

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 2 June 1994

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

STATEMENT - LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Standing Committee Meetings, Opposition Members not to Attend

HON JOHN HALDEN (South Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [2.32 pm] - by leave: I wish to advise the House that I have instructed all members of the Opposition not to attend any further standing committee meetings of the Legislative Council prior to the next meeting of parliamentary Labor Party. At this meeting we will decide upon our attitude, commitment and role in respect of the existing standing committees of the House. The Standing Committee on Legislation has been the benchmark of how committees should operate in this Parliament. However, when our confidence in this system is betrayed in the blatant way it was yesterday, the Opposition does not take the situation lightly. When Parliament was recalled last year the Government took control of all standing committees and of the chairmanship of those committees, a condition that was not required by the previous government. Next Tuesday with the leave of the House I will advise the decisions of the Parliamentary Labor Party.

MOTION - URGENCY

Fire Brigade, Underfunding

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): I would like to share with honourable members the contents of a letter which I received today -

The Hon Clive Griffiths MLC
President
Legislative Council

Dear Mr President,

At today's sitting, it is my intention to move under SO 72 that the House, at its rising adjourn until 9.00 am on December 25 1994 for the purpose of discussing -

- (1) The immediate danger which exists for firefighters and the general public as a result of underfunding of the WA Fire Brigades Board.
- (2) The urgent need for the Government to address both the funding issue and the refusal of the WA Fire Brigade Board to comply with minimum safety manning levels which is endangering lives daily.

Yours sincerely

Kim Chance MLC.

In order that this matter maybe discussed it is necessary for at least four members to indicate their support by standing in their places.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [2.37 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until 9.00 am on 25 December 1994.

The matter I want to raise today was dealt with in the other place yesterday in a more general nature.

Hon N.F. Moore: So it is urgent today?

Hon KIM CHANCE: This is an urgent matter and that is why it was raised in the other place yesterday. I want to deal with the matter in more specific terms than was handled by the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place yesterday.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Wasn't he up to scratch?

Hon KIM CHANCE: So serious is the matter, the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services was supported by the Leader of the Opposition in that matter yesterday. In terms of its urgency I cannot pretend to members that it is a situation which has recently occurred. One could argue that the elements leading up to the present situation are manifold and some of those elements go back a very considerable time, certainly into the time of our government. The urgency is the outcome of a number of factors, some historic and some more immediate, which have brought the issue to a head. It is not just an urgent matter in the strict sense of the word, but also an extremely serious matter because it involves the imminent possibility of loss of life either by one of our firefighters or the general public.

In the run up to the last state election and during the recent by-election for the seat of Glendalough, we heard a number of what I am sure were well intended statements from the present Government about the need to address the question of law and order.

Hon George Cash: Mr Chance, just before you go on; you said the situation had been ongoing for some time.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Some years.

Hon George Cash: Could you give me some indication of the period of years - five or seven?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I could not really identify it. I suggest that some go back to the time of our government. There is a long history. When I say that, I should be more specific. It is fair to say that in any issue involving emergency services and public services, such as the police, ambulance or fire brigade services, I do not think any government has truly addressed the seriousness of those services. The extent to which we have relied and continue to rely on volunteers has always been a matter of concern to me. It is not that I do not appreciate the immense value of the volunteer services - quite the reverse. I stand in awe of the commitment our volunteers provide to the emergency services. It seems that where we have to rely on volunteers, governments, whoever is in government, are not making a sufficient contribution. This is a larger issue. The urgency came from a culmination of factors, some of which are very recent.

Before I responded to the Leader of the House I was addressing the question of law and order. It is an issue which can be broadly defined as a matter of public security. Public security and the response to the issues which affect it is one area which includes another group of volunteers in the state's emergency services. It is not just a police matter in that respect. Firefighters control fire and those other incidents, including road traffic accidents and chemical spillages, which are dangers we look to them to contain on behalf of the public. They are very much matters of public security. I said that the statements made by the coalition parties in the run up to the election were well intended. I am absolutely certain they were, but the response we have had to this issue has been less than edifying. In the city of Geraldton, for example, about the only response we have to the question of law and order in the criminal sense has been the local member making what seems to be a single-handed campaign to introduce caning. This is not the response I have seen suggested by other members of his party or of the Government, but it seems as though the member for Geraldton is determined to turn Geraldton into a little Singapore. Apart from his comments I have not seen a lot happen. If we did an audit of the police stationed in Geraldton today, I suggest that it is likely their numbers would be less and not more than those prior to the election. If we took that audit number after 30 June, after retirements and transfers had taken place, it would almost certainly be the case. What we have had in response to the law and order campaign has been some talk about caning and very little else.

Hon E.J. Charlton: What has this to do with fire brigades, apart from the fact it is a burning issue?

Hon KIM CHANCE: That is very witty. It is a matter of public security and the role the firefighters play in that security. What I drew to the attention of the House on the

question of law and order generally is that the Government has shown very little priority in its willingness to fund the police and fire brigades. The outcome of that has been serious indeed. It has expressed itself in the Geraldton Fire Station in three ways: Firstly, when a member of the fire brigade - and these are professional fire fighters - takes leave or is absent through sickness for any period, it is a requirement of the award that the officer be replaced. There is no doubt about this; it is not a matter the Fire Brigade can negotiate with the fire station to determine whether the relief is provided. Under the award, when an officer is off he is replaced by a relief. This is not a matter necessarily of additional money, because it is a question of transferring a relief officer to that station. However, what we have seen as a result of the low priority the Government has placed on fire fighting is that reliefs are not being supplied to the Geraldton Fire Station. I have no reason to suppose that this situation is not occurring in other fire stations, such as at Albany and Kalgoorlie.

Secondly and seriously, when an officer or firefighter retires, as one from Geraldton did about eight weeks ago, there is no replacement. A period of eight weeks in that case has passed since a full time professional firefighter retired, and there has been no replacement. Of even more concern is my understanding that there has not even been an advertisement to fill the vacant position; in other words, the Fire Brigades Board has shown no intention of replacing that retired firefighter.

The third factor on cost outgoings is that there have been extremely strict limits placed on the amount of overtime available to the officer controlling the Geraldton Fire Station. The outcome of that is the most serious of these. There is an established safety crewing level laid down by international standards. These standards have been adopted for country fire stations throughout Western Australia in an agreement between the government in the 1980s and the fire brigades union. The agreement is that the minimum number of firefighters required to make an initial response to an incident is four; an officer and three firefighters. As a direct result of the overtime levels we expect firefighters at Geraldton to attend incidents, not with four firefighters or even three, but on occasions with two.

Hon George Cash: On what authority do you base the statement there should always be four firefighters who turn out?

Hon KIM CHANCE: That was an agreement between the government and the union in the 1980s. It is further supported by a paper - and I am relying on my memory - written in 1990 by the now chief fire officer, Max Castlehow. The name of the paper was "Fire Defence - Future Directions", in which Mr Castlehow, who was not then the chief officer, stated quite clearly that an agreement had been reached between the government and the union on that matter.

I have that in writing, and from memory that is the case. An established manning level exists for initial response numbers for stations of that size. I will demonstrate why four was chosen and why two is an entirely inappropriate and dangerous number to attend an incident of that nature. Geraldton is an area which has professional firefighters. It enjoys that status because it is a city of a significant population, similar to Kalgoorlie, Albany, Bunbury and other centres. Centres of that type have high risk buildings, particularly multistorey buildings and buildings which contain large quantities of flammable materials in industrial areas. Even when a crew attends a common house fire the firefighters must wear breathing apparatus because houses today contain plastic substances which give off toxic fumes. The likelihood of a firefighter being overcome by smoke is considerable, but the likelihood of being overcome by toxic fumes which are invisible is almost certain. Sending a two-man crew to a fire submits them to an untenable situation because on arrival the firefighters have two options if they believe a person is in that house. The first option is that one firefighter stays outside while the other enters the house alone. The other option is that both enter the house, with no-one outside as backup. That situation is suicidal.

The situation where two firefighters are being sent out in Geraldton has arisen for two reasons: Firstly, the officer at the Geraldton Fire Station was on sick leave between

12 May and 23 May and no relief was provided by the Fire Brigades Board to replace him. This is a blatant and deliberate breach of the award by the board. When this occurs, it has been suggested that relief be made available to the Geraldton Fire Station. However, the Fire Brigades Board has stated that a relief will not be provided. It is not an accidental breach of the award; it is a deliberate breach of the award by the firefighters' employer. After informing the Geraldton Fire Station that a relief was not available, the Fire Brigades Board suggested volunteers be called, if needed. Geraldton has 28 volunteers, and as with any volunteer with any emergency service, they have my undying gratitude. Geraldton's volunteers are diligent people who do the very best to provide a service under very difficult conditions. But they are volunteers, and like all volunteers they must work for a living. In many cases, the nature of their work means they cannot respond to an emergency call. A survey conducted in 1992 indicated the average response was 1.2 officers per call out. Of the 28 volunteers, the average response was only 1.2 persons. From 15 January to 25 August 1992, a nil response was received from volunteers on three of the eight occasions they were called on. Eight pager units are issued to volunteers. In 1992, out of 33 weekly pager tests - which is the means by which volunteers are called out - on 12 occasions a nil response was received. The situation is that two professional firefighters are rostered on a shift, with one chance in three of getting a nil response from the volunteers. The Fire Brigades Board is aware of these figures because the survey was commissioned by the board, yet it informs the officers at the Geraldton Fire Brigade that volunteers must be relied on. As the employer, the board is knowingly committing its employees to a situation where agreed safety manning levels are broken. Firefighters may have to enter a building on fire, possibly containing highly toxic fumes, with either no backup inside or outside. That is an untenable situation.

I have asked the Minister by way of question on notice whether he is aware of these facts, aware of the level of volunteer response in Geraldton, and aware that the Fire Brigades Board has told the Geraldton Fire Brigade that volunteers must be relied on for backup. An answer has not yet been received. I asked it for two reasons: Firstly, to ensure that the Minister is aware of the situation; secondly, to ask him what he intends doing about it.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: If a death or deaths resulted from that, where would the responsibility lie?

Hon KIM CHANCE: The responsibility would lie with the employer, the Fire Brigades Board. That is in a legal sense. But in the moral sense, it goes to the Minister, and, as stated yesterday, not only to the Minister but also to Parliament itself, because Parliament is ultimately responsible for the employment of firefighters. That is why it is incumbent on us to urge the Minister to do something about it. The Minister cannot directly do anything about it. What the Minister can do is direct the Fire Brigades Board to ensure that standards are maintained as established by the award and ensure that the board meets the standards established by the agreed manning levels.

Hon George Cash: It is also fair to acknowledge that the present Government operates on exactly the same basis as the previous government. Is the member suggesting there has been any change at all?

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Is the Minister suggesting volunteers?

Hon George Cash: They have always had volunteers.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The answer to the question that the Leader of the House has raised brings me to factors which have recently occurred - that is, the limits on overtime.

In the past when there has been a shortage of available fire officers through illness, rostering of holidays and for other reasons the practice has been to call back firefighters who are off duty to fill the gap left in the roster. It is not happening now and the reason two firefighters instead of three, which is still short of the required number, are attending fires is the overtime limit imposed by the Fire Brigade Board.

Hon George Cash: They have been imposed in the past by the board.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am not aware of that. I am aware that never before has the Geraldton Fire Brigade had to attend fires with only two firefighters.

Hon George Cash: The former Minister for Emergency Services directed the Fire Brigade to make sure that it worked within the budget allocation. If that meant cutting overtime, it was to do that.

Hon KIM CHANCE: By working within the budget the Geraldton Fire Brigade was able to meet the overtime requirements which are required to increase the numbers per roster to the minimum manning safety level. Even three firefighters is better than two. We have a situation now where only two officers are required to attend call outs. Recently I had two fire officers in my office who were working on a roster together. They told me that if one of them fell acutely ill he would not have been replaced unless a volunteer offered his services. The situation is - it is purely hypothetical - that only one officer may have been sent out.

Hon George Cash: That is what happened during the period the former government was in office under the same circumstances.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Are you saying it is the correct procedure?

Hon George Cash: I have some knowledge of this matter because I was opposition spokesman for Emergency Services for seven years.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: I am not questioning that.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KIM CHANCE: I was aware of the industrial difficulties which have been experienced and I was supplied with some information by firefighters to confirm some elements of what the Leader of the House is saying. Nonetheless, manning levels in Geraldton have never before fallen to the current level. That situation was being addressed by the previous government in a better way than it is now. Frankly, it is not an excuse to say that it is okay to risk firemen's lives, to breach awards and to run over the top of the agreed safety crewing levels because the previous government did it. If it did happen during the period of the last government, it is deplorable. However, it does not make it right for this Government to carry on with the same practice. The situation in Geraldton previously was not as bad as it is now. I conceded at the commencement of my speech that this problem has a history which extends back to the period when the Labor Party was in government. The point is that this issue must be resolved now. When it was put to the Minister that there may be some problems, his response, as far as I can tell, was to say that the Fire Brigades Board had to operate within its budget.

Hon George Cash: Which was the same directive given by the Labor Minister.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It may well have been, but it does not make it right. My contention is that it is an inadequate response and one that the Opposition should not tolerate.

Breaches of the award are being condoned. I am not aware that was the case during the previous government's term in office, but if it was it is also deplorable. The Parliament should not condone this situation. If the Fire Brigades Board is knowingly and deliberately breaching the award, it is up to the Minister to tell it that as an employer it has a responsibility to ensure that award conditions must be met. Whether those conditions revolve around safety or any other matters, it is necessary that the Minister tell the board that. Safety is something that should not be compromised.

Agreed minimum safety crewing levels are being breached, not by accident but as a matter of course. Every workplace reaches a situation where it must round corners. I have been guilty of that as an employee and an employer. To do it deliberately as a matter of policy is not acceptable. The Minister and this House should not accept it. Now that the public knows it is happening, it is up to the Minister to tell the board to clean up its act.

Unfortunately, the worst is still to come. Firefighters are being permitted to go into

burning buildings unaided and without any backup. A firefighter who does that is breaking every rule in the book. The occupational health and safety guidelines require the employee and the employer to abide by certain rules. Obviously, in a dangerous profession like firefighting those rules must be well understood by firefighters. When a firefighter enters a burning building in contravention of those rules, quite apart from putting himself at risk he is taking responsibility upon his shoulders to break the rules by which he is bound. I put a question to the secretary of the united firefighters' union today which he could not answer. I asked him whether a firefighter who took that action would be insured if he were injured or killed. It appears to me that, having broken every rule in the book, under those circumstances a firefighter may not be covered by insurance.

