educational benefit in the way the money can be spent, and no one loses. So you cannot separate economics and education in that way. Every decision you make brings the two together.

Mr FRED TUBBY: It does, but all of these options and the options the Minister has been following are not to do with education but with funding. I will not dispute the Minister's argument in the case of Carmel; I never have argued against him on that. I have argued with him about the fact that he did not consult with the Carmel community. Those people received the shock of their lives when the Minister answered a question in this place and said the school would be closing in six weeks. They did not expect that and they wanted more notice. If the consultation and decision making process had taken a different course I do not believe the Minister would have got himself into quite so much hot water. I do not think the community would have pursued it so vigorously, and the Minister would have received all the support in the world from me. I did not criticise him on his decision to close the school because I consider that in some cases, particularly in the metropolitan area, schools with only 20 to 30 students must be looked at. It is a different kettle of fish in country areas.

Dr Gallop: The member for Belmont and I are facing that situation with some of the schools in our electorates, such as the Rivervale Primary School.

Mr FRED TUBBY: Yes, and the Minister should look also at the Belmont Primary School, which is on the list as well. There are schools like that in the metropolitan area, with other schools in close proximity, which are underutilising permanent capital resources to a significant degree, and they must be considered in this context. However, in the main it must be done on an educational and not simply an economic basis.

I repeat that I support the motion because I do not think there is a great deal new in this document. The Minister has tried to rewrite the history books in the way the process occurred. I believe the report does not cover two very important areas; namely, the setting of the criteria we must use in country and metropolitan areas for closing schools, and the provision of a full 12 months' notice before the schools are closed, when a final decision is made after full consultation with the community.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [3.26 pm]: From what has been said by members opposite, I gather that there is a fair bit of support for what is contained in this process, and therefore it is a great pity that this motion should be moved opposing the school renewal process. While members opposite may see points in this process with which they are not happy or which could be improved upon, I do not think their arguments opposing the process of school renewal stack up very well.

The need obviously exists - and, as the member for Roleystone indicated, it is something which has been considered for some time - to look for the efficient use of our resources in the education system in Western Australia. Let us look at a couple of factors which impinge very much on the use and allocation of those physical resources. Western Australia is leading the other States of Australia in population growth; and particularly when we look at the demographic spread of our population, we will see that that population growth is in the younger age groups more so than in any other State. This impinges directly on the need to provide schools and other resources for these young people. Therefore, we in this State must meet a challenge to marshal our resources in order to provide schools for those additional students in Western Australia.

Besides the growth in student numbers we have also to face up to the shift in the areas with high student age populations. As families move to newer suburbs we find a growth in student numbers in those areas commensurate with a drop in student numbers in some of our older suburbs which are undergoing an ageing process. The figures I will now give are figures I heard a couple of years ago, and while I cannot vouch that they are exactly correct I believe they are cut by only a small margin, if at all. The figures show that in a given period there had been a need in Western Australia to construct 37 new schools. At the cost of building a new school today, the cost of 37 new schools would be in the order of \$100 million. That expenditure was required to meet a net increase in student numbers of approximately 1 200. Members can see the magnitude of the problem, when we would have to spend in the order of \$100 million simply to provide the schools for an additional 1 200 students. So, on top of the actual growth in student numbers, we have a very real problem in making sure that the schools are in those areas where the students are.

Mr Shave: Are you saying that 37 schools are being built to accommodate 1 200 children?

Mr KOBELKE: These are the figures of a few years ago, and I cannot state the period, but it was due to the shift in population.

Mr Shave: If there are 37 schools and one looks at three per 100, are you saying that a school is provided for every 36 children?

Mr Pearce: The inner suburban schools drop in population and we have to create new schools in the outer suburbs, so what the member for Nollamara is saying is right.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Leader of the House for that comment, but I thought that point was fairly clear: A shift has occurred in the population age group. It is no good having - as I do - a school in Nollamara, which has half the number of students it can cope with, while a few kilometres away there are lots of students who want to attend a primary school. This year a new school, the Boyare Primary School, was opened at a cost of \$3.5 million to cater for such a need in Mirrabooka. In the metropolitan areas we will not bus primary school children five and six kilometres; we expect there to be a school in their area, so there is a requirement to build additional schools.

Mr Shave: That has been the case for the past 50 years.

Mr KOBELKE: No, it has not been the case. That has been the situation over the past 10 to 15 years, but I do not want to get bogged down in the demographics of Perth. That is a demographic situation that has existed in the recent past.

Another point in support of the school renewal committee is that we are living in difficult

economic times and this Government, as with all Governments across Australia, is being forced to prune its spending and at the same time to meet the existing demands and, in many cases, the rising expectations about the services that will be provided. While it is obviously a difficult time, such times do provide the incentive to try to ensure that we use our resources with maximum efficiency. This school renewal system will be one way of enabling us to make the most effective use of the resources which are committed to education. As members would be aware this Government has committed very substantial resources to education - 25 per cent of the State's Budget.

I will turn to the role of the school renewal committee, and as the Minister has in part already indicated, Hon John Halden from the Legislative Council was asked to undertake this report along with a committee which comprised people from the Ministry of Education and a wide range of other groups who have an interest in education. They set about generating a public debate on these issues, and they not only consulted the interest groups in the field of education, but also they travelled extensively around the State to ensure that the local school communities were aware of the process and were given an opportunity to input to that committee. This report has now come forward to the Government and the Government has left further time for public consultation and comment before it will make a decision on the implementation of this report. It is not true, as is being suggested by some members opposite, that this report has suddenly been put in front of the public and after a very short time that is the end of it. That is not the case, and it has been a lengthy process to enable the community to be involved.

The school renewal process has three channels through which changes may take place in a particular school or region. The community may initiate changes; that is, a school or a group of school communities which meet one or more of the criteria for renewal may decide they wish to have a review in their area. Alternatively, such renewals may be district initiated. A local area may decide on a review at certain schools which meet the criteria for renewal. Thirdly, the central office may initiate such a renewal. We see a number of avenues through which the process may be initiated, and if one follows the steps of that process one sees a considerable opportunity for consultation, and for the school community and the general public to be involved. The models of reorganisation are only hinted at in this report. They are not prescriptive and they do not preclude other possible changes being brought forward by a particular school or area. I will touch on a few of these matters indicated in the report.

There is the possibility for preprimary and primary co-location. There is nothing new about that; a concerned citizen approached me in Nollamara a couple of years ago indicating that the preprimary, which was a few streets away from the primary school, should be relocated to the primary school site. Consultation took place between members of the school community, staff of the primary school and the preprimary school teacher. The school community thought it would be worth looking at in the future, but they thought the existing arrangements seemed to be advantageous. The amalgamation of junior primary and primary schools has also been suggested. My area has two such configurations where a junior primary and a primary school are adjacent to each other. These schools were built at a time of much larger school populations and in those days it would have been a proper assessment that for educational purposes, the schools would have a higher quality of education with two smaller schools rather than one large school from year one to year seven. With falling student numbers, it is a matter which could now be reassessed and it would be right and proper that any such reassessment would follow a process where people would be able to have their say and the general community would benefit from an open discussion on that matter. An alternative proposal put forward is the possibility of twin or multi-campus schools. Members would be aware that a number of private schools around Perth have amalgamated and work on that basis, although I am not aware of any Government schools which have done so, but it is something that should be given due consideration. There is another consideration which I do not see mentioned in this report, but I know it has already taken place in my area. In the new housing subdivision in the northern part of Dianella, planning for a school would normally be advanced by planning considerations, but a decision has been made in consultation with the Ministry of Education and the State Planning Commission not to allow for a school site. The basis for that decision is that within two kilometres of that site are two existing primary schools that are underutilised. One is the Dianella Heights Primary School which was the centre of a rumour that it would be forced to

close because of its very low student enrolments. By taking into account planning considerations, the decision has been made not to build a new primary school in a new housing estate, but to try to make sure that the arrangement of roads is such that students can move with greater safety from the area where their homes will be to an existing school, which is an extremely good school with a wonderful caring atmosphere.

I have mentioned some of the matters raised in this report but a whole range of possible reallocations of resources or rearrangements could be considered to the benefit of the education of our students. It is not just the physical resource aspect of education which must be taken into account. The size of the school impacts directly on the quality of education. In my view, where schools become very large the quality of education suffers. It is difficult to put a number on what is a large school. However, when I was a teacher at Scarborough Senior High School more than 1 300 students attended that school. That number is too large and makes it very difficult to establish a suitable school climate and quality of care which contributes so greatly to a high quality education.

Mr Clarko: I strongly support you there. It would be better if a school were to have 500 students, but there would be problems in year 11 and 12 if you had that.

Mr KOBELKE: The member for Marmion is jumping ahead of me. At the other end of the scale schools can also run into problems when, as the member for Marmion has suggested, the number of students decreases. In such cases schools cannot offer a reasonable range of subjects to students, which is an integral part of high school education. When the number of students drops in primary schools problems can also occur because the number of mixed classes increases and children of different ages are placed in the same classroom. Such schools do not have the support staff offered to larger schools. The size of a school relates directly to the quality of education provided. Renewal is not simply a matter of reallocation of resources.

Mr Clarko: Quality of education can happen in small schools. I went to a school where the total number of students per class was nine. In fact, in one class I was the only student and, naturally, I was the best and the worst in the class. I made more progress that year than in any other year of my schooling.

Mr KOBELKE: The member for Marmion is raising another problem. The Government is making a positive attempt to address the problems facing schools. It is a commitment which it has shown over a number of years; and will continue to demonstrate that the quality of education can be improved in difficult financial times.

I oppose the motion which consists of three points. It suggests that the report of the school renewal committee does not provide for the removal of bias against country schools. Having listened to the member for Roe, the mover of this motion, I appreciate that my reading of that sentence is not his intention. However, I intend to discuss the actual wording of part (a)(i) of the motion; that is, the "removal of bias against country schools". I do not think there is any real bias against country schools. Of course, students in country areas experience obvious disadvantages but that is not to say there is a bias against them in the education system. In fact, the education system acts very much in favour of country students. The Minister for Education has already indicated that the Government has made a greater financial commitment to students in country schools than students in the metropolitan area and, as the Minister said, that is right and proper. However, that is not a bias against country schools, it is a bias in favour of country schools. This Government has established incentives to attract and retain teachers in country schools. While that may have largely assisted remote schools rather than schools throughout the wheatbelt, the Government has addressed the problem and will, hopefully, continue to do so. Measures that have been put into place can be expanded to meet the needs throughout the country. Recently the Minister announced an extra \$1 000 per annum payment for teachers in 36 remote schools to further encourage teachers who work in country schools. Free bus transport is available to country students. That is not available to students in metropolitan schools. At present, almost \$36 million of the Education budget is allocated to providing school buses in country areas. That is a substantial bias in favour of students in country schools. I reject the first point of the motion.

Part (a)(ii) of the motion indicates that the school renewal committee report is lacking in sufficient detail and does not allow time for informed public comment. I reject that assertion. As I have already indicated, lengthy consultations have taken place on this report.

The report has been made available to the public prior to the Government's making its decisions. Therefore, I contend that members of the public have had ample time to consider the report and to have some input to the Government's forthcoming decisions.

The Opposition believes that the Government has not arrived at a proper public consultation process. Yesterday, the House debated a matter relating to the Water Bill. The Opposition suggested that sufficient consultation had not taken place on that Bill. In that case the Government agreed that further consultation was required. However, that Bill was laid before the House for six months and yet it was considered that not enough time had been allowed for consultation. On the other hand, the recent decision by the Government to build a coal fired power station in Collie was criticised by the Opposition because lengthy consultation had taken place. The Government was criticised for spending so much time on making a decision. The Opposition criticised the Government and said that it should not have been consulting people for all that time. The Opposition said that it did not matter if the Government got it right but that the Government should hurry up and make a decision. It would seem that the Opposition members, when it suits them, consider that no consultation is needed when making these decisions. It does not matter what the Government does, the Opposition always knocks its decisions. The fact is, we have a lengthy consultation process. I am not claiming that we have it 100 per cent right, but each case must be taken on its merits in order to arrive at a better understanding of what people want. The Government has made a good effort in this regard and the Opposition could at least acknowledge that.

The member for Roleystone suggested that we should be looking more to long term planning. Such a view is very naive. Long term planning already takes place in this State, particularly in the positioning of schools and the allocation of resources. It is also difficult to get it right. Many factors impinge on student populations in different areas and long term planning faces many difficulties. Of course, long term projections must be done but they are not something on which one can bet. I suggest that a person is likely to lose his money if he does bet on them. However, in this case the Government is talking to local school communities and to the general population to see what is required in order to put a planning process into place.

The final point of this motion suggests that the Government should abandon the school renewal process and adequately fund the educational needs of this State by normal budgetary allocations. This part of the motion completely sidesteps the major issue with which every other Government in Australia has to contend. In times of economic recession Governments have the option of either allocating their Budgets carefully and more prudently or increasing taxes. This Government is committed to not increasing the tax burden on ordinary families or small businesses. Having made that decision, the Government is living with it. It is ensuring an allocation of resources so that it can maintain our very high quality of education with the money we have to spend. Unfortunately, that is not the Opposition's position. The Opposition seems to be incapable of making hard decisions and setting a program.

Mr Clarko: You are in Government.

Mr KOBELKE: Yes, we are in Government and we are doing it. That is why I have spent most of my time speaking about it. This motion is a knocking one. The motion does not take up the initiative of the Government and try to work with it. It says that we should "abandon the so-called school renewal process". If I could use an analogy, the Opposition resembles an under-set jelly. It has no substance and no consistency. It wobbles this way and that way, not speaking up for any principle but lurching or sliding in one direction or another depending on what is a political favourite at the time. The Government is attempting to put in place a program which is well thought out and which meets the needs of the people of Western Australia and, in this case, particularly of our young people for whom education is so important. The Government's commitment to education can be seen in the maintenance of a high level of spending since 1983. While it must account for a decline in income, in the last few years the annual allocation to education indicated the high priority placed on education by this Government. In the last two years the Government has spent record amounts on the construction of new schools in this State.

Mr Clarko: In real terms?

Mr KOBELKE: The increases have been records. The Government did it two years in a row which meant that the amount allocated for new constructions jumped the figure allocated the

year before. Members are aware that there are considerable maintenance problems. I have indicated to the House already that the necessity to build new schools has been caused by two factors - the increased student population and a change in the areas where those resources must be located.

