

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 18 October 1988

THE SPEAKER (Mr Barnett) took the Chair at 2.15 pm, and read prayers.

STATEMENT - BY THE SPEAKER

Deputy Leader of the Opposition - Criticism of Speaker's Actions

THE SPEAKER: I regret that I find it necessary to refer to an item in last Friday's *The West Australian* concerning question time in the House on Thursday last.

The part of the article which particularly concerns me is the final statement, which reads -

"The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Court, said Mr Barnett's actions were disgraceful."

I would expect that all members are aware of the impropriety involved in criticising the Speaker's actions in a casual way. Standing Orders and the practices of this House make it quite clear that if a member is desirous of challenging or formally criticising actions of the Speaker, this should only be done by way of substantive motion; casual criticism of the Chair during debate is not permitted.

It is even more seriously regarded should this casual criticism take place outside the House; for instance, in the Press. Members should not feel free to walk away from this place making complaints and allegations whose only proper forum is the House itself. I regret that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition apparently saw fit to make certain statements criticising me to the Press. I can only assume that this was done in the heat of the moment and without consideration of the full import of what was involved.

Under these circumstances I am convinced that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would be more than willing to accept my invitation to apologise.

Mr COURT: I apologise, Mr Speaker.

PETITION

Police - Truancy Patrol

MR CUNNINGHAM (Balga) [2.18 pm]: I have a petition couched in the following terms -

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

The Truancy Patrol that has been operating from the Warwick Police Station, covering the suburbs of Marangaroo, Balga, Girrawheen, Koondoola, Nollamara, Alexander Heights, Wangara and Landsdale is considered to have been a great success in the community's fight against crime, since its inception in March this year. With a 20 per cent reduction in the number of daylight breaking and enterings committed in the first four weeks.

The SPEAKER: Order! The level of background conversation is far too high. I am having difficulty hearing the petition being read and those people who have taken the trouble to petition this Parliament have a right to be heard.

Mr CUNNINGHAM: The petition continues as follows -

We, the undersigned, therefore humbly request the Government of Western Australia to establish the pilot Truancy Patrol on a permanent basis.

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

The petition bears 616 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 80.]

PETITION

World Heritage Listing - Shark Bay

MR MASLEN (Gascoyne) [2.22 pm]: My petition is couched in the following terms -

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

We, the undersigned, respectfully sheweth -

That it is our fervent hope that in view of

- (1) promises made by the State Government to the people of Shark Bay;
- (2) the strong opposition by the people of Shark Bay and other citizens to the World Heritage listing of Shark Bay; and
- (3) the urgent need for there to be a united stand by the Government and the Opposition in the State Parliament to convince the Commonwealth to withdraw from its attempt to interfere in Western Australia by imposing World Heritage listing in Shark Bay;

That all Honourable Members of the House will support the motion of which notice was given in the House by the Honourable Member for Cottesloe on Tuesday, 23 August 1988, a copy of which was attached to this form of petition at the time of its signing.

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

The petition bears 17 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 81.]

PETITION

The Last Temptation of Christ - Banning

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch - Leader of the Opposition) [2.23 pm]: I have a petition for presentation to Parliament, expressed in the following terms -

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

We, the Undersigned, wish to express our disapproval of the movie film "The Last Temptation of Christ" and call upon the State Government to ban the film from screening in Western Australia, due to the film's blasphemous portrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

The petition bears 492 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 82.]

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND ASSISTANCE AMENDMENT BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Troy (Minister for Labour), and transmitted to the Council.

ACTS AMENDMENT (RACING INDUSTRY) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 15 September.

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) (2.25 pm): It is appropriate that I take something of a part in this Bill because it involves the racing and riding of horses. With the utmost humility, I am happy to announce to the House that last Sunday in the Lesmurdie marathon I was the leader of the team which won that event.

Several members: Congratulations!

Mr THOMPSON: I thought that I would start my comments by letting members know that at least I can stay on a horse for 10 kilometres, the distance involved in the marathon in which I participated last Sunday.

Mr Thomas: Did you thank the horse?

Mr THOMPSON: Yes. I am happy to say that the horse pulled up sound and well, and that he will be going on to carry me in the 16 kilometre Blackwood marathon journey in a fortnight's time. I hope that I will be able to report that the team in which I participate will thoroughly grub the team entered in the competition by my colleagues opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! I know that it is my duty to ensure that the member is allowed to have his say but I cannot agree with the last statement.

Mr Burkett: You will ride like the true champion that I know you are.

Mr THOMPSON: Exactly.

An Opposition Member: Is it true that when you go over fences, you put your feet on the fence and lift the horse over?

Mr THOMPSON: Yes, I do that.

Mr THOMPSON: I understand that the Minister for Agriculture is part of the Labor Party team in the forthcoming marathon. Can he tell us who are the Labor Party participants in the competition?

Mr Grill: I think the Speaker might be one.