Hon Tom Helm: What about workers' compensation?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Having broken every rule in the book it is quite possible he would not be covered for workers' compensation. The union secretary told me it was a question which had been worrying him and he had been unable to find an answer. The firefighters do not know whether they are covered in such circumstances. I spoke to a firefighter who entered a building under these circumstances. He had been led to believe that it was highly likely that a person had not been evacuated from the burning building. He attended the fire with one other firefighter and he refused to enter the building without having somebody outside it. His only option was to go into the building to find the person, whose whereabouts were not very clear. No-one knew whether the inhabitant of that building was really there. On this occasion, the fireman made that decision on his own shoulders and in the back of his mind was the thought of whether he would be insured if he was killed or injured and that he might leave his young family without not only a breadwinner, but also any compensation.

That situation must be addressed. We must at least be able to tell people whether insurance would cover them in those circumstances.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: If they deliberately breached the award, they would not be covered.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I believe that to be the case. No other group of workers would knowingly breach the conditions of their employment in circumstances where they would be putting their lives at risk. I know there are other workers, both public and private, and certainly employees of the State, who risk their lives in the course of their work. Firefighters are certainly not alone in that regard. However, I am not aware of any other workers who have to breach their award and place their lives at such risk as do firefighters in order to do their job. Let us put ourselves into a firefighter's position. A firefighter who believes that a person is inside a burning building is under great moral pressure when he has to decide whether to enter that building and put his life at risk, or to abide by the conditions of his employment, which state that he should not enter a building in those circumstances. Inevitably, that firefighter would decide to enter that building, because it is in his nature to do that; that is what he is trained and paid to do. We are asking firefighters to make those decisions in circumstances which are, frankly, unsatisfactory - so unsatisfactory that we as a Parliament should not allow them to continue.

So far this year, 316 calls have been made to the Geraldton Fire Station, even though the staff numbers have fallen because the position of the person who has retired has not been filled. That represents an increase of almost 25 per cent on last year. The Government's response to meeting the additional costs involved in the decision of the Industrial Relations Commission to grant firefighters a wage increase has been to reduce by 84 the number of firefighters. Therefore, the people who are now bearing the brunt of the drop in staff numbers will have to pay for their wage increase by subjecting themselves to even more pressure by way of fewer staff. The Minister for Emergency Services has said that the Government will direct the Fire Brigades Board to work within its budget. This problem is not confined to Geraldton, although I have concentrated on that area.

As a cost reducing mechanism, the Fire Brigades Board is decommissioning, in both the metropolitan and country areas, second line appliances which are strategically placed to make an emergency response. It is a shame that the Minister for Health is away on

urgent parliamentary business, because I would have liked him to hear this. Two fire stations which have been subjected to the decommissioning of major appliances are Fremantle and Daglish.

Hon George Cash: What do you mean by "decommissioning"?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Exactly what the word says - they are no longer employed for use.

Hon George Cash: No longer able to be used.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes. They are decommissioned.

Hon George Cash: That is not right.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The Leader of the House will have the opportunity to tell me in his response. The decommissioning at the Fremantle and Daglish fire stations will affect the services which are equipped to provide an emergency response for the Fremantle, Sir Charles Gairdner, King Edward Memorial and Hollywood Repatriation Hospitals. We do not need to stretch our imagination very far to understand why we need special equipment to provide an emergency response for hospitals, because obviously patients are less mobile, there are large numbers of them, and we are dealing generally with multistorey buildings. Has the Minister agreed to the decommissioning of those appliances which are needed for an emergency response; and, if so, how does he expect to meet, in future, the emergency needs of those hospitals and other places?

Local press reports in Albany, which is a regional centre, indicate that the amount of firefighting equipment and appliances available to firefighters in Albany will be halved. Yesterday, the Minister for Emergency Services confirmed in the other place his earlier statement that public safety will not be jeopardised by the cost savings required to be made to meet the cost of the pay rise that was awarded by the Industrial Relations Commission. I am sure the Minister meant what he said. He is an honest and honourable man. However, it is clear that the outcome of the cost savings is jeopardising the public, and even more so is jeopardising firefighters. We must ask why. The Government currently is flush with funds. I think the windfall gain is in the order of \$135m. The cost of the wage rise awarded by the Industrial Relations Commission is \$4m. Not all of that has to be met by the State Government.

Hon George Cash: How much will be met by the Government?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I believe that 75 per cent will be met by the Insurance Council of Western Australia and 12.5 per cent will be met by the Government. The Minister must direct the Fire Brigades Board to comply with minimum safety standards and to abide by the award provisions.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [3.18 pm]: Western Australia is extremely lucky to have a Minister for Emergency Services who is not prepared to compromise or jeopardise the lives or property of the people of Western Australia. He would not entertain any proposition that would compromise or jeopardise such persons or property.

Hon Kim Chance: Not deliberately, perhaps, but he is actually doing it now.

Hon GEORGE CASH: That is the member's view. The Minister would not agree with him and I do not agree with him. I have sat with the Minister at many meetings to discuss the Fire Brigade in Western Australia, and I know his total commitment to seeing that the Fire Brigade is not put in a position where he, as the Minister responsible, could be said to be compromising or jeopardising either lives or property.

Hon Kim Chance: But he is. I have established that.

Hon GEORGE CASH: In regard to putting the public at risk, let us look at the response times that are currently required to be met by the Fire Brigade in Western Australia. In respect of the permanent brigade, first response time is six minutes, and for the volunteers it is nine minutes. Although I do not have the map with me to show members just how committed the brigade is to meeting those particular response targets, I assure members that the map clearly indicates that the times are being met on almost all

occasions. Regarding the proposal for a reduction in second pumps at certain stations - I think Hon Kim Chance mentioned Daglish and Fremantle, not Welshpool -

Hon Kim Chance: No; just those two.

Hon GEORGE CASH: He referred to the fact that hospitals were located in the immediate area of the fire stations. A proposition was presented to the Minister some time ago, following a wage rise granted by the industrial commission, that the second pumps at Daglish, Welshpool and Fremantle could be decommissioned from time to time. Decommissioning a pumper means that it is not available at a specific time to go out on the job unless it can be fully crewed. For instance, if two pumps are at Daglish Fire Station, one officer and three firefighters must be available for each pump. If an officer for some reason was called to another place and was not available to go out on the second pump, technically, although one officer was at the station with six firefighters, the second pump would be taken off line and decommissioned until such time as another officer was available to man that pump. Immediately that officer was available, the second pumper could go back on line and back into commission.

I am sure Hon Kim Chance is aware of that situation, but I mention it as sometimes confusion arises when decommissioning is referred to in relation to firefighting appliances. It does not mean that they are taken out of service and removed to the scrap heap; it means that for staffing, technical repairs or for some other reason the pump is not available and is taken off line or decommissioned for a certain amount of time.

If members visit fire brigade headquarters in Perth they will see the computer system that indicates which pumps are on and off line at any given time. If, say, the Bayswater pump is off line, it may be that the pumper is out of the general district on a training or some other mission. That vehicle is taken off line as far as its primary target area is concerned.

The fact is that the six minute permanent brigade and the nine minute volunteer service response times are intact in Western Australia. Hon Kim Chance's comments on this motion were made in a constructive and positive way; I do not dispute the tenor of the comments, only some of the content. Firstly, Hon Kim Chance admitted that the situation to which he referred was not new. He later qualified that to say it had a long history into the period of the previous Labor government. He correctly acknowledged that the previous government did not address the problem to his satisfaction. The question must be asked: What did Hon Kim Chance do during the period of the former Labor government? Did he raise the matter with the former Minister?

Hon John Halden: He was a great advocate.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Why did the former Minister not respond?

Hon John Halden: Ask the former Minister.

Hon Kim Chance: The Minister did make a response. I went to Geraldton Fire Station with him.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Clearly the problem was not solved because the member is saying that the problem exists today.

Hon Kim Chance: The unsatisfactory situation has been exacerbated, and that is the urgency.

Hon GEORGE CASH: The various problems to which Hon Kim Chance referred are certainly not new; they did not all develop last week, for instance. The Fire Brigade in Western Australia has from time to time found problems as a result of staff reductions. It may, for reasons of sick or annual leave or some other legitimate purposes, find itself down in numbers for short periods.

Hon Kim Chance: Reliefs are not being sent - that is the issue.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I will come to that in a moment. I refer firstly to the general situation. It is important to understand the funding arrangement of the permanent districts of the Fire Brigade in Western Australia; namely, 12.5 per cent of the total cost of running the brigade comes from Government, local councils contribute 12.5 per of the

total and 75 per cent comes from the insurance industry, which is paid for by way of a levy paid by home and business owners. This is collected by the insurance industry and passed on.

The recent pay rise in the brigade, as mentioned by Hon Kim Chance, has a total cost in the vicinity of \$3.2m, and it may be necessary to pass some of those costs onto those insured in the fire districts. The Fire Brigade had an allocation in the 1993-94 Budget which provided for about \$750 000 to be set aside to cover potential wage rises resulting from any industrial commission decision. It so happened that the magnitude of the pay rises granted was significantly more than the \$750 000 set aside. As a result of that, and in keeping with the decision of the previous Minister for Emergency Services, the Fire Brigade was invited to provide proposals to show how it could live within its existing budget. That is where the proposal was brought before the Minister. It was proposed by the Fire Brigades Board to decommission three firefighting units in Fremantle, Daglish and Welshpool, and that some other minor consequential changes be made. The Minister for Emergency Services was prepared to give his preliminary approval to the decommissioning, on the strict understanding that no adverse effect at all would result on the safety of the firefighters or the community. About a week after he had given his preliminary approval - subject to that important condition - the Minister was approached by the chief officer of the WA Fire Brigade, Mr Max Castlehow, who indicated that in respect of the recommendations he believed that there was a possibility that either public or firefighter safety could be put in jeopardy.

As a result of that advice from the chief officer, the Minister for Emergency Services immediately instructed the board not to proceed with its proposals. I again mention my opening comments that Western Australia is fortunate to have a Minister for Emergency Services who is totally committed to ensuring that the safety of the community and the safety of property is maintained by having a properly resourced Fire Brigade.

[Resolved, that the motion be continued.]

Hon GEORGE CASH: Following the Minister's instruction to the board that it was not to proceed with the decommissioning of the pumps at Daglish, Fremantle and Welshpool, he invited the board to come forward with other proposals to ensure that no life or property would be put in jeopardy. Having received the Minister's instruction, the board and the union addressed the problem as a group. That says something for the working relationship that exists between the board and the union. It is not something that has happened to a great degree in the past.

We must give credit to the WA Fire Brigades Board for the way in which it runs the brigade in Western Australia. As I said earlier, the response time of six minutes for the permanent brigade and nine minutes for the volunteers is being maintained and, in general terms, the community of Western Australia can at least sleep easy knowing that their safety is being protected by the board and the Minister for Emergency Services.

As to some of the specific issues raised by Hon Kim Chance - most of them dealt with the Geraldton situation - he has asked a number of questions of the Minister for Emergency Services through me. I am currently working with the Minister for Emergency Services in preparing answers for the member. However, some of the matters he raised and some of the claims he made do not stand up. In a moment, I will give him an indication of why they do not stand up and what the position is on those issues. Firstly, though, there is no international standard on safety manning. It is currently a very controversial issue and just happens to be being debated worldwide. Safety manning is not a condition of the award. The award has no provision to replace a firefighter when on leave, be it sick leave or other leave. I am a little unsure of the authority that the member was using when he made his comments.

Hon Kim Chance: On the last matter, it was the secretary of the union, as recently as this morning, on the replacement of reliefs while an officer is away.

Hon GEORGE CASH: My advice is that safety manning is not a condition of the award and there is no provision in the award to replace a firefighter when on leave, be that sick

leave or other leave. Under the Act, the chief officer has the responsibility to determine adequate safety levels, which obviously includes manning levels. It should be recognised that the permanent force can be assisted at times by volunteers, which happens in Geraldton, which has approximately 75 registered volunteers.

Hon Kim Chance: There are 28 on the active list.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Approximately 75 volunteers are registered. They are not all available at the same time. The community could not do without that pool of volunteers, and I do not refer only to volunteers in the fire area. In Geraldton, the permanent firefighters are supported by an active volunteer brigade, which enables some security to the permanents by way of back-up. The safety manning principle is based on breathing apparatus teams of two. I make that comment because the member said that he had become aware of a situation in which a single firefighter had entered a building without any back-up. Although I do not doubt that the incident occurred, that is outside the standing orders.

Hon Kim Chance: I made that point.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Yes. It is not encouraged by the board. The member then raised issues about whether the person would be covered by insurance. I do not have the answer to that, but it is an interesting proposition. The fact that a firefighter entered a building without requesting back-up or ensuring that he got back-up raises some interesting questions.

Hon Kim Chance: It would have broken every rule in the book.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Unfortunately, that might be the conclusion that was reached in the end.

Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan: But done in order to save a life.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am not arguing with the firefighter's belief that he was doing the right thing when he entered that building by himself without back-up. I am not arguing whether he should or should not have done that. I am just saying that the Fire Brigade has a strict rule about firefighters entering a building without adequate back-up.

Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan: That is right, but I think Mr Chance was simply pointing out that the firefighter was put into a situation in which there was no adequate back-up and put into an incredible moral dilemma.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am not disputing that. The question was raised whether the firefighter would have been covered by insurance. The conclusion that might be reached is that he was not. I do not know; it would depend on the circumstances. I make the point also that it is not the policy of the brigade, and not within the brigades' standing orders that firefighters are required to work by, to have single firefighters enter a building without a back-up available to them. The general mobilising procedures of the brigade will allow additional permanents or additional volunteers to be brought into a situation as a matter of urgency. Clearly, I would need to know much more about the circumstances surrounding the incident to which Hon Kim Chance referred to satisfy myself, firstly, that back-up had been called for and, secondly, why that back-up had not arrived, whether it be by way of a permanent back-up or by way of a volunteer.

Hon Kim Chance asked why the Geraldton Fire Station has been permitted to operate on a roster of one officer and two firefighters, and in some cases two firefighters without an officer, when he believed that an agreement had been established for safe minimum standards. He referred to the safe minimum standards as being one officer and three firefighters. The present Government operates exactly the same as the previous government in that the Minister for Emergency Services has directed the brigade to operate within its budget allocation.

This directive has been reiterated by the Premier to the chief executive officer's of government agencies. As with previous budgets and long standing brigade policy, staff are not replaced by people on overtime or relief staff for short and long periods. With respect to the number of persons that the member referred to, I am advised that there has

never been agreement to maintain one officer and three firefighters automatically at all times as the safe minimum standard. The chief officer's standing orders specifically state that the decision is subject to the chief officer's approval. As the officer might be out of the fire district on brigade business, or off duty, a staffing level of one officer and three firefighters is impossible to achieve 100 per cent of the time. The brigade, however, has a paging system and the capability to use it to notify members of the volunteer contingent of fire stations, should they be required. Again, with respect to Geraldton, it is not correct to say that one firefighter would be required to attend a fire alone at Geraldton. I ask Hon Kim Chance to give me further information about where single firefighters have been required to attend incidents in that area.