The quality of education has been addressed in a number of ways. Given my limited time, I can touch on only a couple of the more recent ones. In the past two years this Government has reduced class sizes in years one and two from a maximum of 32 students to a maximum of 30. Smaller class sizes are commensurate with an improvement in the quality of education, and the Government's action has ensured that this occurs in the vital first two years of schooling. The implementation of the first steps program has ensured the standards of literacy and numeracy will not only be maintained, but also will be improved. Members have seen recently in the newspaper the announced results of the monitoring standards project which indicated that, in English, between 86 and 92 per cent of students performed at or above the expected level; in reading, between 85 and 90 per cent of students performed at or above the expected level; and in mathematics, taking the number strand, between 88 and 96 per cent of students performed at or above the expected level. Those recent tests indicate the very high standard of education that we have in this State and one of which we can all be proud.

The Opposition needs to take into account the importance of the public perception of the standard of our education system. Education is a human endeavour; it is about people, not about buildings. The perceptions of the general public of the standard of education in our schools feed back as an important contributing factor to the quality of education. If people talk down the quality of education, in the long term they will lower the standard of education. That is not to say there should be no criticism because criticism of education system is important and constructive; it can ensure that the quality of education is advanced. However, this Opposition continues to knock and to criticise without making any positive contribution on how to improve things. It is about time members opposite found out what was going on in our schools, because we have a very high standard of education and, once they find out, they should support it. If they are aware of the quality of our education system, they are telling a different story in this place. It is clear to people who go to our schools that they are places of which we can be proud. I admit that there are problems; there will always be problems in education. However, it is our role to support our education system. The school renewal program is one way of better utilising our resources so that we can make a major contribution to improving the quality of education in this State.

MR SHAVE (Melville) [3.56 pm]: I will open my remarks by commenting on the school renewal document. The interesting thing about this document is that, like all the Government's glossy brochures, it looks very nice.

Mr Kierath: All window-dressing.

Mr SHAVE: Yes, it is all window-dressing. I consider some parts of this document most important. However, before I refer to those parts, we should look at the concept. I want to draw attention to a couple of points made by Hon John Halden in the production of this document and what he said about the concept. He said -

In the equity area, the attainment of significantly upgraded educational outcomes for different social groups has been a priority of successive State and Federal Governments. School renewal provides another opportunity for the Government, the community and the Ministry to examine the needs and current educational achievements of particular student groups, such as:

...
rural students;
students from low socioeconomic background;
...
disabled students; and
isolated students.

That is a wonderful example of compassion and consideration. I want a few of the members opposite who have been good enough to listen to this debate to hear what a couple of people in my area have had to say about the concerns of this socialist Government. Hon John Halden also said -

The prime objective will be to ensure that the needs of all students are catered for, with strategies to redress educational imbalance and the opportunity to correct those imbalances as quickly as possible.

That is a social commitment from full-blooded socialists on how they will look after the working man.

Mr Graham: Keep saying that.

Mr SHAVE: It is interesting that the member should say that because when I first came into this House I listened to members opposite refer all the time to socialism and how they were democratic socialists, corporate socialists and other funny socialists. I am worried that perhaps now they are becoming a little disillusioned with their theories.

Mr Graham: No.

Mr SHAVE: Then why does the member not stand on his platform and refer to it? The report continues under the heading "Criteria to guide the need for school renewal" -

equity and social justice issues, to ensure that education is being delivered fairly and appropriately throughout the State.

Under the heading "How funds generated would be allocated" the report states -

It is proposed that, in consultation with the Treasury, financing of the School Renewal Programme should be undertaken as follows:

proceeds from the sale of assets to be reallocated to major works, minor works, maintenance works, land purchases and equipment purchases, as an addition to the General Loan and Capital Works Fund Budget.

The document states that the school renewal program and funds generated from it will assist in addition to the General Loan and Capital Works Fund Budget.

Let us consider how honest this Government really is about its commitment to social justice and to the working class people. The member for Bunbury may like to listen to this because he sits on the other side of the House and rarely stands to support the people he purports to represent. In December 1988 the present Premier, Dr Carmen Lawrence, visited the Willagee Primary School accompanied by the then member for Melville, Barry Hodge. They met with the principal and were escorted around the school by Mrs Di Snowden who was the then president of the local P & C association. The photograph on the front of the local newspaper is quite good, but Barry Hodge has aged a little since then. The article states -

Willagee Primary School is in urgent need of upgrading.

Last week Education Minister Dr Carmen Lawrence visited the school with Melville MLA Barry Hodge to look at some of the old buildings.

She was escorted by principal Bruce Hurrell and P and C Association president Mrs Di Snowden.

After the tour of the premises, Dr Lawrence and Mr Hodge met parents for an informal discussion of education issues.

"Dr Lawrence makes an effort to visit as many schools in the State as possible," Mr Hodge said.

"It ensures she remains in touch with the issues at a grass roots level."

It was a lovely comment and, as I said, a lovely photograph. That was in December 1988, two months before the last election. On 10 January 1989, one month later, another article was published in the local newspaper. The member for Marangaroo should listen because the way this newspaper operates makes his publication look pretty bad. The article is about revamped plans for the Willagee Primary School and refers to the then Minister for Education, Dr Carmen Lawrence. This is the woman who claims to be honest and credible. This righteous lady is reported in the article as follows -

Education Minister Carmen Lawrence plans to improve the Willagee Primary School.

The Building Management Authority has produced several optional designs for a library, new offices and toilets.

I notice that the member for Bunbury is leaving the House. Every time I raise an issue like this he does not want to listen.

Mrs Beggs: I will tell him what you said.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister for Transport can listen to me and then find an interpreter to tell the member for Bunbury what I said. What the then Minister for Education said was very misleading and from that the member for Bunbury should understand the reasons that politicians have a very bad name. People like the Federal leader of members opposite and the Premier mislead electors by deception. The article to which I was referring continues -

Melville MLA Barry Hodge has passed the plans to school principal Bruce Hurrell, and the Parents and Citizen's Association, which asked him for help earlier this year.

The budget plan would see existing toilets demolished, the pottery and media area converted to new toilets, the existing administration area refurbished, a new gardener's and service store built while two classrooms would be converted into a new library.

This would cost \$85,000.

Another option would see the current administration area converted for arts and craft, the two classrooms changed into offices and a \$80,000 library installed.

With a new bitumen car park, this would cost \$199,000.

I do not think this Government has spent \$9 000 on that school in the last 10 years. The Premier, when Minister for Education, gave an undertaking that that school would be revamped and she gave to the local newspaper a plan of the work to be undertaken. I ask the member for Bunbury what he is going to do about making the Premier fulfil her commitment.

Mr P.J. Smith: What if I stand up and make a speech?

Mr SHAVE: When members opposite give a commitment they should stick to it.

Mr P.J. Smith: I always do. Do you?

Mr SHAVE: The colleagues of the member for Bunbury should listen to him. He is good at talking, but he is not very good at producing. Why has the Premier not fulfilled her undertaking?

Mr P.J. Smith: Give us the evidence.

Mr SHAVE: I am giving the evidence.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SHAVE: I will read to the House a letter from the Willagee Primary School dated 24 March 1990 and written by Mrs Smith, the then secretary of the P & C association to a Mr Peter Barrett of the building branch of the Ministry of Education.

Mr P.J. Smith: She may be one of my relatives.

Mr SHAVE: If she were, she probably would not own up to it. The letter reads -

Re your letter of 8 December 1989.

We, the P & C, are very dissatisfied with your reply. It seems that as we are a small school our requests get pushed to the bottom of the pile.

Whatever happened to the upgrading Dr. Lawrence promised us in December 1988? We have heard nothing about that since the coverage in the Melville Times of December 1988 (see enclosed photocopy of the article). To us it appears a political ploy, as nothing more has been said or done, except for a lick of paint last year.

Regarding the covered assembly area, we want a more specific answer.

They started to wonder whether anything would happen. To continue -

We would like to see a list showing where we are on that list. The issue was first raised in December 1986, so surely we must be on a list somewhere.

It is just as important for our children to have a safe environment as it is for children at new schools to have a safe environment. As the sun is considered a real health hazard we want our children protected at lunch time and at assemblies.

Trusting you can supply us with a more plausible answer.

The reply is dated 6 April 1990 and reads -

Dear Mrs Smith

Thank you for your letter of March 24, 1990, regarding the proposed upgrading of the school's facilities, and the provision of a covered assembly area at the Willagee Primary School.

The concept plans you refer to, which were drawn up in 1988, detailed a proposed comprehensive school upgrade and the staff and parents were advised at the time that no funds were currently available for a Capital Works Programme to commence. The project has been listed for consideration in the Buildings Branch Draft Capital Works Budget for 1990/91. However, I cannot give any firm commitment as to when it may proceed until the amount of funds to be made available are known, and school's needs are assessed against the competing needs of other schools in the State.

I would like to thank you and the Parents and Citizens' Association for the interest they have shown in the Willagee Primary School and I trust this clarifies the situation.

What else was going on around the town at the same time? I will tell members what was happening at the same time. On 20 June 1989 a letter was sent by the Chief Executive Officer, Dr Warren Loudon, to the Premier who was then Minister for Education. Its reference number is 797/89. It states -

Following the advice from the Director of Corporate Services dated 17 April 1989 (copy attached) further analysis has been undertaken, -

So analysis had been undertaken prior to that time -

- though not yet concluded.

2. To date the possible closure of thirty four schools has been explored. Of these, the analysis of sixteen has reached the point where further necessary data collection can only be undertaken in the communities affected. Indeed one aspect of the data to be collected is community attitude on closures . . .

Prior to the election the Premier went to have her photograph taken and tried to influence voters in the Melville area by giving them an undertaking that they would get a new school or their old ones would be upgraded. Her photograph appeared in local papers. She provided plans for those local papers indicating they would get improvements to their schools. What happened? They got absolutely nothing. Even if the Labor Party had got back in that electorate the people still would have got nothing because at the time the people were being deceived a proposal was under way to close schools in that electorate. So one man was still considering the matter on 6 April and saying it was in the Budget while on the other hand the school was being put down for closure.

Mr MacKinnon: Do you know who the Premier reminds me of? The Prime Minister. He said something like that to the people before the last election, but really meant something totally different.

Mr SHAVE: Yes. Absolutely.

Dr Gallop: How can you link those things?

Mr SHAVE: Perfectly well, because they are very clear.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like the member for Melville to link the motion being addressed with the matters he is talking about.

Mr SHAVE: We are talking about school renewal. The Willagee Primary School and the Carawatha Primary School are two of the schools on the Government's hit list.

Dr Gallop: They are not on the list; there is no hit list.

Mr SHAVE: Yes they are! The Minister should be careful what he says because he is disputing what his colleague said in the other place and at public meetings in Willagee to parents of Willagee Primary School students. He said that if they wanted the renovations done either the Willagee Primary School or the Carawatha Primary School would have to be closed. That is what this Government is about with school renewal. Let us look at the Labor Party's commitment prior to the 1989 election. Peter Dowding is recorded as promising under the heading "Buildings and Facilities" that a Labor Government would -

continue a major allocation for works and maintenance programme for older schools, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

I ask the Minister, how disadvantaged is the Willagee area?

Dr Gallop: Willagee school will be done, and should be done.

Mr SHAVE: When?

Dr Gallop: I cannot answer that question. A lot of schools will be done, and that school is high on the priority list.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SHAVE: In relation to this renewal program I will read a letter I find very moving. I hope when the Minister received his copy of this letter he took some notice of it. It is written by Sandra Verjans of 20 Kennon Street, Willetton, WA. Under the heading, "My child has a right to be educated" she says -

A language disordered/delayed child has special needs. Placing these children in large schools is detrimental to their educational progress as they respond more effectively in smaller group situations.

That is quite obviously the case, because the attention they get is more specialised.

Dr Gallop: That does not necessarily follow.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister may say that it does not follow, but all the experts who have been in my office and who are qualified in this area - which the Minister is not - say that it does follow. The lady continues -

In fact, these children can become confused, agitated and overwhelmed when they find themselves in large groups.

This is the mother the Minister says does not know what she is talking about, yet she has one of these children whom she has been taking to specialists for the whole of its life and the Minister tells me she and the experts do not know what they are talking about.

Dr Gallop: I did not say that, you are misinterpreting that.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister is implying that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SHAVE: You are trying to defend the indefensible.

Dr Gallop: I am not.

Mr SHAVE: Yes you are. You are a disgrace!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr Gallop: You know nothing about education.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SHAVE: You have not come out yet in protection of these people. The Minister should resign!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr Gallop: You know nothing about education! Sit down!

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat for a moment. I am very disappointed at the Minister's outbursts.

Dr Gallop: He was very provocative.

The SPEAKER: I believe that the Minister's outburst was provocative in the extreme, especially as I had to use my gavel, which he well knows I use very sparingly. I accept that when a member is on his or her feet making provocative statements there will be interjections in response. I can suggest only that those interjections be measured or saved so that at the time the Minister or anyone else responds, those sorts of comments can be included in the response. More importantly, we must be able to record in *Hansard* what is said in this place. My guess is that the past couple of minutes of the member for Melville's speech would look like gobbledegook.

Mr Court: An interesting tape recording.

The SPEAKER: Yes. That would not be because of the contribution by the member for Melville but because of the Minister's shouting over him. My real concern is that neither of the members took any notice of me when I called them to order. If it happens again they can be sure that the members responsible will find themselves invisible to me for a time.

Mr SHAVE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mrs Virgin continues -

The amalgamation of Willagee Primary school and Carrawatha Primary School, incorporating Carrawatha Language Development Centre, I believe, would be costly for these children, both educationally and emotionally.

My two eldest children are in upper and middle primary, making me well aware how important a stable environment is for "average" students to attain their optimum potential.

For my third child, who is attending Carrawatha Language Development Centre, his needs are even greater. He is a beautiful, loving and capable child and deserves equally appropriate opportunities that my other children enjoy, and for that matter, most other children in this State.

It has no doubt taken many years for the high standards that exists at the Carrawatha Language Development Centre to have been achieved. The secure learning environment is in part due to the small social interaction group that exists at the Carrawatha Primary School. Here children with special needs, do mix with "mainstream students" in the playground, however the mix of both groups is quite homogeneous, with neither being disadvantaged.

