

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 5 August 1980

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE

Entitlement: Petition

MR HODGE (Melville) [4.31 p.m.]: I wish to present the following petition—

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in the Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned hereby petition that the Long Service Leave Act be changed to allow for the entitlement to an amount of long service leave as follows:—

- (a) in respect of ten (10) years, thirteen weeks
- (b) in respect of each seven (7) years continuous employment so completed after such ten years, thirteen weeks,

also that changes be made in the legislation to provide for pro-rata leave after 7 years, on the basis of 13 weeks for 10 years.

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 conforms with the Standing Orders of the House and I have signed it accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 2.)

INVENTIONS

Assessment and Protection: Petition

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [4.33 p.m.]: I present the following petition to the House—

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

We the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia pray that Her Majesty's Government and members of Parliament will initiate and support amendments to relevant legislation including the Inventions Act 1975 and the Solar Energy Research Act 1977 to provide for:—

1. Fair hearing of inventors by assessing bodies including full disclosure by such bodies to inventors of all criticisms of their inventions so that the bodies can consider inventors responses before making their recommendations.
2. Inventor's prior agreement to any member of any assessing body or any other person being given details of their inventions to reduce the risk of assessment by opponents and so that inventors can be aware of the extent of circulation of information concerning their inventions which they may need to keep secret to safeguard ongoing patenting procedures.
3. Supply by assessing bodies to inventors of complete copies of assessments made of their inventions and reasons for assessing body decisions.
4. Independent appeal avenues so that inventors can appeal against any criticisms, assessments or reasons that are demonstrably invalid.

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

The petition carries 17 signatures and I certify that it conforms with 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. 3.)

STOCK: TRANSPORT

Method: Petition

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [4.35 p.m.]: I have a second petition as follows—

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned citizens of Western Australia:

Recognise that the present method of transportation of animals from country areas to the Metropolitan stock sale yards and/or abattoirs is causing extreme pain and injury to those animals. We, therefore, request that the State Government undertakes an enquiry into the transportation of such animals with

a view to instituting legislation and regulations to allow for a more humane method of transportation of the animals.

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

The petition bears 1 385 signatures and I certify that it conforms with 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. 4.)

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.13 p.m.]: I move—

That the member for Karrinyup (Mr Clarko) be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Question put and passed.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I desire to announce the appointment of the member for Vasse (Mr Blaikie), the member for Canning (Mr Bateman), the member for Moore (Mr Crane), the member for Bunbury (Mr Sibson), and the member for Albany (Mr Watt) as Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the present session.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Oath of Office

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I desire to announce that, on the 3rd January, 1980, Mr Ivor Miles Evans did before me take the oath of office in accordance with section 8 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act, 1971-1976.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Days and Hours

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.14 p.m.]: I move—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 4.30 p.m., and

on Thursdays at 2.15 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Members will appreciate that these are the hours that have been set down for some years now and therefore there is no need for explanation except that I want to report to the House that there have been some discussions of a constructive nature between representatives of the Opposition and the Government on the possibility of introducing hours which some may regard as being more in keeping with present times and therefore be better able to serve the House so far as the despatch of business is concerned.

I also report that the Deputy Premier and a couple of his colleagues have been asked to re-establish those communications and discussions to examine a number of aspects from a practical point of view and to establish how we can implement hours which would be more acceptable to some of the members of the House. There are some practical points in the draft prepared by the Opposition for the discussion and I think after further talks the problems can be overcome. They appear to be matters of a practical nature with regard to the everyday needs of a member coming from the country and a member in the city.

I am certain that the problems can be worked out and the result will be a different set of hours. The Deputy Premier will be representing myself and the Government and will be only too pleased to confer with the Opposition as soon as possible. In moving the motion as it is now worded I wish to make the point that it is purely to establish sitting hours at this stage of the session with an understanding that if something is worked out as a result of the discussions which will take place, it would be necessary for us to rescind these hours and replace them with a new set of hours.

I appreciate the approach made by the Opposition and the suggestions which have been made to improve the handling of questions. The method we have used is rather archaic in the matter of reading the answer to questions on notice when, in many cases, they could be handed in and therefore shorten the time and allow the question period to be used for questions without notice.

There are some other aspects of the matter under discussion which I think could be a move in the right direction. However, I think I should leave it at that for the time being. I move the motion as it is worded so that we have sessional Standing Orders in respect of sitting hours which will permit us to operate in the meantime.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [5.22 p.m.]: I support the motion with some reservation and some disappointment. I

am on record in this Parliament as having expressed the opinion on a number of occasions over the past 18 or 19 years that we needed more reasonable sitting hours. I suppose the fact that I have mentioned this for so long must prove that I have been wrong, because in the past 18 or 19 years there has been no change. Presumably we did not need a change before.

We did make some progress last year when I approached the Premier and he asked the then Deputy Premier to appoint a committee consisting of themselves and the member for Narrogin and the member for Welshpool and perhaps two others—

Mr Harman: And the member for Perth.

Mr Jamieson: The member for Cockburn.

Mr DAVIES: —to review hours. They had one sitting but nothing eventuated. I suppose the fact that the then Deputy Premier, as the chairman of the committee, was retiring from Parliament did not inspire him to do anything about it. I would have thought it would be a grand opportunity to recommend that we sit from 8.30 in the morning to late at night!

After the election this year I again approached the Premier. The Government appointed the new Deputy Premier and some action was taken. There was a meeting with the member for Welshpool and the member for Perth and the recommendation was made which was, of course, greeted at first with some alarm because it was a change, and this is where the innate conservatism of politicians becomes paramount. All the reasons in the world are found for not doing things rather than reasons for doing them.

The matter has been discussed in our party room but I do not know whether it has been discussed in the Liberal and the National Country Party rooms. I do not know the position in regard to the National Party, but there are still some matters to be ironed out.

Mr Stephens: That is the first reference today to the National Party. Thank you.

Mr DAVIES: I hope it is not long before the matters are ironed out and the situation is resolved. I had hoped that we would try the new sitting hours up to the end of September, when the House rises for a week for the Royal Show. That would have been a good trial period.

There have been some remarks made by members who do not want to change the hours.

Country members cannot expect city members to arrange everything according to their wishes and vice versa. There has to be some compromise, as is generally the case. I believe the system which had been proposed was a very good one because it would have been for a trial period.

I think the outcome was that members would have been sitting in Parliament for longer hours, and this would have been desirable, particularly since it has been so long since we sat. We have a tremendous amount of work to do with both the Address-in-Reply and the Budget debate to be dealt with before the session finishes. This would have been an ideal situation.

I do not believe legislation is made any better if members are sitting around dozing or if they are alert and wanting to enter into the debate. So few Government members enter into debate. So far as the Opposition is concerned, we usually allocate one or two speakers to present our views.

Mr Sibson: Usually two each hour.

Mr DAVIES: I thought the "Chief Secretary" had found something important to add, apart from matters of hanging. We need to be a little venturesome and try the new hours and if we find they are not satisfactory we do not have to continue with them. We can try a new tack.

There are always people who oppose change. They find cases for not going ahead rather than for going ahead.

I am disappointed we are not going ahead with the new hours as proposed. I am not surprised that the conservatives are holding them back again. I am prepared, of course, to go along with the motion because, as the Premier says, we have to have established sitting hours so we know where we are going. However I hope by this time next week we will be able to rescind this motion and commence the new sitting hours.

The Clerk was telling me of his period in the House of Commons in London where they do not stop for meals and afternoon tea. There is a running buffet in the dining room and members move through the House at different times. The fact that we break for lunch at 12.30 p.m. each day does not mean we have to stop for lunch at 12.30 p.m. Many members possibly skip lunch or would prefer to eat at 2.30 p.m.

That is the experience of the Clerk and the Chairman of Committees who also has been overseas to see how systems operate in other Parliaments. We have held the belief that ours is the right way and we must not change.

I do hope that by this time next week we will have come to some agreement on a change which will provide a more practical set of hours for members which will be able to meet everybody's needs. We know country members sometimes have to go down town to introduce deputations to Ministers. These deputations could be introduced to the Ministers at Parliament House. There is also the need at times to take people to lunch on a Wednesday or Thursday, and it is unfortunate that members will not be able to take them to lunch in the dining room but they can go to the Celtic Club or many other places down town. It is not absolutely necessary to entertain here.

We can co-operate and be sensible about matters; the Premier is always good about that. If we have not had a lead speaker available he has always been able to let the matter slide for an hour, or even a day, and this is a happy arrangement that we have made.

I congratulate the Deputy Premier on moving on the matter and bringing down a recommendation quickly. I am sad for him it has not been wholly accepted by his party. There are some reservations as far as the Opposition is concerned but we are prepared to give it a go. I hope by this time next week we will be able to rescind this motion and provide for some practical hours on a trial basis.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS: PRECEDENCE

Tuesdays and Thursdays

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)

[5.27 p.m.]: I move—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

This is consistent with the notice of motion and I also wish to advise that if we bring in revised sitting hours, and they are along the lines of those being discussed between the Opposition and the Government, it will be necessary to modify this motion also. However, in the interests of regularity at the moment, I move the motion as it is shown on today's notice paper.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Appointment

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)

[5.28 p.m.]: I move—

That for the present session—

- (1) The Library Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Tubby and Mr B. T. Burke.

- (2) The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr Sibson, Mr Bateman and Mr Skidmore.

- (3) The House Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Old, Mr Nanovich, Mr Jamieson and Mr T. J. Burke.

- (4) The Printing Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Williams and Mr Skidmore.

- (5) The Public Accounts Committee shall consist of Mr Watt, Mr Herzfeld, Mr Crane, Mr E. T. Evans and Mr Parker.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [5.29 p.m.]: I understand that last Thursday there was some departure from tradition when the Leader of the Opposition took up the debate on the Address-in-Reply immediately. I understand that this caused some people to be a little shocked and disturbed because it was said to be a departure from traditional custom. I just wonder how upset those same people were when there was a departure from tradition and custom in 1975 in the Federal Parliament, instigated by Barwick, Kerr, and Fraser. Of course, in that year and in previous years there were other remarkable departures from tradition.

I wish to express the personal hope that the departure of last Thursday will mean further departures and some action on the matter involving the fair voting in Western Australia, a matter which was taken up in South Australia as long as 25 years ago.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out on Thursday—and I add, so eloquently—that this Parliament from time to time produces decisions, laws and the like which more by accident than as a result of calculation reflect the will of the people.

As I have pointed out previously from time to time, this Parliament is corrupt in the sense that it is not a properly elected Parliament. There are two matters which I will touch on very briefly because I need this background for what I am about to say. In this State we have elections without choice. That is the first thing we have. For example, when the Premier announced the election for the Upper House earlier this year, anybody who knew anything at all knew what the result would be immediately the announcement

was made. There was no need for an announcement at all.

Sir Charles Court: What is this all about?

The SPEAKER: Order! Could I ask the member for Mt. Hawthorn to resume his seat. I would like the member to explain to me how the remarks he is making relate to the motion which we have before us.

Mr BERTRAM: I will do that with great pleasure.

Mr O'Connor: I hope, not at great length.

Mr BERTRAM: You, Mr Speaker, will appreciate that it is not uncommon in a forum such as this—and in many other forums for that matter—for the presiding officer, whether he be a Speaker, a President, or a judge, to allow a person to speak for a moment or two in order to create an environment, if one likes, or a basis from which one can make one's remarks. Otherwise, of course, the speaker—in this case myself—is placed at a distinct disadvantage.

The other point I want to make—and I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, will see how this has relevance to my remarks—is that this institution also can properly be described as a single party Parliament. There has ever been only one party in power in this place. That is thoroughly unsatisfactory.

It is incumbent upon members in this place—and certainly incumbent upon members of the Opposition—to be very careful to see that they do not do things which will show, or tend to show, that this place is a regular Parliament. That is an obligation which rests very heavily upon the Opposition, and Oppositions in the future. In my view the Opposition should give a tremendous amount of thought to taking every opportunity to demonstrate the fact that this Parliament is rigged. That is the view which the Opposition takes, as is well known to this Parliament and as has been well known to preceding Parliaments.

It is true that members of this Parliament, and the people of this State—a population of more than one million—are duty bound to comply with the laws of this State. The people have no choice. But, as I see the situation, the members of this Opposition have no obligation at all to aid and abet this Parliament by becoming members of standing committees.

The SPEAKER: Ah!

Mr Harman: Patience!

Mr BERTRAM: Patience is a virtue, which you, Mr Speaker, have. It has been suggested that I also have patience so two of us have that quality.

As I said, the time has arrived—I think it is overdue—for members of the Opposition to consider refraining from joining Standing Committees either now or in the future. There is ample precedent for that boycott procedure, and I will give one example which no doubt will be sufficient. It will be remembered how the Court Government boycotted a Constitutional Convention held in Melbourne about 1975. It is that precedent, and others which are available, on which I rely to show that nobody from the Government side will be shocked because the Government opposite led the way in this matter. I suggest the Opposition should give a lot of thought to the matter at this stage.

Mr O'Connor: I am sure members of the Opposition will.

Mr BERTRAM: The Opposition should be giving a lot of thought to boycotting these Standing Committees.

Another matter which causes me some interest in these Standing Committees is the fact that no fewer than the equivalent of 37 members of this Parliament are involved in manning these Standing Committees. A total of 37 members on four or five committees. Each committee is effectively a joint committee, with the exception of the Public Accounts Committee. I believe a total of 16 members from the other place sit on committees, and about 21 members from this Legislative Assembly sit on those Standing Committees. That is grossly excessive and thoroughly inefficient, and reflects no credit on this place.

In part justification for my remarks I will give one or two statistics. The BHP Co. Ltd., for example, has a market capitalisation approaching \$4 500 million, and has 12 directors. Conzinc Riotinto has a market capitalisation of almost \$2 000 million with 14 directors; CSR has 11 directors; MIM has 10 directors; Western Mining has nine directors; and Hamersley Iron has nine directors. Those companies have huge capital investments and they are huge enterprises with their operations extending over vast areas, and they are run by a handful of directors.

We have in this place joint Standing Orders and at about page 95 of the relevant booklet it is set out that we need the equivalent of 37 members to do a small job here. That is a staggering situation and needs to be looked at and improved upon.

The joint Standing Orders Committee consists of five members from this Chamber and five members from another place. In fact, there are 10 members on the Standing Orders Committee.

Heaven only knows what they do! With due respect, Mr Speaker, when dealing with contentious matters the members of that committee are not likely to get very far and can be effective only when dealing with fairly uncontentious matters. In any event I put to you, Mr Speaker—and to other members—that the other place has jurisdiction under the Constitution to do what we can do in this place. That situation is the result of a recent amendment to the Constitution. I am therefore a little puzzled as to why we have a set of Standing Orders in this place different from those in another place, and I hope that in the fairly near future something will be done about that. Either our Standing Orders are unsatisfactory, or the Standing Orders of the other place are unsatisfactory; maybe a satisfactory blend can be reached. The reason we need 10 members fiddling around on the Standing Orders Committee escapes me. I hope that in the near future one set of Standing Orders will be adopted and we will be a little more realistic.

Another committee which has always caused me to be somewhat curious, and almost amused, is the Joint House Committee. I do not know precisely what it does to justify its existence. It may do a wonderful job, and do it silently, but the only actions I hear about is what icecream we should eat, whether we should wear coats in the dining room, or whether the bar facilities should be extended. I am sure the member for Morley understands what I am talking about. There are approximately 10 people on the Joint House Committee, including the Speaker and the President. I believe the Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House was a former member of that committee.

In view of the jobs done by directors of private companies, it seems to me to be extraordinary that we should have 10 of the leading members of this Parliament spending their time on the Joint House Committee. I hope somebody will be able to explain to this House shortly—or at an early time in the future—the justification for stacking up 10 members, including the Speaker and the President, on the prestigious—as I think it is—Joint House Committee. That seems to me to be asking a large number of people to do very little, and something should be done about that. The fact that we have had on the Joint House Committee 10 members for the last 50, 60, or more years does not mean we should have the same situation in 1980.

I have already said this Parliament is a one-party Parliament. That is a fact; only one party has ever had power here. The other parties merely make up the numbers. That places us in the

position where every joint committee is permanently controlled by members of the Government. I may be wrong on that point, but that is what I am arguing. It seems wrong that every one of the joint committees should be dominated by the conservative forces, and the Labor Party committee members simply tag along. They should be able to express their views, and have them considered objectively. I do not believe that when a member goes on to a committee of this Parliament he suddenly abandons his political ideology, and becomes concerned only with the matter at hand. That is what some people believe, but I do not share that belief. Of course, there are exceptions to it in the same way as there are exceptions to every rule. Let us concede the exception but, generally speaking, when a person becomes a member of a committee he places the interests of his party before the interests of the committee. The Minister for Health can understand the situation; he was on the Public Accounts Committee and as we saw last year he put his party before the interests of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr Young: Rubbish!

Mr BERTRAM: That is how it came out in the wash. It will be remembered that the Opposition members on the Public Accounts Committee either resigned or did not take part in the activities of the committee. Are we to assume that within a few weeks or a few months the Public Accounts Committee suddenly will function properly and objectively and that party alignments will not continue? I do not subscribe to that view, and neither does the member for Morley. Nor should he.

I happen to have been on the Public Accounts Committee for some time and, therefore, I believe I am in a position to make an assessment on these matters. The point I particularly want to make with regard to the Public Accounts Committee is that I do not believe it is worth continuing in its present form.

It is essential that we have a Public Accounts Committee, but not one as it presently operates. If the committee were conducting an inquiry into the operations of the Royal Perth Hospital, we can assume that the first person to give evidence before the committee would be the Administrator of the Royal Perth Hospital, but then who would be in the position to challenge his evidence? All the committee can do is to call as a witness an accountant or a person lower in the hierarchy than the administrator.

If we are to persevere with a Public Accounts Committee, we must give it some additional

powers, such as those of officers of the Australian Taxation Office who have power to carry out audits to ascertain facts.

What we need is evidence from an independent source—evidence from people who will not be concerned with the possible repercussions to themselves. It is very difficult for employees of a particular department or organisation to give evidence which does not agree with that given by its chiefs. Until we give the Public Accounts Committee such powers, it is really wasting the time of its members.

Members will remember that this Parliament passed legislation to set up a Legislative Review and Advisory Committee. This committee was set up to carry out the tasks which members of Parliament should carry out. It would be a great deal fairer to the taxpayers to wind up this committee and let members of Parliament get on with the business of looking at the legislation and regulations coming before this Parliament.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [5.48 p.m.]: I would like to add a few comments to this debate. No doubt all members of this Chamber are aware that gradually the dignity of Parliament is being eroded. Indeed, many members have expressed concern at the lack of public respect for this institution. We realise, however, that this is due partly to the public realisation of the complete impotence of this Chamber to be anything other than a rubber stamp for the decisions of Cabinet.

This situation has developed over a period of years, and it is contrary to the best interests of the community. It is no good acknowledging that the situation exists unless we are prepared to do something about it. A motion such as the one before us now gives us such opportunity.

Of course we are aware that Parliament consists of representatives of many diverse areas and of many diverse community interests. We come here with thoughts of acting to promote the interest of Western Australia in particular and the Commonwealth in general, with particular concern to look after the areas we have the privilege to represent. The common good, and indeed, democracy itself, is at risk if the will of the majority prevails without any thought for the interests of minority sections. I do not believe that the interests of minority sections are considered sufficiently by this Parliament and even by the Commonwealth Parliament.

I was pleased to notice a recent Press report to the effect that the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Peacock) said that it is not always the case that one side of the House is right and the other side is wrong. It is time all members

realised that, and more particularly, Government members must be prepared to listen to and take cognisance of other points of view.

It is my belief that the present denigration of Parliament is adding to the divisiveness within our community. Members of this House now have an opportunity to take the first step towards rectifying the situation. The motion we are debating is to elect committees of this House—they are not committees appointed by the Executive.

Last Thursday afternoon the National Party was very proud to take an action in this Chamber to give members an opportunity to elect a Speaker. Consistent with that action, we believe we should give members the opportunity to vote freely to elect the members of these committees. We should not simply rubber stamp a decision of the Executive.

The only way to achieve a free vote on this motion is to give members the opportunity of a secret ballot so they may express their point of view without any undue influence, although, bearing in mind an incident that occurred in this Chamber last Thursday, we may doubt even that a secret ballot can be conducted without undue influence.

Amendment to Motion

Mr STEPHENS: I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the words "the Chairman of Committees" in part (2) of the motion with a view to inserting other words.

So that members may be aware of what the National Party has in mind, the "other words" are as follows—

and three other members chosen by secret ballot from Mr Sibson, Mr Bateman, Mr Skidmore, and Mr Cowan.

I hope those members who are free to make their own choice will support my amendment. It is only fair we should include a member of the National Party on the Standing Orders Committee. We are quite prepared to submit the name of a National Party member to give this House the opportunity to vote for or against our candidate.

I should like to draw to the attention of the House, and particularly to members of the Liberal Party that, whether they like it or not, the National Party now is a fact of life. We have been established in this House by a vote of the people, and we are here representing people. I believe the point of view of those people can more properly be taken into consideration if the National Party has

the opportunity to serve on some of these committees.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.54 p.m.]: We have heard two extraordinary speeches, one from the member for Mt. Hawthorn—

Mr Tonkin: And now we are about to hear a very ordinary one.

Point of Order

Mr JAMIESON: Is the Premier now closing the debate, or speaking to the amendment?

The SPEAKER: I take it the Premier is speaking to the amendment.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Sir CHARLES COURT: We have heard two extraordinary speeches, one from the member for Mt. Hawthorn, and the other from the member for Stirling. I think even the colleagues of the member for Mt. Hawthorn were rather bewildered during the first few minutes of his speech—we on this side certainly were—as to how he was going to relate his remarks to the motion before the House. The honourable member did not succeed very well in making his remarks relevant at any point during his speech.

Mr Tonkin: He was quite relevant to the subject.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I imagine the member for Morley was bowing his head in horror, because he is one who advocates more Standing Committees, whereas the member for Mt. Hawthorn—one of his colleagues—was giving us a discourse on why we should abandon these committees, claiming an excessive number of members were involved, and that the committees were inefficient. Be that as it may, I think we will take the comments of the member for Mt. Hawthorn with a grain of salt, and leave the matter at that.