Hon Kim Chance has raised a number of other matters both during his comments today and by way of questions which I am researching with the Minister for Emergency Services and to which we will provide some replies as soon as we can complete the research that is needed. In general terms, many of the statements that Hon Kim Chance has made today are not literally correct. The perception varies within the firefighting community on what are minimum or maximum safety levels. I do not know whether his statements are union based. If they are, I am not suggesting that is improper in any way. However, within the fire brigade of this state there seems to be a number of levels of understanding as to what is standard procedure, minimum levels etc. It seems to change as one moves around the various stations.

When I was the shadow Minister for Emergency Services for seven years I had the opportunity of visiting a number of fire stations around Western Australia. There was no consistent understanding, firstly, concerning the standing orders generally and, secondly, of who was ultimately responsible for safety levels. The fact is, the Minister does not direct the fire brigade in an operational sense; that is the job of the chief officer. At times, that is not fully understood by people who are members of the permanent brigade. I say this, not to cause any discomfort to anyone, but the volunteers are even less informed about some of those requirements. With respect to Geraldton, which Hon Kim Chance spoke of at length, the chief executive officer in Western Australia believes that both the people and the property in the Geraldton area are safe. The Minister recognises that, from time to time, a station will not be manned to 100 per cent capacity. That is not new; it happens for obvious reasons. However, the chief officer in Western Australia and the Minister would not want the people of Geraldton to be alarmed in any way or to be spooked into believing that their safety or security was threatened by insufficient persons managing that area.

Through its budgetary allocations the Government will continue to ensure that the fire brigade in Western Australia is resourced as best it can be.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

[Questions without notice taken.]

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [4.00 pm]: I thank the Leader of the House for his response to the motion. I wish I had been able to give him a little more time, but his response was certainly an informed one and reflected his years of acting as shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

It seems that the area of conflict that remains rests largely, but not entirely, on matters of fact, and those do not need to be discussed here because the Leader of the House and I have resolved the means by which we shall determine who is right and who is wrong. I also thank him for offering the briefing and the other assistance that he has offered in that respect. I said that the conflict rests largely, but not entirely, on matters of fact. There still remains a dispute of opinions. These are, by necessity, perhaps value judgments which always leave more room for dispute. What are left, and what I do not believe was adequately addressed in Hon George Cash's response, are the key issues that I have raised: The unavailability of relief staff for officers and firemen who are on leave, leaving aside the question of fact about whether the requirement of relief staff exists within the award; and the nature of the severity of overtime limits.

Although we can probably agree that limits have been applied by the Fire Brigade Board from time to time, the key matter is that the overtime limits now appear to have been applied more stringently than they have in the past. The outcome of that has been that the officer in charge of the Geraldton Fire Station has lost his capacity to call back professional firefighters who are off duty to fill those shortfalls in the roster. That remains my key concern. It is a matter of judgment about the degree to which something is happening, not whether it happened before or whether it is likely to happen again.

Hon George Cash: Can you just explain to me how the district fire officer has lost his opportunity?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I used the words "loss of capacity". That loss of capacity to call back and off duty firemen results simply from the overtime limit. Hon George Cash made the point that staff levels will fall from time to time for both permanent and temporary reasons. That is not disputed. The means by which local fire brigade officers have been able to cover that in their rosters has been their capacity to call back other firefighters who have been off shift. The accounts of fire stations work on a quarterly basis. If a fire station goes over its quota of allowed overtime in one quarter, that over-quota component must be made up by a shortfall in the next quarter. That is precisely the situation in which the Geraldton fire station is in now. That is why the rosters cannot be filled out to a more satisfactory level, irrespective of whether that number meets agreed staffing levels. I said earlier that the matter with which I have the greatest concern is probably, in financial terms, the least important. I understand that the amount of flexibility required to correct that situation in Geraldton expressed in dollar terms is very small indeed.

Hon George Cash: I understand what you are saying. I do not necessarily agree with everything you have said, but I understand where you are coming from. One of the things that needs to be recognised about Geraldton is the recent introduction of a roster for volunteers so that the volunteers who are available on specific days are known by the district officer and the permanent firefighters, so we do not have a situation where there are no volunteers. It is reasonable to accept that, where possible, permanent firefighters can provide backup. The good news for Geraldton is that at least we have a very able volunteer team, the members of which are prepared to pitch in and give their help.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am pleased to hear that explanation. It is new to me. I was not aware of it. That is why I gave considerable weight to the fact that, statistically, one in every three times when volunteers are called up in Geraldton there is no response at all.

Hon George Cash: That is one of the very reasons why this volunteer roster has been introduced. There were some holes as you have described; however, the good news for Geraldton is that their situation is now under control and the volunteers are known on a daily basis.

Hon KIM CHANCE: If it is under control, the situation must have changed within the past few days. I am delighted that that is the situation. I am extremely grateful that the Leader of the House has recognised the difficulty that is faced in these circumstances that are described where a firefighter may have to break the conditions of his or her employment in respect of entering a burning building without sufficient backup. I very much hope that Hon George Cash will raise this with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Hon George Cash: I have made some preliminary enquiries. I stress that they are only preliminary, so I hope the member will not hold me to the comments that I will make about them. During the afternoon tea break I found out that a single firefighter who entered a building without backup would not be breaching the conditions of the award or the Act; however, there are some recommended guidelines issued by the chief executive officer. I am told with respect to insurance that, should a firefighter enter a building single-handedly without backup, the insurance applicable to a permanent firefighter and a voluntary firefighter would cover that person for that incident. That was my preliminary advice. I was pleased to get it. I will make further inquiries about going through it again.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I have almost finished my comments. I am grateful for the advice. I will draft a question on notice for the Minister for Emergency Services so this can be confirmed in writing in due course. I would like to pay tribute to the dedication of firefighters in Geraldton and the rest of Western Australia. Taking everything that the Minister has said at its word value, even given that firefighters have faced circumstances in the recent past which they should not have to face, if it were not for their dedication and professionalism we may not have had a service at all. We are extremely fortunate that we have been favoured with people with that kind of commitment. I say this with some reserve, because I am taking the word of the Minister that these solutions are at least in hand, but if what the Minister has said is literally correct and the encouraging advice he has does fulfil itself, I can perhaps accept the undertaking from the Minister for Emergency Services that Geraldton people are not endangered by the current situation. Any situation which delivers an outcome of two firefighters attending a fire - this is a matter of fact, not conjecture, so there is no question of a value judgment about that - is dangerous not just for those two firefighters but for the public they are sworn to serve. There is no way on earth that two firefighters can adequately respond to a building fire in which there may be one or more persons still in that building. It is a dangerous situation and I am pleased with the manner in which the Leader of the House has addressed it. When this matter was addressed in another place yesterday, it was not given anywhere near the same treatment by members of the Government. I exclude the Minister for Emergency Services because he did deal with it seriously. I was disturbed reading yesterday's *Hansard* to note the quality of interjections. I thank the Leader of the House for the manner he has dealt with this debate.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

STOCK (BRANDS AND MOVEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon E.J. Charlton (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [4.43 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend the Stock (Brands and Movement) Act 1970 to update the Act so that it will remain effective and relevant to the livestock industries in the 1990s. The purpose of the Act is to establish the clear ownership of stock, regardless of whether stock are located on privately owned land, in transit, at a saleyard, or at an abattoir.

There have not been any significant amendments to the Act since it was introduced in 1970. However, over this period, there have been significant changes in farming practices in Western Australia. There have also been changes in market opportunities, changes in community attitudes towards branding, changes in the way in which animals can be identified, and diversification in the species of livestock that are farmed in Western Australia. Also, as a result of these changes, a number of deficiencies in the existing Act have been found, and it now does not adequately provide for the effective identification of all classes of livestock that are farmed in the state.

The Act provides the livestock industries with a number of benefits. These include the following major factors -

Firstly, the ready identification of livestock, which acts as a deterrent to theft, as branded livestock are far less likely to be stolen than are unbranded stock.

Secondly, assistance in settling disputes regarding the origin and ownership of livestock, due to the presence of brands or earmarks on stock.

Thirdly, assistance in animal disease control, with authorities able to trace the origin of animals that are carrying infectious diseases. The ability to "trace back"

or to find the property of origin of infected animals at saleyards and at abattoirs has enabled the Department of Agriculture to implement very successful disease control programs. Over the years, this has enabled the eradication of a number of diseases from the state, including pleuro-pneumonia and brucellosis, and, more recently, the impending eradication of tuberculosis.

Fourthly, accurate identification of livestock, which is essential for tracing carcasses with unwanted chemical residues. This issue arises from time to time and can have a significant impact on Australia's trade in animal products.

Fifthly, maintenance of the state's freedom from a number of significant animal diseases. Western Australia is very fortunate to be free of a number of diseases that affect livestock in other states. As such, the Government maintains strict control over the importation and movement of stock throughout the state. From time to time, animal diseases do enter the state, and control and eradication programs need to be activated. When such measures are necessary, the efficiency of eradicating diseases is enhanced by being able to accurately determine the ownership and origin of livestock by using brands or earmarks.

Sixthly, ensuring up to date and accurate identification of all livestock, as part of the state's exotic animal disease preparedness program. Exotic animal diseases, such as foot and mouth disease and swine fever, are diseases that are not present in Australia. Should such a disease enter the state, the economic survival of the affected livestock industry is dependent on the rapid eradication of such a disease. The ability to rapidly trace the origin of animals is an essential element of such an eradication program.

In 1989, the then Minister for Agriculture approved a review of the current Act, and subsequently public submissions were invited. Submissions received were considered by a working group consisting of representatives of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, the Western Australian Farmers Federation, the Police Department, and the Department of Agriculture. As a result, a number of recommendations were made regarding the amendment of the existing Act. The changes proposed in this Bill cover four different broad aspects of the operation of the Act. There are changes to the way in which the Act is administered; the classes of stock that are covered by the Act; the way in which stock are to be identified; and the penalties that are associated with breaches of the Act. Significant among the administrative changes are the following amendments -

A change in the title of the Act. It will no longer be known as the Stock (Brands and Movement) Act but will in future be known as the Stock (Identification and Movement) Act. Branding is no longer the only form, or principal means, of identification of livestock.

A change in emphasis is required as the registrar of brands has the facility to allow for other forms of livestock identification, including ear tagging, tattooing and earmarking, depending on the species or class of livestock.

Provision for the use of different means of identification for various species of animal. For instance, the system of identification for goats will be clarified and this will enable ear tags to be used for this species in a way which will enable different lines of goats to be readily identified at saleyards and elsewhere.

The proposed amendments will enable brands to be reregistered every five years rather than every 10 years. Under the current registration system, there is an enormous workload associated with servicing the applications for reregistration that are received all at one time, every 10 years. It is proposed that the new system of registration will provide the Department of Agriculture with greater flexibility, and will enable industry to have a greater choice in the individual selection of brands.

From a technical aspect, the amendments provide for additions to the species and types of animals the movements of which will be regulated by the Act. For instance, various classes of camelids - a recently introduced type of farm animal - are proposed to be

included under the Act. These comprise the alpaca, llama and vicuna, all derived from a South American wild species of animal called the guanaco. This is a relatively small, camel-like animal, slightly larger than the sheep-like vicuna. The llama and the alpaca are between the guanaco and the camel in size, and comprise the last of the camelids to be included by way of this Bill. All the camelids are ruminants with quite woolly or hairy coats, and are farmed for this reason. They have the potential to become a small but nevertheless important part of the state's animal industries. There are also provisions in the Bill to make deer and buffalo subject to the Act. These species have become common in Western Australia, and are now farmed commercially. Furthermore, the Bill recognises that some international livestock markets require animal carcasses to satisfy specific criteria. For example, animals may be required to be free from blemishes such as earmarks. Also, ram lambs that have not been earmarked or branded and are required by some Middle East markets.

The proposed amendments take into account changing community attitudes towards branding. From an animal welfare perspective, the development of alternative methods of identification to branding are to be encouraged, and the use of branding in very young animals is to be minimised. In this respect, the Bill will allow farmers to sell their young dairy calves, of up to two weeks of age, without having to brand or earmark them, providing that such calves carry a certificate of registration issued under the auspices of the Dairy Industry Act 1973, and that they are appropriately identified on a relevant waybill. Furthermore, the Bill will extend the period during which proceedings for an alleged offence under the Act can be initiated, from six months to three years. This is considered reasonable, as it sometimes takes an unexpectedly long time to detect and investigate an offence.

The Stock (Brands and Movement) Amendment Bill 1994 acknowledges that the livestock industries are constantly evolving. These industries are seeking to maintain an efficient and foolproof system of identification, for both livestock species already established and for those species that have been recently introduced into Western Australia. This Bill has the support of representatives of the Western Australia Farmers Federation, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, livestock breed societies, the Police Department and the Department of Agriculture. As such it is worthy of the support of all members of this House. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Cheryl Davenport.

SOIL AND LAND CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon E.J. Charlton (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [4.52 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Land degradation continues to be regarded as Australia's number one environmental problem. Western Australia is no exception and is faced with massive land degradation problems including salinity, wind and water erosion, soil structure decline, compaction and vegetation decline. Of these, salinity alone is likely to take up to one million hectares of prime agricultural land out of production if it remains unchecked. There are also the significant costs incurred through loss of amenity, habitat and water supplies.

The severity of the problem, and the need for urgent action, was highlighted in detail in the report of the Legislative Assembly select committee on Land Conservation. Concern for the problem in the community was also reflected in the attendance of representatives from some 90 land conservation district committees at the recent Western Australian landcare conference in Perth. In Western Australia, a major emphasis has been placed on the involvement of the community in solving problems associated with land degradation.

Western Australia is recognised nationally as a leader in this approach to land conservation and the Government is continuing to support and develop a productive working relationship with the community through the landcare groups. Consequently, it is important that these groups are given as much flexibility and responsibility as is required to address land degradation problems in a meaningful way.

Despite the government commitment to this area of responsibility, it is clear that there is a need for further support to assist the community to achieve land conservation objectives. Hence the Government believes it necessary to amend the Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945. This Act provides for the administration and implementation of measures to control and ameliorate land degradation in Western Australia. It establishes a commissioner of soil and land conservation; a soil and land conservation council; land conservation districts and administering committees; and a landcare trust. Certain aspects of the operation of these bodies have been found to be in need of amendment, particularly in regard to financial accountability and the need for greater flexibility.