This past year I have been actively involved with the Carrawatha Language Centre. During this time I have observed the remarkable and caring contribution made by the Principal, Mrs. Marie Donovan in respect to the educational programme, liaison between teachers, pupils and parents, and her follow-up of children who have successfully exited into "mainstream education". I have the greatest regard for Mrs Donovan and her co-workers who place such high value on the worth of these children who it seems, could be so readily overlooked and disregarded because of government expediency, incompetence and sheer lack of caring.

The many structural facilities you and your department have over-looked (or dare I suggest, dismissed) at both schools overwhelms me when I see the school at Winthrop receive 3.5 million dollars budget and with not enough pupils to fill it. Added to this is the pre-election visit of Carmen Lawrence to the Willagee Primary School where she promised many improvements. What has happened to her promises? Instead of decent toilets and stable rooves for the children of Willagee Primary School, what we see is expensive capital investment in a wealthy suburb, whilst the poorer suburb is forced to endure sub-standard conditions.

Welcome to corporate socialism! To continue -

The expected growth in population in Willagee, once Homeswest complete their re-development programme indicates clearly that the Willagee school alone will not be able to facilitate the predicted enrolments. Of great concern, is that if as Mr Halden suggested that both schools amalgamate, then our little children who will have been "disadvantaged" by being consumed into a large anonymous environment, will be further swamped by ever increasing numbers of students.

It is a heart rending experience being the parent of a child who has special educational needs as you must fight so hard for your child to receive fundamental rights; not privileges, just basic rights!

Mr MacKinnon: Hear, hear!

Mr SHAVE: The Minister should listen to this.

Dr Gallop: I am listening.

Mr SHAVE: It continues -

The greatest disadvantage my son has, along with the many children like him, lies not within him, but with those decision makers who so very often really do not comprehend and who fail to take the time to truly understand what needs exist.

As a parent of a child who has a language disorder, please do not jeopardise his and many other children's educational needs, for after all, our children are our future. Please do not let these children down.

This letter was addressed to the Minister sitting in this Chamber, and it staggers me, after reading that representation and many others which this Minister received from people in that area with disadvantaged children, that a firm commitment has not been given already by this Government to the parents of the children at that school. Every day of the week those parents who have flogged their hearts out to get their children educated under the threat of -

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: These people are living under a threat.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: It is a threat.

Dr Gallop: Are you asking us to consider it?

Mr MacKinnon: You were not at the meeting.

Dr Gallop: I was at the parents and citizens' association meeting.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister was not at the meeting when the mothers were lined up along the wall crying, was he?

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: They were crying for their children.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: No, I did not call the meeting. They called the meeting, in conjunction with a member in another place.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: The member in the other House did not invite me to that meeting.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SHAVE: The parents invited me. The member for Bunbury should not try to put words into my mouth.

Mr P.J. Smith: You try to put them into everyone else's mouth.

Mr SHAVE: Let us go back to this document and look at the school closure document, as it should have been named.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr SHAVE: I refer to the membership of the school renewal committee: John Gill, Director, Financial Services, Ministry of Education; Hon John Halden, Labor member of Parliament; Ed Harken, President, State School Teachers Union; Robin Ho, organiser, Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union; Robert Lubout, industrial officer, Civil Service Association; Hugh Rogers, Director, WA Council of State School Organisations; Jerry Skivinis, Executive Director, Schools Operations, Ministry of Education; Peter Walton,

Director, Corporate Services, Ministry of Education; Dr Chris Whittaker, Ministry of Education; Dr Max Angus, Executive Director, Corporate Development, Ministry of Education; Peter Barrett, Executive Officer, Manager, Buildings Branch, Ministry of Education. This is just a sham! This document is a licence for the Government to say to the people, "We are going to close down schools in this State because we have run out of money and we are trying to pay the bills." What has the Government done? To make it even more hypocritical, the Government has said that it will ensure that consultation takes place.

Under the heading "School Renewal Process - Consultation" this appears -

Following the initial community meeting, it is envisaged that the local review group would be established.

Where only one school is involved, a local review group should be formed with the principal of the school, or a nominee appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, as the chairperson.

He is number one. To continue -

It should comprise no more than 12 members in total, with equal representation from staff and parents, appointed by the School Decision-Making Group, together with one local representative from each of the following:

State School Teachers' Union of WA;

Civil Service Association;

Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union of WA;

Western Australian Council of State School Organisations; and

the local government authorities involved.

It is a stack up! In its Press releases the Government will say, "We had consultation. We had representation from parents in that area." It is like a company with three shares in the hands of one person and nine in the hands of the other. The first person gets no say. How often has this Government operated like this? It says it is pulling in the public, and the parents will be involved in the decision making process. The parents of those children are involved in the decision making process so that this Government can validate the sorts of actions it is taking to remove the rightful education of disadvantaged children in this State.

The second group refers to the chairperson and a number of schools; the deal is the same - 12 people. We can have six students and six teachers. What will the teachers do when the vote comes up? What will they do when every parent is against it, as is the case in Willagee? Every parent and every relative is against it, but when the vote comes up it is nine to three; goodbye!

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr SHAVE: "Trust me!" It is just like Carmen Lawrence: "Trust me; I will deliver these plans to you; I will make the alterations to your school. Just put back my man in the election on 23 February and I will give you everything."

Mr MacKinnon: And the children will sit in the school library with an umbrella to keep off the rain.

Mr SHAVE: Quite so. And the Minister's Federal colleagues will stand and say it is all right to tell lies. Bob Hawke says, "I lied to the public." Members of the State Parliament lie to the people of Willagee, and the Minister turns around and tells the people that this Government has credibility.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister says to the people, "We have credibility."

The SPEAKER: Order!

Several members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: The Government has absolutely no credibility.

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not sure whether this is by design, or whether this sort of thing just happens. I am aware that on occasions I have stood in this place and suggested that the word "lie" was unparliamentary. I know that might seem extraordinary to some people, but it is all about developing a system of parliamentary behaviour so that we can be judged by the public. It is a word which, for as long as I have been here and for much longer, has been unacceptable. On occasions during speeches, because a member has been referring to something which somebody has said outside this place, the member has actually used that word in quoting that person, and I have tended to let that go, although I have cringed in my seat. I cannot accept its use on this occasion; the member used the word several times in the context of his remarks, and then said, "Members of the State Parliament lie to the people". That is not a proper use of parliamentary language in this place.

Mr SHAVE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word "lies" and I shall be a little more careful in future.

Debate Resumed

Dr Gallop: Do you want to support the Leader of the Opposition unequivocally?

Mr SHAVE: I have only a minute to go, but I can tell the Minister -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SHAVE: The Leader of the Opposition has a lot more credibility in my area than members opposite. If members opposite are not sure of how badly they are going, I suggest they continue to ignore the people.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr SHAVE: The Minister can continue to tread on people in underprivileged areas and give them nothing. The Government accepts that children at the Willagee Primary School should use umbrellas in the classroom to keep off the rain. Yet only half an hour ago the Minister said that schools in Western Australia were in very good condition. The Minister is an absolute joke.

DR ALEXANDER (Perth) [4.30 pm]: I wish to make a brief contribution to the debate. I hope that I might present some information from a different perspective. The school renewal report is an interesting document. I am not surprised to hear that some people in the community are rather disturbed by some of the recommendations because it is perhaps unfortunate that a document dealing with the future of our education system is stuck with such a title. Most people read not "school renewal" but maybe "school closure" or "rationalisation", and that strikes fear into their hearts.

Mr Catania: That fear is perpetuated by the Opposition.

Dr ALEXANDER: Granted. I represent an inner city electorate which contains many small primary schools. Many of the primary schools in my electorate have suffered declining enrolments in the past 10 years as the population has aged and as new younger people have moved in who do not necessarily have the same sized families as the ones they have replaced. In areas such as Highgate and North Perth, the local primary schools have been cut from populations of several hundred - 500 to 800 in many cases - to 200 or 300 or fewer. When the P & C associations, the teachers, and the parents hear about the possibility of school renewal, they wonder whether their school is on the so-called hit list. I have received many inquiries from parent groups and teachers at schools which they think might be targeted. The Perth electorate has schools in Highgate and in North Perth - and Kyilla Primary School is another - where the enrolments have either declined seriously or have stabilised, or threaten to further decline in future. Naturally, people are worried about the future of their schools regardless of the report. The issue has been on those parents' minds for some time.

Mr Lewis: That is a demographic sign; it comes and goes.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is the point I want to raise. When I was in Canberra as a resident 10 or 15 years ago, the same issue arose. In the inner city areas - it was a smaller city but it

was a similar problem - schools had been built in early times of expansion, after the Second World War and in the 1950s. The population of the inner city suburbs was declining and certainly the population of primary school children was declining; therefore, schools were threatened with closure. In this case we have the overlay of the economy. The Opposition suggested that the entire program is economically driven. I am not sure about that. That is part of it but it is not the whole answer because this is not a new issue, as the member for Applecross has pointed out. It has been around for a long time - certainly as long as suburban development and the need for primary schools. Enrolments fluctuate as the suburb grows, then the enrolments reach a peak; as the population ages and the children go to high school the population of primary school aged children declines, and that flows to the high schools at a later stage.

Mr Lewis: And then comes urban renewal and you have a new crop.

Dr ALEXANDER: That is the other part of it. It is not a new process; it is a part of urban renewal. The population decreases and then increases. In the current phase and in the areas I represent the new families moving in are generally smaller. Often they have one or two children who perhaps go to private rather than public schools.

Mr Lewis: It must be an affluent area.

Dr ALEXANDER: Parts of it are. Mt Lawley is fairly affluent in parts. Of course, there are private schools such as the Catholic primary schools which do not cater for an affluent population. Two such schools in Perth are growing.

Dr Gallop: Do you think the balance between State schools and private schools is about right at the moment? Do you think we should reduce funding to non-Government schools?

Dr ALEXANDER: It depends on the non-Government schools. I think that the rich non-Government schools get too much and the poor non-Government schools do not get enough.

An Opposition member: I do not know of any.

Dr ALEXANDER: There are a few. The Minister should look at some of the private schools such as Aquinas and Guildford Grammar. Maybe their funding levels are too high. At Sacred Heart in Highgate the opposite applies!

The issue is a contentious one so even when urban renewal starts in these areas, the school population does not necessarily increase - although it might stabilise. I have talked to - and I am still in the process of talking to - a number of parent groups. Much of the discussion this afternoon has been rather academic and on a general level. I refer now to a letter I received the other day from the North Perth Primary School, a school which has been amalgamated. The amalgamation was between the junior primary and the primary school at North Perth. It was called an amalgamation and now it is called a renewal. Because of destabilisation and the possible decline in enrolments the parents are worried about the future. Parents at the Kyilla Primary School have the same concerns. The North Perth Primary School submission accompanying the letter reads -

The Ministry of Education is to be congratulated for its innovative thinking in putting forward the proposals outlined in the School Renewal Report.

The North Perth Primary School P & C Association is not exactly stacked with conservatives or left wingers.

Mr Bradshaw: I went to the North Perth Primary School!

Dr ALEXANDER: There you go. Things have changed since then. That school is one of the oldest and best in the inner city. The submission states that the report is seen as a positive step; it gives the school some say in its destiny, provides a better utilisation of resources and encourages schools to assess their amenities and priorities. However, that association has some reservations about the process. It put its reservations in the submission to the ministry. The association has doubts about whether the additional funds generated from the renewal will be used by participating schools. The submission also expressed doubts about staffing and the utilisation of vacant school accommodation. Doubts exist in the community but, in this case, the school supports the concept of the school renewal system because, unlike some of the fears raised on the other side of this place, this P & C association sees the benefits in the process. That is not to say that the P & C association at Kyilla

Primary School next door - which is smaller and possibly more vulnerable - feels the same way. I will be attending the annual general meeting in a couple of weeks and I will find out what people at that school think. They have already raised some fears, such as whether the school will be closed. They certainly would not be in favour of that.

The Kyilla Primary School celebrated its 75th anniversary last year and naturally a school with a tradition such as that is anxious that the tradition is not broken. That is another factor which needs to be considered. I hope that the Minister will look at that issue. I have talked to the Minister at various times, and I understand the rationalisation process. However, it is very difficult when talking about primary schools with a long tradition of perhaps 70 years - and in many cases, such as at the Highgate Primary School, the schools have been in existence for almost 100 years. Why should they be suddenly faced with the prospect of closure or consolidation with a nearby school even if that may - I emphasise may - make sense because of the decline in numbers of students attending the schools? The advantage of the school renewal process is that it is participatory. The reaction of some of the parents and citizens' groups so far has been more positive than I expected. Being a natural sceptic about this sort of document, as I said at the outset, I thought the reaction in the community might be a little more angry. So far that has not proved to be the case, but the debate is far from over. For that reason, the motion is a little premature.

I agree some doubts exist about the school renewal process as it has been presented and those doubts need to be investigated. However, I am not sure the process should be abandoned. It may have some positive aspects and it may be a way of rationalising competing resources at different primary schools. I refer to an area I know about - my electorate - where to the north east of Walcott Street are Mount Lawley and Coolbinia Primary Schools which are overflowing with students. Coolbinia Primary School is now enforcing its boundaries. On the other side of Walcott Street, nearer the city, enrolments are declining. In other words, two primary schools have expanding enrolments and relatively good facilities and within a few miles, on the other side of Walcott Street in the older area, are schools with declining enrolments, rather poorer facilities often in not very good condition, and no money being provided for resources such as libraries, undercover assembly areas and so on. That does not seem to make a great deal of sense. There is almost a two-class system operating in that area. Some parents have suggested that the fact that the former Premier was resident in Mount Lawley with children at the local primary school had something to do with the fact that that school seems to have done well in recent years. The situation is not as simple as that. Mount Lawley is a model primary school in its resources and facilities while, over the road in North Perth at Kyilla, parents complain about lack of facilities.

Mr Ainsworth interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: Some of them did. At North Perth Primary School the parents say the preprimary premises require upgrading, some of the playground equipment should be replaced, the outdated school grounds require remodelling, and maintenance, which is currently inadequate, must be carried out.

Mr Bradshaw: That is everywhere, not just North Perth.

Dr ALEXANDER: I know. I talked to the parents at Inglewood Primary School which is another on the border of my electorate and the situation is even worse. The Minister visited a couple of months ago and made noises about looking at the situation, but nothing has happened so far.

Mr Bradshaw interjected.