I can assume only that the member for Stirling moved his motion with a degree of mischief in mind, in order to try to achieve some publicity for his group. Most members would understand that these committees have been established for a long time and are very much part of the procedures of this House.

It is quite wrong for the member for Stirling to say that these committees are “appointments from the Executive”—to use his own phrase. Having been a Minister for a while, the member for Stirling should know that these names come forward from the parties concerned. The Australian Labor Party nominates its members,

just as the Liberal Party puts forward its candidates. It is not the Premier, the Government or the Executive of the day who nominates who will sit on these committees. In the case of a Liberal-National Country Party coalition Government, the Liberal Party nominates its candidates, while the Leader of the National Country Party puts forward members he believes should be elected. He nominates members as a party man, and not as a part of the Government. Likewise, the Leader of the Opposition nominates his members on behalf of the Australian Labor Party.

So, it was quite wrong for the member for Stirling to say that these are appointments from the Executive.

Mr Stephens: I did not say that. I said we should realise in this House that they are not appointments of the Executive and that therefore, we should vote on the matter. Do not misquote me.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am repeating what the member for Stirling said before he got around to moving his motion.

Mr Stephens: Then say it in the correct sequence. You are a past master at misquoting people.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is no good the member for Stirling coming in belatedly with an explanation; I understood him to say that these committees are appointments from the Executive.

Mr Pearce: How are your members selected? Does the Executive simply decide who shall serve on these committees, or do you have a free vote like the Australian Labor Party?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Certainly, we do not put the matter to a Caucus, as the Australian Labor Party does.

Mr Davies: Do not kid yourself! You are exactly the same, except that you wield a big stick.

Mr Pearce: How do we know these names are acceptable to your own party?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I come back to the point that these committees do fulfil an important role. The member for Mt. Hawthorn denigrated the work of these committees, particularly the House Committee. We owe a lot to the House Committee for the way it has looked after the interests of members over the years. Its members receive more abuse than thanks, but I believe they zealously and conscientiously endeavour to look after the interests of members.

The appointment of a House Committee is a very practical way of handling these matters; I

know of no other way of doing it. Certainly, if we appointed some outside body there would be never-ending complaints. At least we have members appointed by this place, and they do their utmost to look after the interests of members.

I see no good purpose in what the member for Stirling proposes, and I oppose his amendment.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [6.00 p.m.]: I was concerned when I saw the list of names as there was no representation from the National Party. I was also concerned that the National Country Party seemed to have representation out of all proportion to its numbers in the House. For instance, two members are named—Mr Old and Mr Crane—and the National Country Party, as I recall, has three members only in the House. There are three members also of the National Party.

I would have imagined that the Government would realise the members of the National Party are supporters of the Government, and would have sought a nomination from the National Party.

Sir Charles Court: You could have fooled us.

Mr DAVIES: The members of the National Party are still sitting on the Government side. The Premier is fooled easily, apparently. If he has a look at their voting record, he will find they voted fairly consistently with the Government on most issues. They are still sitting on the Government side; and it is London to a brick on that there will not be many occasions during this session of the Parliament when we will enjoy their support.

I believe the members of the National Party are properly part of the Government, and that they should have some representation on these committees. However, that should not be at the expense of the Australian Labor Party or the Opposition.

It seems we have a couple of gigglers here already. One of those with the loudest laugh leads a party with three members in this House—

Mr Pearce: You mean 1½ members.

Mr DAVIES: That leader has something to be proud of, I suppose. He receives all the perks and privileges of being the leader of a party. That party had a swing against it in the country, yet he finds great amusement in the fact that his party was almost decimated.

The Leader of the National Country Party is prepared to be a member of the House Committee. We will probably receive extra cream

on our pudding with National Country Party men on the House committee.

I do not denigrate the work of the committees, but I would like to see them balanced properly. I know that some of the committees have met rarely in the past. I know one committee is breaking its neck to meet. However, the fact remains that what comes out of a committee is only in proportion to what is put into it.

If the committees are to be properly representative they should have representation from the National Party. There are two members out of three of the National Country Party who are nominated for committees, but there are no members of the National Party nominated. However, I do not propose to sacrifice or put at risk any of our members because I believe they should be members of the committees to maintain a balance. In this instance, I would not want to see either the member for Canning or the member for Swan put at risk.

For that reason, I will not support the amendment, I am sorry to say. I believe that if members of the National Party are to go onto this committee in particular, they should be given the opportunity to serve on the other committees as well. I am not trying to be a "dog in the manger" on this. I suppose we could try to obtain some political advantage by going along with what the Premier would probably call "political skulduggery"; but there is no need for that. It is simply a matter of not putting our members at risk, as against the others.

Of course, if one considers the members in this House and the way they have ganged up, and if one considers the way there was a non-party election for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, one could see what the outcome would be. For those very sound reasons, I will not support the amendment.

I am disappointed that the Government did not explain or attempt to explain why there was no member of the National Party nominated for any of those five committees.

Amendment put and a division called for.

Bells rung and the House divided.

The SPEAKER: I appoint the member for Mt. Marshall teller for the ayes and the members for Murray and Canning tellers for the noes. I point

out that is a departure from the Standing Order which provides that a teller be appointed from both sides of the House; but in the circumstances the job would be too big for one man.

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 3

Mr Cowan

Mr Stephens
Mr McPharlin

(Teller)

Noes 48

Mr Barnett
Mr Bertram
Mr Bridge
Mr B. T. Burke
Mr T. J. Burke
Mr Carr
Mr Clarko
Sir Charles Court
Mr Coyne
Mrs Craig
Dr Dadour
Mr Davies
Mr E. T. Evans
Mr H. D. Evans
Mr Grayden
Mr Grewar
Mr Grill
Mr Harman
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr Hodge
Mr Jamieson
Mr P. V. Jones

Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Laurance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr McIver
Mr Mensaros
Mr Nanovich
Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr Parker
Mr Pearce
Mr Rushton
Mr Sibson
Mr Skidmore
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Taylor
Mr Tonkin
Mr Trethowan
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Wilson
Mr Young
Mr Bateman
Mr Shalders

(Teller)

(Teller)

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR COWAN (Merredin) [6.08 p.m.]: I do not wish to repeat the words spoken by my colleague, the member for Stirling, but there are certain things which I believe should be stated. I am very disappointed that the leaders of the two major parties in this House were not prepared to allow the members of this Parliament to exercise their democratic right in accordance with the Standing Orders under which we operate.

I take issue with the Premier's comment that the member for Stirling was creating mischief. Of course, that depends entirely on how one defines the word. I repeat: a member of this House attempting only to exercise his democratic right in seeking to change the way in which the House elects its members to a Standing Committee is not being mischievous.

I would agree that any person in some position of responsibility who tries to deny an elected Government's supply, as the Premier did in 1971, is being mischievous.

Mr H. D. Evans: It was 1973.

Mr COWAN: Thank you, you are right. I certainly do not believe any member who takes action under Standing Orders, and in particular Standing Order No. 405 and others relating to the appointment of sessional committees, can be considered to be mischievous.

As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to ensure the National Party's desire to have a ballot for the three sessional committees—on which we believe we deserve representation—should continue to take place. If that means we are going to have the Liberal Party and the National Country Party voting with the Labor Party, we are quite happy. It might serve to remind the Premier that one is not necessarily coloured by the politics of those one happens to be with on a particular side of the House.

Amendments to Motion

Mr COWAN: I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the words "Mr Speaker" in part (3) of the motion with a view to inserting

Members will recall that the member for Mt. Marshall has previously served on the Joint House Committee, and I have not heard a complaint from any member of this place about the service he gave. I can only draw the conclusion, and quite rightly so, that his replacement was a political manoeuvre.

I would like to see members of this Parliament given the opportunity to vote for the members they favour rather than for the members nominated by the Premier. Just as it is the Premier's right to nominate members to this committee, it is also my right to nominate other members and to seek a ballot for their election.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 3

Mr Cowan

Mr Stephens
Mr McPharlin

(Teller)

Noes 48

Mr Barnett	Mr MacKinnon	
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver	
Mr Bridge	Mr Mensaros	
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Nanovich	
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr O'Connor	
Mr Carr	Mr Old	
Mr Clarko	Mr Parker	
Sir Charles Court	Mr Pearce	
Mr Coyne	Mr Rushton	
Mrs Craig	Mr Sibson	
Dr Dadour	Mr Skidmore	
Mr Davies	Mr Sodeman	
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Spriggs	
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Taylor	
Mr Grayden	Mr Tonkin	
Mr Grewar	Mr Trethowan	
Mr Grill	Mr Tubby	
Mr Harman	Mr Watt	
Mr Hassell	Mr Williams	
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Wilson	
Mr Hodge	Mr Young	
Mr Jamieson	Mr Bateman	(Teller)
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Shalders	(Teller)
Mr T. H. Jones		
Mr Laurance		

Amendment thus negated.

(Sitting suspended from 6.17 to 7.30 p.m.)

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [7.30 p.m.]:

I move an amendment—

All words after the words "shall consist of" in part (5) of the motion.

It is my intention that those words be deleted with a view to substituting the words "and five other members chosen by secret ballot from Mr Watt, Mr Herzfeld, Mr Crane, Mr E. T. Evans, Mr Parker, and Mr Stephens."

Part (5) refers to the Public Accounts Committee which fulfils an important function. When Sir David Brand was Premier there was some reluctance to set up a Public Accounts Committee. However, such a committee came into being and it has served a useful purpose over the years.

For a period in 1978 the Public Accounts Committee went into abeyance when the member for Merredin, who was a member of the committee, left the National Country Party, as a result of which he was no longer a member of the committee.

It appears that the committee has now been reformed. The Public Accounts Committee is one of the most important committees of the House. Therefore, it would be appropriate if the relevant Standing Order were put into operation so that the members appointed to the Public Accounts Committee are elected by secret ballot.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 3

Mr Stephens
Mr McPharlin

(Teller)

Noes 48

Mr Barnett	Mr P. V. Jones
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Blaikie	Mr Laurance
Mr Bridge	Mr MacKinnon
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Mensaros
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Nanovich
Mr Carr	Mr O'Connor
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Sir Charles Court	Mr Parker
Mr Coyne	Mr Pearce
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Dr Dadour	Mr Sibson
Mr Davies	Mr Skidmore
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Sodeman
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Taylor
Mr Grewar	Mr Tonkin
Mr Grill	Mr Trethowan
Mr Harman	Mr Tubby
Mr Hassell	Mr Watt
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Williams
Mr Hodge	Mr Wilson
Mr Jamieson	Mr Young
	Mr Bateman
	Mr Shalders

(Teller)
(Teller)

Amendment thus negated.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [7.36 p.m.]: As all the amendments have now been dealt with, I should like to address myself briefly to the motion. My reason for doing this is that, if I remain silent, it might be felt that I approved of some of the remarks made earlier in the House, when in fact that is not the case.

I have had experience with only one of the committees of the House, and it is only as a result of my being a member of long standing that I am familiar with the operations of the other committees. All of the committees of the House have undergone difficulties at various times. I understand one of the committees is experiencing problems at the moment. However, I was a member of the House Committee for 18 consecutive years and I have once again been nominated to that committee; therefore, I am able to say that a great deal of work is required of members appointed to committees. Such an appointment would certainly not suit a lazy person.

Members who are not familiar with the activities of committees may be critical of them; but I have had experience with them and I am familiar with the work in which they are involved.

When I first became a member of the House I, along with other members, endeavoured to

improve the conditions under which the committees of the House operated. We met with some degree of success and, over the years the Government of the day has continued to improve the facilities available to committees. Adequate accommodation was provided and suitable staff was obtained. It was then necessary to ensure the wages paid to the staff were of the right order. This was necessary because, Sir, you will recall that, in its wisdom, the Government passed legislation prohibiting the staff of Parliament House from belonging to unions.

Mr Davies: Shame!

Mr JAMIESON: Therefore, it is necessary for someone to look after the wages and conditions of the staff of Parliament House. The same situation applies in regard to electorate secretaries. At the present time the member for Canning is involved with a subcommittee which is endeavouring to obtain better conditions for electorate offices and secretaries. He has spent a great deal of time on this particular issue. Members who have been appointed to various other subcommittees have found the work time consuming. Members do not receive extra pay for their work. However, if one is elected to Parliament, one should take an active interest in these matters. Whether one is involved with the Library Committee, the Standing Orders Committee, or the House Committee, one should apply oneself in the best possible manner. This is a voluntary service which is not covered by the remuneration one receives as a representative of the people of a particular electorate.

I wish to add that the only disconcerting factor I see about the House Committee is its consistent attitude of conservatism. I know the Speaker is not to blame for the matter I will now mention.

The Speaker's predecessor, in his wisdom, determined that because all other Parliaments in Australia have as Chairman of the Joint House Committee the presiding officer from the Lower House, he thought it was right and proper that the position should rotate annually between the two Houses. For several years it was on the House Committee record that this should happen; however it did not. I cannot give the reasons because I was not on the House Committee when that rule was adopted.

Recently it was changed and, I reiterate, it was not the fault of the Speaker, because I know he wished to carry on as his predecessor had.

I hoped members would be interested in their own party system and that before long they would realise the right and proper chairmanship of the House Committee should reside for at least half of the term in the House that had the greatest

number of members and the other for the remainder.

Many members would not be aware of these sorts of things. The committee attempts to achieve many improvements for the members and staff. The committee does all those one-hundred-and-one things that are necessary.

The members of the committee need to be energetic enough to carry out these functions. Sometimes the committee in its entirety is required for some of the greater problems we have to solve, whilst at other times individual members can undertake the necessary duties.

We have found the system which existed worked fairly well in the main. I think the House Committee can work without political schisms because it is looking after the interests of members; not the interests of electorates and interests of political flavours. It does happen that there are occasional philosophical differences. One of the classic examples was the native stone which was buried under the lawn at Parliament House. We had many problems over that, and at various times we have converted ourselves into a Parliament House Board to control some people who wished to camp on the grounds of Parliament House.

The committee has attempted to deal with these problems without issuing any instructions or involving the police. It has attempted to administer sensibly the affairs of the Parliament House building and surrounds. Members should be aware that this takes up time, and it is necessary to have this time devoted to these tasks so that the welfare of all in the Parliament of Western Australia can be cared for.

I am aware that in the past the Printing Committee did not meet for two years, or that some other committees did not meet for some time. Another committee which has been a little discordant over the last few years is the Public Accounts Committee.

In a committee where there are political differences and appointees are from different parties, the administration of the State can be seen to require different action, and as a consequence the members will line up in accordance with their political persuasion.

This situation is not all that bad, because it gives the party of the lesser members the advantage of prying into Government actions to which they would not have access outside this committee.

There were certain reasons that made this an advantage at one time. However, I will leave it lie at this juncture.

For the benefit of new members; the committees are obliged to table reports to the Parliament from time to time.

I think this committee will have success, and I see there will be benefit from its being added to the other Standing or Sessional Committees. I suggest, until we come up with a better way of administering the affairs of this Parliament, we must certainly go along with the appointment of these committees so that we have representatives thus enabling us to know what is going on and the reasons for such actions.

Question put and passed

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION FUND

Appointment of Trustees

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [7.45 p.m.]: I move—

That pursuant to the provisions of the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, 1970-1976, the Legislative Assembly hereby appoints the Member for Murchison-Eyre (Mr Coyne) and the Member for Collie (Mr T. H. Jones) to be Trustees of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund as from this day.

Members will no doubt be aware that the Legislative Council also appoints members who join together as the trustees of this particular fund. The Treasurer *ex officio* acts as the chairman of trustees, and it is customary at the commencement of a new Parliament for the trustees to be appointed.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY BILL

Standing Orders Suspension

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [7.46 p.m.]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a Supply Bill to be introduced without notice and passed through all its stages in one sitting, and to enable this business to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-Reply is adopted.

I will explain later the reasons for the introduction of a Supply Bill at this time, because there has been a change in procedure since the amendment to the Audit Act. However, I will leave my explanation until I introduce the Bill. Suffice to say, it is necessary, when the Government meets the Parliament, to make a priority item of business the procurement of

supply, particularly in an election year when it has not been possible to have a carry-over supply passed by the House in May, as has been our custom in the last two years. That is the reason we must, of necessity, pass this as a matter of priority before we embark on the main business of the House.

Question put and passed.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [7.51 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This measure seeks the grant of supply to Her Majesty of \$910 million for the works and services of the year ending the 30th June, 1981, pending the passage of Appropriation Bills later in the year.

Before I move on to the actual provisions of the Bill I would like to recount the change that has taken place in recent years in seeking the grant of supply.

Prior to 1978 it had been the practice of successive Governments for many years to introduce a Supply Bill at the beginning of the Budget session of Parliament, usually at the end of July or early August. This practice had its origin in the years when Parliament did not normally sit in the first six months of the calendar year and there was no practicable opportunity for the Government of the day to obtain supply before the 1st July of the ensuing financial year.

Although this procedure had been accepted by Parliament and sustained by custom and tradition, it meant that Governments had expended moneys from the Public Account in the initial weeks of a financial year in reliance upon subsequent ratification of this action by Parliament when a Supply Bill is passed.

Strictly speaking this custom was in conflict with the intent of the Constitution Act which provides for the appropriation by the Legislature of moneys from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It was decided, therefore, to seek supply for the ensuing financial year in the autumn sitting of Parliament. This was done in each of the years 1978 and 1979.

However, this procedure cannot be followed in an election year where there is normally no sitting

of Parliament before the commencement of the new financial year.

Members will recall that, to regularise the situation in these years, the Audit Act was amended to provide for an automatic grant of supply for the first weeks of the new financial year.

The authority provided by that amendment to the Audit Act limits both the amount of supply which is provided automatically and the period for which it is available. The authority given to the Government to expend funds in the first two months of the year is limited to one-fifth of the expenditure authorised by the Appropriation Act for the preceding financial year. This limit provides for reasonable requirements for two months allowing for cost increases during the preceding year.

The limits imposed on the automatic provision of supply are intended to require the Government of the day to bring down a Supply Bill as soon as Parliament is in session and pending the passage of the Appropriation Bills, in line with normal parliamentary procedure.

With the introduction of the new supply arrangements from 1978, the practice by the Treasurer of giving an account of the financial transactions of the previous financial year when speaking to the Supply Bill was discontinued. In accordance with my undertaking to Parliament, I have circulated to members a statement on last year's results and I do not propose to traverse that ground again. Full details of transactions for 1979-80 will be laid before Parliament in the Statement of Public Accounts accompanying the Auditor General's Report.

At the conclusion of my remarks, Mr Speaker, I will seek your permission to table a copy of the Press release and the statement which was circulated to members after the closing of the Government's accounts for the year ended the 30th June, 1980. Of course all members individually have received a copy of both the Press release and the financial summary issued at that time.

The task the Government faces in framing the Budget for 1980-81 is the most difficult during the period I have been Treasurer.

Across-the-board increases in public sector salary and wage levels and a significant lift in the price of petroleum products are adding to the cost of providing Government services at an alarming rate.

Mr H. D. Evans: Whose fault is that?

Sir CHARLES COURT: To continue: The resulting rate of growth of expenditure on existing activities alone is outstripping the rate of growth of our revenues. Moreover, the Commonwealth Government has decided to maintain contributions for the community health, school dental, childhood services, and agricultural extension services programmes at the 1979-80 dollar amounts.

These factors, particularly salary increases over and above those resulting from national wage indexation decisions, have created severe budgetary problems for the Government. There is no doubt that expenditure will have to be curtailed with greater severity than has been the case in recent years, and the Government has had to review and increase charges for a wide range of services in an effort to recover the increased costs with which we are faced. The only alternative is to cut back on staff and the services provided and, indeed, the latter course may prove to be necessary before a tractable Budget can be presented to Parliament.

On the capital side, the general purpose capital allocation approved by Loan Council allowed for an increase of only 5 per cent. There was no increase in the basic borrowing programmes of larger authorities. These decisions mean that the increase in funds available to the Government for its normal works programme are less than the inflation rate in the building and construction industry and impose serious difficulties upon us in putting together a balanced and effective capital works programme.

I will have more to say on these issues when I present the Budgets to Parliament in September.

I now turn to the provisions of the Supply Bill before the House.

An issue of \$800 million is sought from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and \$75 million from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund. Provision is also made for an issue of \$35 million to enable the Treasurer to make such temporary advances as may be necessary.

The amounts have been based on needs and estimated costs of maintaining the existing levels of services and no provision has been made for any new initiatives which must await decisions in relation to the revenue and capital budgets to see the extent to which they may be financially possible.

I commend the Bill to members.

I should also mention that when members look at the wording of this Bill they will see that the language used, to say the least, is rather complicated. I must admit every time I have had

to handle it I have had to get out pencil and paper to make sure the Bill means what it says.

As a result of my discussing this matter with the Treasury, I have asked the officers to get together a number of more modern Supply Bills, and in conjunction with our legal drafting people to see whether they can draw up something much less difficult to read than the Bill now before us.

I have been assured again that the Bill means what it says, but I think most members will find it rather complex. The only point I can make in its favour is that it is much less difficult to understand than the original procedures we used to have for granting supply when the Speaker and the Chairman seemed to be in and out of the Chair like Yo-Yos trying to conform with the ancient procedure. We have streamlined that considerably.

I simply mention that we have taken action to see that future Supply Bills will be framed in a more modern and more easily understood verbiage. Of course, that is assuming the legal people do not insist that they have to use the words now used to express the intention of the Bill in that particular way.

I said earlier, Mr Speaker, I would seek your permission to table, for the record, a copy of the statement distributed to all members about the 3rd July, with a copy of the Press release I made on the 3rd July. I repeat: All members have received a copy direct from the Treasury, but I now table a copy for the record.

The papers were tabled (see paper No. 142).

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [8.00 p.m.]: The Supply Bill is a money Bill which gives us the opportunity to discuss all kinds of subjects, but tonight I want to deal with it simply as a money Bill and, although my remarks will be fairly extensive, I will confine them to matters affecting the financial future of this State.

I noticed the alarm and concern expressed by the Premier about the possible future position in this State. While I have a great deal of sympathy for the public, I have very little sympathy for the Premier and his Government and the way they have handled the finances of the State. I believe serious concern is felt about the way the State's finances are being managed. There is cause for alarm about the future. I do not want to make broad, sweeping statements. I want to state how I see the position.