The Act also does not adequately provide for the efficient and effective administration of the rapidly expanding voluntary conservation movement. At present, all land conservation district committees operate outside the strict provisions of the Act, with some doubt as to the correct procedure, should this be forced upon them. The situation is critical in that as committees increasingly and naturally become more autonomous and take on more responsibilities in the community, they increasingly distance themselves from the protection of the commissioner and the Minister, available under the Act. This must be rectified urgently to preserve the enthusiasm of committee members and the voluntary self-helpers, which drive this highly successful movement. The Act should also be amended to deal more adequately with interpretations; matters associated with soil and land conservation district administration; service of notices; appeal committee membership; and enforcement provisions.

Although a major review of the Act is anticipated, along the lines of that proposed by the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Land Conservation, the amendments included in this Bill are urgent and cannot await the outcome of this more extensive review. The amendments proposed in this Bill have been thoroughly discussed with industry and the community. All land conservation district committees in the state were sent the proposed amendments for comment and appropriate modifications were made as a result of this consultation process. The amendments included in the Bill are dealt with in nine areas. In summary, these include -

1. The definition of some additional terms.
2. Changes to the operation and remuneration arrangements of the soil and land conservation council and its members.
3. The definition of a land conservation district, using a publicly available plan on which the boundaries are marked.
4. Provision for land conservation district committees to locally hold and operate their grant monies, rates and other funds; and provision for the employment of persons and payment of expenses from these funds.
5. Adjustments to the administration of a land conservation district, to provide for administration costs to be met from the rates collected from that district.
6. Provision for the commissioner of soil and land conservation to take action against any person degrading land, though such persons may not be the owner or occupier of that land.
7. Broadening of procedures under the Act, so that vegetation other than natural vegetation can be more appropriately protected.
8. The updating of membership of appeal committees in line with recent structural changes to the Department of Agriculture.
9. The inclusion of evidentiary provisions, which will provide that the owner/occupier of land will be held responsible for actions on that land

which give rise to land degradation, in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

It is appropriate to explain each of these areas separately. First, I refer to those additional terms which require definition in the Act. The Act is used to prevent or ameliorate eutrophication as a form of land degradation. To date, the term "salinity" has been used to cover this process. However, the term "eutrophication" requires its own definition to establish a clear meaning in the Act. This is provided. The term "proper" in "proper office", has a general meaning outside that intended and defined in the Act and is replaced by the word "appropriate". The term "district" is given a clear meaning to avoid any confusion when used as a shortened statement for "land conservation district". Throughout the Act reference is made to an "owner or occupier of land". There is a need to explicitly define the meaning of "occupier".

Turning to operational matters, there is a need to clarify and streamline the operating procedures of the Soil and Land Conservation Council. This council is the forum which assists the development of policy on land conservation in Western Australia. It is playing an increasing role in advising government on the direction that land conservation should take at the state level. The following changes to the council are necessary to update its operating procedures: The unavoidable absence of some council members from time to time can be seen to reduce the representatives of the council. This has been taken into account by deferring discussion or decisions on issues in which those members have a stake. However, the council must deal with issues promptly, and well briefed, well informed deputies with full voting rights are needed to maintain the flow of council's business and perhaps, as understudies, to replace retiring members. Remuneration and travelling allowances of members of the council are proposed to be tied to the applicable government award so the allowances can change automatically rather than by way of the long-winded process of gazettal on each occasion that a change occurs. The word "chairman" is obsolete and is replaced with "chairperson". Persons invited to a council meeting are to be formally excluded from the right to vote on any matter before the council, to prevent any public impression that exclusion is a decision of the council itself.

Moving to the matter of land conservation district boundaries, currently, to be legally correct, a district boundary must be described in great detail using words, when a land conservation district is constituted or its boundary is altered. This is a complex and time consuming task which will be simplified by providing for a statutory "miscellaneous plan" on which the boundaries are marked; and for an authorised land officer to testify, when required in court proceedings, that a particular geographic location is within a land conservation district.

I refer now to the operation of land conservation district committees, or LCDCs as they are known, and the need for them to manage funds and employ people. The Act requires that the funds allocated to LCDCs and the rates collected by them should be held by Treasury in an account known as the "Land Conservation District Fund". Currently only the Minister or the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation can use the account on behalf of the LCDCs. In fact, no LCDC funds are held in Treasury and it would be an administrative nightmare for the Minister or commissioner to disburse funds on the recommendation of all the 140 LCDCs in this state. It is an unjust reduction of these committees' powers of self-determination and it is appropriate that this provision be changed to allow LCDCs to locally hold and operate their grant moneys, rates and other funds. As a corollary, the types of activities and items that can be funded by LCDC moneys is also made somewhat more flexible.

Current administrative arrangements dealing with the land conservation rating system also need to be changed. Under the Act the Government, and specifically the Department of Agriculture, meets the cost of administering the rating system in each LCDC. This cost is currently being met out of state Landcare program funds which are more appropriately used to fund LCDC activities. The administration cost will become significant if, as predicted, rating increases in popularity. It is appropriate that the administrative costs are met from rates collected within a district in line with the trend for committees to be more independent.

I will now deal with the need for the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation to be able to take action against any person causing land degradation. Currently the commissioner can act only against an owner or occupier of land. He cannot act against someone causing land degradation on someone else's land, including vested reserves or vacant land. No other legislation provides adequately for regulation of this problem. In the recent past there have been several examples of where the Government has been unable to bring a charge against a person for bulldozing access tracks through reserves and against the overgrazing of vacant Crown land adjacent to pastoral leases. It is appropriate that the current provision is widened to include all land and the actions of any person degrading it.

I refer now to the broadening of the scope of provisions available for protecting vegetation. Currently, these include -

The "soil conservation notice" facility for those people who are directed under the Act to do something or to cease some activity so that land degradation does not occur.

The "agreement to reserve" which is more positive than the notice as it is an agreement between the commissioner and the landowner to protect natural vegetation.

The "conservation covenant" which is used when a landowner voluntarily wishes to protect natural vegetation.

All three facilities become memorials on a land title when they are used to protect natural vegetation. Under the existing legislation the only facility which can be used to protect vegetation which is not natural vegetation is the "soil conservation notice". This facility is not appropriate when the landowner agrees to or voluntarily wishes to protect other than natural types of vegetation. The "agreement to reserve" and the "conservation covenant" should be available to landowners who are required or wish to voluntarily protect vegetation other than natural vegetation. By removing the word "natural" from section 30B of the Act, landowners can have a more positive facility placed on their land title as a memorial rather than suffering the sometimes derogatory inferences of a conservation notice.

This Bill includes changes to the membership of advisory committees on appeals to soil conservation notices. Under the Act the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation takes action against an owner or occupier causing land degradation, or likely to cause land degradation, by serving a soil conservative notice on that person. The person served with the notice has the right to appeal to the Minister for Primary Industry who in turn establishes an appeal committee to advise him on the matter. The Act includes membership of an officer of the Department of Agriculture from "the division of resource management". This division has been abolished by the recent restructuring of the department and reference to it is removed from the Act by the Bill. It is replaced with a more general reference to an officer from the Department of Agriculture.

Finally, I refer to the enforcement of orders under the Act. It is becoming increasingly inappropriate for anyone in the community to carry out an activity which could cause land degradation without that activity first being assessed and given the all clear by the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation. For example, it is no longer acceptable in the community for anyone to clear remnant vegetation without first notifying the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation of their intention to do so, so that any land which is likely to be a land degradation hazard if cleared can be protected. Consequently, it is appropriate that anyone who blatantly disregards requirements under the Soil and Land Conservation Act should be made accountable for their actions. However, there have been difficulties in obtaining prosecutions for illegal activities such as clearing without notification because of inadequate averment provisions in the current Act. Accordingly, averment provisions have been included in the proposed amendments to overcome this problem. These provisions make the owner or occupier of land responsible for any action on that land which is liable to result in land degradation.

In conclusion, the proposed amendments to the Soil and Land Conservation Act will assist land users and government to more effectively deal with the land conservation challenges facing Western Australia. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Helm.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 1 June.

HON B.M. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [5.06 pm]: I support the motion and I take this opportunity to congratulate the new Governor on his speech and welcome him and his wife to Western Australia. I have had the opportunity to meet the Governor and his wife on a number of occasions and I have been impressed with the sentiments they have expressed. We are fortunate in having such a fine couple and I wish them a very pleasant stay in Western Australia. I also take this opportunity to welcome Hon Iain MacLean to this House and congratulate him on his maiden speech.

I was heartened to hear the Governor say in his speech that the Government has made a commitment to the family in this international Year of the Family and he made reference to the programs the Government intends to advance during the year. However, I hope that as members of Parliament we will recognise that we can show some example in work and family responsibility by addressing the sitting hours in this Parliament which are not conducive to people with family responsibilities. I hope that during the Year of the Family that issue can be addressed.

I will give an overview of the Government's responsibility and programs in this state. Most members would be aware that the Year of the Family has, as in previous years, been designated by the United Nations worldwide. It is of interest to me that it is an international project which will be picked up by nations around the world and will address the very institution which the majority of people recognise is the cornerstone of any community. This state, through government programs, is addressing the issue of the family through the Department for Community Development under the Minister for the Family. The department has put its strategy into place by dividing the state into regions and establishing regional councils. These councils will have the flexibility to design programs that pick up the flavour of the regions and follow the themes which have been nominated by the Government. One of the themes is that the quality of family life reflects the quality of community life and I endorse that. As 90 per cent of Australians live in a family we must look carefully at families and where they are at. As chairman of one of the district councils I hope this is not a wasted year and that money is not thrown at programs that do not have a positive and tangible result. We must have programs which will improve the position of families not only in this state, but across Australia.

The International Year of the Disabled clearly and specifically identified that people with disabilities were discriminated against. It raised the level of public awareness for the need for access to buildings, recreation and sport for the disabled. This awareness has flowed throughout the community as a positive initiative and it has been picked up by planners, architects, shopping centres and people involved in sport. I had the pleasure of being involved in the planning of a new rowing club building in my electorate at Canning Bridge. I stated three years ago that disabled rowers should have the same access to the club building as other members have, and a lift was put into that building so that disabled rowers can join in club activities such as trophy presentations. That is one tangible result of the Year of the Disabled. I hope we can achieve similar positive results in this Year of the Family.

Hon Reg Davies: It would be nice if people in all families could have jobs by the end of this year.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Absolutely. Economic pressure and the lack of employment for many people in families - young people, breadwinners and others - is one of the problems that is faced by families. That problem is being addressed in the economic strategies that

this Government has put in place. It is important that governments identify the problems which families face so that they can put in place strategies to address those problems. Another clearly identified problem is the huge increase in the number of marriage breakdowns. We need to identify the causes of marriage breakdown and seek ways to address that problem. I hope that is what we will do in this Year of the Family.

In the Fremantle region, two problem areas which we have identified are lack of communication and the pressures faced by young people. I endorse the comments made by Hon Tom Butler in the Address-in-Reply debate about the need to prevent young people from offending and to keep them occupied. I believe that prevention is better than cure. I too was alarmed to read about the high suicide rate in Australia. *The Australian* of Friday, 27 May, states that Australia is ranked fourth in the world in the suicide rate for 15 to 24 year olds. We should be conscious of the fact that our community places a lot of pressure on young people. That is an indictment on our community, and that matter should be looked at.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: Do you realise that the Hillview institution in the southern part of our electorate, in East Victoria Park, is about to be closed, and that looks after the psychological wellbeing of young people?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I am aware of that, and I have worked to have that reinstated.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: That unit is to be transferred to Bentley Hospital. Whether or not you regard that as acceptable, they are not being abandoned.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: It could have been handled much better. When the community organisation pulls out of the negotiations, one wonders what is happening.

Hon E.J. Charlton: We should deal with the causes rather than try to pick up the pieces.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! One interjection was fine, but suddenly four other members were interjecting as well.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I thank the Minister for returning me to what I was saying. I hope that in this Year of the Family we can identify the causes of family breakdown and that we can raise the level of awareness in the community, particularly among the parents of young children, that pressures can begin at an early age and, with good parenting, can be dissipated.

Another pressure upon families is the role of women. I support women who choose to follow a career path, and I believe governments should support that choice with child care, schools and other supports. However, there should be equity so that those women who choose to be homemakers and to stay at home with their children are also supported.

Hon I.D. MacLean: A lot of women are being forced to go to work to make ends meet.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: That is what I am saying. I support women who choose to go to work, but those women who choose to care for their own children are not being financially supported. We need to look at income splitting and other taxation measures to relieve the burden on those families. There has been talk of a homemaker's allowance. A large amount of money is being spent on institutionalised child care for women who want to access work and training, but those women who choose to care for their own children should also be recompensed. Surveys that have been conducted recently, and my own experience in the early childhood field, indicate clearly that many parents with young preschool-aged children would, if given the choice, stay at home with their children, but economic pressures are forcing them to enter the work force.

Hon J.A. Scott: Do you not think that is due partly to the fact that there is an increasing use in the community of part time rather than full time employment?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: There is no doubt, and statistics indicate clearly, that many women take up part time employment because they need to supplement the family budget but they also want to be caregivers for their children. In this Year of the Family, I hope that as a nation we can address the problems that are faced by families. I do not have time to address all of those problems today. I hope that we can seek resolutions and find tangible

answers to those problems, and that that is where the money to promote the International Year of the Family will be spent.

The other issue I address has been canvassed by many women, and I raised this matter at my first party room meeting; namely, women's health issues, particularly screening for breast cancer and the need for more mammography units. I have pleaded with the Minister for Health to extend this facility in my electorate. At the moment women from Rockingham or Kwinana must travel to Cannington for screening, even though a unit is located in Mandurah. This is because Rockingham and Kwinana are considered to be metropolitan suburbs.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: A mobile unit services the whole south west area.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Yes, and it is very difficult for women in the southern part of my electorate to access that service. We are all aware of the huge death rate caused by breast cancer. It is unnecessary to remind members that the loss of a mother from a family is extremely difficult; the same can be said of a father, but this cancer causes a high death rate in women. The disease can be identified, and we need to address the situation.

Hon Reg Davies: Did you know that the tests must be paid for if a woman is not referred by a doctor?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Absolutely. I have the figures with me, although patients can go to the Hospital Benefit Fund now. However, the point raised by the member is one reason that women do not access some of the services available.

I have been active in the field of preschool child immunisation for a long time, and I was alarmed that the federal Minister for Health did not convince her government that it was worthwhile to establish a national strategy in this regard. This was not part of the federal Budget. I was more alarmed to discover that only 53 per cent of children under the age of five years are being immunised in Australia. In Queensland last week three deaths occurred from measles. *The Australian* of Tuesday, 31 May indicated that the immunisation debate in Queensland had become heated following the death of three people as a result of a measles outbreak.