Dr ALEXANDER: It is indeed. If so-called renewal allows some of the resources which may be directed to comparatively well off primary schools to be redirected elsewhere maybe it has some substance to it. The best answer is to not renew the schools, but renew the Ministry of Education's budget and provide more money for education, particularly in the State primary school sector. In a sense, this renewal document diverts attention from the real issue that insufficient resources are provided for the Education budget generally. That is why schools like North Perth Primary School have no roofed outdoor areas to protect them from the searing hot sun in summer and rain in wet weather and that the total area of playground is being reduced as a result of the former junior primary school being occupied by another body; that is, an administrative part of the Ministry of Education. We can all tell

similar stories in our electorates about the lack of resources provided for those primary schools.

Although the motion has something to commend it, it is premature at the moment when the school renewal committee report has only just been released to the community. The community should have longer than it has been given for submissions. At the back of the report it says that it will be available for public comment for one month; I imagine that period has almost elapsed. At least three months, if not six months, should be provided for that process.

I support part 2 of the motion about insufficient time being allowed to consider the report, but it is premature to call on the Government to abandon the process; rather it should ensure the process is democratically based and that the Government listens to parents' reservations. The Teachers Union which has participated in this process is worried it will be used as an excuse to cut teaching resources further. The process should not take that direction. On this occasion I will vote against the motion and hope the Government listens to the strong reservations people have in the community about the process outlined to date.

MR P.J. SMITH (Bunbury) [4.46 pm]: I cannot believe what I hear from the Opposition. This is another of those situations where the Government is condemned if it does and condemned if it does not. The Government is accused of having rushed the document through because a case was brought against it in court concerning the closure of a school and as a result it decided it would be a good idea to put the matter to a committee and present a report which would get the Government out of trouble.

Mr Wiese: Is that not what happened?

Mr P.J. SMITH: I do not believe that is what happened at all. The report addresses a problem which has faced every Government since the second World War. All members have been in the schooling system in some way since then and will know schools are constantly being closed, downgraded and upgraded. From my experience as a teacher for approximately 23 years, and from having been directly associated with schools for 36 years since I left high school, I know that always somewhere in the State half a dozen schools are undergoing trauma. The teachers are always concerned about upgradings or downgradings, particularly if they are in promotional positions, or may get a transfer, or will not be able to stand up against the competition in appeals. Parents are always worried too. All members will have faced the problem that if a school is upgraded the community could lose its favourite principal or staff; or the school will be downgraded. This is a number problem. From either position, two problems emerge. At one end of the scale a school becomes so big that a new school must be built, creating the debate about which students will go where and where the new school will be built, and that results in another political problem.

At the other end, when the numbers are reduced, no matter what the reason, there is always the agony about whether a school will be closed and why it should be. In my question on notice 1836 of 22 November 1990 I asked how many schools had been closed each year since 1945. I referred to 1945 because those members who were around at that time - there will not be many at this stage - will remember the massive closure of schools, called the consolidation of schools in those days, when small schools of 10 to 15 students were closed and the students were bused to the main centres. I was at Busselton Primary School at that stage and the schools at Yoongarillup, Acton Park, Tutanup and Ruabon are some that I remember had to close. The students were brought into Busselton because that was where they could get a better education because they could be together and were among a greater range of students in the class. Every year, those reasons were given for amalgamating schools and building bigger schools. I was young at the time, but I have no doubt the parents of those smaller schools believed greater benefits were obtained because the schools were small; the teachers were loved; the kids got a great deal and they did not want those schools to be closed.

Mr Wiese: The situation then was very different when you had the introduction of the completely new technology of bus transport which enabled kids to get to schools which were much more distant.

Mr P.J. SMITH: I agree entirely, but I do not remember that stage because I was too young. However, I will guarantee the parents said much the same thing as they do now.

Mr Wiese: I must be old, because I went on the first bus to the nearest school to me.

Mr P.J. SMITH: I did not know the member for Wagin was as old as I am. Having taught in country areas like Bridgetown and Margaret River where the students travelled long distances, I know that parents always moaned about their children having to travel for up to an hour and a half. At times Governments have closed schools and it is not an easy decision to make. The closure of 10 schools in 1961 must have caused great agony for many people. Since then at least four or five schools have been closed every year, except in 1988 when only one school was closed and in 1989 when no schools were closed. Almost every school faces the trauma associated with the threat of its closure because it is not economical or educationally viable to allow it to remain open. Often a decision to close a school is based on the fact that students will be able to get a better deal elsewhere. I could provide dozens of different examples of schools facing the threat of closure, as could every other member. However, what I like about the school renewal committee report is - irrespective of why this report was commissioned or why the committee was set up - that people concerned can now refer to an organisational method when schools must be consolidated, want to be consolidated, or there is perceived need for them to be consolidated. The traumas of the past will not continue. A superintendent will not visit a school in November and threaten it with closure. Also, school principals will not have to put up with the rumours which result when their schools have not been put on the promotion list.

One would think that in a place like Bunbury, which has been growing steadily over the years, there would be no need for rationalisation or amalgamation of schools. However, in the time that I have lived there - that is, for 22 or 23 years - South Bunbury Primary School and Bunbury Senior High School have faced the threat of closure or change. As the population of Bunbury has moved to the outer edge of the city the population of the inner schools has decreased and the outer schools have overflowed. As a result the school boundaries have been changed. That has meant that the boundary for Bunbury Primary School and South Bunbury Primary School is almost at the South Bunbury Primary School; the South Bunbury Primary School and Adam Road-Sealinks Pre-Primary School boundary was almost at the Adam Road; and, the Adam Road-Sealinks Pre-Primary School and Withers Pre-Primary Centre boundary is very close to the Withers Primary School.

About 15 years ago a great debate took place. Teachers and parents sat down and argued a case for the closure of the South Bunbury Primary School. It was decided that that land could be sold to the council so the council could build a new civic centre. It was proposed that the money from the sale of the land could then be used to build up the other schools which were dying. We all thought that was a good idea. Some of the parents of the children attending South Bunbury Primary School were not happy but, generally, it was supported. When that proposal was made to the education department it said that could not be done. The department said that if the school was closed and the land was sold the money would go back to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The report proposes that if schools are to be closed, as much of that money as possible should be allocated to upgrading the schools in the area in which a school is closed.

Other members have thoroughly canvassed other sections of this report, so I will not repeat them. The Minister has already spoken about the various models for reorganisation referred to on pages 17 and 18 of the report. At long last we have a document which will give people a method of discussing these matters. For years many of the ideas in the document have been discussed over cups of tea at morning tea and lunchtime by teachers, sometimes at teacher union meetings, and often at parents and citizens' association meetings. However, nothing has ever resulted from those discussions because there has been no process whereby people can sit down and agree or disagree on certain matters. That has been the case with Bunbury Senior High School. After the creation of Newton Moore Senior High School and Australind High School it was suggested that Bunbury Senior High School be made a senior college and a new high school be built to take its place. I do not support that proposition. However, either Bunbury Senior High School should be made a senior college, or a senior college should be built on the outer ring road on the site of the TAFE college. This document provides examples of such options and a process for discussion.

The report also outlines advantages for some of the smaller communities around Bunbury. In the member for Wellington's electorate there are three small schools, Benger Primary, Burekup Primary and Roelands Primary. The impracticality of having both Burekup and

Roelands has often been pointed out to me. They are two nice schools within a whistle's distance of each other which could be amalgamated. People would not have to travel much further to get to school, and a great school could be established on one site. No doubt that proposition has its economic advantages. However, local people like their local schools and want to stick with them. Perhaps at some time in the future those schools will amalgamate. The former member for Murray-Wellington must have used his influence on Ministers to prevent certain schools in his electorate from being closed down. It seems that Benger Primary has been threatened with closure every year. Is that not right, member for Wellington?

Mr Bradshaw: It was talked about a couple of years ago when the number of students was down to eight.

Mr P.J. SMITH: My belief is that every year in the past 25 years Benger Primary has been threatened with closure. Exactly the opposite has occurred due to a policy introduced by this Government; that is, the ability of students to cross boundaries. People have suddenly realised that a nice little school is located in Benger in a great community where students seem to do well, and people are taking their children across boundaries so that they can attend the school in Benger. As the population in Benger is decreasing, the population of the school is increasing. I noted in the education circular recently that the school is being upgraded.

Mr Bradshaw: There are about 18 or 19 students there currently.

Mr P.J. SMITH: This report outlines the way in which those options can be examined. The related issues section of the report has not been examined by many members. I believe that this section negates the motion, particularly part (a)(i) which states that the school renewal committee does not provide for the removal of bias against country schools. Most of us would agree that there is a bias in favour of country schools in this State. If we looked upon schools as economic units and determined what are the advantages for students in small schools we would probably have closed many of them down years ago. However, a school cannot be closed if it is the only school within 40 or 50 kilometres. I am pleased that the report referred to bus services. Students should not be forced to travel for more than 90 minutes to and from school. That policy helps maintain many of the smaller schools in Western Australia. Improvements in distance education technologies, the need for curriculum assurance and specialisation are important factors in supporting small schools. This report does provide for bias in favour of country schools. It is probably true that about 30 or 40 schools are considered for closure every year. That has been happening for the past 20 to 40 years.

Dr Gallop: That was the point I was making.

Mr P.J. SMITH: Yes. The member for Marmion, as a former Minister for Education would have had to address that problem each year. He would have had to sit down with Ministry of Education officials and decide which schools should continue and which schools would disadvantage students by their closure. Then four or five schools would be marked for closure. The Ministry of Education would then have to meet the parents and make a decision to close those schools.

This document negates the motion. I am pleased that extra time has been provided for public discussion because it is important that school teachers, the P & C associations and the people concerned with the schools are given a chance to comment on the report. It is an excellent document.

Mr Bradshaw: Do you think there is enough time for input?

Mr P.J. SMITH: The time has been extended to the end of June, and I am sure the Minister will take into consideration any late submissions. Many people in my electorate are keen to make submissions and, if they are not ready before the deadline, I will ask the Minister to ensure that they are taken into account.

MR BRADSHAW (Wellington) [5.00 pm]: I certainly have grave concerns about the school renewal policy; I regard it as a way for the Government to save money. The Government has mismanaged the State for the past five years and it is in a financial crisis. It is not a school renewal policy; it is a con job on the public of Western Australia whereby the Government plans to close some schools and save money to try to pay off some of its debts.

The Chairperson of the school renewal committee, Hon John Halden, in a letter printed at the beginning of the document, states -

The public meetings and consultations also helped to allay the concerns of many people about the concept. Some of these stemmed from distortion and misinformation generated in the media and elsewhere and it was useful to have had the opportunity to clarify a number of issues and to explain the role of the Committee.

That is an absolute load of rubbish. The people in the south west were given three days' notice of the meeting. They were told on Friday evening that a meeting would be held on the following Tuesday, and those who attended did not have their fears allayed in any shape or form. They were also very critical of Hon John Halden, who chaired the meeting. I cannot speak about the other meetings which took place - I understand that 29 meetings were held altogether - but I know that the people in the south west who managed to attend the meeting at such short notice were not very happy about the situation. I was not extended the courtesy of being informed that the meeting would be held, but I heard of it from the parents and citizens' associations. I went to the meeting to find out what it was about. This policy is about saving money for the Government.

I have grave concerns, as do some of the people in my electorate, for smaller schools. I said last night in the debate on the Loan (Financial Agreement) Bill - and the member for Nollamara alluded to it in this debate - that small schools have an important place in the community. They provide a great service for students who cannot cope with the larger schools. They may not be as cost effective, but they certainly turn out good citizens. Some children are transferred from larger schools to smaller schools because they can cope more easily with them. I refer, for example, to Bengier Primary School and Burekup Primary School, both of which have a far different atmosphere from that found in larger schools. I am not critical of the larger schools because in the main the teachers at those schools do their best for the students. However, there is a far more loving, caring and family atmosphere in smaller schools. The school at Bengier was in trouble a few years ago because of the low number of enrolments, but that number has now increased a little. It is still on the hit list of the Ministry of Education. I am aware that many schools must be examined with a view to closure. As the member for Bunbury indicated, the ministry has always had a hit list. This document is purely rhetoric; it merely contains a number of motherhood statements that should be taken for granted with regard to the way the education system is run in this State. For example -

In the equity area, the attainment of significantly upgraded educational outcomes for different social groups has been a priority of successive State and Federal Governments. School renewal provides another opportunity for the Government, the community and the Ministry to examine the needs and current educational achievements of particular student groups, such as:

- those for whom English is a second language;
- female students;
- rural students;

The list continues. Many of those issues should be addressed by the planning section and the people developing the education system for students in Western Australia. This document is merely an attempt to make the Government look good and to suggest that it is doing something for education. However, everybody in Western Australia knows that the system is suffering through lack of funds, and that standards are falling. It is not the fault of teachers that standards are falling, because they try to maintain high standards. The former Minister for Education, the member for Armadale, did his best to destroy the great tradition of education in Western Australia when he was at the helm of the Ministry of Education. Many of the teachers became disillusioned and depressed as a result of the events that took place while he was Minister and, thankfully, he was eventually removed from that office. When the present Premier was appointed as Minister for Education she ran around with a big fire hose putting out the fires started by the previous Minister. She then pulled a con job because before the 1989 election she said that the Government expected to award teachers pay increases. When the election was over, and no pay rises were given, the teachers began to strike. Eventually the Government gave in and awarded the teachers, to a limited extent, the rises for which they had asked. The situation in Western Australia is absolutely disgraceful.

Maintenance is carried out in schools only if a dangerous situation is evident. Almost every school in my electorate needs major work carried out.

As I have said on several occasions, the gymnasium/hall at the Harvey Senior High School is only two-fifths completed. What incredible stupidity it is to not complete the building! It is a monument to incompetence; it stands out like a sore thumb. It will certainly be a good facility when the building is finally completed so that the students will be able to play basketball in the hall.

Mr Bloffwitch: How much longer before it is completed?

Mr BRADSHAW: About six years. The Minister of the day tried to make three schools happy by constructing three buildings which are two-fifths finished rather than building one complete gymnasium and making one school completely happy. The result is that three schools are unhappy. Other schools certainly need new library facilities, upgrading and maintenance, but those things are not happening.

Dr Gallop: It is not as bad as the member for Wellington indicates.

Mr BRADSHAW: It is; it is two-fifths built.

Dr Gallop: It is usable.

Mr BRADSHAW: When the wind is blowing from the wrong direction and the rain is coming from the wrong direction, the building cannot be used.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections and the Minister is interjecting when he is not in his seat.