Since the last sitting of Parliament we have had plenty of time to review the State's finances, and I am not happy with what I have found. This evening I want to expose the dishonesty in some

of the State's accounting, which has given rise to my anger and the anger of the people of Western Australia about the position we find ourselves in at the present time. I will demonstrate the extent of the financial disaster that has befallen Western Australia since the introduction of the Fraser Government's so-called new federalism. I will highlight the lack of appropriate controls to ensure cost efficiency and optimum performance of Government agencies in Western Australia, which give cause for great concern.

In the course of doing each of those things I want to explode the myth of the balanced Budget in Western Australia. We have come to accept the myth of the balanced Budget; it is no such thing. I want to sound a warning about the future course of the new federalism. I will talk about the past, but I am more concerned about the future of the new federalism. I will also draw attention to the inadequacy of procedures to ensure the accountability of Government agencies.

I will speak first of all under the subheading "Dishonesty in Accounting". One of the Court Government's principal boasts is that it is a Government of sound financial managers. The enormous increases in all kinds of charges since the last election show that the boast is an absolutely idle one. Surely not so much would have been inflicted on the population in such a relatively short time if members of the Government were sound financial managers. But if the Court Government were guilty of nothing but a lack of modesty in its accounting and financial management, it could be dismissed as simply lacking in grace, and nothing more. However, a great deal more is lacking, of course.

One of the cornerstones of the Government's claims of sound financial management is the fiction that it always balances the Budget; in other words, that it takes from the public only what it needs to cover costs, and nothing more. That claim is quite dishonest; indeed, it is a lie. It does not tell anything like the full story or the true story.

Ever since the Court Government took office it has tried to disguise the true financial position of the State. It has promoted an image of itself as a frugal, careful, and prudent housekeeper, and the truth is that in one area in particular it is a successful and prosperous investor. It has played out the annual charade of the balanced Budget for three reasons, the first being an attempt to reduce criticism of increases in Government charges. The rationale behind that is that if people think the Government is only just covering its expenses, they are likely to be less critical of increases when they come about. Fortunately, as

the outcry we have had this year, particularly in regard to water and sewerage rates, has shown, the public are not prepared to be fooled any longer.

Secondly, the charade is played out to shield the Government's Federal parliamentary colleagues from the wrath they would deservedly encounter if the full effects on Western Australia of their disastrous economic and financial policies were allowed to be felt. The rationale behind this is that it is a Federal election year; and when it is not a Federal election year it does not do any harm at home to make it appear that all the meaningless huffing and puffing about Canberra which is done by the Court Government actually achieves something.

The third reason for the charade is to allow the accumulation of a nest egg to be spent or committed in the months before an election, either by keeping down taxes and charges or by enabling generous promises to be made to the electorate at large.

I said a moment ago that rather than being the frugal and prudent housekeeper it paints itself to be, the Court Government, in one area, is a successful and prosperous investor. That is quite true; but instead of paying handsome dividends from its substantial earnings in this one area to the shareholders who advanced the capital in the first place, the Court Government uses those earnings for rather less worthy activities. It uses the funds to disguise the fact that its Canberra associates are bleeding the enterprise dry; to stop the shareholders growing restless about the frequent calls that are made on their shares in the company's essential services division; and to produce glossy prospectuses and dishonest reports to induce the long-suffering shareholders to re-elect the directors and put their money in again on the promise of a better return next time.

If the members of the Court Government were running a company they would be gaoled every year because their financial reports would be in breach of the Companies Act for not reflecting a true, accurate, fair, and honest picture of the company's financial position. The balanced Budget is a myth. In fact, the Court Government has been running healthy surpluses for many years. I will show members how it is done—and it is not done with mirrors.

I might be excused for explaining to the new members of the House, if they do not already know it, that the State's finances are arranged in four broad categories. We have the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the General Loan Fund, trust funds and suspense accounts, and semi-

Government authorities. When we talk about the State's Budget we are talking about transactions through the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This fund is supposed to meet all the Government's operating expenses and to receive all the revenue earned by the Government; but members should know as well as I do that it does not receive all the revenue.

In fact, a substantial proportion of the Government's revenue never passes through the Consolidated Revenue Fund, but is deliberately kept out of it for the reasons I mentioned earlier: either because it would be politically embarrassing to have a surplus or because the money can be used quietly for purposes which are politically more productive. The revenue which does not pass through the fund is money earned as interest by the Government on funds on hand, but not needed immediately.

It works this way. If the Government has \$10 million in cash on hand and it requires only \$8 million immediately, it invests the surplus on the short-term money market at the best interest rates available. There is nothing wrong with that principle, provided it is carried out in accordance with the law. The interest earned is Government revenue. It is the public's money which is being put to work, and under normal accounting procedures it would be directed to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Of course it is not directed to the Consolidated Revenue Fund; it is held in a Treasury Suspense Account. I have told this House before about this matter, and I will tell it again and again because I believe the Government is being quite dishonest.

Mr Barnett: Again.

Mr DAVIES: On the 20th June, 1974, the amount on hand in that Suspense Account was \$6.4 million. In 1975 it was \$6.5 million; in 1976 it was \$11.5 million; in 1977 it was \$24.5 million; in 1978 it was \$33.4 million; and in 1979 it was \$44.6 million. So the amount in this account rose from \$6.4 million in 1974 to \$44.6 million in 1979. Of course, I do not have the figure as at the 30th June, 1980, as yet, but on the basis of the estimated earnings in 1979-80 and the transfers of money out of the account during the year, I estimate that it would have been between \$25 million and \$30 million. However, we will find out that figure in due course.

These funds ought to be placed in the Consolidated Revenue Fund at the end of the financial year, and ought to be included as part of the State's financial dealings for the year. In other words, they ought to be included in the calculation of the State's surplus or deficit for the

year, but only a small proportion is transferred out to the Consolidated Revenue Fund—just enough so that the Treasurer can claim that he has balanced the Budget and no more.

Thus in 1979-80, the total expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund was \$1 640.9 million. But the income, excluding earnings from the short-term money market, was only \$1 629.5 million, leaving a shortfall of \$11.4 million. So income was \$11.4 million below expenditure.

The Government transferred \$11.4 million from the Treasury Suspense Account, where the short-term money market earnings are kept, to the Consolidated Revenue Fund; just enough to be able to announce a balanced Budget. As I said, it is not done by mirrors and it is not done by chicanery—it is done by the Treasurer having a little nest egg from which he can draw to balance the Budget.

Despite the transfer of that \$11.4 million, I estimate that there would have been between \$25 and \$30 million still in the Suspense Account. If the State's finances were being operated honestly and reported on honestly, that amount would be shown as a surplus. The Budget was not balanced; it was substantially in surplus.

If this proper basis of reporting had been adopted in previous years, the State's budgetary outcome would have differed substantially from the Court Government's claims. I will tell members what the result would have been.

In 1975-76, the Court Government declared a surplus of \$600 000. In fact, the surplus was \$12.1 million. In 1976-77, the declared surplus was \$3.4 million. In fact, it was \$27.9 million. In 1977-78, the Court Government declared a balanced Budget. In fact, there was a surplus of \$33.4 million. Again in 1978-79 the Government declared a balanced Budget, when, in fact, the surplus was \$44.6 million.

As I have already pointed out, in the financial year just ended, although the Treasurer declared a balanced Budget, the true outcome was probably a surplus of \$25 to \$30 million.

Traditionally, Government Suspense Accounts have been used to clear relatively small amounts of moneys appropriated by Parliament for specific purposes, but which amounts have not been spent at the end of the financial year. Normally the amounts would be spent early in the next financial year. However, the Court Government has used the Suspense Account at the Treasury as a political slush fund. The Government has used this accounting practice to conceal large amounts of unallocated revenue, thereby concealing the true Budget outcome. Such a procedure is

dishonest, and the public have a right to be very angry about it.

All the public wants is to know the truth, and yet the Government has concealed the truth from them. The statements the Treasurer makes shortly after the end of each financial year in which he discusses the year's financial outcome for the State are absolutely meaningless, despite all the self-satisfied breast-beating that always accompanies them. The same thing applies to the statement made in this House tonight by the Treasurer—it is absolutely meaningless. The Treasurer simply said, "We have balanced the Budget. Aren't we clever? We have done it again, despite all the hardships and difficulties we had to put up with." The Treasurer said that he had balanced the Budget, when in actual fact the Government has \$25 million in the Treasury Suspense Account.

I am aware that the surpluses in the Treasury Suspense Account are used to bolster the General Loan Fund to conceal in part the Fraser Government's parsimony. I am not saying that the surpluses are wasted or misappropriated. I make no charge whatsoever along those lines. There is nothing wrong with the money being spent in this way, but I object strongly to the financial sleight of hand involved; I object strongly to all the nonsense, distortions, and untruths told about this State's allegedly balanced Budgets.

The Government should tell the people the truth about what is happening with their money, instead of trying to cover it up for fear that people might ask embarrassing questions or draw unwelcome conclusions. The money can be used for any purpose decided on by the Government, but the public should know what is happening.

I would like to draw the attention of members to the meaningless statement made by the Treasurer on the 3rd July of this year and his remarks to this Bill tonight. Certainly the public are not told the truth.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the new federalism, and I have said quite a few words on this subject before.

Despite what I have said about the State Government's concealing of surpluses, there has been a deterioration in the State's financial security in recent years, and I am genuinely sorry for the Government because of the position in which it finds itself. As I have said before, the deterioration is due almost entirely to the Fraser Government's so-called new federalism.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hear, hear!

Mr DAVIES: That policy has been a disaster for Western Australia, and current trends

indicate that the future growth in the cost of providing Government services will increase at a faster rate than the growth in the State's revenue.

Mr Jamieson: Who was the author of the new federalism?

Mr DAVIES: Someone asks who was the author of new federalism. One of its greatest proponents was none other than our own Treasurer. He was the only Treasurer who would not meet when all the other State Treasurers wanted to meet to seek a new deal. Through his actions the conference was stymied. I am indeed pleased to see that the Treasurer is going east on Friday to plead our case. I do not know what success is likely to come from the conference, but we are in such a serious position because of the new federalism that I certainly wish him every success.

Mr B. T. Burke: When is he going to introduce his second income tax?

Mr DAVIES: The imposition of a second income tax comes closer hourly. It is certainly a distinct possibility.

Mr B. T. Burke: Ask him and give him a chance to tell the Parliament when we will get the second income tax.

Mr DAVIES: If the cost of providing Government services continues to increase at a faster rate than the growth in the State's revenue, we are faced with only two possibilities, and these were mentioned by the Treasurer in his introductory speech tonight: either services are reduced or taxes are charges are raised.

The trends pointing in this direction are as follows—

The Fraser Government's failure to maintain the total funds it directs to the States at a level sufficient to keep up with inflation;

the likelihood that the current revision of the new federalism will result in a worse deal for the States;

the growing impact on the State of the Fraser Government's policy of charging Middle East prices for Australian crude oil;

the Fraser Government's failure to make good its promise to reduce interest rates;

the proliferation of costly statutory authorities, advisory committees, and other quasi-Government agencies; and

population growth in Western Australia which is greater than the national average.

The Court Government attempts repeatedly to place all the blame for the State's budgetary problems on increases in wages and salaries; and

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this came through in the Treasurer's second reading speech tonight. His attitude is that if the working man stopped taking increases in wages, everything would be fine. That is just about as dishonest as his financial statements, because it is certainly not the truth.

The Government knows very well that each of the factors I have just mentioned is contributing substantially to the difficult financial position. It also knows that the biggest factor is the Fraser Government's failure to implement reasonable and sensible financial policies towards the States. It is a pity the Government is not prepared to say so; instead it tries to heap the blame on workers who are trying only to keep up with the cost of living.

If we analyse the receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for 1979-80 we find that my contention is proved; the biggest problem is the attitude of the Fraser Government.

If revenue from public utilities is excluded, then Commonwealth funds represent 58.54 per cent of the money which flowed into the Consolidated Revenue Fund in 1979-80. The amount raised from the State's own sources represented only 41.46 per cent. The apologists for the Fraser Government might try to claim that on the revenue side Western Australia has done well out of the new federalism. They could bring a little evidence in support of that claim because between 1976-77 and 1979-80—the first four years of the new federalism—general revenue funds to Western Australia increased by \$84 million, or, in real terms, 4.3 per cent.

In the same period specific purpose grants for recurrent purposes also increased by \$14.1 million, or 1.2 per cent in real terms.

However, while on the surface those figures might seem to represent a favourable position, the reality is somewhat different. Even though the increases in revenue funds are slightly better than the inflation rate, they do not allow the Government to do very much in the way of new services. The reasons for this are that—

fuel price rises have been greater than the overall inflation rate;

the State's population is growing quickly; and

services have to be provided over a far-flung area and costs in country areas are higher than in the city.

Those are all sound reasons that the Government cannot do much in the way of new services; but there is another even more powerful and disturbing factor which makes the situation worse

than it appears. I refer to the appalling cut-backs in real terms that have been made by the Fraser Government in capital funds. Again, the Premier did not say anything about this in his speech tonight; he merely highlighted the difficulties. I am giving him a few of the facts, and I will have more to say later about the magnitude of the cut-back in capital funds.

The cut-back in capital funds also has an impact on the Consolidated Revenue Fund, because the poor deal on capital funds makes it necessary to divert revenue funds to bolster the works programme. This means funds that would normally be used to improve the range and standard of Government services must be channelled into the works programme. This is one of the difficulties that faced the Tonkin Government, and now it is facing the Court Government. The capital funds provided are nowhere near what is needed, and the position now is far more difficult than it was four years ago.

In 1979-80 the Consolidated Revenue Fund would have been better off by at least \$25 million had the State received a fair and sensible deal from the Commonwealth on loan funds. This is the amount that was diverted from revenue to the General Loan Fund. If that amount could have been left in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, we could have had \$25 million-worth of more Government services and we would be \$25 million-worth further away from cut-backs in services for the increases in taxes and charges we face at the moment because of the new federalism.

The outlook for 1980-81 is bleak, with possibly worse to come in future years if the Fraser Government is re-elected.

The situation this financial year appears to be that our general revenue allocation from the Commonwealth will be pegged at no growth, while specific purpose payments will be pegged at 1979-80 levels—which effectively means there will be a cut. As I said a few moments ago, the situation in relation to funds for capital works is even worse than it is in respect of revenue funds.

The importance of public investment through capital works expenditure cannot be overstated. It is the most significant, short-term economic instrument available to the State Government: to push money into the economy to give it some confidence. Government expenditure in this area is needed, because it has an almost immediate impact on the level of economic activity. There is a tendency for public investment to be seen as important only in relation to employment.

Employment is certainly a major and important consequence of public investment, but it also stimulates demand in the private sector and is a significant addition to corporate income.

Before 1976-77, the Commonwealth Government contributed more than 60 per cent of the funds used in Western Australia's capital works programme. However, since the election of the Fraser Government, the composition and source of funds available to Western Australia for capital works has altered dramatically. One of the hallmarks of the new federalism has been the devastating cuts in works programmes.

This is what has happened between 1976-77 and 1979-80—the first four dark years of Fraser federalism—

General purpose capital funds, consisting of capital grants and borrowings approved by the Loan Council, have been cut by \$69.5 million, or 17.8 per cent in real terms;

specific purpose grants and approved borrowings for specific purposes have been cut by \$163.3 million, or 25 per cent in real terms; and

the total of all capital funds has been slashed by a massive \$232.8 million, or 21.8 per cent in real terms.

Those figures do not include funds for roads and housing, where the picture is just as bleak. If roads and housing were included in the overall figures, the situation probably would be even worse.

The enormous detrimental changes that have occurred in the funding of public works under the new federalism are shown in the following figures—

In 1975-76, 61.8 per cent of Western Australia's capital works programme was provided from Commonwealth sources;

by 1979-80, that figure had dropped to 35.4 per cent;

between 1975-76 and 1979-80, Western Australia's total works programme fell by 4.38 per cent in real terms; and

in the same period, the State had to increase its funding of the capital works programme by 94.4 per cent in real terms.

In 1980-81, Western Australia is to receive an increase of only 5 per cent in capital funds; but inflation in the building and construction industry is around 14 per cent. That amounts to a cut of about 9 per cent in real terms; it means about 9 per cent less work can be done this year when compared with last year, and 9 per cent fewer jobs will be available.

That is the dismal picture the Fraser Government's new federalism has created for Western Australia. It is bad enough already, but I fear worse is to come if by some appalling mischance the Fraser Government is re-elected at this year's Federal election.

The Commonwealth's course is clearly marked already in two areas: There will be continuing reductions in funds for capital works; and, the cut-backs in specific purpose funds for recurrent purposes will continue.

However, the most alarming aspect of the recent Premiers' Conference was the indication by the Commonwealth Government that the small real increase in general purpose recurrent funds might not continue. As I said, we have been grateful for even the smallest of increases; however, now there is a clear indication that those small increases might not continue.

This further financial threat to Western Australia arises from the review of the tax-sharing arrangements currently taking place. Under the present tax-sharing arrangements, the States receive annually a fixed percentage of the Commonwealth's net personal income tax collections as a Commonwealth contribution to the general revenue of the States. There is a guarantee that the States' entitlements in any year will not be less in money terms than they were in the previous year.

Over the last four years—the so-called "transition period" of 1976-77 to 1979-80—the States were also guaranteed that their entitlements would not be less in any year than they would have been under the States Grants Act of 1973, which was the formula established by the Whitlam Government. This guarantee has insulated the States, particularly Western Australia, from cut-backs in general revenue funds, and at the same time ensured modest growth. Western Australia has relied on the guarantee every year and without it, would have lost more than \$54 million in general revenue funds over the last four years.

It is important to recall that when Mr Fraser proposed the new scheme he said the States would not be disadvantaged by the new arrangements and they would be at least as well off. However, at the Premiers' Conference in December, 1979, Messrs Fraser and Howard announced that the guarantee under the States Grants Act of 1973 would be abolished commencing in 1980-81.

The States Grants Act of 1973 provided the States with financial assistance grants as general revenue reimbursement for the States having yielded their income tax powers to the

Commonwealth in 1942. Under the Act, the financial assistance grants were calculated according to a formula which took into account: The financial assistance grant received in the previous year; the percentage increase in the State's population; the percentage increase in wages; and, a betterment factor.

In 1975 the Whitlam Government amended the Act to increase the betterment factor from 1.8 per cent to 3 per cent. This is the formula on which Western Australia fell back in the first four years of new federalism to protect its revenue. Thank goodness it has been there!

It is a vastly better formula than the tax-sharing arrangements provided for under new federalism. It is better because increases in wages and population which result in increased demand for Government services are treated as the two main factors affecting the movements from year to year in the State's recurrent expenditure. The betterment factor provides the States with a real growth component to assist with improvements in the range and standard of services. This component recognised the needs of the developing States, particularly Western Australia, in relation to the real increase in the demand for Government services flowing from economic development and growth. We have certainly seen economic development and growth, but it has been ignored under new federalism. It is not taken into account as it was taken into account as one of the major factors under the old Whitlam formula.

The formula also provided Western Australia with greater stability in budgeting from year to year and facilitated forward planning in the provision of services. The basis of the formula was the financial assistance grant received in the preceding financial year.

Under new federalism, the base is the amount of net income tax collections received annually by the Commonwealth. In some ways, I can understand the Government falling for such a proposal. The Government was not interested in using the financial assistance grant received in the preceding year as a base, although that system had a lot to attract it. The Government was interested in the annual amount of net income tax collections received by the Commonwealth.

Under the financial assistance grants formula, the revenue base was completely stable and predictable, because it was the amount received in the preceding year. The growth elements were simply applied to the base to calculate the assistance to be provided in the next financial year.

When new federalism was introduced, it was assumed there would be an automatic growth factor under the tax-sharing arrangements because the Commonwealth's annual income tax collections would grow. The Treasurer was entitled to think, "Western Australia is guaranteed a proportion of the tax. Taxes are going to grow each year so naturally, the amount we receive each year must increase."

However, that assumption did not reckon with the Fraser Government's financial chicanery; the Fraser Government put it over the States, completely and absolutely, and our own Premier and Treasurer fell for it.

The Fraser Government hoodwinked the States in the following manner: The arrangements entered into specifically excluded from the pool to be shared any money raised by the Commonwealth from any surcharge or levy on incomes. The Commonwealth Government promptly imposed a surcharge, of which the States received nothing. The Commonwealth said to the States, "You receive a share only of personal income tax. If we impose a levy or surcharge, you do not receive any of that." The Commonwealth Government completely put it over the States by increasing taxation—by increasing the amount we all must pay—by way of a levy or surcharge and it did not return any of this money to the States, but kept the lot.

We were reasonably entitled to believe there would be a growth in personal income tax. We were not entitled to believe that the Fraser Government, supported by this Government, would resort to such financial chicanery. We had it put over us completely!

In the three years ended the 30th June, 1979, Australia's population grew by 3.65 per cent, increasing demand for State-provided services. However, the work force grew by only 0.9 per cent.

There are also other reasons that the new arrangements are less stable and predictable than the old. The Commonwealth's income tax collections are highly variable because they are affected by any changes in the level of employment, the level of wages, the rates of income tax and tax scales, and the amount of tax avoidance and evasion.

Under the old arrangements there were firm growth elements and all the variables worked to the advantage of the States. Under the new arrangements there is no guarantee of growth and the variables can work either for or against the States, depending on the whims of the Federal Government.

Changes in the rates of income tax and tax scales affect the revenue of the States most. Since 1976 there have been no fewer than 18 changes to the income tax system through indexation, Medibank levies, surcharges, changes in scales and so on. No wonder we cannot keep up with them.

In one way or another, every one of those changes has affected the personal tax collections on which the tax-sharing arrangements are based, or the ability of the States to introduce revenue-raising measures themselves. It further demonstrates how unstable the arrangements have become from the point of view of the States.

Under the old arrangements, the Commonwealth bore the full brunt of the changes it made to the taxation system. However, under new federalism, the States must share the burden of changes, even though they have no say at all in what changes are to take place. They are left to carry the baby, but they did not have anything to do with its conception. That is the most unstable and unfair system.

The only thing that saved the States in the first four years, as I have already said, was the guarantee under the new arrangements that they would not receive less than they did under the old arrangements. Now that guarantee has gone, and the next safety net, albeit a far less satisfactory one, was the guarantee that under the new arrangements the States would not receive less in money terms in one year than they did in the previous year. Now the Fraser Government is slashing gaping holes in that net.