Health professionals, particularly those concerned with early childhood, are greatly concerned that parents are backing away from immunisation under the misunderstanding that the common early childhood illnesses will not attack their children. As a result of the lack of immunisation outbreaks are occurring of common diseases such as whooping cough and measles, and health professionals predict an outbreak of a more serious disease such as polio or typhoid could occur. Nevertheless, nothing is more serious than an outbreak of measles resulting in deaths.

As an educationalist involved with early childhood development, I am concerned about the number of children in early education suffering from many common diseases. This can lead to mental development delays through speech and hearing problems, and this can be avoided through the promotion of an immunisation program. I have taken on this issue as president of the Kindergarten Association, and every year I have tried to promote among parents the necessity of immunising children.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: Is there any evidence to suggest why parents are backing away from immunisation?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: Yes, one significant factor is that for a minuscule number of cases the vaccine causes a reaction. Some parents have been lulled into a false sense of security and say, "Well, we are not surrounded by typhoid or polio, so I will not put my child at risk." These parents do not realise that the risk of suffering from the disease is far greater than the risk of suffering from vaccine reaction. I have indicated to the health professionals that we must upgrade and move into the twentieth century. Clinics and health centres should be available when parents are available. If parents are working and children are in child care, the health centres are not open when parents can attend. That situation must be addressed.

Some members would be aware that I am currently chairing a ministerial review

committee considering road calming. This was established by the Minister for Transport in reaction to strong community concern about traffic calming devices. This is an important economic matter involving a number of issues relating to state and local government relationships. One of the primary reasons for building better and new roads is to enhance road safety. However, building new roads is not the only means of achieving that end. Many more people die on country roads than on city roads, and this is despite the huge proportional imbalance in population between those areas. In 1993, 82 road deaths occurred in the metropolitan area, with 125 country deaths. These country fatalities often involve drivers with little experience on country roads. Huge amounts of money are being spent on altering the roads in suburban streets, and we must consider whether that funding is justified. If the reason for this innovation or change in our city streets is to achieve road safety, we must consider alternative methods of spending our precious dollars. We should address driver training, as a far better result could be achieved by directing money to those types of programs.

Finally, I touch on one of my major tasks in my first year in Parliament; namely, the review of early education. Members would be aware that voluntary preprimary education was introduced, and this year about 7 000 children who will turn five by December 1994 were enrolled in preprimary centres across the state. When this scheme was introduced in 1992 a great deal of opposition, as well as support, was expressed and many hard questions were asked. When the change of government came about, the new government said it would complete the implementation of the full time program, although possibly with an altered time frame subject to the findings of two inquiries. The first of these was the McCarrey report on the state's financial situation, and the second was the task force which considered the issues arising from the full time preprimary program and the manner in which it was implemented. I was fortunate to have expertise in this area and last year was appointed by the Minister for Education to chair a task force to investigate the issues that surround the implementation of this major change in our education system.

I will touch on one or two of the terms of reference that I feel are applicable across my electorate and across the state which are issues which I would hope, after having spent much time putting together the task force and the recommendations, that the Government would seriously consider. One of the main concerns of parents when the full time program was announced was that they felt that some children turning five would be too young for a full time program. When we look at the situation in other states, we find that in no other state or territory are children able to enter a full time preprimary as young as they may in Western Australia. In Western Australia, the entry age is five years as at 31 December. The nearest equivalent entry age is in New South Wales, which is five years by 31 July. Children in Western Australia are up to five months younger than children entering a comparable program in New South Wales, six months younger than those in Victoria, eight months younger than those in the ACT and 12 months younger than those in South Australia and the Northern Territory, where they have continuous entry and the children do not begin until they are five.

We concluded in our recommendations that, although continuous entry may be attractive, it would not be adopted in Western Australian schools except in schools which have sufficient flexibility in the grouping of classes, coupled with appropriate developmental practice.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: It is evident that members are suffering from the long hours that we had to put up with last night. One of the first points that I made was that the hours of this House ought to be addressed in respect to work and family responsibilities.

When we looked at the entry ages across Australia and confirmed that Western Australian children were entering and leaving school much younger than their Eastern States counterparts, it was agreed that we would recommend to the Government that we alter the entry age. The current differences in entry age and enrolment procedures across

Australia cause enormous problems for children and families when they move from one state or territory to another. That may not have been a significant factor 20 or 30 years ago, because those types of cases were relatively rare. However, nowadays they are not, and Australian families are much more mobile than they were even a decade ago. In my electorate, in the Rockingham region which has a large contingency of defence force families, it is evident that many families suffer great difficulties when they move interstate and cannot get their children into classes because they are full or they do not know which class is appropriate for their children. If a common entry age across Australia is to be achieved, it would be achieved by most states increasing their entry age, with Western Australia being amongst those states.

We have been asked on a number of occasions what the research shows in this respect, apart from looking at mobile families. We found that there was not a lot of educational research which commented on this, but it seemed that experts accepted that the entry age needs to take into account a range of relativities, that age is a factor and that research on average showed that older children in the class are educationally more advanced than their late birthday peers. Parents also take very seriously the relationships between age and educational achievement. That was demonstrated by the growing trend in the United States and Victoria for parents from middle class backgrounds to delay their children's entry into preprimary. The children already advantaged by socioeconomic factors were getting a further advantage by trading on the correlation between age and educational performance.

Perhaps one of the most significant pieces of data that was presented to the task force was the data presented to us by the Secondary Education Authority, which identified that in the 1991 and 1992 TEE cohort that went through Western Australia some 2 000 year 12 students with late birthdays did not sit for their TEE. That was not supported by any particular reason. The only identifying and unique factor about those 2 000 students was that they all had late birthdays. It meant that they either dropped out of school at year 10, they repeated or they had difficulty and went elsewhere and were not university bound or tertiary bound.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson interjected.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I was not going to go into that detail, but it is interesting to note that the 16 year olds with late birthdays who sat for their TEE did well and the 17 year olds with late birthdays who reached year 12 in step with their age group did not suffer any disadvantage. However, as I said, a significant number of late birthday 17 year olds failed to reach year 12 in step and were not tertiary bound. They do not progress at the normal rate through school and they are less likely than the other age groups to go on to university studies. The reasons for that ought to be investigated.

Our final recommendation to the Government was that an altered entry age for Western Australia ought to be considered in the interests of being better for young children and having a better outcome at the other end of school.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Do you mean a staggered entry age to cater for changes in birthdays?

Hon B.M. SCOTT: No, I do not mean a staggered entry age. I talked about that earlier. A continuous entry is a staggered entry. I said that we did not recommend that to the Government because we need a different structure for children to go into that. We recommended that we try to achieve a national common entry age for children entering preprimary so that we either come into line with Victoria, which has a 30 April cut-off date - so that no children, unless they are five by 30 April, go into the preprimary year - or reduce our entry age by one month at a time so that the impact on resources is minimal.

We have recommended that that be done at the same time as we extend the program across the state for full time entry students. It also represents a significant saving of \$3m a year. That will help to offset the huge cost of the implementation of the program. That was not a significant factor in our deliberations because we made the recommendation in

the belief it was in the best interests of the children. Tertiary institutions were most interested that suddenly we were talking about not only children at kindergarten but also students coming out of year 12 and entering university and that perhaps this had a bearing on the high failure rate of first year university students. As I said earlier, we need to address that problem and the issue in detail and conduct some research to find out whether that is a significant factor. Certainly parents across Australia and in other parts of the world are withholding their children so they will be successful through the school system because they recognise that older children in the class fare better.

Finally, there is a need in Western Australia to bring some cohesion and coordination to all the services in the early childhood sector. There is enormous variety for the younger sector four year old and kindergarten years. We have recommended to the Government that the terms be made familiar to parents so they know what systems the children are going into and that an office of early childhood be set up to coordinate policy and examine the issues we have identified in the report and, ultimately, bring about cohesion and coordination. It is an area of non-compulsory education in the system.

The report into full time preprimary education in Western Australia is a document of some note and is a benchmark which should be used for planning in the future. I hope that when the Government is able to address these issues within its budgetary constraints it will consider the major terms of reference that we were given to examine and implement the recommendations. They have been made with the interests of young children in Western Australia being of paramount importance. A key consideration throughout our deliberations, which has been referred to by other people in this debate, is that early experiences have a very clear connection to later outcomes. All of us would rather put in place programs that have a preventive approach than see the need later to pick up the pieces through remedial work or programs that are far more costly.

I urge the Minister, where possible, to consider our recommendations seriously and support them in the Budget. I support the motion.

Hon George Cash: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon J.A. Scott.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD BETTING AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 31 May.

HON T.G. BUTLER (East Metropolitan) [5.43 pm]: The Opposition supports this Bill. The reasons for it are set out clearly in the Minister's second reading speech. The two amendments are necessary because of the action by the Victorian Government to convert the Victorian Totalisator Agency Board from a statutory authority to a public company called TABCORP. The Western Australian Act currently provides that its totalisator board can participate in a combined pool system with any other state, territory or authority. It makes no provision for the Western Australian TAB to participate in a combined pool with a public company. The amendments will allow that and will ensure Western Australia's continued participation in the SuperTAB. If the Act is not amended it will mean money by the larger punters being invested in the interstate TABs to the detriment of small Western Australian punters. I commend the Bill to the House.

HON MAX EVANS (North Metropolitan - Minister for Racing and Gaming) [5.45 pm]: I thank the Opposition for its support of this legislation. It involves minor changes to an industry that would, without them, suffer major ramifications which would impact on our Totalisator Agency Board's earnings which will be generated from the SuperTAB in conjunction with the Victorian TAB. The Government wants to pass the legislation to make sure it is in place when the new company begins operating. It is not a statutory authority in which this State can participate as a result of the current law.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee and Report

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon Max Evans (Minister for Racing and Gaming), and transmitted to the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [5.48 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - Questions, Inadequate Answers

HON JOHN HALDEN (South Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [5.48 pm]: I want to raise a matter firstly in a general sense and, secondly, in a specific sense. As I look through the pink supplementary day-in-day-out record, I am becoming particularly tired of the Government's response to our questions which go basically along the following lines: "The information sought will require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose." In today's record that happens on a number of occasions. I refer specifically to question on notice 138 that I asked of the Minister for Education on 12 May 1994. In part five of the question I asked what number of children are at home, not attending formal school. I received the response that the information sought would require considerable research and the Minister was not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. He said that if I had a specific question concerning a school he would be pleased to respond.

Hon T.G. Butler: How many schools are in your electorate?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: There are a number. I asked how many children were at home and not attending formal school. How could I refer to a specific school? It is outrageous. If it was not appropriate then, it is definitely not appropriate now. This one highlights the stupidity of trying in a carte blanche way to avoid answering questions that should be answered. This is not a political question that I am asking, and I am surprised that the ministry would not have on hand how many children in this state are at home not attending formal school. That seems to be a fairly simple question, and one that the department should know, and if it does not know I would like to know why because that is a question that interests me. I do not think it should take an enormous amount of research. The answer, considering the question, is absolutely nonsensical. A difficulty in this place is that once having asked a question it cannot be re-asked. In the future this needs to be looked at, when nonsensical answers are received, and how one then attains a sensible answer in an appropriate way. Perhaps someone can advise me to that effect. Under standing orders I am somewhat curtailed in obtaining a sensible answer to what was a reasonably sensible question and not one of a political nature.

*Adjournment Debate - Constitutional History Museum - Old Hale School Building,
Parliament Place, Ideal Site*

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [5.52 pm]: In North Terrace, Adelaide, next to Parliament House stands the old Parliament House of South Australia. This houses South Australia's constitutional history museum and the history trust of South Australia. In Parliament Place stands the old Hale School building which is to be renovated by the Building Management Authority over the next 18 months, and that building will be restored to conservation standard. This is an ideal site for a Western Australian constitutional history museum.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I thank the Government for its assistance in this regard. It would not be any inducement if Mr Tomlinson continued as chairman of the Legislation Committee. There are two Hale School buildings. Hon Derrick Tomlinson could have the two storey building as befits his status and perhaps this would be more appropriate for the single storey building -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: If the member checks his facts he will find there are several buildings. Does he mean those on the east side or the west side, or does he mean the tutorial rooms or the boarding house rooms?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I am a little nonplussed, not having had the honourable member's experience of education at said institution while it was an educational institution. I make the point that the farther of the two buildings on the corner of Havelock Street and Parliament Place is a little large in its own right for a constitutional history museum. The South Australian government found that once it moved its constitutional history museum into the old Parliament House it was a little too large for one function. At present we have the opportunity of accommodating two other bodies in this building. The National Trust of Australia is willing to give up its location in the old observatory and move to the building I refer to, and the Royal Western Australian Historical Society is eager to sell its premises in Nedlands and move to a joint location with the National Trust. That building could house a state heritage centre with a constitutional history museum, with the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and the National Trust. This will yield us in the parliamentary precinct that magnificent building, the old observatory. I have often shared the views of Hon Phil Pandal that it would make an excellent state reception centre. In the next couple of years the potential exists to establish a state heritage centre. Whether the heritage council is moved in as well or is left at the National Trust and the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and our own constitutional history museum could be open for debate. I bring this to the attention of this Chamber and Parliament, and I trust that Parliament and the Government will not let this opportunity pass.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.56 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TAXI INDUSTRY - BROOME

Additional Plates Issued

23. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

Could the Minister please advise -

- (1) What were the reason and conditions for the issue of three country taxi plates and one multipurpose taxi plate for the Shire of Broome in 1993?
- (2) Were these taxi plates issued at a percentage of the market value?
- (3) Are there any plans to issue more taxi plates for Broome and what procedures will apply to any further issue?
- (4) Has the Department of Transport a policy of encouraging the present operators of country taxis in Broome to form a cooperative management of the taxi industry and thus eliminate the need for extra plates to be issued?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) The three additional taxi licences were issued at the request of the taxi industry. The licences were originally issued as temporary taxi licences, again at the request of the taxi industry, to meet the short term demands. An application was received in 1993, from an existing Broome taxi operator, for a multipurpose taxi licence to service the needs of the disabled. The licence was issued with the condition that the licensee had to provide a priority service to the disabled and that the licence would not be transferable for three years.
- (2) No.
- (3) As a result of an approach from some of the Broome taxi operators and, after consultation with the taxi industry and users, the Department of Transport has agreed to issue four temporary plates to existing owners to meet the expected additional demand during the tourist season.
- (4) No. The Department of Transport has always recognised that there are both operational and financial benefits to Broome taxi operators should they choose to form into a cooperative management arrangement. Clearly, the department is not in a position to impose any such system on individual operators but should the industry take a decision to pursue such an arrangement the department would provide support and advice. It is speculation for anyone to suggest that the formation of a cooperative will eliminate the need for additional taxi licences.