Mr BRADSHAW: We do not need the school renewal policy to find out what is the state of schools in Western Australia. We need action. The consultation with local communities before a school is to be closed, which is referred to in the report, is a load of rubbish. The Ministry of Education may have consultation with a local community, but it will say to a district superintendent that he will have a certain amount of money to run the education system in his district; he will be the poor bunny who will have to make the decision about the closure of a school, and the Minister will not have to take the blame because he has passed the buck to the district superintendent.

Dr Gallop: It never works that way. Whoever may make the decision, the Minister will ultimately be responsible.

Mr BRADSHAW: The Minister for Health found that out last year when he tried to shut down the hospitals in country towns over Christmas, but that backfired on him because he -

Dr Gallop: He did not do that.

Mr BRADSHAW: He handballed that over to the directors of health in those regions, but the ball soon came back and bounced on him. In this case in the end the Minister for Education will take the flak for it, and rightly so. We also saw the people being conned in respect of the school based decision making groups which were set up. The Government said that those groups would have marvellous powers and that to some extent they would be able to run their schools in the way they wanted. However, in came the razor and cut off the powers that make those groups work, and the powers of those school based decision making groups have basically been neutered. The report refers also to the option of consolidation of two schools on one site.

Mr Shave: You would end up with two-fifths of a gymnasium!

Mr BRADSHAW: It may be four-fifths of a gymnasium.

Mr Blaikie: I will bet for sure that if the school is in a red ribbon Labor electorate, it will have ten-fifths of a gym, and a bit more to spare!

Mr BRADSHAW: That is right.

Mr P.J. Smith: Bunbury Senior High School had to wait until 1966 to get a gymnasium that was promised to it every year by a Liberal Government.

Mr Pearce: I spent five years tracking around the State, giving gymnasiums to schools that a

previous Liberal Government had promised but would not attend to, and they were major schools at that. The Northam High School did not have a gymnasium.

Mr BRADSHAW: I am not particularly worried about the Northam High School. I am worried about the Harvey High School, which has been waiting -

Mr Pearce: That is right. If 10 years of Liberal Governments had attended to the major senior high schools, then Harvey High School would have been attended to years ago.

Mr BRADSHAW: Schools were in a much better shape then than they are today.

Mr Pearce: Northam High School, which is one of the oldest high schools in this State, did not have a gymnasium until I was Minister for Education. You might complain about a school having only two-fifths of a gym, but Bunbury Senior High School did not have a gymnasium under a Liberal Government. Northam High School would have loved two-fifths of a gym - anything! In the end, we gave it a complete gymnasium.

Mr BRADSHAW: The option of consolidation of two schools on one site is an airy fairy proposal when we consider that not many schools in Western Australia will be able to consolidate on one site; there are not many schools which are that close, and overall that will not be of any great benefit. The school renewal policy is a load of rubbish. It is a "school removal" policy and it does not allay the fear that has been expressed in my electorate that small schools will go. The point about small schools is that they often serve as the heart or focal point of their communities, and if we take away small country schools the local communities tend to disintegrate. The towns of Roelands and Burekup are actually growing because people are choosing to live there and travel to work at Worsley, Bunbury or Kemerton. They are not growing at a great rate, but they are growing. People are looking for a rural lifestyle. It is not just the people with children at the schools in Roelands, Benger and Burekup who attend the presentation nights at those schools at the end of the school year but also other people who have lived in those areas for a long time. It is very important that those schools continue. There is more in life than just saying that it is more efficient to close certain schools because we can then better look after the students at other schools, at no great loss to the community. I believe there will be a great loss, and that the Government should look long and hard at that situation.

MR AINSWORTH (Roe) [5.15 pm]: We have heard quite a lot today from members on the Government benches who try to refute some of the arguments put forward in support of this motion. However, I do not believe that the major issues have been adequately addressed. For example, the consultative process that supposedly took place between the community at large and the school renewal committee prior to the drafting of this report really was a Clayton's consultation. There was no great opportunity for in-depth discussion or debate. That was particularly so in the areas that I represent. The feedback that I received - and I know this also from my experience - was that the chairman of the school renewal committee and some staff from the Ministry of Education came to the public meetings. In fact, the meetings were not that public; there were basically teacher representatives, the P & C association members, and one or two members of the community who, like me, happened to hear on the grapevine that the meeting was on. We heard the chairman summarise what the renewal process was supposed to mean, and there was some interchange of ideas, and questioning, but that is about as far as it went. A couple of hours, at the most, were spent in each community, and there was not the opportunity for in-depth consultation and prior research before the consultation process took place. Very short notice was given and there was no time for the people outside the education system to do their homework and to find out exactly what was going on. The average parent really had no time or opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The level of background conversation is far too high.

Mr AINSWORTH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. In addition, the timing of this report was particularly insensitive to rural people because they were already fearing for the future of their country schools because of the declining number of people who were choosing to remain on the land. Regardless of whether this report will mean the closure of schools, it was certainly seen that way. The unhappy coincidence of that report's coming out at a time when one small school had already been closed, and also at the time when the proposal to close country hospitals over Christmas was first raised, guaranteed that the report would be

misconstrued; and that is what happened. The report may not mean the closure of schools; I will give it the benefit of the doubt. However, a great deal of uncertainty has been generated, and that has not been put to rest by the consultation process.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I wonder whether the level of conversation was so high that members did not hear my previous suggestion that some of those conversations might be toned down and/or taken elsewhere. Question time is on shortly, but that is no excuse for the background level of conversation being so high that the member on his feet can hardly be heard, and the Hansard reporter is having difficulty in hearing him.

Mr AINSWORTH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Nollamara referred to the word "bias" in the motion. I believe the interpretation of that word has to be made quite clear; that is, we need to actively redress the shortcomings of many of our country schools. The shortcomings of those schools are in many ways far greater than the deficiencies and shortcomings of their metropolitan counterparts, and that bias - or whatever members might like to call it - against country schools, or that lack of attention to the needs of country schools, is not addressed in this report. I will give some examples of the areas that need to be attended to. I have quoted one or two of these examples in this House before but they are worth repeating because they illustrate quite clearly the types of things I am trying to highlight here. I cite the case of the Varley Primary School, which the then Minister for Education addressed, and I thank him for that. However, last year this two-roomed school had, I think, 52 children and two teachers. It had no preprimary building at all, although a preprimary class was being conducted in a storeroom at the school, access to which was gained through the junior primary classroom. On top of that, even though there were 52 children, because of the break-up of the various age groups they could not be effectively divided into two roughly even groups of 26 or so. It had to be roughly two-thirds in the higher class or two-thirds in the lower class, either way to the detriment of that teacher and that class. That is just one example of the sort of thing one does not find in metropolitan schools to any degree. Most certainly in the metropolitan area one does not find that type of situation, coupled with difficulty with things such as housing for teachers, because plenty of housing is available in major centres and metropolitan areas.

I also raised in this House last year the case of the Newdegate Primary School, a very old school with a library at one end which is really a closed in verandah. If a teacher takes one class into the library there is just enough room to fit the children in if they are standing up; they certainly cannot sit down and use the library effectively. The same thing happens at the other end of the school in another closed in verandah, which is the administration section. In either case the facilities are extremely poor and very substandard. They have been like that since the day the school was built, but as time has passed and the numbers have increased - and the numbers are now static; they are not reducing - the facilities have remained substandard and I believe they will not be addressed by this school renewal process.

I have mentioned teacher housing but it is worthwhile mentioning it again because many country teachers are graduates. Members should bear in mind that that puts added stress on them because they are coming to a new school in their first teaching job, full of the uncertainties that that entails, without needing the worries of looking for housing. However, in many places adequate teacher housing is not available - in fact, no teacher housing is available - and teachers are not sure whether they will have housing when they go to some of these schools. It depends more on good fortune than on good management by the ministry and the Government that housing is somehow found for some of these people.

I do not believe this school renewal report addresses the difficulties experienced by teachers in some small country schools with a high number of students in multiple classes. I have heard what has been said about the reduction of class numbers in junior primary classes from 32 to 30, but I do not think that is enough; it should be well below 30. However, suffice it to say that if 30 is a reasonable figure, many multi-year classes have nearly 30 students in them but could have three or four year groups as well, which presents considerable difficulties to the teaching staff. Again, I do not believe that that problem in country schools is addressed by this report.

The incentive for country service for prospective principals who want to get their promotions through the system has been taken away from teachers. In the past, if a teacher wanted promotion he or she would first apply to be a country principal at a class 3 primary school

and there would be an advantage to that teacher - not a monetary advantage but a promotional advantage in his or her career path - by going to a small country school. Those schools benefited by having motivated, very keen, dynamic teachers who gave excellent service, even given the difficult situations under which they might have had to teach. That has been taken away now, with the new broadbanding system, so further problems in attracting quality teachers to country schools will be experienced as there is no incentive for them to go there.

Also, despite the fact that the quality of education in the past has been very good at some of these smaller schools, and country schools in general, the Government's own statistics point out that the level of tertiary qualifications for country students per capita is lower than that of their city counterparts; so there must be something wrong with the system somewhere which works against these students. I am not saying the teaching is to blame, but something in the system is not helping those country students have equality of opportunity and equality of attainment of tertiary qualifications in comparison with their city counterparts. Again, I believe this report does not touch on those issues at all and will not address that problem in the slightest way.

The motion calls for budgetary allocations to come from the normal source. I believe that makes quite good sense, because to play around with funding and expect to get funds from the sale of this and the reorganisation of that within the system and hope that will make up the shortfall in the budgetary allocation is not good enough. We need a clear, concise commitment that is actually delivered, not pre-election promises or rhetoric in this place. On the ground we want to see the delivery of adequate finance for those schools that so desperately need it. We kept hearing from the Government side today about increases in Education budgets in recent years. On pure, bald figures I cannot argue with that; one has only to look in the Budget documents to see that it is so. However, if we couple that with what is really happening in schools, we recognise that much of the increase in the budget allocation has been due to increased enrolments and school populations, changing demographics, and increases in salaries. Then, when we look at those schools which are desperately in need of funding to upgrade and maintain them and provide all those things they have missed out on for many years, it is quite clear that the increases in the budget have not been sufficient to address all of the problems of education. They might have addressed the problems of new suburbs and changing populations, but not the long felt needs of many older schools which do not have changing populations and so do not have these funds spent on them.

It is worth quoting again from the document itself. It says, "Where shortcomings in resource allocation are identified or there is a need for maintenance, positive measures should be undertaken for upgrading and improvement." One could not argue with that statement, but why is it not being done now? The report also says that there should be provision for adequate educational programs for students in a cost-effective way. Again, no-one would argue with that, but if that cannot be done now something is wrong with the current system, and this report will not rectify these major inadequacies, if that is what they are, in the current system. I express again my very grave doubts that the extra money to be provided by the new system will be used in a supplementary way to the normal budget allocation. If the normal budget allocation means a normal deficiency, perhaps it could be used to supplement it and bring it up to what it ought to have been, or close to it. However, if this Government, or any other Government, is not clear in a commitment to adequately fund education it has something to answer for and it will pay the price ultimately. The Minister assisting the Minister for Education has already acknowledged the fact that there is no guarantee that the additional or supplementary funding from this school renewal process will not be used in a way which will enable the main Budget which we pass in this House to be diminished accordingly.

The call for the abandonment of the renewal process is not to disregard some of the issues raised in the report and, as I said before, many of these things that need to be done with education can be done quite adequately now, under the current system, without having this new proposal before us and the uncertainty it has promoted throughout the community. Rather than raise these uncertainties across the board, the deficiencies identified - and they will be identified by both school communities and the Ministry for Education without this process - can be addressed under the current system. If more consultation is needed when changes need to be made, again, that consultation process can take place.

The SPEAKER: Order! Just because I take my seat there is no need for everybody to resume their conversations.

Mr AINSWORTH: I think my voice can overcome it, Mr Speaker, but I thank you for your help.

The motion seeks two things: Acknowledgment that problems in country areas are not clearly addressed in the report, a report which is not clear in its intent in many other areas; and the abandonment of a separate school renewal process and the clear commitment to full and adequate funding from normal budgetary allocations which would allow the upgrading, curriculum equality and many other provisions vital to continued quality education in Western Australia. My motivation for moving this motion is my particular concern for the problems of country areas, to remove the community disquiet that this report has engendered, to guarantee better consideration of rural needs, and to seek assurances of increased funding and priority emphasis for education for the wellbeing of all Western Australian students and their parents. I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and negatived.

[Questions without notice taken.]

House adjourned at 6.04 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SUPERANNUATION - THREE PER CENT OCCUPATIONAL SUPERANNUATION

515. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) Should the three per cent occupational superannuation which was awarded from the national wage case now be paid to all workers?
- (2) Are all Government employees receiving the three per cent occupational superannuation contribution?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Are somewhere between 10 000 and 20 000 State Government employees not receiving the three per cent occupational superannuation contribution?
- (5) How does the Minister reconcile this with the fact that all private sector employees are now required to be paid the three per cent occupational superannuation contribution?
- (6) Will approximately 10 000 to 20 000 people only receive the three per cent from the date that they actually apply for registration?
- (7) Is the Government saving between \$9 million and \$18 million each year by avoiding paying the proper three per cent superannuation payments?
- (8) How does the Minister reconcile this fact with the cases whereby the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations is taking employers to court for failing to pay their three per cent occupational superannuation payments?
- (9) What action is the Minister taking to ensure this disgraceful situation comes to an end?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) The three per cent superannuation benefit should be available to all employees.
- (2)-(3) No. Members of the pension scheme and some other public sector schemes do not receive the three per cent benefit which is made available to other Government employees on a voluntary basis, under the terms and conditions negotiated by the Government with the public sector unions.
- (4) Approximately 90 000 Government employees receive the three per cent benefit through the Government employees superannuation scheme. The number of employees not receiving this benefit is not known but is to be the subject of a comprehensive program to increase participation in the scheme.
- (5) The arrangement for the State public sector is the result of the negotiated settlement of the three per cent claim. In the private sector, payment is through award provision or by agreement. However, not all awards and agreements provide for the three per cent and not all employees are covered by awards or agreements.
- (6) All eligible employees receive the three per cent benefit from the date of application.
- (7) Within the terms of the settlement of the claim, the Government has not avoided any payments.
- (8) A number of private employers have denied their employees access to the three per cent benefit.
- (9) Voluntary participation cannot be described as a disgraceful situation as the arrangement was a feature of the settlement of the claim. The scheme has been actively promoted by the Government and unions and this includes the recent issuing of a ministerial circular to Government employers to ensure that all employees are made aware of their superannuation entitlement.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN - PREMIER

Eastern States Flight List, July-August 1985

726. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) As in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of Friday 3 May 1991 it was reported that -
 "First, that unexplained flight in early July 1985 - a flight that exists only in the manifest of the jet charter company. On Wednesday, Mr Burke's former personal secretary, Mrs Brenda Brush (one of three Burke staffers listed as having made the dash), told the commission she could not remember it but presumed it must have been a visit to the national ALP conference, which "is always around about that time of year".
 The only trouble was that she was a year too late; the last full national conference in Canberra was in the winter of 1984." -
 will the Premier list the flights chartered by the Government for the Premier or other Ministers for travel to the Eastern States in July and August of 1985?
- (2) Will the Premier list who accompanied the Premier or Minister on those visits?
- (3) If the Premier or Ministers were not on those charter flights will the Premier list the details of who was?
- (4) In each case will the Premier list the purpose of those flights?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Charter flights to Eastern States -

July 1985

Perth - Canberra - Perth	30.06.85-01.07.85
Perth - Canberra - Perth	25.07.85

August 1985

No charter flights to Eastern States recorded in August 1985.