At the December, 1979, Premiers' Conference the Commonwealth announced its intention to abandon this guarantee, too. The Commonwealth's initial proposition for 1980-81 in relation to tax sharing was that the States would receive a flat 39.87 per cent of income tax collections, and nothing else. The Commonwealth said, "39.87 per cent is your share, and nothing else". Eventually the Commonwealth relented a little, and gave a guarantee that the amounts for 1980-81 only would be no less in real terms than in the previous year. That meant there is just enough to compensate for inflation, and nothing more. It did not allow for growth. In the case of Western Australia, of course, it did not allow enough to compensate for population growth and new development, with the consequent increases they bring in the demand for Government services.

There is currently further discussion between the separate States, and between the States and

the Commonwealth, on how the tax sharing arrangements will operate after 1980-81.

There are two important conclusions to be drawn from the last two Premiers' Conferences. Firstly, the Fraser Government has confiscated the real growth element that existed in Commonwealth-State revenue sharing arrangements for 20 years. In doing so it has restricted severely the capacity of Western Australia to improve the range and standard of Government services. In fact, it is highly unlikely that the Western Australian Government will be able to afford improvements without raising the level of taxation, either direct or indirect. As the member for Balcatta asked, it is a matter of when the Government will bring in State taxation. As I have already pointed out, general revenue predictions indicate that the Government will be struggling to maintain the provision of services at 1979-80 levels. Once again I refer members to the Premier's second reading speech tonight when he said just that. This has severe implications for improvements in the provision of services in decentralised and remote regions of Western Australia.

Secondly, it is apparent that after 1980-81 the Fraser Government will, if re-elected, continue to confine the States to 39.87 per cent of net income tax collections without any guarantee that the real level of general revenue assistance will be increased or maintained. Moreover, it is becoming more apparent that the Fraser Government will attempt to reduce the level of assistance under the tax sharing arrangements. This is possible even without lowering the percentage share of 39.87 per cent currently allocated to the States. It is done by fiddling with the tax levels and other factors, as I showed earlier.

State officials working on the review of tax sharing arrangements report that the States need to lift their percentage of net personal income tax collections from the current 39.87 per cent to 41.74 per cent, simply to maintain their position in the light of the changes made by the Commonwealth to the tax system since the introduction of tax sharing.

The outlook for the future, if the new federalism continues, is most disturbing. This new federalism is the policy of which the Premier was an architect. When it was introduced, he boasted about the scheme and his part in it. Every other State Premier has fought against it, but our Premier has accepted it. When the proposals were announced by Prime Minister Fraser before the 1975 Federal election, our Premier described them as "a breakthrough" in the relationship between Commonwealth, State, and local

governments. The Premier was reported also as saying that the arrangements "spelt an end to the degrading spectacle each year of the States going to Canberra to beg for funds". Some breakthrough!

We are worse off now than we have ever been. Our Premier was either unwilling or unable to see the implications which were obvious from the start. The scheme meant greater control for Canberra over the Budgets of the States. Do members recall how it was going to be easier for the States to use the money they received?

The new federalism proposals meant more stringent and tighter controls by Canberra over the Budgets of all the States. That policy is likely to lead to a State income tax, no matter what the Premier says about having shelved the State income tax legislation. That was before the election, of course. I am sure the legislation will come to light again. It has been prepared; it has been approved; and it is waiting. It is ready to go when it is needed.

If the Fraser Government stays in office, all the disturbing omens indicate that we will need the State income tax legislation. The Court Government, and the Premier in particular, are to be condemned for their acquiescence in this disastrous new federalism policy. Surely the Premier can see what a disaster that policy has been. It has been running for four years, and it has become progressively worse. The kindest thing the Premier can do now is acknowledge that fact.

The final matter about which I wish to speak, and which was the third point I made at the beginning of my speech, is the lack of control of Government agencies. The financial problems that have been created for Western Australia by the Fraser Government have been compounded by a lack of appropriate controls to ensure cost efficiency and optimum performance from Government agencies in Western Australia. The lack of adequate procedures to ensure the accountability of Government agencies is a cause for serious concern.

Over the last 20 years there has been a proliferation of semi-government agencies established with and without statutory authority, in addition to the agencies which are broadly described as "business undertakings". These semi-government agencies take the form of advisory committees, trusts, boards, authorities, and so on. Usually they have been established in response to certain demands from or problems in various sectors of the community.

One of the most significant developments in the State's finances during the last decade had been

the growth in the size and financial demands of semi-government agencies. At the end of the 1970s, there were about 200 Government agencies, in addition to 40 Government departments or agencies of similar stature. In their quest for revenue, the non-departmental semi-government agencies such as the Metropolitan Water Board, the State Energy Commission, and the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust, have imposed more severe financial burdens on the public than any other section of government.

I do not believe it is really possible for any Government, no matter how sincere its intentions, to keep proper control, over such sprawling machinery of government. I do not believe it is possible to have proper governmental supervision of such a vast administrative and policy-making apparatus. I do not believe it is possible to make every part of such an enormous establishment properly accountable for its actions, policies, expenditure, and revenue raising. Most importantly, I do not believe that such a vast organisation can possibly be as efficient and as cost effective as it ought to be.

The actions of the Metropolitan Water Board over the last few years give the impression of an organisation careering out of control with the Government of the day standing by, apparently powerless to do anything about it. The failure by the Cabinet to spot the \$3 million mistake in the Metropolitan Water Board's new charges, and its failure to spot a \$3.3 million mistake last year in the proposed fuel levies, demonstrate the lack of proper supervision.

I doubt that the Court Government is even aware of the existence of some of its own agencies. I am sure it is years since some of the agencies reported to the Government of the day or were checked on. The time is long overdue for a rationalisation of the machinery of government in Western Australia. I cannot understand how it can possibly be efficient as it is presently organised when unnecessary costs are being incurred.

In June, the Government announced a first tentative step towards regularly reviewing the functions and performance of Government agencies. It did this with the announcement of its intention to insert a sunset clause in legislation governing the Industrial Lands Development Authority.

This proposed first attempt at introducing sunset legislation is welcome, but also deeply disappointing. The sunset clause to be inserted in the legislation governing the Industrial Lands

Development Authority suggests that the Government either does not understand the sunset principle properly or has not embraced it fully.

The fault in the Government's proposal is that it provides a 10-year interval before Parliament reviews the necessity for the continuation of the authority.

Mr Harman: Government members do not want to be reminded of this. They are obviously interested in something else.

Mr Stephens: They are not even listening.

Mr DAVIES: Ten years is far too long and defeats the purpose of sunset clauses.

A sunset clause in legislation establishing a statutory authority means that the authority automatically ceases to exist after the period specified in the sunset clause, unless Parliament specifically moves to re-establish it.

The aim is to avoid a proliferation of statutory authorities which continue to exist after they have outlived their usefulness, or the purpose for which they were established has passed. This aim can be carried out satisfactorily only if the roles of statutory authorities are reviewed at regular intervals which are not too long.

When, in January, the ALP proposed sunset legislation, we suggested that sunset clauses should take effect after five years, though we would be prepared to consider some other time period. Our reason for proposing five years was that it was longer than the life of the Parliament—three years—but less than the life of two Parliaments.

It seemed to us that sunset clauses specifying the end of authorities after only two or three years would be setting too short a period and would mean that every Parliament would have to review the operations of every statutory authority—a mammoth task.

A five-year period would avoid this problem, give authorities a reasonable time to do their jobs, yet still allow a frequent examination of the work of an authority.

I ask the Government to reconsider its decision to make the ILDA's sunset period 10 years. It is just too long to be worth while and to fulfil properly the function of sunset clauses.

The Opposition is becoming increasingly concerned at the lack of accountability of semi-government bodies to Parliament and the public. Sunset clauses need to be inserted in the charter of statutory authorities.

But there are also so many Government agencies that do not have statutory backing. These need periodic examination, too. Every

Government agency, whether statutory or not, should be subject to a performance audit every five years. There needs to be more interest at the top level of Government in streamlining the whole government operation. And there needs to be a more rigorous attitude to requests for the establishment of new bodies.

It goes without saying that the periodic performance audits should, in the course of their evaluations, consider the very basic question of whether an agency needs to continue to exist.

The present Government's record does not give much cause for hoping that it is likely to do anything about streamlining government or getting the maze of agencies back to more manageable proportions. After I tackled the Premier about this subject last November, he said the matter was under control. I think a report was to be issued by the end of June or July, but I have yet to see it. I shall be watching for it with interest.

What is the Government's record? Since the 1st January this year, the Court Government has established no fewer than 25 new Government agencies of one sort or another, ranging from a committee into the quality of food in school canteens to the WA Mining and Petroleum Research Institute. Not a bad record—25 since the beginning of the year.

There are 16 new committees, three new councils, three new institutes and three others—and there might be some I missed. It is government growing out of hand. It is a Government in great financial trouble.

I feel sorry for the public of Western Australia. I continue to be critical of the Premier's support of new federalism which has led Australia from disaster to disaster. I can only wish him well with his talks with other Premiers this coming Friday.

I will be repeating this story again and again, because it is outrageous that so many people should have been hit so hard by so many increases by a Government which last February painted such a rosy picture. Since then it has been on a big slippery dip. This happened immediately after the election.

I appreciate the opportunity to detail the Opposition's thinking and feelings on some of these financial matters. We have a responsibility and we have endeavoured to meet this responsibility. It has been such a long time since Parliament last sat. We have been able to do quite a lot of research into the figures that are available. But we have not got the figures from information that has been generally released to the public, because the Government has not told

the public the truth about its financial matters, information the public are entitled to know. There is a responsibility on the Government to provide this information.

I support the Bill.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.56 p.m.]: It is three days short of seven years since there was a speech following the moving of the Supply Bill in this very Legislative Assembly in which there were made several remarks which would be appropriate and relevant to the debate this evening. At that time, the now Premier—for it was he who made the speech on the occasion to which I refer—listed what he saw as the deficiencies of the Federal Government at the time. He said in opening—

We meet to consider this measure under rather unusual circumstances, not just in Western Australia but throughout the whole of Australia. We have a situation in Western Australia, and for that matter, in other parts of Australia, where the people of this State and of this country are very uneasy. They expected changes to take place when the new Government was elected . . .

How appropriately prophetic that was. I suppose I could say that the unusual circumstances to which he referred and which are now starting to leave their mark would probably be the gradual unfolding of the new federalism upon the finances of this State and on the residents of this State. This has resulted in charges well in excess of the level of inflation and the cost of living, and an additional levy of 3 per cent on State facilities and instrumentalities.

The new federalism which was espoused by the Premier was detailed by my leader just before he resumed his seat. He made reference to the prospect—not an unreal prospect—of double taxation in many of the States of this nation of ours. The advocacy of the Premier at that time was for the rejection of the Supply Bill by the Legislative Council on the ground that the Federal Government had acted poorly. He made that advocacy in this place and this is documented on page 2415 of *Hansard* of the 8th August, 1973.

This evening, the Opposition is not advocating the rejection of the Supply Bill in that manner. Nor will it use the Legislative Council for that or any similar purpose. But how much greater is the justification for the Opposition to undertake some drastic action if it were available. A brief reference to the performance of the Fraser Government will indicate this beyond any shadow of doubt.

Never before has there been a Federal Government with such a list of broken promises. An article in a recent edition of *The Australian* showed that the list of broken promises on the part of the Federal Government amounted to a double spread.

We have a Prime Minister who has deliberately gone out of his way to fan the flames of international discord to remove the attention of the electorate away from the state of the economy in Australia. He has done this in a coldblooded, calculated, and amoral manner.

In the first four Budgets brought down by Mr Fraser approximately \$2.5 billion was transferred, by way of concessions, to big business. At the same time the numbers of unemployed have increased by 150 000. The corporate sector has certainly done very well under the present Federal Government. Indeed, it has not done too badly in Western Australia.

Mr Fraser has funded industry by a series of handouts whilst at the same time slashing public programmes in a wide range of areas including health, education, child care, regional development, Aboriginal welfare, housing, and community projects.

Furthermore, by the use of iniquitous measures such as the petrol tax, Mr Fraser has more than doubled the price of petrol and the community has had to suffer all the ramifications which such an increase implies.

Inflation is rising once again as a result of Government decisions to increase the charges for goods and services. Probably two of the best examples of such increases would be those which have been levied in the areas of petrol prices and charges for health services. Such increases affect everybody, particularly those on low incomes.

Interest rates are rising because the Government has lost control of the supply of money. The Federal Treasurer has admitted that he has not been successful in achieving the lower levels of inflation which were projected three years ago.

The Fraser Government has created the difficulties I have enumerated and continues to aggravate them. At the same time it has placed an iron hand on the provision of finance to the States. This has put them in the impossible position which was outlined by the Leader of the Opposition a few moments ago. This is the track record of the worst Federal Government in living memory.

I should like to revert to the second point referred to in the speech made seven years ago, to which I have just alluded. In that speech the

responsibility for malgovernment is apportioned equally between the State and Federal Governments. The particular paragraph to which I wish to refer reads as follows—

We cannot divorce the actions and the philosophies of the ALP in the Federal sphere from the ALP in the State sphere.

That is a significant quotation, because for the past four years we have seen the spectacle of this Government attributing responsibility for all the difficulties which have arisen in this State to the Federal Government. If, as I have just quoted, the blame for the problems experienced in the States' sphere can be attributed equally to the Federal Government, and vice versa, surely the same situation applies now. Therefore, the Liberal-National Country Party coalition which we have in this State must share its portion of the responsibility and blame for the financial mess into which this country has fallen. Members opposite share the same philosophical beliefs as their counterparts in Federal Parliament. Members on the Treasury benches in this State and in Canberra have similar philosophies and interrelated support mechanisms, therefore, the blame for the problems we are experiencing must be apportioned equally.

Maladministration and bungling of the fiscal policies of the nation and this State have resulted in an erosion of the standard of living in this country. The wage and salary earner is worse off now than he was in 1974. In order to illustrate the situation I should like to point out that the purchasing power of a family man who received the average weekly wage between December, 1974, and December, 1976, was at least \$7.80 less after two years of wage indexation.

Total average weekly earnings for a family man in December, 1974, were \$123.05. In December, 1976, the figure was \$152.75. However, if the same purchasing power was to be retained over the two-year period, the average weekly earnings should have risen to \$160.58. It can be seen that there was a deficit of \$7.83.

If we expand the situation a little we find that a single man receiving the average weekly wage during the period December, 1975, to March, 1980, would have moved from \$166.90 to \$243.70. His disposable income, after paying income tax and the health insurance levy, would have increased from \$129.58 to \$184.95. It is essential to remember, however, that between December, 1975, and June, 1980, the CPI in Perth increased by 58.6 per cent. Over that five-year period the increase per annum was in excess of 10 per cent.

Therefore, in order to maintain the purchasing power available in December, 1975, a single man on an average weekly wage would have needed to earn \$264.70. As a result of earning only \$243.70, he was \$21.00 worse off in March, 1980, than he was in December, 1975.

If we look at this man's disposable income it can be seen that, over the five-year period, he is \$16.30 worse off. The purchasing power of a single man in that situation was \$3.00 per week lower during that five-year period.

That situation has been brought about by the policies espoused by members opposite and their Federal counterparts. This brings me to the treatment the States have received at the hands of the Commonwealth Government under new federalism. I am indebted to the Leader of the Opposition for presenting in such detail the true situation in this regard.

I would like to make some reference to one of the most fundamental and important specific purposes capital grants programmes, one that affects every single person in Western Australia. Indeed, in Western Australia it has greater significance in application than in other States in connection with road funding.

In the past four years, under the new federalism—and being a country member, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), you would appreciate fully the import of these figures—there have been many decreases. In 1975-76 the disbursement under the specific purpose capital payments for roads was \$62.2 million. That was under a Labor Government. In 1976-77, the figure was \$58.2 million; that was the Fraser Liberal Government, and with the same Government in 1977-78 the figure was \$63.2 million. This was just beyond the Labor figure of the previous year. In 1978-79 the figure was \$69.2 million and for 1980-81 it is estimated that Western Australia will receive \$76.9 million. That is \$7.7 million or 11 per cent more than the 1979-80 year, bearing in mind that that was a decrease; well below what we would have received under the Whitlam programme.

These figures represent a cut in real terms of around \$1.3 million. In five years the Fraser Liberal Government payments to Western Australia for road funds have been cut by over \$28 million in real terms. Just what does that mean? Getting down to the realities, it means at current costs \$28 million would be the equivalent of constructing and sealing up to 400 kilometres of highways in the Pilbara, or constructing and sealing 350 kilometres of highways in the Kimberley. It could mean the constructing and sealing of 800 kilometres of local roads in the

Pilbara, or the constructing and sealing of 700 kilometres of local roads in the Kimberley.

These huge cut-backs in road funding have, of course, been one of the major causes of the recent increases in Western Australian taxes, no matter what anyone tries to tell us we should think otherwise.

There are other important areas to which I can make reference, not the least of which would be welfare housing which received a direct decrease in the same period from \$34.8 million to \$27.3 million. That is typical and symptomatic of both coalition Governments which have occupied the Treasury benches for the past five years.

I wish now to make a number of references to a further consequence of the parsimony of the Federal Government with regard to State funding. The State has had to increase its charges to an unprecedented level as illustrated in *The West Australian* newspaper on the 5th June, 1980. The headline stated that metropolitan people will face increases of up to 50 per cent with the new water, drainage, and sewerage rates. That headline was a fairly significant one and was evidenced probably in the entire area of this State. However, the headline did not make reference to the increase by the SEC for electricity charges, perhaps the most significant, with an 18 per cent increase from the 1st May. This increase was well before the Budget, and so the approach of this Government—as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out so ably—verges a little beyond tactical and more to being deceptive.

Gas was increased by an average of 24 per cent as from the 1st May, 1980, with a \$40 deposit system for new domestic customers. These are impositions that strike at those who can least afford them. Third party insurance increased by 50 per cent as from the 1st July, 1980, and never a hint of a reformation of the SGIO.

Public transport from the 1st July, 1980, had an increase in fares over the basic two sections from 25c to 30c. Road funds on fuel franchise lifted petrol from .9c to 1.3c as from the 1st July. The State Shipping Services had an increase of 10 per cent, and marine charges increased from 24c to 40c.

With water sewerage and drainage—and I do not think we have heard the last of this—there was an increased standard annual charge of 50 per cent. Sewerage averaged 15 per cent and drainage 9 per cent. The country areas maximum water supply rate for domestic use was up from 33 per cent to 40 per cent.

Then, we go onto the impost by Westrail for grain, fertiliser, and wool. The State Housing

Commission increase was 14 per cent from July. What a sad and sorry record by this Government. With its timing, it turned around, again just on the eve of the Budget and said, "What clever housekeepers we are. We are not putting up States taxes." They did not have to do so, they had done it well before the Budget and in a manner that would have made Ned Kelly blush.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), I know that decentralisation is as true to your heart as it is to mine and the impost on road transport, road taxes, road freight and fuel make it difficult for country people and rural producers. There is not a single item going into the country, onto farms, back into the ports or the metropolis that is not subject to transportation costs, and the greatest shame of all is that the heaviest portion of this burden falls on the lower income sector of the rural industries. This is the greatest injustice, as you and I understand more clearly than most in this House, Sir.

I am indebted to the Leader of the Opposition for the exposition he gave on the manner of funding that has been undertaken by this Government, and while it is probably true to say that countries get the Government they deserve, Western Australia does not deserve the Government it has.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [9.17 p.m.]: The first point on which I wish to touch is the often claimed but always false statement that the Premier makes regarding State taxes. All of us in this House have heard time and time again the Premier idly boast that his Government has not raised taxes.

How many times can we remember him having said that, and yet we know that he has built into this State's finances an automatic taxing device which attaches itself to the gross revenue of public utilities and facilities.

Tonight at question time as we well remember, the Premier explained that the revenue of this State increases automatically. He can claim that taxes do not rise simply because he is automatically taking from the public purse extra millions with every increase in State Energy Commission charges and metropolitan water charges that his Government imposes. Of course, there is no need to increase taxes because it has been done for him when he increases charges and by subterfuge increases taxes at the same time. It is time the claim the Premier makes was exposed for what it is.

It is a deliberate and wilful misleading of the Western Australian community because he is

increasing taxes in just the same way as the Fraser Government has been doing; while claiming that he is not. If State taxes do not rise, why is it that we are getting three, four, and five million dollars more from the revenue of the Metropolitan Water Board than we were previously? Of course taxes have risen because this Premier has decided they shall rise according to the increases in charges that have been thrust onto the shoulders of people least able to bear the burden.

I think, too, it is necessary tonight to touch on this Government's deliberate provocation in industrial matters and industrial disputes with the intention of gaining political mileage. I ask members to refer back to the recent water supply workers' strike, and to some of the things that happened during that dispute. Some actions occurred which were not broadly known, including the fact that the Deputy Premier—the Minister for Labour and Industry—on two occasions managed to have fruitful talks with the unions. On two occasions the striking workers were able to leave the negotiations confident that the matter had been put to rights, and that an end to the dispute was in sight. Following those fruitful negotiations, the present Minister for Water Resources promptly harpooned the agreement which had been reached. He quite deliberately set about white-anting and undermining the position which the Deputy Premier—the Minister for Labour and Industry—had sought to right during those negotiations.

If we move onto the question of a 35-hour week, and look at the Alcoa dispute which occurred, we see quite clearly that it was not in the interests of the company or the workers for the dispute to continue for as long as it did. Had this Government shown one ounce of leadership or one ounce of courage it would have intervened and brought the company and the workers together successfully to bring about the implementation of the 35-hour week instead of leaving the parties to war in the jungle. The Government should have shown some sort of leadership and set about bringing together all the advocates to leave the way clear for the 35-hour week to become a reality in stages at some time in the future. Instead, this Government—if it did anything—provoked the situation and prolonged the dispute. It abdicated its responsibility towards the people of this State and to the formation of a sensible programme which would in future years bring about a 35-hour week as a reality.

What would be wrong with this Government bringing together the employers and the employees, with Government representation perhaps through the Industrial Commission, to set about producing a programme of drawing up a scheme to implement the change gradually, in the best interests of the economy of the State, in the best interests of the employers, and in the best interests of the employees? Why cannot this Government show some leadership and set about the adoption and implementation of such a plan? Is it so difficult; does it require so much leadership? Or, is it simply a question of it being of political advantage to the Government to continue to keep the employers and employees at each other's throats?