"AUDIT INSIGHT" - PRINTING DETAILS

27. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Who printed the leaflet "Audit Insight" put out by the Office of the Auditor General, Western Australia, No 7, April 1994?
- (2) What was the cost?
- (3) If State Print was not used, why was it not used?
- (4) If it was not used, was it asked to tender?
- (5) If it was asked to tender, what price did it tender?
- (6) What price was tendered by the printer?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

- (1) The leaflet "Audit Insights" No 7, April 1994, produced by the Office of the Auditor General, was printed by Westcare Industries, a workshop for the physically and mentally disabled and a quality assured printer in Western Australia.
- (2) The cost of printing was \$294.
- (3) Under Department of State Services guidelines, agencies are only required to include State Print in the quotation process for jobs over \$2 000. All relevant State Supply Commission purchasing guidelines were followed in seeking quotations for this job. Based on its past unsuccessful quotation record for "Audit Insights" State Print was not asked to quote on this occasion.
- (4) Not on the above job. State Print was included in this initial quotation process for "Audit Insights" some two years ago and was unsuccessful. The specifications for "Audit Insights" were changed 12 months ago to cut costs and again State Print was unsuccessful in its quotation.
- (5) In the 1992 quotation process when "Audit Insights" was run on pre-printed two-colour base sheets, State Print quoted \$200 compared with the lowest quote of \$125.
- (6) The price tendered for the current issue of "Audit Insights" was \$294.

ROTTNEST ISLAND - ABORIGINAL BURIAL GROUNDS, RECONCILIATION PROGRESS

31. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

What progress has been made to reach a full reconciliation of the issues surrounding the Aboriginal burial grounds at Rottneest and what issues remain to be resolved?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

Work has been completed removing four staff houses and nine tourist cabins from the Aboriginal cemetery area. A bitumen road and road base are in the process of being removed and topsoil will be spread as part of a landscaping process. The final form of a perimeter fence is to be decided before installation. Agreement is also to be reached on the form of an appropriate commemorative plaque or structure to give recognition to the Aboriginal cemetery. Decisions are still to be made on a management plan for the environs of the Aboriginal cemetery and the construction of a visitor interpretive centre in the vicinity.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

33. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Ministry of Premier and Cabinet to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
- (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

34. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:
- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Office of State Administration to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
 - (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

35. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:
- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by GoldCorp to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
 - (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

36. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:
- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Bank of Western Australia Ltd formerly the R & I to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
 - (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

37. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:
- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Treasury Department to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
 - (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

38. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Western Australian Government Holdings to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
- (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

39. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Western Australian Tourism Commission to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
- (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

70. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Health Department of Western Australia to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?
- (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question about funds paid to media organisations I will be pleased to respond.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS - GOVERNMENT PAYMENT

71. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Since 16 February 1993 what funds have been paid by the Ministry of Fair

Trading to in each case Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, community newspapers, Golden West Network and *The Australian*?

- (2) What is the amount contracted in each case to the above media organisations to be paid that has not yet been paid?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

The information sought would require considerable research and I am not prepared to allocate resources for this purpose. If the member has a specific question about funds paid to media organisations I will be pleased to respond.

GEMCO - AWARDED WESTRAIL CONTRACTS

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

- (1) Has GEMCO been awarded a contract to carry out Westrail work in Kewdale?
- (2) Was the contract awarded after tender?
- (3) Was GEMCO provided with employees of Westrail by Westrail to assist it in tendering for the contract?
- (4) Under what terms did Westrail provide employees to GEMCO to assist GEMCO in tendering for the contract?
- (5) Has Westrail agreed to allow GEMCO to use old Midland Workshops equipment?
- (6) If so, what equipment, what is the value of such equipment and what price is GEMCO paying?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) GEMCO has been awarded three Westrail contracts for work as follows -
 - (a) Reconditioning of wagon wheel sets.
 - (b) Wheel reprofiling.
 - (c) Wagon bogie reconditioning.

GEMCO has indicated that work will be carried out at Belmont.

- (2) All contracts were awarded after tender.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) Yes. Sale and hire of equipment from Midland Workshops were part of the tender process.
- (6) Equipment sold -

- (a) Contract for reconditioning of wagon wheel sets -

Equipment Description	Current Asset Value \$	Price to GEMCO \$
Wheel press	20 883	40 000
Axle lathe	15 939	40 000
Wheel borers (2)	16 452	20 000
Wheel hone	* nil	200
Induction heaters (2)	* nil	400
Heating oven	* nil	200
Agitation tanks	* nil	3 000
Bearing puller	* nil	100
Recording instruments	* nil	1 000
NDT equipment	* nil	200

- (b) Contract for wheel profiling -
- | Equipment Description | Current Asset Value \$ | Price to GEMCO \$ |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Wheel lathe | 39 279 | 35 000 |
- (c) Contract for wagon bogies -
- | Equipment Description | Current Asset Value \$ | Price to GEMCO \$ |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| Function wedge removal press. | | |
| Hydraulic hard press. Brake cylinder assembly press | * nil | 2 000 |

Equipment Hired -

- (a) Contract for reconditioning of wagon wheel sets -
- | Equipment Description | Current Asset Value \$ | Price to GEMCO \$ |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Wheel press | * nil | 416 per quarter |
| Axle lathes (2) | * nil | 832 per quarter |
| Wheel borer | * nil | 1 250 per quarter |

*Fully depreciated.

Prices paid for the above equipment were an integrated part of the tender package.

WESTRAIL - MIDLAND WORKSHOPS, FORMER WORK LET TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY

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

- (1) What work formerly carried out at the Midland Workshops is now being carried out by private companies outside of Western Australia?
- (2) What is the value of the work?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) The manufacture of dogspikes and rail turnouts.
- (2) The value of work let to date to private industry is \$2 216 604 and expenditure will be incurred from 1993-94 to 1996-97.

WESTRAIL - MIDLAND WORKSHOPS, FORMER WORK LET TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY

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

- (1) What work formerly carried out at the Midland Workshops is now being carried out by private companies in Western Australia?
- (2) What is the value of the work?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) To date, the following work formerly carried out at the Midland Workshops is being carried out by private industry -
 - Overhauls of locomotive, wagon and railcar bogies.
 - Overhaul of engines.
 - Repairs and modifications to locomotives, wagons and containers.
 - Reprofiling and reconditioning of wheelsets.
 - Manufacture and repair of permanent way tools.
 - Locomotive painting.
 - Repair, overhaul and manufacture of locomotive and wagon components.
 - Reforming of sleeper plates.
 - Rework and supply of fishplates.

- (2) The value of work let to date to private industry is in the order of \$31 523 000 and it is estimated that expenditure will be incurred from 1993-94 to 1996-97.

GOVERNMENT ASSETS - DISPOSAL, CABINET SUBCOMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

98. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Public Sector Management:

In respect of the Cabinet committee referred to in press release P94/08 -

- (1) Which assets recommended by the Cabinet subcommittee have been disposed of since the last election?
- (2) What was the sale price of each of those assets?
- (3) Which assets have been recommended by the Cabinet subcommittee for sale but not yet sold?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Public Sector Management has provided the following reply -

- (1) SGIO Insurance Limited
- (2) The public float of SGIO Insurance Limited was fully underwritten at a value of \$165m.
- (3) The Cabinet subcommittee has also recommended to offer for sale the commercial operations of State Print as a going concern.

**TRANSPORT, DEPARTMENT OF - BANDY CREEK BOAT HARBOUR, ESPERANCE, SAVINGS SINCE REMOVAL OF OFFICER
*Albany Office, Servicing Rowles Lagoon; Additional Staff***

105. Hon MARK NEVILL to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What net savings have been achieved by the Department of Transport since the removal of the officer in charge from the Bandy Creek boat harbour at Esperance?
- (2) What net savings are expected over the full 1994-95 financial year?
- (3) (a) Will the department continue to service Rowles Lagoon from Albany; and
(b) what is the extra cost of servicing Rowles Lagoon from Albany?
- (4) Have any additional staff been employed at the Albany office since 1 July 1993?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) The net saving for 1993-94 is expected to be approximately \$10 000.
- (2) The net saving for 1994-95 is expected to be approximately \$30 000.
- (3) (a) The department is currently reviewing its regional staffing arrangements and the arrangements for Rowles Lagoon could change. For the present we will continue to use officers stationed in Albany to service Rowles Lagoon as an extension of their commitment to Esperance.
(b) Nil.
- (4) No.

LEEWIN-NATURALISTE NATIONAL PARK - FIRE

Inadequate Firebreaks Claim; Inquiry

110. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) What action has the Minister taken following claims broadcast publicly on regional news that inadequate Conservation and Land Management firebreaks allowed the private burn of Sussex Block 1362 Hamlyn Bay to escape into Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park?
- (2) Has the Minister initiated an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the recent fire that devastated a large section of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and, if so, what is the nature of the investigation and will it examine whether -
 - (a) the Conservation and Land Management Act has been breached; and
 - (b) a case exists to pursue a claim for compensation?
- (3) If the Minister has not initiated an investigation, why not?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following reply -

- (1) No action is envisaged. A firebreak has been in place on the interface of the national park and Sussex Block 1362. Fuel reduction burns have been undertaken by CALM in the national park on the western boundary of Location 1362 in accordance with the approved management plan for Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.
- (2) The Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Bush Fires Board have investigated the circumstances surrounding the fire. The investigations found that -
 - (a) the CALM Act has not been breached;
 - (b) CALM is not considering making a claim against the owner for allowing the burn to escape into the national park.
- (3) The Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Bush Fires Board are taking steps at the local level to advise landholders and bushfire brigades to prevent a recurrence of such fire escapes.

ROAD FUNDING - FIX AUSTRALIA, FIX THE ROADS CAMPAIGN

Financial Contributions by RAC, Police Department etc.

115. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport:

What is the financial contribution of -

- (a) the Royal Automobile Club;
- (b) the Western Australia Police Force;
- (c) the Pastoralists and Graziers Association;
- (d) the Main Roads Department;
- (e) the Western Australian Farmers Federation;
- (f) the Department of Transport;
- (g) the Road Transport Association;
- (h) the Western Australian Municipal Association; and
- (i) the Livestock Transport Association

to the Fix Australia, Fix the Roads campaign?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (a)-(h) The Government's contribution has been set at a maximum of \$235 000 for external costs plus administrative costs within government. The contribution of non-government organisations will include -

- running advertisements in their journals;
- circulating information to their membership;
- providing advice and assistance as required;
- taking campaigns into the national arena via their peak bodies, and
- running advertisements in the media.

This campaign has been commenced as a result of the crisis situation with our roads that has been brought about by the reducing level of Commonwealth funding to the roads of Australia, and in particular Western Australia. The groups supporting the campaign have recognised the important part which roads play in our everyday life and the consequences of not taking some concerted action immediately to bring about an increased level of road funding. Western Australia's road system is rapidly approaching a crisis point. Over the next 10 years 30 per cent of the sealed road network will have pavement ages of more than 40 years. The replacement costs of these roads is \$2b. Due to limited funds, Main Roads is currently reconstructing these roads at 3.5 times less than the required rate.

The Federal Government will collect \$10.7b in fuel taxes in 1994-95 but only \$1.5b has been allocated to roads. Western Australia has 4 650 kilometres, or 25 per cent, of the total national highway system within its border but only attracts about \$55m, or 7 per cent, of the \$771.4m that was allocated to the national highway network throughout Australia in the 1993-94 Budget. This represents an average funding shortfall of \$39m a year for the State's national highway based on projected needs over the next 10 years. The funding shortfall on state highways and main roads has been estimated at a further \$95m a year. This estimate is based on projected needs to maintain, improve and expand the road network to meet new demands over the next 10 years. In 1993-94, compared with 1992-93, the State Government increased its contribution to Western Australian roads by \$34.7m and the Federal Government reduced its contribution by \$63m. This important campaign deserves the support of all Western Australians and I look forward to the support all Australian Labor Party members with this campaign.

MULTICULTURAL PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES - DETAILS

116. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Health:

What are the details of the multicultural psychiatric services the Minister proposes to develop following the closure of the Multicultural Psychiatric Centre in West Perth?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I refer the member to my previous response to this question of 12 April 1994, Assembly question 1930. An implementation plan expanding upon the details provided to you in my response is available from the interim manager of the Multicultural Psychiatric Centre on 328 5788.

KEANEY, REVEREND BROTHER FRANCIS PAUL - STATE ARCHIVES
PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT FILE, PREMIER'S LETTER RECOMMENDING OBE

127. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that in State Archives of Western Australia Premier's

Department file ACC 1704 AN 2/10 58/53 Box 6 there occurs a file named "Reverend Brother F B (sic) Keaney, Honour for ..."?

- (2) Is the Premier aware that in that file there occurs a letter to His Excellency the Governor dated 12 February 1953 from the Premier recommending the Distinction of OBE in the Coronation Birthday Honours List for Reverend Brother Francis Paul Keaney?
- (3) Can the Premier provide me with a copy of that written citation?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

- (1)-(2) Prior to the member asking this question I was not aware of the information referred to.
- (3) No. There is no citation of the award given to Brother Keaney on the file. Brother Keaney was awarded the distinction of MBE as a result of action taken by the Federal Government, not the State Government.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS - SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE OF YOUNG BOYS ADMISSIONS, ATTORNEY GENERAL'S MEETING

128. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Health representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Has the Attorney General met with the Christian Brothers or representatives of that organisation to discuss the possibility of establishing a judicial inquiry into admissions by some Christian Brothers that they physically and/or sexually abused young boys who were trusted to their care, and were those discussions centred around the same type of inquiry envisaged by the Victims of Institutionalised Cruelty, Exploitation and Supporters (VOICES)?
- (2) If so, on what date and where did the meeting occur?
- (3) Was the public announcement not to establish an inquiry made following that meeting?
- (4) Has the Attorney General had discussions with the Christian Brothers in respect to the admitted existence of Christian Brothers who were known serial sexual molesters?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1)-(2),(4) The Attorney General met with representatives of Christian Brothers and VOICES during 1993 at both her ministerial office and Parliament House.
- (3) No such public announcement has been made.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS - CHILD MIGRANTS *Attorney General's Letter to Senator McKiernan*

129. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Health representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Did the Attorney General write to Senator McKiernan about the conduct of Christian Brothers institutions in relation to child migrants of the 1940s and 1950s?
- (2) Did the Attorney General in that letter advise Senator McKiernan that the Christian Brothers had established a helpline and professional counselling service?
- (3) Did the Attorney General also advise Senator McKiernan that an

independent panel had been approved to give advice to the Christian Brothers and to invite submissions from individuals and groups?