- (2) Passenger list as per invoice -

Trip 30.06.85-01.07.85

Premier
 V. Shervington
 B. Brush
 J. Grill
 P. Horobin

Trip 25.07.85

Premier
 B. Brush
 R. Barry

- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Purpose of trip -
 Trip 30.06.85-01.07.85 - Tax summit
 Trip 25.07.85 - Economic Planning and Advisory Council.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE - TASK FORCE REPORT
Recommendations Implementation

743. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Has the Government announced its commitment to implementing any or all of the recommendations numbers 27D to 37 and recommendation 40 of the 1987 Child Sexual Abuse Task Force report?
- (2) If yes -

- (a) which of the recommendations has the Government already implemented and what were the dates of implementation;
- (b) (i) which of the recommendations are in the process of being implemented;
- (ii) what is the current state of play in each case;
- (iii) when is full implementation expected;
- (c) (i) which of the recommendations are still under review by the Government;
- (ii) when is the Government likely to make a decision in each case;
- (d) which of the recommendations has the Government rejected?

Mr RIPPER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) Recommendation 35 was not accepted. The Children's Court was restructured by the Children's Court of Western Australia Bill (No 2) 1988 and a President appointed. Recommendation 36 was implemented by the Acts Amendment (Children's Court) Act 1988.

(b) (i) Recommendations 27(d), 28, 29, 30, 31 and 40 have been approved by Cabinet. Further action on recommendation 30 is subject to consideration of the Law Reform Commission report on evidence of children and other reasonable witnesses released for public comment on 17 May 1991.

Recommendations 32, 33 and 34 have been addressed by the Legislative Review Committee of the Department for Community Services. The report of the committee has been released for public comment until 31 July 1991.

Recommendation 37 will be partly addressed by the implementation of recommendations 27(d) and 30 which refer to the reporting provisions of the Children's Court. The evidentiary provisions refer to the use of closed circuit television as outlined in sections 23A-C of the Child Welfare Act. The use of closed circuit television is discussed in the Law Reform Commission report.

(ii) Legislation to implement recommendations 27(d)-31 and 40 is being drafted. Drafting instructions which cover recommendation 37 will be prepared in response to recommendations of the Law Reform Commission project No 87, "Report on the Evidence of Children and Other Vulnerable Witnesses".

(iii) Legislation is expected to be introduced in the autumn and spring sessions 1991.

(c) (i) Recommendations 30, 32, 33, 34 and 37.

(ii) At the end of the public comment period for the Law Reform Commission report and the Legislative Review Committee report.

(d) See (ii) above.

SCHOOLS - PRE-PRIMARY CENTRES *Ministry of Education - Lease Statistics*

780. Mr TUBBY to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many preprimary centres are currently being leased by the Ministry?
- (2) Of these, how many have undergone a complete refurbishment since 1981?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) 156.
- (2) In accordance with lease agreements the ministry is responsible for maintenance of leased preprimary centres. "Complete refurbishment" does not form part of any lease agreements.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE - STAFF DISPUTES
Industrial Relations Act 1979 Amendments

786. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

When will the Government introduce further amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1979 enabling disputes of the staff working in Parliament House to be heard at the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

Further amendments to the Industrial Relations Act will be introduced when the parties are satisfied that the necessary administrative arrangements are in place.

JUVENILE REMAND CENTRE - SITE DECISION
Local Residents - Consultation Promise

793. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Did the following report appear in the *The West Australian* of 27 January, 1990 -

"The Department of Community Services has promised to consult local residents before deciding the best site for a new juvenile remand centre.

The department's east-metropolitan regional director, Mr Terry Keating, said yesterday greater care would be taken to keep the community informed as his staff looked for an alternative location to the preferred Forrestfield site, which was rejected on Tuesday."

- (2) If so, why was the promised consultation with local residents not carried out as was promised at the time prior to the decision to proceed with the proposed Murdoch juvenile remand centre?

Mr RIPPER replied:

- (1) Yes, this report did appear in *The West Australian* on 27 January 1990.
- (2) Since plans for the Lakes Hospital site as a whole have been announced, very extensive consultation with the community has taken place on the juvenile remand centre.

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS - JUVENILES
Commercial or Private Benefit

804. Mr NICHOLLS to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Are community service orders for juveniles carried out for the benefit of commercial organisations or private individuals?
- (2) If so, how many were imposed in 1990 and to 30 April 1991?
- (3) How is each CSO work task selected?
- (4) How is the value of the task calculated and hours of work determined?
- (5) How many community service orders in total have been imposed where the work is carried out in the Mandurah area?

Mr RIPPER replied:

I refer the member to question 598 to the Minister for Justice the answer to which was supplied by the Minister for Corrective Services on Thursday,

9 May 1991. The following answer refers to Department for Community Services, Community Service Orders -

- (1) Private individuals receive assistance when they are categorised as "disadvantaged"; for example, work may be done for pensioners or disabled. Work carried out in these situations would be general garden maintenance, etc. There is no gain for individuals. A number of voluntary organisations benefit from some work done by young people on CSOs; for example, Salvation Army Op-Shop. The benefit to these organisations is seen as being returned to the community rather than one of commercial gain.

- (2) The following Community Service Orders were imposed -

Metropolitan area

	<u>1990</u>	<u>01.01.91-</u> <u>30.04.91</u>
Number of orders	1 176	362

Country 1990

	<u>1990</u>	<u>01.01.91-</u> <u>31.01.91</u>
Number of orders	842	166

Statistical data beyond 31.01.91 is not yet available.

- (3) Community Service Orders tasks come to the attention of the Community Based Offender Program in two ways -
- (a) An individual or group may contact CBOP for assistance with a task. CBOP then visits the site to assess the suitability of the task in terms of nature of the task, skill level required, safety issues and length of time to complete the work.
- (b) CBOP approaches local community groups and agencies to determine whether or not they might be interested in participating in the program.
- (4) The hours of work for a young person attending a CSO placement are taken from the time of reporting to the overseer. "Value of the task" is only an approximation of the time required to complete the task.
- (5) Between 1 January 1990 and 31 December 1990, 32 CSO dispositions were imposed by the Mandurah Children's Court. Between 1 January 1991 and 30 April 1991, 14 CSO dispositions were imposed by the Mandurah Children's Court. For all of the above, the work was carried out in the Mandurah area.

HOSPITALS - EYE INFECTIONS

Health Department Morbidity Program Statistics

805. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for Health:

On the statistics available under the morbidity program of the Health Department of Western Australia, how many persons were admitted to hospital in 1991 with eye infections resulting from previous operations.

Mr WILSON replied:

In 1991 for which only teaching hospital data is available to date -

Only one patient had an operation followed by a readmission into hospital with an eye infection. This patient had not undergone an eye operation.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT - BROWN, HON JIM
Staff Members

806. Mr MINSON to the Premier:

- (1) How many staff members does Hon Jim Brown MLC have?

- (2) What are the names of the staff members?
- (3) Where are the staff members located?
- (4) Are the staff members full time or part time?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Two.
- (2)-(3)
 - Ms Sheryl Cahill - located in Merredin.
 - Mr Murray Harrison - located in Perth - Parliament House.
- (4) Both staff members are part time employees, working in a job sharing arrangement equal to one full time equivalent.

EDUCATION MINISTRY - STAFFING FORMULA REVIEW
Wellstead Primary School

815. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will the Minister consider reviewing the current staffing formula for 1991?
- (2) If no, will the Minister consider making an exception in the case of Wellstead Primary School for -
 - (a) the remainder of 1991;
 - (b) 1992?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) (a) No exception will be made for the remainder of 1991. The school will retain its present staff allocation until it reaches an enrolment of 51. If this occurs an extra staff member will be appointed.
- (b) The same scale of staff allocation based on enrolments will apply in 1992.

SCHOOLS - KENDENUP PRIMARY SCHOOL
Maintenance

816. Mr HOUSE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

In relation to the maintenance needs of the Kendenup Primary School, are the following items in need of attention because of the strain of the growth of the school, for the ensuing State Budget -

- (a) repair to the plaster on the walls of the classrooms;
- (b) the allocation of a storage area for cleaner and gardener;
- (c) provision of storage for school stock;
- (d) provision of sick room facilities?

Dr GALLOP replied:

Current and projected enrolment trends do not indicate a strain is being placed on existing facilities.

- (a) The repair and painting of classroom walls is listed in priority order on the 1991-92 programmed maintenance schedule.
- (b) The school is currently provided with storage for the cleaner and the gardener.
- (c)-(d) Should be considered within the context of the district based minor works scheme.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT
AND OTHER MATTERS - BURKE, MR BRIAN

Naylor, Mr - Australian Labor Party Salary Percentage Payment

817. Mr KIERATH to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the nature of the evidence Mr Michael Naylor, former Labor Government adviser to Hon Brian Burke, has given to the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters?
- (2) Was the percentage of Mr Naylor's salary paid to the Australian Labor Party a breach of section 111(1) of the Industrial Relations Act 1979?
- (3) Has the Minister instituted any proceedings against Mr Naylor for breaching section 111(1) of the Industrial Relations Act 1979?
- (4) Has the Minister instituted any proceedings on behalf of Mr Naylor under section 111(3) to recover the payments made to the Australian Labor Party by Mr Naylor?
- (5) Are there any other public servants providing any premium, payment or reward to the Australian Labor Party in respect of their employment or engagement?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

(1) Yes.

(2)-(5) No.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - NORTH WEST GAS
PIPELINE

ATCO WA Pty Ltd - Workers' Camps Contract

824. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Did the State Energy Commission of Western Australia enter into an arrangement with ATCO WA Pty Ltd to provide four camps on the north west gas pipeline to house SECWA workers?
- (2) If yes, were these camps provided as per the original contract?
- (3) If no, what changes were made?
- (4) Have all the subcontractors involved in building these camps been paid?
- (5) Who is SECWA currently paying for the lease of these facilities?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) Yes. On 28 May 1990, SECWA awarded a contract to ATCO Structures (WA), a division of ATCO Industries (Aust) Pty Ltd, for the supply, delivery, site installation, day to day running, catering, maintenance demobilisation of construction camp accommodation and services at four compressor station sites. On 17 August 1990, Fortuna Holdings, the ultimate parent of ATCO Industries Pty Ltd, was placed in the hands of a receiver and manager. The receiver has permitted the continued trading of ATCO Structures and is currently managing the SECWA contract.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) No. The contractor has advised SECWA that the receiver manager of ATCO Industries Pty Ltd has not paid all subcontractors for their services.
- (5) The contract is with ATCO Structures (WA), a division of ATCO Industries Pty Ltd (Receiver and Manager Appointed), which is being paid for the services as performed.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTRY - CREDIT RELIEF APPLICATIONS

826. Mr COURT to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

How many credit relief applications were there in the quarters ending -

- (a) March 1990;
- (b) June 1990;
- (c) September 1990;
- (d) December 1990;
- (e) March 1991?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (a) 58.
- (b) 59.
- (c) 65.
- (d) 93.
- (e) 84.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

Power Supply Guarantees and Continuity Proceedings

828. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the current status of the State Energy Commission of Western Australia's bid in the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission to have guarantees and continuity of supply built into its awards?
- (2) Will this hearing continue in the near future?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) The proceedings were instigated by the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission's own motion and concern the reliability of power supply to the community.
- (2) Subject to the judgment of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

POWER STATIONS - COAL FIRED POWER STATION, COLLIE

Mitsubishi Carbon Dioxide Removal Process

831. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Will the coal fired power station to be built at Collie include the process patented by Mitsubishi which removes carbon dioxide from the flue gases of power stations?

Dr GALLOP replied:

For the Collie coal fired power station to be provided by the Mitsubishi-Transfield consortium, the boiler plant will be supplied by ICAL Ltd and the turbine-generators by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. The boiler plant will be of modern, corner fired design with proven performance, incorporating pulverised coal firing equipment. In discussions to date with the consortium partners, no commercially viable process has been identified for the removal of carbon dioxide from flue gases for this plant. The matter has been raised specifically with Mitsubishi Australia in order to seek further information.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS - ESPERANCE REGIONAL CENTRE

Supervisor's Appointment

832. Mr COURT to the Minister representing the Minister for The Arts:

When will the Government be filling the position of a person in charge of the

Esperance Regional Centre of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts?

Dr GALLOP replied:

The filling of this position will be considered in the formulation of the 1991-92 State Government Budget.

SUPERANNUATION - GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS
Shortfall Reduction

833. Mr COURT to the Treasurer:

- (1) Has the Government estimated the cost of meeting its superannuation commitments for the next five years?
- (2) What steps have been taken to ensure that this shortfall is minimised?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

- (1) Yes. I would refer the member to pages 22 and 23 of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee's Report No 18 in relation to Funding and Reporting the State's Superannuation Liability which sets out projected cash flows for superannuation payments for the period 1991 to 2003.
- (2) Since the introduction of the Lump Sum Scheme statutory authorities have been required to fund concurrently the employer's 12 per cent contribution for all contributory members and three per cent for noncontributory members.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - UNDERGROUND POWER
Country Subdivisions Costing Policy

835. Mr COURT to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is State Energy Commission of Western Australia's policy on costing of undergrounding power in country subdivisions?
- (2) What contribution is SECWA prepared to make to private sector developments with underground power?
- (3) Is the private sector given the choice of constructing the underground grid itself or must it use SECWA?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) For residential subdivisions, provided the lots are 1 000 metres squared or less, and otherwise standard, SECWA will reticulate with underground power at a standard charge of \$1 700 per lot less \$700 per lot subsidy; that is, \$1 000 per lot. However, the developer is responsible for providing road crossings and trenching. The standard charge does not cover SECWA's full costs in country areas.
- (2) The standard charge and subsidy are the same whether the developer is private or public.
- (3) Under the present policy SECWA carries out the installation using a combination of subcontractors and its own staff. This policy is currently under review.