Mr Davies: I think there may be some internal Cabinet fighting.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Everybody knows the Premier has the skids under the Deputy Premier. Everybody knows that during the recent dispute the Minister for Water Resources did his very best to undermine the position of the then Acting Premier. Everybody knows that the Premier wants to stay while it is a possibility the present Deputy Premier may take over the top job. Of course there is some political in-fighting in the Cabinet! Everybody knows the truth, and the Premier even smiles in acknowledgment.

Mr Young: We are all laughing about your proposition.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Another hallmark by which the compassion and caring of a Government can be judged is the way it treats its old people. This Government is the first in the history of the State to adopt a policy aimed at deliberately turning old people out of their homes. This Government, through the policy of the State Housing Commission, has said to people who have lived for perhaps 20 or 30 years in their present homes, and who have raised their families in those homes—the homes in which they are now living—that they shall not remain there unless they pay a premium on the normal rents. Is that the hallmark of a compassionate and caring Government; that it will turn old people out of their homes—homes in which many of them have lived for 20 or 30 years?

For the sake of \$5 extra the Government says those old people will be put out of their homes. For the sake of \$5 extra those old people will see the environment in which they have lived, in some cases for many years, cease to be their environment. For the sake of \$5 extra, those old people will run the risks clearly demonstrated in relocating old and frail people. Is that the

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hallmark of a caring and compassionate Government or the hallmark of a Government which will impose on the shoulders of people unable to bear the burden the most severe increases in taxes and charges this State has ever seen? Is that the sort of Government we would be proud to stand behind and claim to be proudly Western Australian? Of course, it is not.

It is a disgrace to the community that the State Housing Commission, for the matter of \$5 additional, will tell the pensioners to leave their homes and turn their backs on areas in which they have lived, in some cases, for many years.

If that is not bad enough, consider the plight of Aboriginal applicants for State Housing Commission assistance. Remember, too, it was not so long ago this Government returned to the Federal Government a sum of \$5 million that was earmarked for Aboriginal housing. This Government told the Federal Government that it could not use those millions of dollars that had been made available; it could not use the money when Aboriginal families were living beneath bridges and in the bush on the fringes of the metropolitan area. Children of Aboriginal families were dying on rubbish tips, but this Government said it could not use the money earmarked for Aboriginal housing.

If members on the Government side are proud to belong to a Government guilty of that sort of thing, let the responsibility rest firmly on their shoulders. It is not something of which I am proud, and it is not something about which anyone in this State can be proud. At this time we have about 400 Aboriginal families living in camps in the bush on the fringe of some outlying metropolitan suburbs.

If the thrust of the Government's policy as illustrated by the attitude of the State Housing Commission needs any further amplification, all we need do is look to what we heard from the Minister for Cultural Affairs tonight when he explained to us how Aborigines were flying in plane-loads of alcohol to their camps, and playing cards with thousands of dollars which they obtained through unemployment and other social security benefits.

Mr Davies: And by selling bottles!

Mr B. T. BURKE: If that is the type of responsible action and attitude we can expect from the Minister for Cultural Affairs, then it is 1976 revisited because that is when he last visited the area. When asked to confirm the source of his information, the Minister stood up and waved his arms and said it was general knowledge. If it is general knowledge we would like some edification

about the source of his information that Aborigines are playing cards in camps with piles of dollars in front of them. We would like to know.

Mr Young: While looking for that information perhaps the member for Balcatta could tell me something about the case of an Aboriginal child dying on a rubbish tip.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yes, the Anderson family. They had six or seven children and had been living on a rubbish tip for six months. One child was admitted to hospital with pneumonia and subsequently passed away. According to the doctors, her death was the direct result of her experience of living on that rubbish tip.

Mr Young: I will check the case.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I hope the Minister will do that, and I would very much like him to explain his findings.

Mr Young: I will.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Thanks very much.

Mr McIver: Do you want some further cases? We can supply some from the country if you want them.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister for Cultural Affairs has shown an intense reluctance to explain anything. We would like to hear the reference that led him to say that planeloads of alcohol were reaching the Aborigines.

Mr Grayden: The air operation had to be discontinued to Oombulgurri settlement in the Kimberley.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The air operation had to be discontinued because it was bringing in planeloads of alcohol; is that right?

Mr Grayden: The operator had to prevent any more alcohol going into the settlement.

Mr Young: It is true.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let us allow the Minister to tell us that planeloads of alcohol were being flown into the Oombulgurri settlement. Is that what he is saying?

Mr Grayden: Among other settlements.

Mr Jamieson: It was probably for the Turkey Creek wine festival.

Mr Grayden: Why don't you make inquiries yourself?

Mr B. T. BURKE: It would not seem to be necessary for me to make inquiries because the Minister has made inquiries, and now he is making the most outlandish, extravagant statements, as he was doing in 1976.

Mr Grayden: It is only a matter of getting on the phone to the people in the region and they will tell you.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That planeloads of alcohol are being flown into the Aboriginal settlements in the north?

Mr Young: And ask him how he used to test the stuff in the box.

Mr B. T. BURKE: We have no evidence. We have only the unsubstantiated statement of the Minister for Cultural Affairs, and everyone knows he is committed to the denigration of his Federal counterpart's position in this matter.

Mr Grayden: That is not so.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course it is so. I think the Minister has forgotten already that tonight he said during question time that he took no exception to the statement reported in the *Daily News*, which contained the implication that the proposals put forward by Senator Chaney were proposals upon which the Aboriginal population could seize to take control of society. Anything less likely I have yet to hear about a people who were never inclined or able to do such a thing, and if the Minister's statement was not directly—

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest the member for Balcatta address his remarks to me. It seems to me I should move myself down to the Minister's seat.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Members on this side of the House could rest assured your claims, Mr Speaker, would not be as extravagant and irresponsible as those made by the Minister. We have yet to learn what evidence the Minister has for claiming that planeloads of alcohol have been flown into Aboriginal settlements in the north. If the Minister is unable to explain that to our satisfaction, let him tell us, without any wanderings similar to those of four years ago, what evidence he has to substantiate his claim that pools involving thousands of dollars are engaged in by Aborigines in the north. Has the Minister said these games—

Mr Grayden: Who said that?

Mr B. T. BURKE: He has forgotten he is reported to have said that in the *Daily News*.

Mr Grayden: That Aborigines "are engaged in"? You added those words.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The problem really is that from anybody else the irrational and irresponsible, not to say untrue, things attributed to the Minister would be laughable if it did not so happen that the person making those statements is the Minister for Cultural Affairs and he is responsible for the protection and advancement of

the people he degrades. That is the sad thing—not only that he degrades them in this House and in the daily Press but that he deliberately sets about sabotaging a worth-while plan that has been proposed by his Federal counterpart, a Minister who belongs to the party to which he also belongs.

Mr Grayden: We will have the opportunity to show you just how worth while it is before this session is out.

Mr Davies: We will wait.

Mr Grayden: I will look forward to that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If the Minister wants to show us something worth while we will be prepared to wait, because it will be the first worth-while thing he has been responsible for advancing during the eight years I have been here. Nevertheless, whether or not the Minister wants us to wait, it behoves this House to deplore the inflammatory statements the Minister has made quite proudly and which are reprinted in the *Daily News* tonight.

Mr Grayden: All perfectly correct.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister again proudly proclaims that he is the author of statements which are intemperate, which bear little resemblance to the truth, and which are designed to do nothing but sabotage the decision, carefully thought out in answer to a difficult problem, by the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Senator Chaney).

The Minister is aided and abetted in his task by the Premier's paid henchman, Mr W. W. Mitchell, who, when he is not advocating hanging people along with the "chicken king", is writing to the Press and telling the public that Aboriginal society has not been responsible for one worth-while thing. Tonight, when given the opportunity to deny the statements made by W. W. Mitchell, the Premier was very careful to skirt them and not to say he disagreed with what Mr Mitchell said. He was also careful to say that Mr Mitchell's terms of employment with the Government would not be affected. If that is not approval by implication of the extravagant claims made by W. W. Mitchell, what is it? We would like to hear the Premier deny the things W. W. Mitchell has said about the Aboriginal population.

Mr Grayden: Have you ever been to the Northern Territory?

Mr Wilson: Senator Chaney certainly dissociated himself from them.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am quite happy to tell the Minister I have never been to the Northern Territory.

Mr Grayden: You ought to take an early opportunity to go. You will see how wrong you are.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not making extravagant claims about the Northern Territory based on the fact that I have not been there. The Minister has been there and he is making claims about all sorts of things. Can the Minister not understand the elementary logic about the statements he is making being based on realistic experience and not being plucked from his fertile imagination, as he is wont to do time and time again?

Let me return to the Premier and see whether he is prepared to deny the statements made by W. W. Mitchell about Western Australia's Aboriginal population. I will pause to allow the Premier to deny what Mitchell said.

Mr Grayden: What statements are you talking about?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier remains completely silent. He is not prepared to take issue with a man who is paid \$1 200 a month, who stood for the position of Vice President of the Liberal Party, and who spoke at the Liberal Party's State conference. The Premier is not prepared to say the letters by W. W. Mitchell which were printed in the Press contained statements he will disown. Of course he will not disown them. Not only will he not disown them but he will also continue to pay W. W. Mitchell who writes letters to the Press saying the Aborigines wander from place to place and have never contributed anything to civilisation.

It is the ugliness of this Government that is coming out. We have the action on three fronts. We have the Minister for Cultural Affairs degrading the people whom it is his responsibility to promote and protect. We have the Premier's hired public relations man writing to the newspapers some of the most vicious, disgraceful, and racist letters that have ever been written. Then we have the Premier refusing to do anything except, by his silence, to condone what W. W. Mitchell said. That is the sort of thing we are expected to accept as indicating that this Government is acting in good faith. It is the faith of brigands, and as far as the Opposition is concerned the Minister stands condemned on his own admission that the statements he cannot prove were accurate reflections of what he said. The Premier stands condemned on his inability and unwillingness to contradict the statements made by a man he pays to be his public relations officer—a man he pays out of the public purse to denigrate the Aboriginal population.

Mr Shalders: I can say to you that a missionary I know, and whom I am not prepared to name, was at Warburton Range mission while I was there and he told me there are very big two-up and card schools at that mission.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have no doubt that there are card games played there, and that Aboriginal people are drinking beer, wine, or some other sort of alcohol, but good God, card games are played in James Street, Perth, in which the pools are thousands of dollars, and we do not have this Minister standing up here saying that the people gambling in James Street are guilty of squandering their social security cheques. If it is good enough for the Minister to single out the Aboriginal population in this way, it is good enough for him to treat others in the same way and to say that others are guilty of the same crime—if it is a crime in the Minister's eyes.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: What did the Minister say?

Mr Harman: He mumbled.

Mr Grayden: Do you want to know what I said?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yes.

Mr Grayden: I will tell you. I said, "I am not complaining of anyone squandering social security cheques."

Mr B. T. BURKE: Then why single out the Aboriginal population in the north and label them as the squanderers? Why not label the people in my electorate or in the Minister's electorate?

Mr Grayden: You are the one making an issue of it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister is the one who made an issue of it in tonight's issue of the *Daily News*. It was the Minister who made an issue of it, and he now quite calmly says that we are making an issue of it.

Mr Grayden: No, you are the one who made an issue of it.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Mr Speaker, knowing how reasonable you are, I am sure you would not expect the Opposition to allow the Minister to make intemperate and irrational statements as reported in the Press, and then to say the Opposition should not reply to them, call upon the Minister to found his claims in fact, or to prove his credibility by reference to the source of his information. If the Minister wants to say that we are the ones making an issue of it, all we can say is that this Minister is running true to form—he is willing to make an issue of anything and then run

for cover. He is not willing to provide any proof; he is not willing to provide any evidence. He is running for cover.

Mr Grayden: Surely you should be able to talk to some of your own members who come from those areas. They could tell you about it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: This is a classic case for the Minister to put up or shut up.

Mr Grayden: I'll put up!

Mr B. T. BURKE: If he cannot put up, why should he not shut up? He is attempting to degrade these people while he should be protecting them.

Mr Grayden: What are your members doing if they do not know about these things?

Mr Harman: Give us one instance of a planetload of alcohol.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let the Minister give us the evidence.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to come to order. The member for Balcatta.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is it not strange that when the Minister is asked to quote cases, he mumbles an aside to the member for Maylands. The Minister has made the claim; now is the time to produce the evidence.

Mr Grayden: You have members who represent these isolated areas—they have heard about these things.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Put up or shut up!

Mr Harman: You have said these things and it has caught up with you.

Mr Bryce: Scurrilous, empty claims!

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask particularly the member for Maylands and the Minister for Cultural Affairs to disengage in their cross-Chamber conversation.

Mr T. H. Jones: The Minister is in a corner.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I notice that the Minister for Cultural Affairs finds it much easier and more profitable to engage in cross-Chamber conversation than he does to back up his claim with facts. For the last time, let me emphasise that this Minister committed himself by his oath to the protection and advancement of part of our community and today he has been guilty of the degradation of that part of our community by issuing statements that are inflammatory and intemperate. Tonight we have given that Minister the opportunity to demonstrate the basis on which he makes these claims. If the Minister can tell me I am wrong and if he can produce the evidence to prove I am wrong I will say no more. However,

while he continues to evade the issue we can only presume his guilt in this matter.

Mr Grayden: Are you denying the statements?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not denying the statements because I have not made them. The Minister made the statements.

Mr Grayden: Are any of your members denying the statements?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The farcical situation has developed where the Minister believes he can make the statements and I have to prove them.

Mr Grayden: Are you denying the truth of the statements?

Mr Parker: Who made the statements?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will say it once more, solely for the benefit of the Minister. There is a responsibility on the holder of a public office not to make intemperate, irresponsible, or untrue statements. I am simply asking the Minister to demonstrate the truth of what he has said. He will not demonstrate the truth of what he has said, because I suspect he cannot.

Mr Grayden: They can easily be substantiated.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Well, go ahead.

Mr Grayden: Well, let your members go ahead and do it too.

Mr B. T. BURKE: They are not making the statements—the Minister is.

Mr Grayden: It is general knowledge.

Mr B. T. BURKE: General knowledge?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: If it is general knowledge, then what has this Minister and his Government been doing for six years to allow it to go on?

Mr Grayden: Who introduced drinking rights to Western Australia?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Government has been in office for six years, and yet only today has the Minister drawn this matter to the attention of the public.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order! The member for Balcatta.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Six years in office, and only today does this Minister draw to the attention of the public something that he now says is general knowledge and has been going on for years. Why has not the Minister done something about it before this?

Mr Harman: Because they had yaws!

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister's silence is deafening. Not only is he unable to demonstrate

the accuracy of the statements he made, but having claimed this matter has been in evidence for years, he is unable to say why he has failed to do anything about it before this.

Mr Grayden: Because the Opposition would have claimed we were negating the rights of the Aborigines.

Mr B. T. BURKE: What has negating the rights of the Aborigines to do with it, Mr Speaker?

Mr Grayden: The right to drink.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is the Minister now suggesting that he would like to take away the Aborigines' right to drink? I suggest he should think about giving these people houses; he should think about giving them an education. I suggest to the Minister that he should stop this campaign of degradation that he is undertaking against the Aborigines; he has been unable to prove that they have gambled away thousands of dollars obtained through their social security cheques. He has been unable to prove that they have flown in plane loads of alcohol.

Mr Grayden: Absolute rubbish!

Mr B. T. BURKE: The only thing he has been able to prove is that he made untrue statements.

Mr Grayden: Absolute rubbish!

Mr Harman: That is what we said!

Mr B. T. BURKE: I would like to return to one or two final points. I reiterate: if this Government is to show leadership in the matter of industrial relations, one of the most pressing tasks it should undertake is the formulation of an ongoing plan or programme for the introduction of a 35-hour week. I am not saying that the 35-hour week should be introduced tomorrow, next year, or in five years' time, but I am saying that one of the tests of government is the leadership it can show in difficult situations.

If this Government wants to abdicate from the fray and allow employers and employees to remain at each others' throats, then let it do so, even if its wont is motivated by political advantage. However, the suggestion of the Opposition is if the Government is responsible and can get employers and employees around the table to discuss a practical programme that can be introduced in stages—if that is economically desirable—towards the fulfilment of what will become a reality—whether it is now, in five years' time, or in 10 years' time—then that is one thing the Government can do to show leadership.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, it is far preferable to have this Government attempting to show that sort of leadership than it is to have this

Government standing off from industrial conflicts that do no one any good and do so many so much harm.

The final point I want to emphasise concerns State Housing Commission rental premiums for pensioners. The amount of money involved in these premiums cannot justify the heartbreak, the pain, and the anguish that is being caused as a direct result of this Government's decision to charge pensioners who have lived in and who wish to remain living in family accommodation an extra \$5 a week.

It cannot be justified on compassionate grounds, and it cannot be justified on the ground that the revenue encouraged by the move is of such magnitude as to justify the anguish which is caused.

I know, too, that the Honorary Minister for Housing and the State Housing Commission are having second thoughts about this matter. I would urge the Honorary Minister to consider very carefully whether it is not advisable to allow pensioners to remain in the accommodation which in some cases they have occupied for 10, 20 or 30 years, rather than to turn them out of their family homes for the sake of \$5 a week.

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

Mr Laurance: You know they are not being turned out; you have been told that is not so. No-one has been turned out. What are you telling people on the waiting list?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am glad the Honorary Minister has come in, and I will deal with his points. If he wants to say that pensioners are not being turned out, then I put it to him that to impose upon a person a rental burden that he cannot maintain, and thereby to force that person to relinquish his tenancy, is tantamount to turning him out.

Mr Laurance: That is not the situation at all, and you know it. People are being given an opportunity to change if they can be allocated suitable accommodation in the appropriate place. Each one has been written to separately, and if anyone has any difficulty in understanding that communication, an officer is available to speak to him.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am quite encouraged by the Minister's tone.

Mr Laurance: But if they say they don't want to be listed for suitable accommodation and prefer to pay the differential and stay in their own house, we are happy to let them do that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If they say they do not want to be listed for suitable alternative

accommodation, and they do not want to pay a premium rental, there is no third option available to them.

Mr Laurance: Oh, yes there is.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In that case they must either shift out or pay the premium.

Mr Laurance: They are asked if they want suitable alternative accommodation. Is that wrong?

Mr B. T. BURKE: No, but if a person has lived 30 years in the one house, has brought up his family there, is friendly with his neighbours, and has relatives living close by, and he says, "I am 73 years of age and I do not expect to live for another 30 years; I want to spend the last five years of my life here", what happens then?

Mr Laurance: What about the people with four children who are waiting for a house and whom you are representing to me?

Mr Carr: You said by way of the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator's Speech that the waiting list is satisfactory.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let us give the Honorary Minister an opportunity to explain to the House what happens.

Mr Laurance: I will, in all good time.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yes, and in his good time; it is like the second coming. Let us refer back to the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech and the Premier's boast about the number of units of accommodation to be built this year. Does the House realise that the Tonkin Government, between 1971 and 1974, built more units of housing in each year of its existence than this Government will build in 1980-81? In six years we have gone backwards; in fact the units of accommodation to be built this year will be in the region of 600 fewer—although I am open to correction on that—than the maximum number built in any year under the Tonkin Government. How does the Honorary Minister explain that?

Mr Laurance: With vacant accommodation, that is how.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Vacant accommodation, that is right; because the Minister has flats that he will not rent at realistic prices. Let me give another example of his duplicity. We all read that the rent for flats was not increasing except, of course, in the case of pensioners. How does the Minister justify that?

Mr Laurance: They do not pay the standard rent. This year we will have rebates worth \$10 million.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister is starting to sound like the last failed Minister for Housing; the only word he knew was "rebates". How does he justify not increasing the rents charged for flats unless the flats are occupied by pensioners?

Mr Laurance: They are on a rebate rental.

Mr B. T. BURKE: So they pay more.

Mr Laurance: No, they pay less.

Mr B. T. BURKE: They are paying an increased rebated rental; in other words their rebate is increasing. Is that right?

Mr Laurance: We have tried to tell you.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister tried to tell the pensioners, and they were not convinced. Any Government that will say to elderly citizens, "Either list for suitable alternative accommodation or pay \$5 a week more for the family accommodation you occupy" certainly cannot be credited with compassion. Any Government that builds so many hundreds of accommodation units fewer than were built seven years ago by the last Labor Government cannot be accused of unusual building activity; and any Government that holds millions of dollars of expenditure earmarked for Aboriginal housing at a time when Aborigines are sleeping beneath bridges cannot be credited with having realistic policies.

Mr Nanovich: Would you say the East Girrawheen development is a credit to the previous Labor Government?

Mr B. T. BURKE: That development far exceeds the contribution of Brownlie Towers to the credit of the Liberal Government. However, let me say quite clearly that if I were the Minister for Housing East Girrawheen would never be repeated. I do not take credit on behalf of the last Labor Government for that sort of development, because I think mistakes were made which should not have been made and should not be repeated. But that does not justify the shortcomings in the present policies. I am sure the member for Whitford does not agree with the idea of charging pensioners an extra \$5 a week if they want to stay in the home in which they have lived for 30 years.

Mr Laurance: I think he would agree with that if they nominated to do so.

Mr Wilson: That is a departmental answer.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I conclude my remarks by once again saying that on the first sitting day of this Parliament we have seen a most deplorable instance of ministerial irresponsibility displayed by the Minister for Cultural Affairs who so effectively has degraded and denigrated that

portion of the community which he is charged to protect.

Mr Grayden: That is absolute rubbish. What else would we expect from you?

MR HODGE (Melville) [9.58 p.m.]: I would like to pursue the matter of housing for a few minutes, because I have two large State Housing Commission areas in my electorate. The Government's recent announcement in respect of a surcharge on pensioners has caused terrific consternation in Willagee and Hilton. Those are areas which have a very high population of elderly people, and many constituents have come to me seeking clarification of the Government's intentions.

I was most interested when the Honorary Minister for Housing said by way of interjection that a third option was available to pensioners. When the member for Balcatta asked what was the position if people did not want to be listed for transfer and could not afford to pay the surcharge, the Minister said a third option was available. I would like him to explain to the House what is that third option.