- (4) Will the Attorney General advise of the date and place of any precedent where a similar non-government panel has been established inviting submissions about physical assaults and sexual abuse committed by employees of child care institutions?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1)-(4) Correspondence between the Attorney General and Senator McKiernan are matters between them.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS - BOYS TOWN TO KEANEY COLLEGE BY PATRICK GRANT

Bills Handling Fee Simple, Tardun and Bindoon Properties

130. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that on page 32 of the book *Boys Town to Keaney College*, 1986, the author, Patrick C. Grant, wrote -
 "Br Conlan had "seen" the Minister for Local Government who had a Bill drafted and discreetly steered through Parliament, and thus it came to pass the Tardun, Bindoon, Clontarf, Castledare and Aquinas College - all have extensive land holdings - were exempted from rates in perpetuity. The past phase of the battle shows Br Conlan's thoroughness; he must secure the future. Diplomacy and parliamentary lobbying this time resulted in a Bill handing a fee simple of all the Tardun property to the Brothers. These same tactics were to be repeated 4 years later at Bindoon."?
- (2) Will the Premier advise the House the titles of the two Bills referred to in the book and the dates they were debated in the Parliament as well as the dates of proclamation?
- (3) Can the Premier assure the House that the Bills handing fee simple to the Christian Brothers at Tardun and at Bindoon were not improperly drafted as a result of the then Minister being approached by the Catholic Church?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

- (1) No.
- (2) In 1930 the Minister for Lands (Mr M. Troy) received a request from solicitors J. and R. Maxwell (acting on behalf of the Christian Brothers) for the transfer of nine section 68 (Land Act, 1898) conditional purchase leases at Tardun from individual nominee brothers to the head trustees of the Christian Brothers in Australia based in Strathfield, NSW. Messrs Maxwell advised that an agriculture college had been built on that site, which comprised in aggregate 20 000 acres, and that the brothers wished to raise finance in order to pay outstanding debts which had been incurred in the course of farm development. On 8 May 1930 Messrs Maxwell were advised that their request could not be entertained as it would have resulted in an individual trustee controlling more than the statutory maximum area of farm land.

In 1933 Brother Conlon (Principal, Clontarf Farm School) requested the department to provide rent relief for the respective leases. The Minister for Lands subsequently agreed to rent protection for a period of three years from 1 January 1933 on the basis that this was preferable to closure of the school. On 22 June 1933 Brother Conlon requested the Minister for Lands to consider

granting the fee simple of the total farm area to the Christian Brothers. This amounted to 21 503 acres of land. As appropriate legislation did not exist to deal with this request (in view of the way the leases were held and mortgaged) a Bill was drafted in 1935 to give effect to the original request and grant the land to the body corporate. 'The Clontarf Farm School, Tardun' (incorporated on 27 July 1934). The Bill was not introduced to the Parliament. No record exists of the introduction of a similar Bill in respect of Bindoon.

- (3) Not applicable.

TAXI INDUSTRY - BROOME

Private Plate Changed to Ordinary Plate 1993, Conditions

139. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What were the conditions upon which a private taxi plate in Broome was changed to an ordinary plate in 1993?
- (2) Have these changes in plate allocation last year tended to favour the interests of one Broome operator?
- (3) Can the Minister confirm that seasonal places are again under consideration this year despite the fact that the number of year round plates jumped from eight - plus one private taxi - to 13 in 1993?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) The owners of the private taxi-car licence approached the Department of Transport for a metered taxi licence. As a result of consultation with the applicant, the taxi industry and users, it was agreed to convert the private taxi-car licence to a metered taxi-car licence in lieu of an additional taxi-car licence.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes.

JANDAKOT WATER MOUND - HOUSING, ADDITIONAL, REPORT

140. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for the Environment:

On Saturday, 7 May 1994 in *The West Australian* the Minister was quoted as saying that the Department for the Environment had received a report suggesting more housing could be built over the Jandakot water mound.

- (1) Who delivered that report?
- (2) Will the Minister have that report tabled in this House?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following reply -

- (1) I understand that the honourable member was referring generally to a report prepared by consultants on behalf of a group of landholders. The report was provided as a comprehensive submission to the honourable Minister on the Environmental Protection Authority's draft environmental protection policy for the Jandakot Mound.
- (2) No. However, if the honourable member contacts the Minister's office he will be given the name of the consultant who may be approached for a copy of the report.

**TRADITIONAL LAND USE, OFFICE OF - FINANCIAL RECORDS,
COMPUTERISED**

159. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 86, are the financial records of the Office of Traditional Land Use computerised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 86?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has provided the following reply -

- (1)-(3) Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

**KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL COUNCIL - FINANCIAL RECORDS,
COMPUTERISED**

160. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 69, are the financial records of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council computerised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 69?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

- (1)-(3) Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF - FINANCIAL RECORDS,
COMPUTERISED**

161. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 68, are the financial records of the Department of Local Government computerised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 68?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

- (1)-(3) Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL - FINANCIAL RECORDS, COMPUTERISED

162. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 67, are the financial records of the Water Resources Council computerised?

- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 67?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Water Resources has provided the following reply -

(1)-(3)

Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

WATER AUTHORITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - FINANCIAL RECORDS, COMPUTERISED

163. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 66, are the financial records of the Water Authority of Western Australia computerised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 66?

The Minister for Water Resources has provided the following reply -

(1)-(3)

Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

LAND ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF - FINANCIAL RECORDS, COMPUTERISED

164. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 49, are the financial records of the Department of Land Administration computerised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 49?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

(1)-(3)

Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

MINERALS AND ENERGY, DEPARTMENT OF - FINANCIAL RECORDS, COMPUTERISED

165. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) With respect to question on notice 48, are the financial records of the Department of Minerals and Energy computerised?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why does it require considerable research to answer question 48?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

(1)-(3)

Details are unable to be supplied on payments to individual media organisations. This information is managed by Media Decisions WA, which won the Government's media contract through public tender.

**GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES HOUSING AUTHORITY - GERALDTON,
ACCOMMODATION SHORTAGE**

171. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is there a shortage of Government Employees Housing Authority accommodation in Geraldton?
- (2) Is it correct that a GEHA owned house on the corner of Howes Street and Scott Road, Rangeway, is to be offered for sale by auction on 28 May 1994?
- (3) If so, why is GEHA further reducing its housing stock at a time when it is in short supply?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Housing has provided the following reply -

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes. The house was sold on 28 May 1994.
- (3) Stock is not being reduced as replacement accommodation is being provided elsewhere in Geraldton.

CONCRETE BATCHING PLANT, NEERABUP - CROWN LICENCE GRANT

173. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has a Crown licence been granted to allow the construction and operation of a concrete batching plant at Quinns Road, Neerabup?
- (2) If so, to whom was the licence granted?
- (3) What are the licence conditions?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

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

BURNS BEACH - LEASES

Beach Cottage Conditions; Recreation Zone

180. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Lands:

I refer to my question on notice 1891 of 5 April 1994 and the Minister's answers, and ask -

- (1) Did the leases granted by the City of Wanneroo specify that the land at Burns Beach was -
for the purposes of the erection and maintenance thereon of premises to be used as beach cottage?
- (2) Was the land zoned "recreational" at the time the leases were offered?
- (3) Is a "beach cottage" in a recreation zone usually regarded as a "permanent residence"?
- (4) How does the lease of land for the erection of a "beach cottage" in a recreation zone conform with the requirement that lessees granted concessional purchase price "reside on the lease as their principal place of residence"?
- (5) Was it a condition of the leases that "The lessee will not assign, underlet or part with the possession of the said premises or land or any part thereof or any structure whatsoever upon the said land without the written permission of the Hon Minister for Lands"?

- (6) Did any lessees have such written permission?
- (7) If yes, which lessees?
- (8) When did each of the following take up the lease for which they were granted concessional purchase prices -
 - (a) Lot 11421 K.L. & D.K. Brabazon;
 - (b) Lot 11436 R.G. & O.E. Thomas;
 - (c) Lot 11492 D.J. Chivers;
 - (d) Lot 11414 D. & L. Lings;
 - (e) Lot 11496 M.N. & M. Warren;
 - (f) Lot 11419 W. & K.M. Kell;
 - (g) Lot 11423 H.F. Jansen;
 - (h) Lot 11442 A. Holt & S.K. Rice;
 - (i) Lot 11417 H.M. Harries;
 - (j) Lot 11462 H.A. Dev;
 - (k) Lot 11469 S.J. & B.C. English; and
 - (l) Lot 11477 C.G. Waite?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

- (1) The lessees covenanted inter alia with the shire to build a cottage within 12 months and to maintain the premises.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.
- (4) The situation at Burns Beach had got out of hand. The former government was endeavouring to rationalise the situation in the most equitable way possible.
- (5)-(6) Yes.
- (7)-(8) The information sought will take considerable researching and may not be available as the leases were between the City of Wanneroo and the lessees. Should further information become available, I will advise the honourable member.

SHARK BAY - REGIONAL PLAN

Abandonment; Ministers for Planning and Land Positions

194. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Does the Minister accept the basic principles of the Shark Bay regional plan which restricts major developments within the Shark Bay area in the townsite of Denham and precludes the lease of land for such purposes outside that townsite?
- (2) Is the Minister yet aware of the publicly stated position of the Minister for Planning that he is "abandoning the current Shark Bay Regional Plan that was developed after five years of extensive consultations with community, local government, industry and environmental groups and relevant government departments and agencies"?
- (3) Is the Minister for Land's position in conflict with the position of that taken by the Minister for Planning?
- (4) Does the abandonment of this plan now enable the Minister to grant a land application to the Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort for the establishment of a golf course at Monkey Mia?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

- (1) Until such time as the Shark Bay Regional Plan is reviewed, the plan remains the principal regional planning *guide* to development, though it has no statutory basis to control land usage that is determined/controlled by local town planning schemes which have the force of law.
- (2) I am aware that the Minister for Planning intends that the Shark Bay plan be reviewed.
- (3) I do not understand the import of the member's question.
- (4) No formal consideration of the outline development plan, presented by the Monkey Mia resort owners will occur without regard to the statutory planning, environmental and public consultation processes.

**WATER AUTHORITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - SEPTIC TANKS,
SOURCE OF RIVER AND GROUND WATER POLLUTION**

355. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Does the Water Authority see septic tanks as a major source of river and groundwater pollution?
- (2) If so, why?
- (3) What is the cost breakdown for the \$350 a year charge to households being connected to the sewer?
- (4) Has the Water Authority done any research into the environmental impact of composting toilets?
- (5) Why does the Government not allow householders to use a composting toilet instead of being connected to sewers?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Water Resources has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes; septic tanks are a source of river and ground water pollution.
- (2) Septic tanks can contribute significant amounts of bacteria, viruses and nutrients into the water cycle.
- (3) The cost breakdown for an average existing residential property returning 50 per cent of water consumption to the sewer is approximately \$100 for operating costs, \$105 for depreciation and the balance for servicing capital. The cost of depreciation and servicing capital for infill lots is greater than the above average as the capital costs for infill lots are significantly greater than normal "greenfield" lots.
- (4) No, but the information is available from other sources.
- (5) Control of compost toilets is a matter for the Minister for Health. However, connection to sewer would normally still be needed for all other household wastewater, even if a compost toilet is used.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - INTERVENTION PILOT PROGRAM, ARMADALE
*Government Funding***

66. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Community Development:

Some notice has been given of this question.

- (1) Has the Government agreed to fund the domestic violence intervention pilot program in Armadale which was originally funded by the Criminology Research Council in 1993?
- (2) If so, from what date will funding commence?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) If the program is now being funded by the Government, has any evaluation of the program been undertaken?
- (5) If so, will the Minister provide the House with the evaluation report?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) Does the Minister intend to implement further programs of this nature?
- (8) If not, why not?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Community Development has provided the following reply -

- (1) The Government has not agreed to fund the domestic violence intervention pilot program in Armadale as a separate program. The Government funds the agencies involved in the program; that is, police, courts, and the women's refuge. The Criminology Research Council provided a grant for the evaluation of the pilot program, not funding for the program.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The domestic violence intervention pilot program in Armadale is a cooperative model of agencies working together to address the issue of domestic violence. It uses resources already allocated to those agencies, including police and the Starrick Women's Refuge.
- (4) As mentioned in answer to question (1), the Criminology Research Council has provided funds for the evaluation. This work is being conducted by Jennifer Gardiner, School of Social Work, Curtin University.
- (5)-(6) Not applicable.
- (7) Development and implementation of further programs will depend on a number of factors, including assessment of other models and examination of the evaluation outcomes.
- (8) Not applicable.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT- BODDINGTON AND GREENOUGH REPORTS
Crown Solicitor's Office, Advice Tabling

67. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Local Government:

Some notice has been given of this question.

- (1) In order to assure the public that the Government is acting in good faith, will the Minister table the advice from the Crown Solicitor's office which the Government claims recommends it should not release the reports into the Shires of Greenough and Boddington?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

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

- (1)-(2) In accordance with the longstanding practice of this and former governments, such advice will not be tabled. However, the Minister for Local Government earlier today during debate on a matter of public importance read from part of that advice. The extract read that in view of the Crown Solicitor's office, "... publication of Mr Kyle's report under the authority of Parliament, in accordance with section 351 of the Criminal Code following tabling, ought to be postponed until after the completion of any prosecution action taken in respect to the matters the subject of the report.

If publication were to take place at this stage it could have the potential to prejudice the fairness of those proceedings."

STATESHIPS - CALLING FOR TENDERS

Handled by Arthur Andersen; Price Waterhouse, Evaluation Report

68. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the Minister confirm that the calling of tenders for operating Stateships will be handled by Arthur Andersen and company?
- (2) Will the Minister confirm that he will not table the Price Waterhouse report into the evaluation of proposals to operate part or all of Stateships?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1)-(2) As far as I know Arthur Andersen has nothing to do with the calling of tenders for Stateships. To my knowledge the Price Waterhouse report was tabled long ago.

Hon John Halden: I am referring to the evaluation of the proposals.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: There was no Price Waterhouse report on the evaluation of Stateships.

HOSPITALS - SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER

Industrial Relations Staff Employment

69. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Health:

Some notice has been given of this question.

- (1) How many staff are employed to perform industrial relations duties at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital?
- (2) What is the cost of employing those people?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) 2.5 full time equivalents.
- (2) Salaries - \$106 137
On costs - \$12 736
Total - \$118 873 per annum.

However, as one of these positions has been vacant for much of this financial year, the total cost this year will be \$93 091, inclusive of oncosts.