BRUSH, MRS BRENDA - GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

852. Mrs EDWARDES to the Premier:

- (1) Will the Premier advise the period of time Mrs Brenda Brush was employed as a public servant and/or a Government officer with the Western Australian State Public Service?
- (2) In what capacity was Mrs Brush employed and to which Minister and/or Ministers, was she responsible to during her period of employment?
- (3) (a) When was Mr Nigel Wilson appointed to the position of Executive Director, Office of Economic Liaison Review;

- (b) From which private and/or public sector department/instrumentality did he come?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

See reply to question 411 of 30 April 1991.

- (3) (a) Mr Wilson commenced his appointment as Executive Director, Office of Economic Liaison and Review, on 2 July 1990 following approval by the Governor in Executive Council on 19 June 1990.

(b) SECWA.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WEEK - MARRIAGE EDUCATION GRANTS
Community Groups

860. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for the Family:

Which 20 community groups received marriage education grants released during Marriage and Family Week?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

The community groups to receive funding through the 1991 Marriage Education Grants Program are -

Community Care Neighbourhood and Learning Centre
Catholic Marriage Education and Preparation Centre
YWCA of Perth
Uniting Church - Presbytery of the North West
Beldon Community Centre
Australian Association for Marriage Education (WA)
Anglican Marriage and Family Counselling Services
Uniting Church in Australia - Synod of WA
Institute of Human Development
Karingal Neighbourhood Centre
Fullness of Life Centre
Southern Aicare
Catherine McAuley Family Centre
Carramar Christian Community
Wesley Central Mission
Mobile Counselling Inc
Couples for Marriage Enrichment Australia
Escare
Catholic Engaged Encounter
Geraldton Regional Community Centre
Marriage Guidance Western Australia

BUILDING INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL - ESTABLISHMENT DATE

861. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) When was the Government's Building Industry Consultative Council formed?
- (2) Who are the members of that council?
- (3) What is the purpose of the council?
- (4) How many times since its formation has the council met?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) The Building Industry Consultative Council is in the final stage of process of formation.
- (2) Membership of the council has not yet been finalised.
- (3) To provide a forum on matters of interest to the Western Australian building and construction industry.
- (4) Not applicable; see answer (1).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION - REVIEWS

862. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

- (1) What reviews have been undertaken into the workers' compensation system in Western Australia since 1983?
- (2) What has been the outcome of those reviews?
- (3) Is there any current review under way into the workers' compensation system?
- (4) If so, what are the details of that review?
- (5) Are there any reviews proposed into the workers' compensation system in Western Australia?
- (6) If so, what form will that review take?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

- (1) Following proclamation of the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Act in 1982 a subsequent review of the new Act was commenced in 1983.
Review by the Tripartite Labour Consultative Council of the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Act was initiated in 1987.
- (2) The review, following proclamation of the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Act, led to further amendments to the Act being proclaimed in 1985.
The second review, initiated in 1987 under the auspices of the Tripartite Labour Consultative Council, led to the recent package of amendments to the Act being proclaimed in March 1991.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The Tripartite Labour Consultative Council has been conducting an ongoing review of the workers' compensation system since its establishment in 1984.
- (5) It is proposed to conduct an inquiry into the dispute resolution procedures of the workers' compensation system.
- (6) I shall be announcing the details of this inquiry shortly.

**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT
AND OTHER MATTERS - PARKER, MR DAVID
*Overseas Trip - Ministerial Expenses Inquiry***

865. Mr MacKINNON to the Premier:

- (1) In evidence given to the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters did former Deputy Premier and colleague Hon David Parker indicate that on overseas trips he charged his expenses to a Mastercard credit card account and pocketed the allowance?
- (2) In evidence tendered to the Royal Commission did the former Deputy Premier indicate that he kept up to \$25,000 in a satchel in his office?
- (3) Will the Premier ensure that an immediate inquiry is launched to enquire into this practice so as to ensure -
 - (a) that the former Deputy Premier was operating within the guidelines laid down for ministerial expenses; and
 - (b) that a full report on the details of the former Deputy Premier's travel and entertainment expenses is released?
- (4) If not, why not?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(4)

I understand this matter is still before the Royal Commission and it is completely inappropriate for me to launch a parallel investigation. In

addition, the Leader of the Opposition has not correctly quoted the evidence given to the Royal Commission on this matter.

EDUCATION MINISTRY - LEVEL 6 POSITIONS

Interviews Statistics - Women Appointments

867. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Would the Minister advise the numbers of men and women interviewed for level 6 positions and above, during the years -
 - (a) 1989;
 - (b) 1990;
 - (c) 1991 to date?
- (2) How many women applicants were successful and received level 6 positions and above, during the years -
 - (a) 1989;
 - (b) 1990;
 - (c) 1991 to date?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--------|----------|
| (1) | (a) | 50 men | 12 women |
| | (b) | 15 men | 14 women |
| | (c) | Nil | Nil |
| (2) | (a) | Three | |
| | (b) | Three | |
| | (c) | Nil | |

HOSPITALS - KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL BOARD

Members

868. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Who are the members of the King Edward Memorial Hospital Board?
- (2) When were they appointed?
- (3) What are terms of their appointment?
- (4) Who is the chairperson of the board?
- (5) What are the person's qualifications to be entitled to this position?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The members of the King Edward Memorial Hospital Board are -
Ms L.M. Maher, Dr G.M. Leavesley, Ms L.B. Liveris, Mr H. O'Brien, Ms A.V. Payne, Miss J. Brann, Mr F.M. Montgomery, Dr H. Cohen, Dr S.E. Reid and Professor C.A. Michael.
- (2) All the above members were appointed on 5 July 1988 with the exception of Ms L.M. Maher and Mr F.M. Montgomery, who were appointed on 14 May 1991.
- (3) The term of appointment for all of the above members is for three years, due to expire on 30 June 1991, except for Ms L.M. Maher and Mr F.M. Montgomery who were appointed for an initial term due to expire on 30 June 1992.
- (4) The chairperson of the board is Ms L.M. Maher.
- (5) The appointment of Ms Maher was made in accordance with section 15(6) of the Hospitals Act. Ms Maher is tertiary qualified and has considerable experience as a senior administrator in both the public and private sectors.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WEEK - WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE
Members

869. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for the Family:

- (1) Who are the members of the Marriage and Family Week Western Australian Committee?
- (2) What is the role of the committee?
- (3) Does the committee prepare and release an annual report?
- (4) If not, why not?
- (5) What are the dates of the committee's initial appointment and when does their current term expire?
- (6) Who determines the membership of this committee?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(6)

The Marriage and Family Week Australian Committee is a non-Government organisation operating under its own constitution. For further information on the committee I suggest you contact Elizabeth Dalzell, Wesley Central Mission.

**WESTERN WOMEN FINANCIAL SERVICES PTY LTD - WOMEN'S
INFORMATION AND REFERRAL EXCHANGE**
Government Action

871. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Is the Minister taking any action on behalf of consumers in respect to the Western Women Financial group and in particular the links between the Women's Information and Referral Exchange and Western Women, whereby hundreds of WIRE's clients have lost their money?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

Matters relating to investments with the Western Women Financial Group are being handled by the Australian Securities Commission which is responsible for the regulation of investment services. The relationship between the Women's Information and Referral Exchange and the Western Women Financial Group is presently the subject of an inquiry by the Public Service Commission.

LEEDER, MS SANDRA - GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

876. Mrs EDWARDES to the Premier:

- (1) Further to question 511 of 1991, was Sandra Leeder, a director of Western Women group, an employee or did she work in any capacity for either Mr Gavan Troy, member for Swan Hills, or Hon Gordon Hill, member for Helena, at any time?
- (2) If so, what was her position, title and dates of that employment?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

Ms Leeder was employed as an electorate officer, C-II-1/2 to Hon G. Hill from 13.9.82 to 27.4.84. There is no other record of her working for Mr Troy or any member of Parliament.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - WEST AUSTRALIAN
NEWSPAPERS LTD*Packer, Turnbull, Tilley Meeting*

201. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Microeconomic Reform:

- (1) Was he aware of the reported meeting between Mr Packer, Mr Turnbull and Mr Tilley where the question of the State Government Insurance Commission and its investment in West Australian Newspapers Ltd was discussed?
- (2) If so, when did he become aware of the meeting?
- (3) Did Mr Turnbull report back to the SGIC?
- (4) What was the nature of Mr Turnbull's report?
- (5) If Mr Turnbull did not report back, why not?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3)-(5)

Regarding the matter of whether the adviser reported back to the SGIC, I simply cannot indicate either way on that issue. Certainly, he was advising the board on what he felt would be the best interests of the commission on the Bell issue. However, whether that meeting came up as part of that advice, I cannot say.

Firstly, as a general response, the Government has played no role whatsoever regarding the decision of the board in relation to this very complex commercial issue - that should be the case in a relationship between the Government and the board. Secondly, the board has made it clear that the attitude taken has concerned the business and commercial interests of the organisation, and non-commercial factors have not come into play on the issue. If the Opposition is implying through this kind of question that the Minister should be telling the board what it should be doing in this highly complex commercial matter, perhaps we should ask the Leader of the Opposition about his general view of the relationship between a Government and a Government organisation trading in the marketplace.

STATE WAGE CASE - MEMBER FOR COTTESLOE'S COMMENTS

202. Mr GRAHAM to the Minister for Productivity and Labour Relations:

Will she comment on the criticisms made yesterday by the member for Cottesloe on the failure of the Government to bring on the State wage case earlier than last week?

Mrs HENDERSON replied:

I thank the member for the question. I was surprised and dismayed by the comments of the member for Cottesloe yesterday. He indicated that he thought the Government had a responsibility to initiate the State wage case, and said that I had been dilatory in not bringing on the State wage case earlier than last week. As this is of interest to everyone in the Chamber, it is important that the Parliament is aware that the Minister does not have the power to direct the State Industrial Relations Commission regarding when it hears the State wage case and nor should the Minister have this power. No Government in the history of this State has made application for the State wage case to be brought on. In fact, this is done by the other parties; that is, the Confederation of Western Australian Industry and the Trades and Labor Council of WA.

It is interesting that when this question was raised in the hearing itself, the

representative from the confederation queried how long it had taken for the State wage case to be brought on. The Chief Commissioner said -

- you were a party to discussions with me early in May. The hearing dates were convenient, not only to you but to other parties. If there had been a necessity for urgency in listing the matter - and indeed I realise certain obligations already listed by commissioners and by advocates - that this was the first opportune time that it could be listed. You do not agree with that?

The representative of the confederation said that he agreed. It would not serve any good purpose for members of this House to use the opportunity afforded them in this House to criticise the commission and to accuse it of delaying bringing this matter on, which is exactly what the member for Cottesloe did. He criticised the Government and the Minister for not directing the commission to hold the meeting earlier. However, the Minister does not have the right or the power to direct the commission when it is hearing the State wage case, and nor should it.

GYPSUM - TRANSPORT

Road Transport Applications Response

203. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Transport:

Earlier this year the Minister announced that there was to be an inquiry into the transport of minor bulk goods by rail. I understand that fertiliser has been dealt with by this inquiry, but that leaves the other two minor products of gypsum and salt.

- (1) What response is the Minister providing to applications by gypsum miners to transport the product by road?
- (2) Will these miners be granted permission to transport this product directly to the user by road?
- (3) If so, when?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(3)

The applications are not made directly to me -

Mr Cowan: They are made to your department.

Mrs BEGGS: - but to the Department of Transport. My understanding is that each application is viewed on its merits. Regarding those two other commodities under review, as I said in the House the other night, the whole question of deregulation of transport is being dealt with systematically by the Government.

Mr Cowan: Fuel is another one; this has been a problem for five years.

Mrs BEGGS: I am aware of that. However, this creates another problem in that one cannot eat one's cake and have it too. In many areas the rail line is reliant on those products, and the maintenance of the rail line is essential for some of those country areas.

I am aware of the problem being caused with the transportation of gypsum. The member for Moore brought a case to me regarding a constituent and his problem with the transportation of gypsum. I am taking this matter seriously, as is the department. I hope to be able to take something to Cabinet soon regarding those commodities.

Mr Cowan: What about fuel?

Mrs BEGGS: Fuel is under review. This matter has been delayed, and I have been a little tardy, because I have been waiting for the Interstate Commission's report on road user charges to be completed. We await some determination on that matter.

As the Leader of the National Party is aware, the Government has deregulated the transportation of fertiliser, and then removed the levy of 1¢ per net tonne per kilometre as a result of the plight of the rural community. We cannot ignore the facts; if the rail system is deregulated, huge costs will be involved. We must balance the two sides of the equation. We must balance the desire of Government to maintain a rail service, and we must consider the need for road transport. The Leader of the National Party often asks me questions about what we are doing to rail services in his electorate. Therefore, we must balance the two aspects. We must look at deregulation in a sound way. Until we know what the road user charge system will be between the States and the Commonwealth, and how we will keep up with the maintenance of roads in the future - which is a big problem for the State Government considering that the fuel levy is one of the ways we can maintain the cost of roads throughout Western Australia - I am reluctant to move totally to deregulation.

WOMEN - PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATION

Leader of the Opposition's Comments

204. Mrs WATKINS to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Given the allegations of sexism and misogyny in this House yesterday, is he aware of comments attributed to the Leader of the Opposition today on representation for women in this Parliament?
- (2) Do these views accord with the Government's view regarding the representation of women in this House?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I thank the member for the question. Members may have heard the radio news today in which the Leader of the Opposition stated -

I hope that at one time the Liberal Party is led by a woman. I would hope, also, that our party, in fact, achieves very soon more women representatives in Parliament. I have been on the record on more than one occasion urging good women to stand for the Liberal Party, but to expect to be selected on their merits.