Mr Laurance: This is not question time. If they are prepared to go to suitable pensioner accommodation in an appropriate place, given the fact that they might have been in one locality for a long time, then they are wait-listed for pensioner accommodation in that locality and will not pay a different rent. If they decide they do want to stay in the house and prefer to pay the differential rate, then they may stay there.

Mr HODGE: I want to know what happens if they want to stay in the house and cannot afford to pay the extra money.

Mr Laurance: We think, seeing that the Government is charged with the responsibility of looking after the people whom you purport to represent, that is a very irresponsible course of action for you to take.

Mr HODGE: I would like the Minister to answer my question in respect of what happens to pensioners who want to stay in the house in which they may have lived for 27 years, but who cannot afford to pay an extra \$5 a week. What does the Minister intend to do with them? Does the Government intend to leave them there, or are they going to be evicted?

Mr Laurance: All these people would be on a rebate. We would go to them and say, "What are your circumstances?" We would talk to them in the context of making negotiations. We are trying to provide pensioner accommodation for pensioners and family accommodation for

families who are waiting for such accommodation. Is that a bad policy?

Mr HODGE: Is the Honorary Minister saying that pensioners who cannot afford to pay the additional \$5 a week will be allowed to remain?

Mr Laurance: Is that a bad thing? Answer my question.

Mr HODGE: The Honorary Minister has come half way towards answering my question. I am seeking a little clarification.

Mr Laurance: My question time is over. You answer my question.

Mr HODGE: I have thousands of constituents living in Willagee and Hilton who want to know the answers to those questions, but the Honorary Minister obviously is not prepared to provide them. Mr Speaker, I can see I am largely wasting my time and your time.

Mr B. T. Burke: There is a third alternative: Eviction!

Mr HODGE: That is right. Obviously I am not going to get a sensible answer from the Minister; I might as well abandon that approach.

Earlier this evening we were given a very comprehensive outline of the State and national economy by the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We heard about the very shaky position of the State and national economies. We heard about the level of unemployment, about pensioners, about families with dependent children, about Aboriginal people, about the health insurance scheme, and about a whole range of other issues.

With that sort of background, it was with some amazement that I and many thousands of Australian citizens read a recent announcement in the Press that Prime Minister Fraser had been chosen by an international organisation to receive a humanitarian award.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Ku Klux Klan.

Mr Bryce: The laugh of the century!

Mr HODGE: The award has been conferred by the Jewish organisation, B'nai B'rith. I understand its headquarters are in Washington DC. Apparently it has branches throughout the world, but I am not sure whether it has a branch in Australia.

I do not know on whose recommendation this organisation acted in the belief that Malcolm Fraser was a great humanitarian. Obviously the members of this organisation did not do their homework; they did not bother to check Fraser's history or record. Perhaps they were influenced

by his rhetoric when overseas, and by his election policy promises.

It would be interesting if these people tried telling Australia's nearly 400 000 unemployed that Malcolm Fraser was a great humanitarian. Unemployment has risen by 50 per cent since the Liberal Government came into power in Canberra. People living on unemployment benefits currently are struggling well below the poverty line. The unemployed people in this country have been subjected to unprecedented masses of red tape and bureaucratic forms to fill in; they have suffered continual harassment and severe financial penalty. I am sure that not many of the unemployed would be impressed with the suggestion that Malcolm Fraser should be given an award for his humanitarian ideals.

It would be interesting if the organisation tried to tell the invalid pensioners of Australia that Malcolm Fraser was a great humanitarian. Invalid pensioners recently have been subjected to the harshest crack-down in Australia's history. Thousands of invalid pensioners throughout Australia are living under great tension and anxiety because of the Government's latest crack-down in guidelines relating to invalid pensions. Invalid pensioners who have been receiving a pension for many years currently are being subjected to review. It appears a large number of them are to be taken off the pension; they are having their pensions reviewed out of existence.

Even the Government's own doctors are rebelling against the new, harsh guidelines. These doctors have been instructed not to take into account the possibility of a person being able to obtain gainful employment. Job prospects cannot be taken into account when doctors are assessing a person's eligibility for an invalid pension. That certainly is a great humanitarian move!

It would be interesting to try to tell the age pensioners—the senior citizens of Australia—that Malcolm Fraser is a great humanitarian. In the first Budget after the 1977 election, the Fraser Government abolished the twice-yearly indexation of pensions. It was only after great outcry and public pressure that the Government eventually restored twice-yearly indexation. Malcolm Fraser slashed funds for aged persons' housing and citizens' centres and has rejected frequent approaches to increase the miserly \$5 a week rent allowance paid to pensioners in very poor circumstances.

Many pensioners in this country are living below the official poverty line established by the Fraser Government. When I talk about "poverty

line", I am not referring to a level plucked out of the air by me or anyone else; this is the poverty line arrived at by the Government's own statisticians.

It would be interesting to try to convince the Greek community in Australia that Malcolm Fraser is a great humanitarian. We are all aware of the notorious raid which took place a couple of years ago on Greek pensioners. Hundreds of Greek pensioners suddenly had their pensions arbitrarily stopped. They had not been accused, charged, or convicted of any offence, yet their pensions were stopped. That was another great humanitarian move.

Mr Nanovich: Do you believe there was any abuse?

Mr HODGE: The system may have been abused by certain people and I agree that those people should have been investigated. However, it was certainly not the action of a great humanitarian to arbitrarily cut the pensions paid to hundreds of Greek people in our community. It was an unfair and unjustifiable action.

Perhaps we should start telling the families of Australia that Malcolm Fraser is a great humanitarian. There has not been an increase in the family allowance for over four years. There has not been an increase in the allowance paid for dependants of pensioners since Malcolm Fraser has been at the helm of this country. I think it would be difficult to try to persuade families that Malcolm Fraser has been a great humanitarian.

Single parents living solely on their pensions are struggling well below the poverty line. Some single parents with dependent children are living on up to \$20 a week below the official poverty line.

Mr Sodeman: What was the inflation rate when Whitlam was Prime Minister?

Mr Bryce: About the same as it is right now—13 per cent in 1980. After five years in office, the inflation rate is precisely where it was when Fraser came into office.

Mr Jamieson: This Government holds the record when it comes to inflation. No other State Government can touch it.

Mr HODGE: Australia's Aboriginal people are not convinced that Malcolm Fraser is a great humanitarian. We have seen cut-backs in all spheres of Government spending on Aborigines. We heard the member for Balcatta say that this Government returned to the Fraser Government a large amount of Commonwealth money intended for Aboriginal housing. Cut-backs have been imposed on all sorts of works programmes for

Aboriginal projects; there have been reductions in financing of health programmes for Aborigines.

Last week I visited the Aboriginal Medical Service in Broome. This is a self-help organisation operated by a group of Aborigines who have banded together to employ a doctor in an endeavour to help themselves and improve their medical standards. Yet in over two years of operation, this group has been unable to obtain 1c of assistance either from this Government or the Fraser Government. It relies on a small annual grant from the Lutheran Church, which is based in Europe. Again, this is a graphic example of the humanitarian ideals of both this Government and the Fraser Government.

Another Aboriginal group based in Broome has a similar story to tell. This group looks after Aborigines with alcohol problems and does its best to rehabilitate them. It has received one grant of \$3 500 from the Alcohol and Drug Authority. That is the full extent of the assistance it has received.

I do not think Australian wage and salary earners are convinced that Malcolm Fraser is a great humanitarian. He has presided over the greatest transfer of wealth in our history. He has presided over the transfer of wealth from the wage earners through the taxation system. The wealthiest 10 per cent of people in this country have had a terrific transfer of wealth to them. It is the ordinary wage and salary earners who are footing the bill. They are paying more in tax. They are also paying more—much more—for health insurance.

Of course, Malcolm Fraser forgot one of the promises on which his award was based. That was the promise that he would keep Medibank. Of course, we all know that the promise was not kept. We all know we now have the most ramshackle, creaky, old, health insurance system that any country has ever had the misfortune to have imposed upon it. People are paying up to \$600 a year and they are still receiving an inadequate and hopeless health insurance cover. Is it any wonder that nearly 50 per cent of the population have opted out of health insurance?

In addition to not being able to afford health insurance, when many people go to the doctor they find they cannot afford to have his prescription filled. Recently I was speaking to a pharmacist who works in a pharmacy situated in a large, working-class, Housing Commission area. He told me of some of the strains he is facing because of economic circumstances and the ramshackle national health scheme. The pharmacist told me he frequently receives phone

calls from people who say, "Look, I'm home sick in bed. I'm too sick to go down to Fremantle Hospital outpatients' clinic and wait. I can't afford to have the doctor come around to me, but I've got such and such a drug in the medicine chest. Should I take it?" They expect the pharmacist to tell them over the phone what they should take, and diagnose what is wrong with them.

Some people take their children into the chemist shop and say to the pharmacist, "Look at little Johnny for me. Can you diagnose what is wrong with him and give him something to take?" They are expecting the pharmacist to diagnose what is wrong with the child, and to prescribe some drugs or medication.

Mr Young: Why would they do that?

Mr HODGE: Because they cannot afford to go to the doctor.

Mr Young: Why would they not go to the hospital where the treatment is free?

Mr HODGE: Because many people, the Minister might be surprised to know, do not know they can go to the hospital.

Mr Young: Come on!

Mr HODGE: They do not know; and in addition—

Mr Bryce: You do not advertise it, and I bet you won't.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are always threatening if they do, you will penalise them.

Mr Young: They want a mobile hospital to call at the door. You have got free medicine at a number of hospitals. Some of the best in the world—completely free. You walk in the door and you go right through for absolutely nothing—through everything.

Mr HODGE: I realise that.

Mr Young: What on earth more can the Government do?

Mr HODGE: Many people in the community need to know, but they do not. This is the point I am trying to make.

Mr Wilson: A lot of them live a long way from the hospital.

Mr Young: What do you want to happen? Send cabs around to pick them up?

Mr Wilson: The Minister wants to introduce Government changes in hospitals.

Mr Young: It is about time you grew up. You are the sort of person who believes we ought to send them around.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order and cross-Chamber conversations will cease.

Mr HODGE: The people who most need to know about the free service available at Fremantle Hospital and other hospitals do not know. Many of them, of course, cannot wait for up to five or six hours. People have to wait five or six hours because of the huge influx of people now going to the outpatients' sections of the public hospitals to obtain attention. That is another disadvantage.

Another problem with the present ramshackle health system is that if people can visit the doctor and he gives them a prescription for antibiotics, antihistamines, and a cough linctus because they are suffering from the flu, they present the prescription to the chemist and he tells them they will have to pay three lots of \$2.75. The question they pose to the chemist then is: "Which is the most important thing on the prescription? I can't afford to pay three times \$2.75, so which is the most important thing on that prescription?" Again, the chemist is being put in an impossible situation. The doctor has diagnosed a certain problem and written out a prescription which he thinks is suitable and necessary. The person cannot afford three times \$2.75, or four times, or whatever, for all items. Therefore the chemist is asked, "Which is the most important? I can afford only one." The chemist has to make a decision. He is placed in a terrible position.

That is another byproduct of the system under which we are labouring under the Fraser and Court Governments. I do not think many people in that position would be very impressed with Mr Fraser's humanitarian award.

I have not been able to learn much about the organisation which presented the award to Mr Fraser. I visited the Parliamentary Library, and I discovered a little information. Apparently the organisation is the oldest and largest Jewish service organisation in the United States of America. It was founded in 1843. It is interested in helping people, and particularly young people—the youth of the country.

I do not know where the organisation obtained the information on which it based its award. If it obtained it from its Australian branch, it ought to investigate ways and means of updating the Australian branch. Obviously it was given incorrect information. It did not do its homework. Obviously the award was based on Fraser's rhetoric—his rhetoric meant for overseas consumption on his overseas jaunts—not based on what is happening in this country.

Malcolm Fraser is not a humanitarian. That is for sure. He has divided this country more than any other politician in our history. He has divided it between the powerful and the powerless. In my opinion, that is not the ground for a humanitarian award.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [10.18 p.m.]: I would like to take a few minutes to offer my congratulations to the member for Kimberley, who is sitting here tonight. I want to say how pleased we on this side of the House are that he has been elected to the House in spite of the racists in the Liberal Party who stopped at nothing in trying to prevent his election. No doubt, of course, that has all been forgotten. He is a member of "the club", and some of those people will be buying him beers in the bar.

I would like to remind the member for Kimberley that they are the people who tried to stop him. They were prepared to make a mockery of the electoral laws. They were prepared to stop at nothing in order to prevent his election. We should remember that kind of thing when we are making our judgments on these people.

There were two different groups in the Liberal Party who were racist. There were the sophisticated ones—the bullies who, with their qualifications as lawyers, were sent to Kimberley with a job to do. A bully is a person who uses his superior force against one who is not as strong. There is the physical bully who uses his body against someone who is physically weaker; and there are those who have a superior education and who, on that shameful occasion, went to Kimberley in order to use their superior education and their superior technical knowledge of the law against the people who did not have that kind of advantage. That kind of bullying is just as reprehensible, just as bad, as the physical kind of bullying about which we usually use the term. The dictum of Lord Acton was that power corrupts and that was never more forcibly shown than in the case of the Western Australian Liberal Party.

In case people believe that shameful episode was an isolated incident—it will make us ashamed for decades to come—I would like to mention one or two events that have occurred in this century, in this country of ours, which show that racism and the determination to subvert and pervert the electoral system is a rotten canker running through conservative political forces of this country.

The conservatives have never been prepared to accept that the people can have the Government of their choice. The Liberal Party has never been

prepared to say to the Australian people, "If you decide not to choose us, that is fair enough with us." We know very well what happened in 1974, when a properly elected Government of this country was prevented from governing by people who would not admit that Australian people had the right to choose a Government other than a Liberal Government. Although that Government was re-elected in 1974, in 1975 the Liberal Party once again said that the people did not have the right to have that Government. So for the Liberal Party to say it believes in democracy is a mockery and a lie.

We heard the member for Mundaring use the word "democracy" the other day. I do not know how the word does not stick in the throats of Liberal Party supporters; I do not know how they can use the word. We all know the Australian people are denied a chance to have their choice. The word "liberal" is synonymous with electoral cheating.

In this State as far back as 1960 the Government of Sir David Brand had to be taken to the Supreme Court and then to the High Court of Australia to be made to obey the electoral law. One wonders how Liberal members can have the moral force to say to people, "You should obey the law. It is there for you to obey." The Liberal Party runs a law and order ticket, yet it was the Brand Liberal Government of this State which refused to obey a law passed by this Parliament, over which it had control. It is bad enough not to obey laws made by other people, but when a Government does not obey laws it has made itself, we realise how bad things are.

Another example of the disgraceful way in which the Liberal Party tampers with elections in this State is shown by the Electoral Districts Act. So we see this attitude is not new; this attitude that the Liberals will interfere, cheat, and lie. They will interfere with the electoral system to prevent certain members of the public from having the Government they choose. This is what does happen.

I shall refer to certain conservative forces in this country which have used other methods in order to have their own way. I am talking about people who have gone outside the parliamentary system. The other night we heard the member for Mundaring speaking about people going into the streets and how this was not the proper thing to do. We have seen articles in *The West Australian* stating that this is not the proper way to get a law changed.

However, we remember William John Wendell Scott who decided to use other methods to get his

own way in the same manner as reactionaries in this country. Scott was a State councillor of the RSL in New South Wales. He was an insurance broker and he was on the board of several insurance companies. In 1920, when it was believed there was a danger of a Labor Federal Government being elected and when there was a Labor Government in the offing in the State of New South Wales, the representatives of most Sydney business interests, farmers, members of protestant churches, and returned soldiers met in Sydney and formed the King and Empire Alliance. This action was taken to prevent the Australian people from having the Government of their choice. It was to take over from a Labor Government should such a Government be elected.

This is the same symptom we have seen already of the conservative forces saying, "You will not be permitted to choose a Government; you will have to take the Government we choose for you."

This King and Empire Alliance was formed to take over from a Labor Government, should it be considered necessary in its warped and facist views. It had over 100 000 members in a very short space of time when the population of Australia was something like five million. All these people were prepared to act in a revolutionary manner to overthrow a Labor Government if the Australian people should choose such a Government.

Papers which are available in the National Library reveal a plan was drawn up in 1918, 1919, and 1920 by the conservatives of the time in case a Labor Government was elected. It was a conservative Prime Minister (Bruce) who got in touch with Scott and people like him, wanting to know whether there would be any problem and if they could be relied upon to get together 500 000 or so people who would be prepared to assist the police in times of trouble. This is very similar to the essays which were being formed in Germany in the 1920s where street fighters who would be prepared to fight for their facist ideas were organised.

It is not surprising that Prime Minister Bruce went to Scott wanting to know whether Scott could raise such an army. It is very interesting to note that within weeks of Lang being elected, I think, in 1930, giving New South Wales a Labor Premier, the Governor of the time (Philip Game) sent a secret telegram to the British Government discussing the possibility that he might have to dismiss the Lang Government. We know that a year later he did dismiss Lang from office. But it is worth noting that within weeks of Lang's election, the Governor was canvassing that possibility with the British Government.

The actions of that Governor remind me of the absent and unlamented Governor Kyle. I have raised in this House the question of the most improper behaviour by this Governor who had been berating a member of this House over the Australian Labor Party's uranium policy.

The SPEAKER: I have just asked the Clerk to turn up the relevant Standing Order covering this matter. It is a fact that Sir Wallace Kyle is still the Governor of Western Australia and I draw the member's attention to Standing Order No. 128 which states—

No Member shall use the name of Her Majesty or the Governor irreverently in debate, or for the purpose of influencing the House in its deliberations.

I ask the member to have regard for that Standing Order and not to continue referring to the Governor in the fashion he has up to this time.

Mr TONKIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I did refer to the fact that the Governor had berated a member of this House with respect to the policy of the Australian Labor Party on uranium. I pointed out that it was the job of the Sovereign's representative to be completely impartial. Further, I pointed out that Her Majesty the Queen had succeeded in doing this and had been able to keep herself above party politics.

About the same time, the Governor attacked the Australian Labor Party's policy with respect to local government. When that kind of thing happens, the people of this State have a right to wonder what kind of attitude such a Governor would have if there should be elected as the Government of Western Australia a Labor Government, a Government whose policy he has already attacked.

I believe the people of Western Australia have a right to choose any Government they wish. Certainly no-one appointed by a Government, as is the Governor, has the right to attack a political party and act in the manner I have described.

I suggest to you, Sir, that if Her Majesty the Queen had acted in that fashion it would not have been accepted. As I mentioned when I was speaking on this matter last year, at one stage Britain was very close to becoming a republic. At that time the people, even the conservatives, were discussing how long the monarchy would last. The reason the monarchy has lasted is that it has shown it can adjust to the democratic system and that it will not be involved in party politics. Of course, that is the correct stance.

When the Standing Order to which you, Sir, referred a few moments ago was drawn up, it was assumed the Governor would act in a proper,

constitutional manner. Naturally, if the Governor is acting correctly and does not take sides against one political party, there would be no reason that anyone should wish to attack the office; but the fact is the Governor forgot himself on the occasions I have mentioned. That is a matter of public record and this is the place in which such issues should be drawn to the attention of the public.

I referred to Sir Wallace Kyle and back in 1930 we saw Sir Philip Game showing his partisan nature in a very clear and unmistakable way during a very brief period of time after the election of a Labor Government. I question with what degree of impartiality the Governor would have acted had a Labor Government been elected in this State earlier this year.

As soon as Mr Lang became Premier a citizens' defence corps was formed in the more affluent suburbs of Sydney. These people were committed to overthrowing by force the properly elected Government of New South Wales, if they deemed it necessary.

We should not be surprised to learn that this group was organised by a committee known as the Goldfinch-Gillespie committee. Mr Goldfinch was the general manager of CSR and Mr Gillespie was the Chairman of the Bank of New South Wales. These people were prepared to act in the manner I have described.

Colonel Scott, to whom I have referred already, and Colonel Campbell, who achieved a degree of notoriety when the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened in 1932, represented the new guard.

Mr Bertram: A thug!

Mr TONKIN: In 1932 this group planned to seize control of the State, if it was considered necessary, because a Labor Government was in power. One might say to oneself that Colonel Scott was a true patriot and a person who was prepared to defend Australia against the ravages of a Labor Government. However, I suggest to you, Sir, that had Colonel Scott been a German he would have been very prominent in the Nazi Party. As the member for Mt. Hawthorn has so rightly said, he was nothing more nor less than a thug. However, in some quarters such a man was considered to be a patriot.

We have heard the Premier talk about traitors and the fact that people who question his wisdom in regard to environmental or any other matters are traitors. However, I suggest that anyone who plans to overthrow by force a legitimately elected Government is a traitor to his State and to his country.

It is interesting to note that, in 1932, Colonel Scott wrote a letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald* saying, "The Australian public feels admiration for the positive policy of Japan and the admirable way it is being carried out." There we have the great Australian patriot saying that he admired the positive policy of Japan. What was Japan's positive policy at that time? It had just invaded Manchuria.

The Sydney Morning Herald then published 31 pro-Japanese articles written by Colonel Scott who had been the organiser of an army which he hoped would be able to overthrow the Labor Government if necessary.

Indeed, it is a matter of record that, when Mr John Curtin became Prime Minister, it was quickly brought to his attention that in certain parts of the intelligence section of the Army particular officers could not be trusted. Of course, Colonel Scott was involved with the intelligence section at that time.

When war broke out Colonel Scott took charge of Gull Force on Ambon. That force surrendered to the Japanese, although it had taken very little part in the fighting. Another detachment of 300 men continued to fight. Those men were not under the direct command of Colonel Scott. They were killed almost to a man whilst defending the airfield at Ambon.

When Colonel Scott indicated he was not very keen on fighting the Japanese, his officers and men became quite restless. His second in command dissuaded him from surrendering in the first place, but eventually Colonel Scott had his way and the soldiers surrendered.

If one examines the military record of Colonel Scott, in addition to his political record of thuggery, it can be seen he was not a man to be held in high esteem. The events on Ambon and the part played by Colonel Scott are one of the more shameful episodes in our military history.

I referred to that matter because I believe people should be aware that, when an isolated incident occurs such as the attempt made to subvert the electoral system in the Kimberley, we err if we believe that in fact it is a case on its own. In the 1920s and 1930s the conservative forces were prepared to overthrow the Government by force. They had uniforms and took part in drills as members of the new guard. Members will have seen photographs of the ribbon being slashed by the new guard at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Members must realise that throughout the 1920s and 1930s and up to the present day, decisions to prevent a Government elected by the people from governing, the

sabotage of Government by any method, whether constitutional, financial, or illegal—such as the use of force—are not new. They are not isolated incidents.