HOSPITALS - SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER

Industrial Relations Commission Case, Crown Law Representation

70. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Health:

In view of the Minister's answer, why has Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital used Crown Law to represent its case in the Industrial Relations Commission this week, and what was the cost of that representation?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I have no idea.

COAL INDUSTRY TRIBUNAL - DEPUTY CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT

71. Hon DOUG WENN to the Minister for Mines:

In reference to the appointment of the deputy chairman of the Coal Industry Tribunal -

- (1) Will the Minister be advertising for suitable applicants?
- (2) When will the appointment be made?
- (3) Will the Minister give an undertaking to inform the House when that appointment is made?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

(1)-(3)

Yesterday I informed the House that I was considering the matter. The position has not changed overnight. I am still considering the matter.

SCHOOLS - MT TARCOOLA PRIMARY

Extensions Commencement

72. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Works:

Some notice has been given of this question.

- (1) Will the Minister indicate when construction will commence on the extensions to the Mt Tarcoola Primary School?
- (2) Has there has been delay in commencement of work on these extensions?
- (3) If yes to (2), will the Minister outline the nature of these delays?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1) No. The decision on awarding the contract rests with the Minister for Works.
- (2) There has been a small delay in awarding the contract - not necessarily in the commencement of work.
- (3) Tenders are currently being considered and a final decision has not yet been made.

KING, MATTHEW - CUNNINGHAM, PAT

Land Clearing Bans, Different Cases

73. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for the Environment:

Some notice has been given of this question. I refer the Minister to his answers to my questions of 31 May and 1 June regarding compensation to farmers affected by clearing bans.

- (1) In respect of the clearing bans applied to properties owned by Mr Matthew King of Kukerin and Mr Pat Cunningham of Kalgarin, which occurred in similar circumstances and at the same time, why has one been considered under the Environmental Protection Act and the other under the Soil and Land Conservation Act?
- (2) If Mr King is to receive payment for his land as a direct result of a clearing ban, and Mr Cunningham is not to receive such payment, has equity been achieved in this matter?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

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

- (1) Mr King's proposal was originally considered under the Soil and Land Conservation Act, and approved. His proposal was then referred to the Environmental Protection Authority under section 38 of the Environmental Protection Act. Following appeals against the informal level of assessment, on 22 December 1992 the then Minister for the Environment directed the Environmental Protection Authority to formally assess the proposal. After formally assessing Mr King's proposal, in July 1993 the EPA recommended not to clear the respective land. The Minister for the Environment upheld this recommendation, and offered to purchase the land under the Conservation and Land Management Act for the purposes of conserving the flora and fauna.

Mr Cunningham was not given approval to clear his land under the Soil and Land Conservation Act, due to land degradation issues.

- (2) As stated previously, Mr King's and Mr Cunningham's cases are not identical or comparable. For equity concerns to be addressed, they should be considered under the Soil and Land Conservation Act. I understand the member has received a briefing from the Minister for Primary Industry on this subject.

Hon Kim Chance: I have not.

Hon N.F. MOORE: If further clarification is required, the Minister for the Environment offers his time to brief Hon Kim Chance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT - CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS

Government Action

74. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Health representing the Attorney General:

Some notice has been given of this question.

- (1) Will the Attorney General act to allay public fears that nothing is being done about allegations of corruption in local government?
- (2) Will the Attorney General act to ensure that reports dealing with corruption are brought to the public's attention immediately, and that every effort will be made to bring those allegedly involved in corrupt practices to trial?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

(1)-(2)

The Government will always act to ensure that all allegations of corruption are investigated by the proper authorities established for that purpose, and the outcome of such investigations will be made public, as deemed appropriate. The Government will also ensure that the agencies which have this responsibility are provided with support to the fullest extent to ensure that corruption is thoroughly investigated.

CHEMISTRY CENTRE WA - COMMERCIALISATION

Redundancies or Redeployment

75. Hon TOM HELM to the Minister for Mines:

Some notice has been given of this question. With regard to the proposed redundancies at the Chemistry Centre WA, a branch of the Department of Minerals and Energy -

- (1) Will staff occupying positions made redundant be offered redundancy or redeployment?
- (2) Will staff who wish to be redeployed be allowed to take a position with a salary similar to that held before redundancy?

- (3) Will those staff redeployed be forced to take positions outside the metropolitan area?
- (4) Will those staff redeployed be given contracts and/or workplace agreements to sign, or will they be allowed to remain in the existing system of industrial cover, namely, the Public Service Act?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

- (1) Any surplus staff resulting from the commercialisation of the Chemistry Centre will be offered redeployment, and will become eligible for voluntary severance.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.
- (4) They will be allowed to remain in the existing system of industrial cover - the Public Service award.

COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY ACT - PART II A, COMPENSATION PAYMENTS FOR LAND SUBJECT TO CLEARING BANS

76. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Water Resources:

Some notice has been given of this question.

- (1) What payments have been made under part IIA of the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947 in the years 1987-88, 1988-89, 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92 for land which is subject to clearing bans?
- (2) How many hectares of land were involved in compensation payments under part IIA of the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947 in 1987-88, 1988-89, 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Local Government has provided the following reply -

- (1) The amount of compensation paid under part IIA of the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947 in each of the requested financial years is: 1987-88, \$470 000; 1988-89, \$662 000; 1989-90, \$1.327m; 1990-91, \$572 000; and 1991-92, \$482 000.
- (2) I am advised that the information requested on the number of hectares of land compensated in each of the years is not easily retrievable, but will be provided to the member at the earliest possible time.

SCHOOLS - QUINNS ROCKS PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION, MINISTER'S REFUSAL TO MEET PARENTS

77. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Education:

- (1) I have received complaints from members of the Quinns Rocks Parents and Citizens Association that, despite numerous requests, the Minister for Education has refused to meet with them. Is the Minister prepared to reassess his position and meet with this group of parents?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

(1)-(2)

I do not recall refusing to meet with anybody. That suggestion was made last night also, but it is not the case. If these people are prepared to request an appointment through the normal channels, I will talk to them.

If the matter they want to discuss is the future of a new senior high school in the area, I advise that I have made a decision that in 1997 a new school will be opened in the Clarkson area, and in 1996 students will be housed in another school in the northern suburbs area. The department does not have the resources to build two senior high schools in one year. Next year the Ballajura senior high school will open, and the following year the Warnbro senior high school, with the Clarkson school being built in 1997. The resources of the Education Department through the capital works program are such that one senior high school, plus four or five primary schools, are the limit of the capacity of the budget to provide new schools. I draw the member's attention to the fact that in the 1980s for three years no senior high schools were built. Some of the chickens are coming home to roost!

SCHOOLS - QUINNS ROCKS AREA, NEW SENIOR HIGH
Minister's Decision Reconsideration

78. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Education:

In what circumstances is the Minister prepared to reconsider the decision he has now made? I remind the Minister that he is in a position in which he can, if he so desires, allocate priorities within his budget.

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I would reconsider if there were an absolute and total blowout of student numbers, which had not been anticipated by the Education Department's planning branch. Obviously, the people in that branch are experts in determining where schools should go, and I rely on their assessment of likely growth in all suburbs. These things change and that is the reason the construction of primary schools is not decided until the end of the year, when the most up to date figures are available. I make the point that we have determined that Ballajura senior high school will open next year and it is being built now, and the Warnbro school will be built in the following year and is in the process of being planned. I do not think the people of Warnbro would be appreciative if I allocated their funds to the northern suburbs. Hon Graham Edwards could argue that with Mr Barnett and Mr Marlborough. They will make the point, as will Hon John Cowdell, that Warnbro has a very significant need for a school. We must have proper planning, and it has always been the case that schools always grow to a population level higher than the permanent population will eventually become, and there is a need to use demountable classrooms. For example, the Willetton Senior High School has 20 demountable classrooms, but it will not be the subject of any new building programs because in a few years' time the numbers will decline - as they always do - and the school will have excess capacity of a permanent nature.

Ocean Reef Senior High School will have demountables for a couple of years more than people would like, but when the Clarkson senior high school comes on stream, the numbers will drop and they will adequately fit into the permanent accommodation.

COAL INDUSTRY TRIBUNAL - DEPUTY CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT

79. Hon DOUG WENN to the Minister for Mines:

As the Minister refused to answer my question about whether he would call for applications for the position on the Coal Industry Tribunal, will he tell the House whether he has already received a number of names to be considered for that position?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I would not want Hon Doug Wenn to think that I refused to answer his

question. Basically, I said that yesterday I had answered a similar question from him. He asked whether I had made a decision - which must have been made overnight or this morning. The answer is no, I have not made a decision. The matter is still under consideration. If it is that Hon Doug Wenn has a particular person in mind whom he wants me to consider -

Hon Doug Wenn: No. I asked you whether you had called for applications.

Hon GEORGE CASH: If the member wants to say that Brian Smith should be considered, he should say it.

Hon Doug Wenn: Where are you coming from?

Hon GEORGE CASH: Does the member not want Brian Smith to get the job?

Hon Doug Wenn: He is a bit old for the job.

Hon GEORGE CASH: From time to time I am approached by members on both sides of the House regarding people who are considered competent and capable of filling various positions. I can tell Hon Doug Wenn that the matter is under consideration. As soon as I am able to make a decision on the matter, I will convey that information to the member. I have no problem with that.

Hon Doug Wenn: You could have said that in answer to my first question.

Hon GEORGE CASH: The member asked whether I had made a decision. The matter is still under consideration. I recognise that the member is upset by my response. It was not my intention to upset him. The member represents the area and knows what goes on down there; I recognise that. I would be more than happy to discuss the matter with the member. I am surprised and a little disappointed that the member has written off Brian Smith, but that is life!

FOOTROT - OUTBREAK COVER-UP, MINISTER'S MEETING

80. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

Some notice of the question has been given.

- (1) Will the Minister confirm that on 23 March 1993, he met with certain parties, both private citizens and public servants, and was advised about certain improprieties regarding a cover-up of an outbreak of footrot?
- (2) If so, will he also confirm that he failed to take any action whatsoever in relation to this advice?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Primary Industry has provided the following reply -

(1)-(2)

I have met with a number of industry, community and interested groups on this subject and the appropriate action has been taken.

EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DEPARTMENT OF - AND STATE SCHOOL TEACHERS UNION AGREEMENT, IMPLEMENTATION FAILURE

81. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Education:

Has the Minister failed to implement the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training/State School Teachers Union of WA agreement of 19 March 1992?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:
Not to my knowledge.

RAILWAYS - NORTHERN SUBURBS
Services Review

82. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Transport:

In view of the considerable inconvenience caused to public transport patrons in the northern suburbs recently, will the Minister consider ordering a review of the services to ensure that recent schedules put in place in those suburbs complement each other rather than continue with the current situation, which is creating chaos for those patrons?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Is the member referring to the Fastrak service alone or the bus and Fastrak services combined?

Hon Graham Edwards: Both.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Over recent days, problems have been caused because the Fastrak railcars have not been fully operational owing to service requirements. Consequently, those cars were off the line for some time. That situation had an impact on a number of passengers.

Hon Graham Edwards: I was talking about the scheduling. Buses cannot wait for trains, and so on.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: I wanted to ensure that the member was aware of the problem that has affected the scheduling of Fastrak trains. As to the bus schedules and connections with other bus services and trains, other than the occasional inquiry, I am not aware of major problems between the connections and the schedules. I have responded to some problems recently and they have been overcome. I will be interested to hear about specific details, if the member can provide them, at another time.

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - PROGRAMS, GOVERNMENT
WITHDRAWAL**

83. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Education:

Is the Government considering withdrawal from all employment and training programs, with the exception of technical and further education, later this year or early next year?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

That matter is being considered within the budgetary context. The member will be advised as soon as the Budget is brought down.

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PROGRAM
AND YOUTH ACCESS PROGRAM, FUNDING CUT**

84. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister be cutting funding to the employment equity program, the youth access program, or the Aboriginal Employment Economic Development Project Office, either later this year or early next year?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The matter is being considered within the budgetary context. The member will be advised as soon as the Budget is brought down.

HOSPITALS - BUNBURY

Site, Purchase Cost

85. Hon DOUG WENN to the Minister for Health:

Bearing in mind the announcement yesterday in Bunbury about the new hospital, when the Minister made the point that the preferred hospital site is at the corner of Roberts Drive and Bussell Highway, can the Minister indicate the cost of purchasing that land?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

No. We have had discussions with the Education Department and with the university but at this stage we have not arrived at a fixed price.

RAILWAYS - NORTHERN SUBURBS

Overcrowding, Government Action

86. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to comments by the Minister both in this House and outside that the fact that a number of people must stand when travelling on trains reflects the efficiency with which the Government is running the public transport system.

- (1) Will the Minister confirm that this was an unwise statement?
- (2) Can the Minister also advise what action will be taken to overcome the problem of crowded trains?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

That was not a misleading statement -

Hon Graham Edwards: I said unwise.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Or unwise. It is a fact that the number of people using Fastrak is far higher than the anticipated number. The only other comment to make is much the same as my previous answer: Over a couple of days the situation was compounded by the need for Fastrak cars to be serviced. There are more vehicles on the Mitchell Freeway than prior to the implementation of the Fastrak system. More people are travelling from the northern suburbs to and from and through the city compared with a year or two ago. More demand is made on the system during peak hours and that is when the problem occurs. Westrail will monitor the situation to determine what should be done in future in relation to putting more railcars on the northern line. Other areas are growing at a rapid rate as well, but the situation is continuing to be assessed.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS - NEWMAN

Education Department, Consultations

87. Hon TOM HELM to the Minister for Education:

In view of the fact that the Water Authority may not be taking up the offer from BHP for the waste water treatment plant at Newman, has the Education Department been consulted? The Water Authority may choose to go to the three pond system - a similar system to the one used in Karratha and Hedland and other country towns, with all the inherent, real or imagined, health problems associated with watering the school grounds in those towns. Can the Minister inform the House whether he has been consulted or whether he will ask to be consulted on the matter?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I am not sure of the answer that I can give because there was a

combination of questions in one sentence. I do not know the system that exists in Newman at the moment. I have not been advised. However, I will seek advice and inform the member accordingly.

RAILWAYS - AUSTRALIND
Fares Increase

88. Hon DOUG WENN to the Minister for Transport:

Following the recent announcement of the increase in fares for public transport, can the Minister indicate whether there will be an increase in fares on the *Australind*?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Yes, there has been. Country fares have increased by 5 per cent.

WESTRAIL - BUS SERVICES
Fares Increase

89. Hon DOUG WENN to the Minister for Transport:

Does that increase refer also to the Westrail bus fares?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Yes, it does.