The Government's position on this matter is exemplified by the Government benches. We are proud of our women members and Ministers, indeed our woman leader, all of whom hold their place as a result of merit. It is hard to believe there are no women of merit in the Liberal Party.

Point of Order

Mr LEWIS: I understand that it is the convention of this House under the Standing Orders that questions should be addressed to the Minister who has responsibility in the area. Could the Speaker explain to the House on what basis the question is put?

Mr Blaikie: It is appropriate that he answer.

The SPEAKER: I think I should echo the sound advice given to the House by the member for Vasse.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr PEARCE: I cannot believe that the women in the Liberal Party are so lacking in merit that they cannot score preselection against some of the drongos who sit opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: I withdraw the word "drongo" and substitute the word "men". The Leader of the Opposition is about to have the opportunity to bring his wish to fruition, because as members know, there will shortly be a by-election for the seat of Floreat and one of the leading candidates for the Liberal Party is a woman of outstanding merit - in anyone's judgment. The Leader of the

Opposition only has to indicate very firmly his support for the woman candidate for the Floreat preselection.

Mr Bradshaw: He cannot do that.

Mr PEARCE: Why not?

Mr Bradshaw: Because he cannot.

Mr PEARCE: If the Leader of the Opposition wants more women in Parliament, why should he not be supporting a decent woman candidate? Or is it the case - and perhaps the member for Wellington can tell me - that people are a little more concerned about whether Dr Constable would vote for the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Nedlands in any ballots which might be coming up in the near future. The Liberal Party should be doing more to get talented women into the Parliament and the by-election opportunity presents -

Mr Watt: Traditionally, anybody whom the leader of the party supports is doomed to failure.

Mr PEARCE: Far be it from me to reflect upon the judgment of the rank and file of the Liberal Party. Other States of our fair Commonwealth have a better record than the Liberal Party in this State in trying to bring noteworthy women into Parliament. As far back as 1983 in South Australia in the Federal election for Port Adelaide the Liberal Party ran - fortunately she was unsuccessful - Ms Robin Rickards who scored 23.04 per cent of the vote against the sitting member, Michael Jerome Young. Ms Rickards went bankrupt in South Australia owing money to a large number of financial institutions, and she changed not only her career, but also her name and came to Western Australia as Ms Robin Greenburg, author of Liberal Party policy and failed entrepreneur.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - BELL GROUP SHARES *Government Discussions*

205. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Microeconomic Reform:

- (1) What discussions has the Minister had with any member of the State Government Insurance Commission Board or staff or advisers including Mr Turnbull, either directly or indirectly, via a staff member, about the SGIC and its share dealings which involve the SGIC's investments in the Bell Group which owns *The West Australian*?
- (2) When were those discussions held?
- (3) What position did the Government indicate it had taken with respect to this ownership?

Dr GALLOP replied:

(1)-(3)

I will repeat that the Government has not played a role in the decision making processes of the State Government Insurance Commission Board and management in respect of this issue.

Mr MacKinnon: That is not the question. Have you had any preliminary discussions?

Dr GALLOP: I have never met Mr Turnbull. I have never had any discussions with Mr Turnbull. I think I know what he looks like because I have read an article or two about him in the newspaper. I indicate again that the Government has in no way intervened in the decision making processes of the SGIC board in respect of this matter. It is a matter for that board to determine on the basis of its best commercial interests.

Mr MacKinnon: You have never discussed this issue with the board?

Dr GALLOP: The board has kept me informed about the processes which have been occurring. Of course, when crucial decisions were made the board informed me of them.

Mr MacKinnon: You have discussed this matter. When did you discuss it with them?

Dr GALLOP: That is a stupid, stupid question.

Mr MacKinnon: When did you discuss it with the board?

Dr GALLOP: The board has kept me informed of this matter right through the process from when I became Minister earlier this year.

Mr Taylor: If the board had not kept you informed, the Leader of the Opposition would have kept you informed.

Dr GALLOP: Obviously I contacted the board today about the matters which were raised and had it advise me about the allegations which have been made on the television and in the newspapers.

Mr Omodei interjected.

Point of Order

Dr GALLOP: I answered the question of the Leader of the Opposition and when I resumed my seat the member for Warren said that I was guilty. I regard that as an offence.

Mr MacKinnon: Guilty of what? What are you guilty of?

Dr GALLOP: The member for Warren said it.

The SPEAKER: I do not see that that in itself is a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

WHEAT - GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICE

Member for Cottesloe's Comments

206. Mr LEAHY to the Premier:

Given the all party support for the Government's decision to guarantee a minimum price for wheat, is the Premier aware of the scathing criticism of that decision by the member for Cottesloe? Does the Premier intend to continue support for the rural community despite this savage attack by a member whose rural interests extend from North Fremantle to Subiaco?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

Like many members of this House I was astounded last night to hear the member for Cottesloe not just say he did not think it was a very good idea -

Mr MacKinnon: You were not even here at the time.

Dr LAWRENCE: I was present in Parliament House and I was very much aware of what the member for Cottesloe was saying. The member for Cottesloe clearly contradicted his leader and his deputy leader in relation to the guaranteed minimum price for wheat. He did not say only that he not think it was a good idea, he gave several reasons which fly in the face of his leader's comments, the deputy leader's comments and comments of members of the National Party. I know that the Leader of the Opposition was a little hesitant about supporting this scheme, but he was more than happy to accept a bit of the political kudos. In response to my invitation, which was given generously, that they take part in a small celebration a couple of nights after the announcement, the deputy leader was more than happy to come along and stand with the people from the rural industry, members of the National Party and me, to take credit for it. Now we have the member for Cottesloe basically saying that it is a lousy idea.

Mr Bradshaw: Have you ever heard of free speech?

Dr LAWRENCE: I have also heard of some consistency in policies. Do Opposition members support it or not?

Mr MacKinnon: If it is paid this year. The member said that you should pay it this financial year.

Dr LAWRENCE: The Leader of the Opposition should go through the *Hansard* when it is able to be quoted -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr LAWRENCE: The noise we were just hearing is a demonstration of the sort of dispute that occurs in the Liberal Party on this matter and indeed on most economic matters. They are telling us on the one hand to spend buckets of money and on the other hand to squeeze the Public Service dry; on the one hand we should be throwing money into capital works and on the other hand not borrowing any funds. In this case we have the Leader of the Opposition and the deputy leader being quite prepared to publicly state their support for this program and a senior member of the Liberal Party undermining that position very clearly. If the member's speech were circulated to country constituents represented by Liberal Party members, they would not be very enthusiastic about his views because they indicate that, as a party, the Opposition does not give a damn, that Opposition members are political opportunists who see a nice bandwagon and jump on it. Members opposite think it is a popular move with the rural electorate. However, the true view that members opposite hold - that those people can all go and burn in hell - was reflected in the speech last night.

TURNBULL AND PARTNERS - STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE
COMMISSION
Government Payment

207. Mr COURT to the Treasurer:

I have given the Treasurer some notice of the question.

(1) Now that the Government has been prepared to make public some consultants' fees paid by the State Government Insurance Commission, will it detail what fees have been paid by the SGIC and the State Government Insurance Office to the Whitlam Turnbull Investment Bank now called Turnbull and Partners in 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991?

(2) If yes, what were the fees involved?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

(1)-(2)

The member for Nedlands may think he gave me notice of this question, but he did not. I think he gave it to the Minister assisting the Treasurer.

Mr Court: I sent it to your office this afternoon.

Dr LAWRENCE: The Minister assisting the Treasurer is responsible for this matter and he is more than happy to answer the question.

Mr MacKinnon: The question was addressed to the Treasurer.

Dr LAWRENCE: The answer is simple. In the past, questions of legal fees and costs have not been the subject of answers to parliamentary questions. However, the Minister responsible is prepared to go to the board and ask it whether, in its view, it is reasonable to make those figures available to the Parliament. That organisation, as you know, has a commercial role in this society. The Opposition insists it should and we believe it should. Therefore, it is a reasonable question to ask of the board and the Minister will do precisely that.

TAXES AND CHARGES - INCREASES
Member for Nedlands' Claims

208. Mr KOBELKE to the Premier:

Is the Premier aware of statements by the member for Nedlands about Western Australia's increases in taxes and charges and, if so, are they correct?

Dr LAWRENCE replied:

No, the claims are not correct. There are a number of fallacies in the statement made by the member for Nedlands yesterday. The degree of coverage it has received is probably a reflection of how seriously it is taken by the media. It is worth our having a look at an Opposition party that wants to be taken seriously as an alternative Government. The member for Nedlands suggested that there has been a very significant increase in State taxes, fees and fines, as he put it, and had someone put together for him a convenient table based on a set of fallacies - one might say lies, but fallacies is probably closer to the truth. Maybe the member for Nedlands does not recognise them. He claims that there has been a dramatic increase in taxes in Western Australia. What he failed to do, and what the Opposition consistently fails to do as I know from experience, is to acknowledge that the rates of taxes have changed but little and the extent to which taxation collections increase is a function of economic activity.

Mr Court: That is not true.

Dr LAWRENCE: Can I give the member an example? Let us take a community in which 10 people live and from which maybe \$100 worth of taxes is collected because one house is being built. What is the per capita rate?

Mr Court: Are you suggesting that those figures are incorrect?

Dr LAWRENCE: I am telling the member that his interpretation of them is fallacious. If he listens to my example he will understand that what he attempted to do was to mislead the people of Western Australia. Have the rates of those taxes increased in percentage terms as claimed by the member for Nedlands? Of course, they have not. The rates of those taxes have not increased. The member has been caught out with his cuteness with figures. He may be able to get away with that if the Opposition regarded itself as a ragtag Opposition that had no chance of getting into Government. That is my view. However, it wants to present itself as a responsible alternative Government. If members opposite are prepared to do that sort of thing, they deserve to be condemned. For example, a person with one employee may pay \$10 payroll tax. However, if that person employs another person he would pay \$20 in payroll tax. Has the rate changed? Of course it has not; the rate of activity has doubled. Members opposite persistently refuse to understand that, using the figures to which the member for Nedlands referred, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Commonwealth Grants Commission recognise that WA is one of the lowest taxing States in the country and that, in the last financial year, we did not increase any taxes, apart from a minor increase in the financial institutions duty, and that we raised the threshold of payroll tax. In comparison with New South Wales and Victoria, in particular, this is a low taxing State. For members opposite to persistently confuse a rate of taxation with a return from taxation based on economic activity is either perverse, exploitive or stupid; they can take their pick.

COAL - ROYALTIES

Power Generation

209. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Will the hard working and high achieving Minister report on the current level of royalty being paid on coal used for power generation in WA?
- (2) In line with indications made by the Government during the negotiations on the new coal fired power station using Collie coal, will the Government delay the increase in royalty which was scheduled for 1 July 1991?

Dr GALLOP replied:

I would prefer the member for Collie to place the question on notice so that I can answer it in detail. Royalties are complicated, as are the arrangements entered into by the companies and the Government.

EAST PERTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - PUBLIC HOUSING

210. Dr ALEXANDER to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Following the Minister for Planning's unfavourable reply to my previous question about public housing in the proposed East Perth development project, will public housing be included in the project?
- (2) If so, what proportion of the 800 proposed stage 1 units will be constructed by Homeswest?
- (3) If none, why will Homeswest not be participating?

Mr McGINTY replied:

(1)-(3)

There has been some misrepresentation of the position of public housing in the East Perth development project. The Government does not intend to exclude public housing from that project. The precise nature and extent of public housing through Homeswest or otherwise is currently the subject of detailed discussions between the Minister for Planning and me. Broad public concern has been expressed not only by the member for Perth, but also by other people. When the details of that public housing component in the East Perth project have been decided and reported to Cabinet, I will be more than happy to inform the member for Perth of the details. However, they have not yet been determined.

ABORIGINES - INDIGENOUS FLORA AND FAUNA
Protection Responsibility

211. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) This being World Environment Day, does the Government accept that, when adequately informed, the Aboriginal section of our population is as responsible as the remainder of the Western Australian population in protecting our indigenous flora and fauna?
- (2) If so, why does the Government retain legislation that exempts all Aborigines from Western Australian wildlife conservation laws, even though the great majority are generations removed from a hunter gatherer existence and no Aborigines are now dependent on that way of life for survival?
- (3) Will the Government initiate an education program for those Aborigines who require information on the necessity to protect our diminishing flora and fauna and thus enable the Aboriginal people as a whole to join the wider community in what should be a common conservation goal?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1)-(3)

If there is one quality I have always admired in the member for South Perth, it is persistence and I have a feeling that the next two years will be marked, once every second week, by questions on this theme.

Mr Clarko: If you last two years.

Mr PEARCE: There are not too many people in this State who have any misapprehensions about that.

I advise the member for South Perth, as he launches himself into the next two years, that the Government does accept that the vast majority of Aboriginal people, like the vast majority of other people, are very responsible in their attitude to wildlife. The issue of traditional rights of Aboriginal people to traditional food sources is not a dead issue in many parts of the State. It is a very much a live issue in remote communities where people not only live on traditional foodstuffs, but also live a traditional lifestyle. I am surprised that the member, with his affinity with Aboriginal people and his research on the issue, is not aware of that.

Mr Grayden: What you are saying is absolute rubbish and you know it!

Mr PEARCE: Apparently the member's level of awareness is not quite as high as I thought. The Government is not proposing to remove those traditional rights from Aboriginal people.

Mr Grayden: You are denigrating Aboriginal people.

Mr PEARCE: I am not.

Mr Wiese: They shoot kangaroos and other wildlife in the south west of the State; it is not restricted to the north.

Mr PEARCE: Huge numbers of people shoot kangaroos, including farmers. The shooting is not restricted to Aboriginal people. The significant point in the issue raised by the member is the potential impact on threatened and endangered species by that legislation. The simple fact is that under that legislation any threatened or endangered species can be exempt from the traditional foodstuffs arrangements for Aboriginal people. In many areas of the State we can strike a genuine dilemma between the rights of Aboriginal people and the need to protect the environment. We seek to resolve those issues in a way which keeps the Aboriginal interests in harmony with the environmental interests. That is quite appropriate, given the extent to which Aboriginal people have managed to live in harmony with the environment in this State. If the member had to pick an issue to raise on World Environment Day, I would have thought he would not seek to attack Aboriginal people for bringing about destruction to the Western Australian environment. He knows, as every Western Australian knows, the great threats to the Western Australian environment have taken place in the course of the last 200 years.