When we see the perversion of the electoral system such as occurs in Western Australia under the Electoral Districts Act, we have to realise this is all part of a situation in which the Australian people are being told, "You will not be allowed to have the Government of your choice. If you do not choose us we will see to it that no other Government can govern. We will use any method."

We are reminded of Senator Withers, who, within weeks of the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972 met with other people in the Liberal Party to decide how Whitlam should be destroyed. No frank admission that the Australian people—after 23 years—had a right to choose such a Government, but rather a determination to prevent such a Government from governing.

So, in rising to congratulate the member for Kimberley, I say, in spite of this obstacle which was put in his path by the Liberal Party, he has arrived. His election to this Parliament is a far more significant event than the election of any other member of this House. That is why I particularly wish to congratulate him and to indicate that we are not prepared to allow people to pervert the will of the people, whether that perversion is done through a Statute of this Parliament or whether it is done through tricks—as they were euphemistically called on election day—as in the case of Scott in the 1920s and 1930s.

So, whatever method is used with the Western Australian people and the Australian people, they have a right to choose any Government they wish and we will not allow any interference with that right.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [10.42 p.m.]: My party made it very clear during the course of the election campaign that it would not deny supply, and so it goes without saying that we will be supporting this Bill.

However, whilst we support the Government in principle, we do take issue with specific areas of Government policy, and it would be remiss of me if I did not mention some of those issues which have not been raised already by members in this House.

The members of the Opposition have referred mostly to social issues. Whilst they are important, they are not the only issues which I think should be raised in this House in order to remind the

Government of its responsibilities. These are some of the issues where we believe the Government's policies could be improved.

One particular issue of interest to rural Western Australians relates to transport, and at the moment the Western Australian State transport policy is in a state of flux. It is very difficult to obtain from anyone in this House—and particularly the Minister for Transport—some stated policy which the Government is adhering to in terms of its land freight transport policy.

Mr H. D. Evans: He was approved of in Merredin; he received seven votes out of 650!

Mr COWAN: There were not 650 people. That is an exaggeration. The number of votes the Minister received was not an exaggeration. There were something like 350 people in the hall. The rest had to be turned away because there was not room for them. Of the 350 people present, only seven were prepared to support the Minister. It was not so much the Government's land freight transport policy, but the issue that relates to increased grain freight charges.

Mr H. D. Evans: Was not there a motion of no confidence?

Mr COWAN: There was a motion of no confidence in the Minister and the Government policy. My interpretation of that is that the direction of the motion of no confidence really related to grain freight charges.

As far as we are concerned, we have little quarrel with the principle behind the land freight policy, but it is very difficult to find any substance or any area where there has been an enactment of the policy. There have been statements to the effect that Westrail is to become competitive, but how can a decision to increase grain freight rates by 20 per cent make Westrail competitive? Competitive with what?

People accept that there must be increases in charges for services, and certainly Westrail is a service. However, they do not accept that charges must rise at a level higher than the existing CPI. They do not accept—and this is probably the greatest issue—the base upon which the Government increases its charges on long haul grain freights at 20 per cent. Most people believe the initial rate is a highly inflated figure.

They are not prepared to accept the new freight charges unless Governments can give some justification for the pricing of long haul freights on grain being what they are; particularly in the case where all other bulk commodities are being transported for prices sometimes less than half those of grain freight.

Grain growers provide the largest amount of revenue to Westrail, and they deserve to be given some answers to the questions they are asking of the Minister for Transport. They deserve to be told why it is that they are paying rates in excess of double the rate for bulk commodities such as iron ore. Also, why it is that Westrail, because it finds some commodities are not regulated commodities, is able to offer prices far less than for grain which seems to be regulated. I will give an example that the Minister gave in answer to a question asked in the House. I dispute the answer he gave. My information is that he is wrong.

There was an offer made to shire councils that Westrail could transport bluemetal from the metropolitan area to areas—for argument's sake—within my electorate for a price less than that for grain. Included in the price for bluemetal was the cost for transporting bluemetal from the quarry to Kewdale, and then from the rail siding to the shire council depot.

Now, there is no way in the world anyone can convince me that Westrail can operate competitively in the freighting of bluemetal at that price. If so, why is grain charged at a higher price?

Farmers are quite justified in asking the Government to provide details of the cost of transporting grain from CBH country storage points to the ports, and until the Government gives those answers it will lose many friends in rural areas.

It is not good enough for the Minister for Transport to say that grain and superphosphate are regulation products and therefore the Government must extract from the people who produce or purchase them the maximum the market can bear, and at the same time say to other people to whom they offer contract rates at a very favourable price that they cannot divulge the price because it is a commercial operation. They are being offered rates at less than half that for grain producers.

The Government has a responsibility to those people who seem to support it blindly, and a responsibility to advise them just how the costs are ascertained.

Rail is only one of the many transport issues. There are other factors and I think members of this House should be reminded here and now—particularly members on this side of the House—of the consequences of the State transport levy. When the levy was first introduced we warned members here that if the Bill were supported in the way it was represented to this House, the Government would be given an open

invitation to increase the State fuel levy tax just when it felt like it, and also the passing of that Bill gave *carte blanche* to increase licence fees any time the Government felt like it. Consequently, on the 1st July we found ourselves in the position where the State fuel levy for petrol was increased by 44 per cent, and heavy vehicle licence fees went up by 25 per cent. There is no redress against that type of increase.

I am sure the Government must realise the effect that these high transport costs will have on people who support the Government very strongly. It is a great disappointment that this has happened and that there has been no effort or endeavour by the Minister for Transport to answer the questions that have been put to him. Despite the numerous meetings he has attended and despite the numerous deputations he has received he has made no effort to answer the questions put to him. That is something with which I can take issue and I want to place on record my opposition to it.

I am sure the Government has not contemplated the consequences that its increased freight charges, or its new land freight policy will have on rural communities. I represent an area which comprises nine shires. If my area includes one of the large shires in the electorate of the member for Yilgarn-Dundas, that region will have to pay to Westrail an extra \$2 million in grain freights alone. I can assure members that is \$2 million the small businesses in the rural communities will not get.

It is pointless for the Government to set up a private company to help decentralised small businesses if it takes action to deprive them of turnover and money which normally would go to them for services rendered. The Government should look closely at its land freight transport policy and, perhaps, make some adjustments, particularly in the light of the fact that other commodities are transported far more favourably than grain.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [10.54 p.m.]: One has to assume there is an election in the offing because I can only imagine that the outpourings from the Opposition tonight have been related directly to such an event. I must admit it was a rather disappointing type of contribution because we saw from the Leader of the Opposition the same old routine; a wearisome, very pedestrian type of speech, no doubt prepared by the same person who has prepared his previous speeches.

Mr Davies: Spot on, and you know it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: No doubt, copies of the speech were sent to the Press Gallery and, no doubt, in a dutiful way the Press will report the speech as in the past.

Mr Bryce: Listen to Dr Goebbels complaining about the dissemination of information;

Sir CHARLES COURT: We have heard it all before.

Mr Davies: And you will hear it all again.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am amazed that the Leader of the Opposition on this occasion, having had some experience, did not attempt to analyse the financial position of the State in a much more effective way than he did. Obviously, somebody did a lot of work for him.

Mr Davies: We were looking for some result from the Government.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will not argue about the percentages and other figures quoted; but, I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition—who aspires one day to lead the Government and be the Treasurer—should distort the situation in the way he did tonight. The Leader of the Opposition knows that the accounts of this State are tabled in this Parliament at regular intervals, and that they are in great detail. We have a lengthy debate when they are analysed by members in this Parliament. There is also the Auditor General's report which is presented regularly, and that is not a Government document.

The Auditor General's report is a document presented by an officer of this Parliament. The report comes to this Parliament, and members see it at the same time as the Treasurer himself sees it. So, it is not a Government document. Yet, the Leader of the Opposition has the temerity to stand up and use a phrase such as "dishonesty". I thought the Leader of the Opposition should have been ashamed of himself because he knows that the earnings on the short-term money market are very much part of the Government's income; a part of the income that is faithfully recorded and faithfully represented each year. It is explained in detail each year when the Budget is presented. That income is covered by the Auditor General's report, but the Leader of the Opposition has the temerity to use the same old expressions, "slush fund" and so on. No doubt the Press will dutifully report his remarks again. There will be reference to the "slush fund" even though the Press has had it explained to them, and Parliament has heard the explanation *ad infinitum*.

The display by the Leader of the Opposition was abysmal because it was a tirade of irresponsible statements. One has to ask whether

the Leader of the Opposition, if he were in charge of the Treasury, would take all the money from the short-term money market—which is very much part of the State's acknowledged income covered by a Statute—and splurge it all in one year. That is Labor-type policy and administration, and it has echoes of the days of Whitlam—spend, spend, spend and push up the public sector. To hell with the consequences!

I say to those who take these things seriously that they should look at the Government accounts and look at the way the money has been employed. The earnings from the short-term money market have not only been faithfully represented to this House, but also used in a very wise way. I ask members of the Opposition what they would have done in government when faced with a very serious cut-back in capital funds from the Federal Government.

Mr Davies: Whose fault was that?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Certainly not ours. What would members opposite have done? Would they have used this money in the way we used it? It was used to pump an extra \$25 million from the revenue side into the capital arena to enable a continuity of works programmes so that there was a stability in the work force. We not only maintained our work force, but also made much more work possible in the private sector than would otherwise be the case. It is up to members opposite to say quite clearly what they would have done.

Mr Davies: You still have \$25 million stashed away.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition should reflect on what I have said. He makes dastardly attacks on some very responsible people, not only in the Treasury, but also on the Auditor General himself.

Mr Davies: They missed a \$3 million mistake, and a mistake of \$3.3 million the year before. They are doing a job and they have to be counted the same as the Premier.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Of course, they will be counted.

Mr Davies: They are not standing up too well at present.

Sir CHARLES COURT: They are subject to the audit of the Auditor General and any internal audit that takes place. So it is not right or proper for a leader in this House to make this dastardly attack on those people. Those are the ones who are attacked.

Mr Davies: Rubbish!

Sir CHARLES COURT: It has been acknowledged and stated in this Parliament time and time again by me that we are not happy about the way the Federal Government has treated the States either in respect of capital funds or revenue funds, or in respect of road funds. But, we happen to be living in a democracy and it is our right—as happens within the Government parties—to criticise people without having our heads chopped off.

I will be going to a meeting on Friday, as is public knowledge. I was one of the architects in arranging the meeting for Friday so that State Premiers could confer without the Federal Government being present and iron out several problems between themselves, so that when we see the Federal Government we can present a united front. I believe this is the way it should and can be done. It has been done in the past when the States joined together, ironed out some of the problems which were peculiar to one State as against another, and went forward to the Commonwealth, not letting it defeat us by the "divide and conquer" method.

It is not peculiar to the present Federal Government. It has happened with previous Labor Governments as well as Liberal-Country Party Governments. It is part of the job of the Premier and Treasurer of the State to fight for the State. We are very proud of the record of this State as far as finances are concerned. No previous Government has been able to present to the Parliament the financial statements that this Government has been able to present. It is not only the result of the work of a Treasurer; it is the result of the work of a team. All the departments have to pull their weight, whether it is in education, health, law and order, road programmes, or anything else.

The Leader of the Opposition did not seem to understand any better this year than he did in previous years.

Mr Davies: Why did you write and ask me for my thoughts on the short-term money market?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Only because the Leader of the Opposition said he had some ideas.

Mr Davies: You told me you knew all about it. You did not want to know about it last year. Now you ask me to help you out. Send me back the report I asked you for.

Sir CHARLES COURT: We did not need any help from the Leader of the Opposition. I thought it would be a novel idea if he, professing to have some superior knowledge, told us about it. I ask the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Davies: You are on thin ice and you know it.

Sir CHARLES COURT:—who has been so irresponsible tonight, what he would have done had he been in the situation of having the Treasury of the State in his hands and having to formulate a works programme which would at least maintain a reasonable level of work, a reasonable standard of services, and generally a reasonable standard of employment. I remind him that using this money for capital works is accounting and financial management at its best, because it is money on which we do not have to pay interest and which we do not have to pay back. We are making a contribution to the taxpayers because we are taking a burden off their back, not only for today, but for the years ahead.

I remind members of what appears on page 3 of the statement issued to members summarising the financial results to the 30th June. This is one of the great challenges which will face every Government in Australia, both Federal and State; that is, the incidence of the increases that have taken place in costs during the year just ended, which apply only for part of that year, but which will apply for a whole year without any increase in the standard and volume of services, and without any further wage increases, which are yet to be felt. That is very enlightening.

Members will see that the costs absorbed in this particular statement in 1979-80 were no less than \$45.1 million, but when those items are projected for a full year into 1980-81 they will amount to \$90.4 million. That is the sort of burden we carry. When we refer to wage increases, fuel increases, and other increases, it is for good reason: we want to alert this House to the fact that when we bring down the Budget in September it will have to be a tractable Budget with which we can live, at the same time absorbing not only all the cost imposts which have already taken place, but also no doubt some others to follow.

I also say in defence of the Federal Government that it has been doing an important task for the nation in trying to bring the economy of this country under some sort of control. It inherited an almost impossible situation.

Mr Pearce: Here we go!

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members have any pride in their country at all, they will be pleased to see that today Australia has moved up very much in the scale of OECD countries, which is the only yardstick we can use to measure ourselves against the rest of the world. Having gone from the bottom of that list to a fairly high

position among our trading partners, and having respect for the things that have been done, we as Australians should be proud and realise it involves some sacrifice.

I do not welcome the problems we have to face up to, but I believe every Government, State and Commonwealth, has a responsibility to do its share to try to get on top of the problem—the scourge of inflation—because if we do not get on top of it there is no future as far as the unemployed are concerned. It is only by getting on top of it that we can have a future for those people.

I was expecting something responsible from the Leader of the Opposition after the experience he has had, but I was disappointed that instead we had an irresponsible statement which reflected no credit on him and no credit on the people he is leading.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr Pearce: It reflects no credit on you, either. It is disgusting.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Gosnells that I have been on my feet for some time. At this early stage of the session I do not intend to take action.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Issue and application of \$910 000 000—

Mr DAVIES: This is the main clause of the Bill and it deals with the issue of money up to \$910 million to come out of this year's Budget from the 1st July to the 30th June.

I am sorry that tonight we had in reply from the Premier the same diatribe we have had on other occasions. I would have thought some of what we had been saying might get through to him by now and that he might have appreciated that we had some sympathy with the position in which the public of Western Australia found themselves, but little sympathy with his handling of financial matters in this State. It is of no use his blaming everybody but himself; it homes directly onto him.

When the Treasurer is bringing down his Budget this year, we do not want to hear the same old clichés about how difficult it is to handle these

matters. He would like us to think that Western Australia is the only Australian State that is suffering.

There is no particular magic about the way the Treasurer is handling financial matters. If he had listened to what I said tonight he would have seen the position that the State is in because of his stubbornness in defending the new federalism in which he took such pride initially and which has proved to be such a disaster.

The Opposition wonders what kind of Budget will come out of this clause. Will not the Treasurer learn that other people can have sympathy and understanding? He will never receive any co-operation if he carries on like this.

The Treasurer asks what would we do with the money available from the short-term money market. We would do what we did with it before—we would use it responsibly. We would not let it grow to such a huge sum that we were forced to take pride only in building it up. Additional amounts of money would have been spent on capital works and the like. It is not good enough for the Treasurer to say time and time again that we would blow the lot of it and it would be like the Whitlam era. Let me remind him that under Whitlam our State would have received a far better deal than it is receiving at the present time.

I would like to remind the Treasurer that the Treasury officials who are advising him are the same officials who advised the Tonkin Government. In other words, he is insulting the people who advised the Tonkin Government. The Treasurer is too old and he has been so long in the job that it is starting to show. We have heard an irresponsible and irrational reply from him tonight. Year after year we have heard the same tirades from him and the same replies to questions.

We would like to be able to go out into the electorate and tell people that things will be better for the public of Western Australia. However, we still have not had a proper explanation of the \$3 million Metropolitan Water Board bungle. I understand that people are calling the Minister for Water Resources the \$3 million man! Neither have we heard a proper explanation of the \$3.5 million mistake made last year. When we say anything about these matters, we are accused of attacking Treasury officials. Why does not the Government buy the Treasury a new computer or a new ready reckoner?

The other night I said to a high-ranking Treasury official that when I called for the resignation of the Treasurer I was not calling for

the resignation of the Under Treasurer. His reply to me was, "Who takes any notice of what you say?" This man exhibited the same arrogance as that exhibited by the Treasurer.

In tonight's debate we tried to give a faithful resume of the existing financial position of the State. We pointed out that the position is deteriorating all the time for the people of Western Australia. Despite the decreases in some areas, the increases in others have been so dramatic that we are worse off now than we have ever been. The Treasurer has completely disregarded all our arguments and has concerned himself with character assassination only. If he is so sure of the correct way to proceed, why did he write to me and ask for my thoughts on the short-term money market?

Sir Charles Court: Only because you said you had some ideas. We are sorry we wrote to you.

Mr DAVIES: Certainly we are prepared to give the Treasurer some help. The Treasurer knows as well as I do, if he has sought responsible legal opinion, that he is breaking the law in regard to money on the short-term money market.

Sir Charles Court: We are not breaking the law.

Mr DAVIES: It is no good the Treasurer blustering his way through this.

Sir Charles Court: I said we are not breaking the law.

Mr DAVIES: The Treasurer is blustering. If he is so certain of himself, why did he write to us?

Sir Charles Court: As a matter of courtesy to you. In view of your comments I asked did you have any thoughts on it.

Mr DAVIES: It is the last kind of courtesy we want from the Treasurer.

Sir Charles Court: All right—you won't get it any more.

Mr DAVIES: We are genuinely prepared to co-operate, but all we get is lecture after lecture about how we do not understand the position. The Treasurer has said to me, "Come down to my office and I will tell you about it, but do not tell anybody else as it will be on a confidential basis." That is the kind of nonsense we have to deal with, and then after the election we receive a letter asking for our comments on the matter.

Sir Charles Court: I am sorry I extended the courtesy to you.

Mr DAVIES: We would be delighted indeed to co-operate with the Government.

Sir Charles Court: It is no credit to you that you talk about this sort of correspondence when we are just being courteous to you.

Mr DAVIES: The Treasurer has just said some of the most disgraceful and unscrupulous things I have ever heard a Treasurer say.

Sir Charles Court: Good heavens—you are talking about the Government and the Treasurer being dishonest.

Mr DAVIES: The Treasurer is dishonest when he says that he balanced the Budget.

Sir Charles Court: Of course we did.

Mr DAVIES: The Treasurer took a little bit out of his nest egg to balance the Budget.

Sir Charles Court: Well, I balanced the Budget.

Mr DAVIES: You still have another \$25 million tucked away.

Sir Charles Court: You flatter us.

Mr DAVIES: That will be very handy to have around if the Treasurer does not balance the Budget next year. It is no good the Treasurer smirking and making out that he is smart.

Sir Charles Court: You are making an absolute fool of yourself.

Mr DAVIES: Not really.

Sir Charles Court: You are going to get a shock when you see the balance sheet for the Budget.

Mr DAVIES: The Treasurer has refused to answer questions in this Chamber about the matter and it has done him no good whatsoever.

Sir Charles Court: We shouldn't have to answer those questions of yours—you made such a fool of yourself asking the same thing over and over again.

Mr DAVIES: Even if that were so, now the Government wants to know what we know and our thoughts on the matter. When the Treasurer signed that letter, he gave himself away completely.

Sir Charles Court: Not at all. After consultation with the Treasury we decided it was the courteous thing to do.

Mr DAVIES: We just wanted the public to know what was going on. The public are shareholders in this State. As I said earlier, if the Government were a company its directors would be in gaol because the Government has put out false balance sheets. It ought to be more responsible.

Sir Charles Court: That is completely untrue.

Mr DAVIES: In my speech I listed the financial result for each year that the Court

Government has been in office. I listed the financial result announced by the Treasurer, and I also listed the amount in the Treasurer's little nest egg.

Sir Charles Court: Do you say that the Auditor General has given a false report?

Mr DAVIES: I am saying that the Treasurer has not revealed the full information to the public. The Auditor General has audited the statements relating to the short-term money market.

Sir Charles Court: That is right.

Mr DAVIES: But they have not been included as part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Sir Charles Court: They do not have to be in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, you silly man.

Mr DAVIES: Of course they must be. The Treasurer cannot take what he wants from this nest egg and put it in the Consolidated Revenue Fund and then pretend the rest is not there.

Sir Charles Court: Of course you can't.

Mr DAVIES: That is exactly what the Treasurer has been doing.

Sir Charles Court: You are making an absolute fool of yourself because it has to be accounted for.

Mr DAVIES: I am not making a fool of myself. If the Treasurer had listened carefully to the figures I gave, he would know that I have shown that the Treasurer claimed to have balanced the Budget—

Sir Charles Court: That is right, and very proud of it.

Mr DAVIES: —when in actual fact the money from the short-term money market should all have gone to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Sir Charles Court: And it would have been squandered if you had been in charge.

Mr DAVIES: The Treasurer has admitted it should have been in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and he is saying that we would have squandered it. He should look at the record of the Tonkin Government on these things.

Sir Charles Court: I have looked at it, and we do not want such a record.

Mr DAVIES: The Opposition certainly feels much more honest and at ease with the public than the public feels with the Government. Despite the fact that an amount of \$25 million is still there to be used when required—and I have said there is nothing wrong with using it for capital works—

Sir Charles Court: Wait until you see the balance sheet and the Budget.

Mr DAVIES: I can hardly wait! The Premier told us we have been given all the information, but now he tells us we should wait with bated breath until the balance sheet. Let him make up his mind; above all, let him be honest with the public.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and transmitted to the Council.

Message: Appropriations

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Council Personnel

Message from the Council received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees elected by that House.

House adjourned at 11.24 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. *This question was postponed.*

PORT

Bunbury

2. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

Will this season's wheat be forwarded from the Port of Bunbury as in past years, or will it be transported direct to Kwinana?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Yes. From the Port of Bunbury.

GRAIN

Facilities: Bunbury

3. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it the Government's intention to construct new grain facilities at Bunbury in accord with Co-operative Bulk Handling requirements?
- (2) (a) If "Yes", when will work commence; and
(b) what is the estimated cost to the Government?
- (3) (a) Where will the grain facilities be situated; and
(b) will wharf fees be increased?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Co-operative Bulk Handling plans to construct new minor ship loading facilities for grain at Bunbury.
- (2) (a) Anticipated mid-1981.
(b) Not known at this stage—cost study being undertaken.
- (3) (a) No. 2 breakwater berth outer harbour is being considered.
(b) Yes, from time to time but not specially as a result of this project.

RAILWAYS

Pedestrian Crossings

4. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has he submitted a proposal to the Government to establish an advisory

group which would evaluate the circumstances of individual cases where pedestrians conflict with railway traffic?

- (2) (a) If so, when was the advisory committee set up; and
(b) who are its members?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) 15 May 1980.
(b) The Schools Crossing Committee consists of representatives from Main Roads Department, Education Department, Road Traffic Authority, WA Council of State School Organisations and one additional member from Westrail and local government.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Meat

5. Mr McIVER to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Did the Western Australian Government make representations to the Australian Government seeking the lifting of restrictions on back loading for flights taking meat to the Middle East?
- (2) If so, what was the Australian Government's response?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes, in close collaboration with Minister for Agriculture and those involved in the trade.
- (2) The Commonwealth has reduced the restrictions on loadings for inbound aircraft twice—once about 18 months ago and again within the last month.

RAILWAY: FREMANTLE-PERTH

Train Hire

6. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the reasons the Friends of the Railway organisation have been refused the hire of a train from Perth to Fremantle on Sunday, 31st August, 1980?

- (2) Will this decision also be applicable to other organisations who may want to hire a train between Perth and Fremantle?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) During the trial period of an all-bus operation in the Perth-Fremantle corridor it is not desirable that passenger trains be allowed to operate.
(2) Yes.

Generally the policy outlined will be maintained but individual applications, particularly those with a significant historical interest, will be dealt with on their merits.

TRANSPORT

Reports

7. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many transport reports have been commissioned in the past 10 years?
(2) Will he list them together with the cost of each study?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) If the member would be more specific, I will have the information compiled for him.

PORTS

Improvement Programmes

8. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

Will he give details of the combination of positive, appropriate improvement programmes for ports throughout the State, referred to in the Liberal Party policy?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Between 1974-75 and 1979-80, more than \$62 million was spent on capital works to expand the facilities at Western Australian ports. As trade volumes expand, the benefits of these works will become increasingly apparent.

Port development through capital works will continue where such expenditure is warranted, as current commitments bear witness. Major projects are—

- (a) A second container crane for Fremantle, at a cost of some \$3 million.
(b) Additional heavy-duty berth capacity at Fremantle, at a total estimated cost of \$6.6 million.
(c) A bulk-loading facility at Broome, at a cost of \$2.75 million.

In addition, the advent of the North-West Shelf gas development will lead to substantial expansion of the Port of Dampier.

The Government is also concerned to get the greatest value from the existing investment in ports. To this end, the Government has initiated programmes aimed at boosting the interest of shipowners in serving Western Australian ports and improving the availability of economic, commercial, planning and engineering expertise to the port authorities.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE

Ships: Replacement

9. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has a decision yet been made on whether to replace any ships with the Kimberley type vessel?
(2) If "Yes", would he supply details?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) The Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission has executed agreements to charter two sister vessels to MV *Kimberley* for delivery mid 1981. The terms of the charters are similar to that entered into for MV *Kimberley*. On entering service, the two ships will replace MV *Nyanda* and MV *Boogalla* in providing a fortnightly service to north-west ports and Darwin.

RAILWAYS

Railcars

10. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the current situation on the new diesel railcars ordered by the Government?
(2) When is it anticipated they will be operational?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) An order has been placed with A. Goninan and Co. Ltd. for construction of the new diesel railcars, and delivery is scheduled progressively from August to December 1981.

- (a) M-class;
(b) A-class;
(c) B-class;
(d) C-class;
(e) first class;
(f) second class;
(g) second class 2 +25%?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) Until the Western Australian Government Railways was given borrowing powers in 1978, it had not raised loans in its own name since the conclusion of the 1927 Financial Agreement.

Since that period and with the exception of special public borrowings in 1979, railways capital has been provided by the State from its pool of loan funds, raised by the Commonwealth on the State's behalf.

The State meets the interest and sinking fund payments on these borrowings and, in turn, levies interest and sinking fund contributions from the railways and other business undertakings which receive an allocation from the State General Loan Fund.

It is not practicable to assign specific loan raisings to individual authorities from the pool of funds in the General Loan Fund account.

Because the aggregate State debt is comprised of many loans at varying interest rates and periods of amortisation, State authorities are charged an average rate of interest and a uniform sinking fund contribution which is calculated to amortise the debt over 53 years, the period over which the State debt is amortised.

In accordance with the averaging approach, the interest rate charged by the Treasury in 1979-80 on the railways loan indebtedness was 7.5 per cent.

Two public loan raisings—as distinct from borrowings by the Commonwealth—were made by Westrail in 1979. Details are as follows—

Loan No. 1

\$10.9 million repayable the 31 January 1983 at 9.1% per annum

RAILWAYS

Loans and Freight Rates

11. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) (a) In which years were current loans raised by Westrail for all purposes;
(b) what is the amount of each loan;
(c) what are the terms of each loan, i.e., principal repayments, rates of interest?
- (2) Has there been an excess of payments over collections since the inception of the loans?
- (3) What is the source of private long-term loans guaranteed by the Government?
- (4) Do these loans carry the same rate of interest as the Consolidated Revenue Fund charge?
- (5) (a) What amounts of loan money have been written off under the General Loan Fund;
(b) when were these amounts written off?
- (6) Has consideration been given by the Government that a substantial amount of money borrowed from the Commonwealth and on loan to Westrail be written off?
- (7) What is the itemised cost per tonne of freighting grain from each Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited receival point in Western Australia to ports?
- (8) What is the breakdown of income from goods listed as general, i.e., does this include superphosphate, beer, steel, fencing and building material, fuel, etc.?
- (9) (a) Is it a fact that the freight rate on blue metal is lower than the rate for grain on comparable distances;
(b) if "Yes", will he please explain why wheat from Southern Cross is approximately double the iron ore rate from Koolyanobbing, which is about 80 kilometres further?
- (10) On what goods are distance rates charged under the following headings—

\$0.3 million repayable the 31 January 1986 at 9.1% per annum
 \$0.3 million repayable the 31 January 1989 at 9.2% per annum
 \$1.5 million repayable the 31 January 1994 at 9.2% per annum
 Loan No. 2
 \$16.4 million repayable the 31 October 1983 at 10.4% per annum
 \$1.0 million repayable the 31 October 1984 at 10.4% per annum
 \$0.2 million repayable the 31 October 1989 at 10.5% per annum

- (2) Yes.
 (3) Answered by (1).
 (4) No.
 (5) (a) Westrail's capital was written down by \$24 724 548.
 (b) 1951.
 (6) No; but considerable sums approximating the depreciation on assets acquired from general loan funds are, in fact, written out of railway capital each year. The figure in 1979-80 was \$8.969 million and the total since inception is \$153.209 million.
 (7) The information is not available.
 (8) If the question relates to the income of \$46.1 million shown as "general goods" on page 14 of Westrail's 1979 annual report, a break-down of the major items is as follows—

	\$000
Timber	3 160
Wool	3 496
Fertilisers	4 989
Fuel	9 248
Cement	1 306
Beer, Wine, etc.	2 199
Woodchips	2 678

- (9) (a) No. The gazetted rate for blue metal prior to 1 July 1980 was identical with the rate for grain. When the new grain rates become operative the charges for grain will be less than those for blue metal for haulages up to 360 kilometres, and beyond that the rates will be the same.
 (b) Not applicable.
 (10) Sample commodities are:—

(a) M Class—Aggregate, bran, building blocks and bricks, coal, flour, steel, pollard, road metal, scrap metal.

- (b) A Class—Asbestos, cement, stockfoods, bottles, plaster and sheets, posts, slabs, tiles.
 (c) B Class—Bitumen, aerated waters, building sections, fruit and vegetables (small lots), chaff.
 (d) C Class—Castings, fibres (hemp), flotation re-agents, oils, paper, sugar, pipes (water), weedicides.
 (e) 1st Class—Groceries, hardware, beer, medicines.
 (f) 2nd Class—Acids, batteries, brushware, confectionery, crockery, earthenware, breakfast foods, glass.
 (g) 2 + 25%—Advertising, cigarettes and tobacco, clothing, fancygoods, spirits.

ABATTOIR

Midland Junction: Pig Floor

12. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has any equipment associated with the killing and processing of pigs been removed from Midland Junction Abattoir, or is it proposed to move any such equipment?
 (2) If "Yes", to where was such equipment sent, or will it be sent?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) I am informed that no such equipment has been removed or is proposed to be removed at this time.
 (2) Not applicable.

WOOD CHIPPING

Export: Additional Quantity

13. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) What is the quantity of woodchips which WA Chip and Pulp Co. Pty. Ltd. may export under the woodchip agreement which it has with the Western Australian Government?
 (2) Has permission to export an additional tonnage to that stipulated in the woodchip agreement been given to the company, and if so—
 (a) what additional quantity is now permitted;

- (b) from what source will this additional quantity of woodchips come, and will it increase the forest operations of the company;
- (c) was the decision to allow an increase in the export of woodchips subject to a study by the Environmental Protection Authority, and if so, what were the recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority?;
- (d) for what period will the company be permitted to export the tonnage additional to the quantity expressed in the woodchip agreement?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The company has an export licence issued by the Commonwealth of Australia to export 750 000 tpa.
- (2) Yes.
 - (a) 150 000 tpa;
 - (b) Jarrah, derived exclusively from sawmill residue. The forest operations of WA Chip and Pulp Co. Pty. Ltd. will not be increased.
 - (c) This decision to allow an increase in the export of woodchips was supported by the EPA and the Forests Department.
 - (d) The period of the export licence will be subject to examination in the context of the ERMP being prepared by the company and due early in 1981.

WOOD CHIPPING

Paper Pulp Industry

14. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Has the company WA Chip and Pulp Co. Pty. Ltd. conducted investigations into the possible establishment of a paper pulp industry in Western Australia as required under its woodchip agreement with the State Government?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what are the nature and extent of the investigations carried out;
 - (b) is it intended that a paper pulp operation will be established in this State?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) I am advised that the study, undertaken by an overseas consultant, examined the project feasibility and economic viability, and concluded that, at the then current and projected prices for woodpulp, the project was uneconomic.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Stations: Conversion to Coal

15. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What was the final cost of conversion of the first two units at the Kwinana power station from oil to coal?
- (2) What was the cost of converting the South Fremantle and East Perth power stations from oil to coal?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) \$32 million.
- (2) This cost is not available. The power stations were originally designed to burn coal, were converted to oil, and back to coal in 1974. I am advised that the cost involved was not significant.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Muja Power Station: Cost of New Units

16. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What is the final anticipated capital cost of the 2 x 200 MW units being installed at the Muja power house, Collie?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The current capital cost estimate for the Muja "C" development is \$155 million. This estimate includes certain items not included in the original estimates, excludes the cost of the transmission works, and is stated in 1980 dollar values.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RAILWAYS: FREIGHT RATES

Wood Chips, Iron Ore, Bauxite, and Grain

6. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

If the answer is detailed, I would be happy for the Minister to hand it in. The question is as follows—

- (1) How much does it cost Westrail per tonne/kilometre on average to transport—
 - (a) woodchips;
 - (b) iron ore;
 - (c) bauxite;
 - (d) grain?
- (2) How much does Westrail charge per tonne/kilometre on average to transport—
 - (a) woodchips;
 - (b) iron ore;
 - (c) bauxite;
 - (d) grain?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The answer is as follows—

- (1) (a) to (c) These commodities are carried under commercial freight agreements which are kept confidential in accordance with normal business practice.
- (d) Because there is no unique pattern to the haulage of grain, this information is not available.
- (2) (a) to (c) As answered in reply to part (1) this information is confidential.
- (d) When the new grain rates become operative they will range from 5c per tonne/kilometre for short hauls down to 3.5c per tonne/kilometre for haulages of 500 kilometres.

Mr Davies: I know a lot now!

MINING

Aboriginal Sacred Sites: Conzinc Riotinto of Australia Ltd.

7. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

Does he regard the deal between an Aboriginal family and CRA as a

precedent for other situations where mining is proposed on Aboriginal sites? If he regards it as a precedent, does he consider it an undesirable one?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

No, I do not consider it would be an undesirable precedent. As the Premier has indicated on previous occasions, a "good neighbour policy" is quite acceptable. For instance, if an oil company is undertaking exploration on a pastoral property and it chooses to repair the fences, or do something about repairing the buildings on the property, or putting down an additional water supply for the Aborigines, it is acting as a good neighbour. That is quite acceptable, and it would not be an undesirable precedent.

MITCHELL, MR W. W.

Letter to Newspaper

8. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

As many people have been offended by the racist statements contained in a letter to *The West Australian* on the 2nd August, 1980, by W. W. Mitchell, will he indicate to the Parliament whether Mr Mitchell was stating or reflecting Government policy when those comments were made? If not, does the Government intend to terminate Mr Mitchell's contract as a spokesman?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I know of no racist statements made by the gentleman referred to, or in the letter to which reference was made.

Mr Bryce: Have you read *The West Australian*?

Sir CHARLES COURT: As far as I am concerned, if W. W. Mitchell wishes to write to the newspaper, it is a free country and he can do so. I will not restrain him from doing so. It has no effect on his contract with the Government.

Mr Bryce: He was not reflecting your policy?

ABORIGINES: LAND RIGHTS

Minister for Cultural Affairs: Statement

9. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

(1) Is the Minister correctly reported in the statements attributed to him in the *Daily News* of today's date under the heading "Grayden raps land rights move"? In this article the Minister is quoted as saying as follows—

Planeloads of alcohol are flown into such areas. The Aborigines sit around playing cards and two-up, and at times thousands of dollars are in the ring. All of this is made possible by social security benefits.

(2) If the Minister is correctly reported, are his statements based on reports which have come to him from his department or from other departments? In other words, I should like the Minister to tell me the source of his information.

(3) In regard to the statement that Aborigines play cards and two-up, could the Minister tell the House where the Aborigines learnt to play those games?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

(1) to (3) I do not take exception to any of the statements in relation to this matter which have been published in the *Daily News*. I am at a loss to know why the member is not aware of the source. Those statements were given wide publicity in the Press and they were referred to in this House some time ago. There have been instances of planes carrying loads of alcohol flying into the Warburton Mission. There have been eye-witness accounts of Aborigines sitting around playing two-up whilst thousands of dollars were in the ring.

Mr Harman: Who said that?

Mr Davies: Who?

Mr GRAYDEN: I should like to ask the member for Maylands what else Aborigines at the Warburton Mission can do with the money they receive in the form of social security benefits? There are no shops in the area and that is why the Aborigines spend their money in that way.

Mr Harman: Tell us who said that.

Mr Davies: Tell us who!

Mr B. T. Burke: What is your source?

The SPEAKER: Order!

FUEL AND ENERGY

State Energy Commission: 3 per cent Levy

10. Mr. T. H. JONES, to the Treasurer:

Since the 3 per cent levy was introduced will he advise what amounts have been paid to the Treasury by the State Energy Commission?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The following amounts have been paid to Consolidated Revenue by the State Energy Commission under the 3 per cent levy provisions—

	\$
1974-75	2 298 196
1975-76	2 898 269
1976-77	4 032 435
1977-78	4 383 811
1978-79	5 655 006
1979-80	6 522 150

It should be noted that the levy is 5½ per cent in Victoria and 5 per cent in South Australia and Tasmania.

Mr Davies: The rates in those States are not as high though.

RAILWAYS

Dalwallinu-Mullewa Line

11. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

Is there any proposition before the Government to close down any part of the Mullewa-Dalwallinu railway line, and if not will the Government give a guarantee that the line will not be closed down during the life of the present Government?

Sir Charles Court: That is for ever!

Mr RUSHTON replied:

There is no such proposition before the Government. The member can be assured the line will remain open during the life of the current Government.

Mr Davies: Just like the Perth-Fremantle railway line!

STATE FINANCE: PUBLIC UTILITIES

3 per cent Levy

12. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Does the Government regard the 3 per cent levy on certain Government utilities as a tax or a charge?
- (2) If the Government regards this levy as a tax, how does the Treasurer justify his statement that the Government has not increased taxes? The Treasurer has made these sort of statements from time to time—

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) I should like to remind the member that, as far as this Government is concerned, the levy has not been increased; but it can be seen from the answer I gave to the question asked by the member for Collie that the levy is much higher in other States. For that reason, I make the point that the percentage has remained unchanged and that is the basis on which any levy, tax, or charge is related and measured. Therefore, in that regard there has not been an increase in that particular tax. If the member is referring to the amount of money which has come from the levy, then of course the amount has increased, as a result of the extra income which has passed through the SEC. The member would be well advised to go back and read the explanation given at the time the levy was imposed. The instrumentalities which pay this type of levy do not pay other normal taxes which are paid by trading bodies, when in fact these instrumentalities are trading concerns. It was decided by most of the States that the best method of obtaining an equitable situation was for a levy to be imposed on income instead of the charges being related to net earnings or profit. The easiest and most readily understood manner in which to tax these bodies was in the form of a levy related to the incomes of the instrumentalities.

I remind the member that our levy is much lower than the levy in the other States I enumerated.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Your charges are so much higher.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Our levy is much lower than the levy in the other States I mentioned in answer to the question asked by the member for Collie.

HEALTH: TOBACCO SMOKING

Report

13. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

It can be seen from a statement published in tonight's issue of the *Daily News* that the committee investigating tobacco smoking has finally furnished a report. In view of the fact that the Minister has made a copy of that report available to the media, would he extend the same courtesy to the Opposition and make a copy available to it immediately?

Mr YOUNG replied:

I would be very happy to make a copy of the report available to the Opposition and I shall do so. I shall table the report if the member would like me to do so.

Mr H. D. Evans: Belated courtesy!

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 141).

ABORIGINES: LAND RIGHTS

Minister for Cultural Affairs: Statement

14. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) My question relates to a report in today's edition of the *Daily News* under the heading "Grayden raps land rights move".

When was the Minister first acquainted with the fact—if it is a fact—as alleged by his colleague, the Minister for Cultural Affairs, that plane-loads of alcohol are flown into such areas as those referred to in the article? I should like to know also when the Minister was first acquainted with the situation in which Aborigines sit around playing cards and two-up and that at times thousands of dollars are in the ring, all of which is made possible by social security benefits?

- (2) If the Minister was acquainted with these so-called "facts" prior to reading about them in the newspaper tonight, what action has he taken to investigate them?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) and (2) I have not read the article to which the member for Maylands has referred and, therefore, I will not comment on it.

Mr Davies: Lies!

Mr HASSELL: However, I should like to advise the member and the House that the situation at Warburton has been of concern to me. Since my appointment I have taken some action to try to co-ordinate the State and Commonwealth authorities in looking at the overall unsatisfactory situation which exists there and attempting to institute measures which will alleviate the position.

HEALTH: TOBACCO SMOKING

Report

15. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Health:

My question relates to another question asked a few moments ago concerning the report which has recently come to hand in regard to cigarette smoking or what might otherwise be referred to as "the pushing of nicotine". I should like the Minister to tell me the date of the report and the date upon which it was delivered to him.

Mr YOUNG replied:

As I have tabled the report, I do not have it in my possession, therefore, I do not know the date. However, I am sure the member for Melville would be able to tell the member for Mt. Hawthorn the date of the report. If that cannot be done, I will tell the member for Mt. Hawthorn tomorrow.

ABORIGINES: LAND RIGHTS

Minister for Cultural Affairs: Statement

16. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister for Cultural Affairs—

Mr B. T. Burke: Why waste your time?

Mr BRYCE: —further to the reply he gave to the member for Maylands referring to the disturbing reports that plane-loads of alcohol have been flown in and large sums of money have been found in the two-up ring in the Kimberley region.

As a brief preface to my question, I would like to remind the Minister for Cultural Affairs that the *Oxford Dictionary* defines "authenticated" or "authentic" in the following way—

... of undisputed origin; not forged; establishing truth or authorship or validity.

What source did the Minister rely upon when he suggested that those reports were authentic? I should like the Minister to provide us with the details of his claim.

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Before I reply to the question asked by the member, I should like to reiterate that widespread publicity surrounded these allegations when they were made. They were referred to extensively in the *Daily News*, *The West Australian*, and *The Sunday Times*.

Mr Harman: When?

Mr GRAYDEN: The allegations were the subject of speeches in this House.

Mr Harman: By whom?

Mr GRAYDEN: I had occasion to go through the Warburton Range and to Docker River. I have been to the Warburton Mission on many occasions.

Mr Harman: You have not been there for 30 years.

Mr GRAYDEN: I am sorry to disappoint the member, but I should like to inform him that, in company with the member for Murchison-Eyre, I was in that area four years ago. We went to the Warburton Mission and I was astonished to see not dozens, but hundreds of wrecked cars there. In fact that area was a bigger junkyard than any junkyard one could find in the whole of the metropolitan area. That indicated the amount of money in the possession of Aborigines in that area.

Mr B. T. Burke: How do you know the cars belonged to the Aborigines?

Mr GRAYDEN: When we were at the Warburton Mission the Aborigines were playing cards and two-up. This is not the only area in which such activities occur. Exactly the same situation applies in the Docker River area which is just over the border in the Northern Territory. The same situation applies also in other parts of Western Australia.

Mr Harman: Where?

Mr GRAYDEN: The same situation occurred at Fitzroy Crossing until relatively recently. It happens in numerous places. In areas where hundreds of Aborigines draw social

security benefits and have nothing on which to spend their money, cards and alcohol are the main avenues of expenditure. Alcohol is brought in and it is of no consequence whether it comes in by the truckload or the planeload.

Mr Bryce: Before long there will be jumbo-jetloads!

Mr GRAYDEN: I have been in these areas and I have received reports to this effect. They have been given widespread publicity. Something should have been done about the situation many years ago.

Mr B. T. Burke: You have been the Government for six years!