Mr Burkett: Johnny Miller is riding the horse; his son, Mark, is swimming, Shane is riding the bike and Julian is running.

Mr THOMPSON: As far as the Liberal Party is concerned, this Bill is being dealt with as a non party Bill which is traditional with legislation that involves gambling, liquor and a few other issues which have very significant social consequences. I am not able to state precisely the attitude of all members on this side of the House.

Mr Peter Dowding: What is the attitude of your party? You are the party's spokesman.

Mr THOMPSON: I will let the Premier know my attitude; he will know the attitude of the party when we come to the vote.

Mr Peter Dowding: We will then have 21 different attitudes.

Mr THOMPSON: A number of members will express their point of view on the range of issues covered in this legislation.

Mr Peter Dowding: The member would get a fright if he ever came to Government. Seventeen different views would come out of Cabinet.

Mr THOMPSON: We have a little more freedom on our side of the House with respect to a whole range of issues, this one included. It is interesting to hear the comments coming from the Government benches. That is the party which did not accept our point of view on the question of random breath testing, but was quite happy to accept the vote of three members of the conservative party in another place when they crossed the floor and allowed that legislation to pass.

Mr Carr: To get you off the hook.

Mr THOMPSON: No, to put you on the hook.

Mr Wilson: I would have thought you would have joined them too. I am a bit disappointed in you.

Mr THOMPSON: I am sure the Minister is. Some time ago the Government instituted an inquiry into the racing industry. That inquiry was, to a large extent, to get the Government off the hook because of some significant decisions it made early in its life which had a dramatic impact on racing and trotting in this State. One of the things the Government did was to increase the amount of money that it has traditionally taken from the racing industry. The Government increased from six per cent to seven per cent the money it took from the profit of the operations of the Totalisator Agency Board. That decision had a dramatic impact on the funding of racing and trotting in Western Australia, although it took some years for that impact to bite, and is one reason why racing and trotting have felt the financial pinch.

Another decision made by the Government which has had an impact on both codes, but, to a lesser extent on racing in later times than on trotting, was the establishment of the casino. The casino has, as predicted by speakers on this side of the House, increased the competition for the gambling dollar in our community to the detriment, obviously, of the other activities where legalised gambling may take place. Trotting has particularly felt the pinch from the impact of the establishment of the casino, and continues to do so. Although racing initially felt the impact, in recent times that industry has been able to improve its financial position. Initially, there was a significant downturn in the patronage of races and the activity of TAB shops in favour of the casino. For a time a substantial number of gamblers chose to go to the casino rather than the races, but that has settled down to a large extent more recently. The figures which are available show that the crowds are starting to return to racing, but that is not the case with trotting.

Trotting has felt severely the impact of the activities of the casino, and it is not hard to understand why that is so: They operate in the same geographical area, and only the river separates the Western Australian Trotting Association headquarters at Gloucester Park and the casino. Even when trotting is held at Richmond Raceway the distance is not significant enough to weigh in favour of the trots. What has happened repeatedly since the casino was established is that people who want to go out for a night's gambling choose to go to the casino rather than the trots. Although we have a very favourable climate, there are many months of the year when it is better to be indoors at night than out of doors. In the high summer a night at Gloucester Park can be very pleasant, but in autumn, winter certainly, and spring the evenings can be cool and it can be uncomfortable out of doors. There has been a significant impact on the attendances at the trots because of the existence of the casino.

Mrs Beggs: Is it only because of the existence of the casino?

Mr THOMPSON: I am not prepared to say that it is only because of the casino, but the Minister would have to concede that the existence of the casino has had a devastating impact on the trots.

Mr Stephens: Many other things have as well, though. Very definitely.

Mr THOMPSON: Many other things have as well, I would think.

Mrs Beggs: What about the downturn in attendance at the trotting meetings, and the downturn in revenue generated by country trotting where there is no casino?

Mr THOMPSON: I am not able to answer that, and I am not sure if that is the case. If the Minister says that is the case I would have to accept it, but I am speaking specifically about the metropolitan area and there is no denying the fact that the existence of the casino had a dramatic impact on both codes initially, and continues to have an impact on trotting. That is the second of two decisions which the Government has made which have resulted in significantly less funding being available to racing and trotting.

That decision has forced the administrators of both codes to significantly lower the amount of stake money which is offered at race and trot meetings. Western Australia, because of some very innovative moves by both the trotting and galloping administrations, became a mecca for those codes. Western Australia led the way with purses for racing and trotting for a fair period. A lot of the credit for that can go to people like Harry Boulton and John

Roberts, together with a number of people close to the administration of racing, who had the courage to offer high stakes and attract the best horses in Australia, particularly to our summer carnival. In recent years there has not been the opportunity to do that because of the limitation by the Government on the funds flowing into racing and trotting. There has been a substantial reduction in the purses offered at races. By contrast, in the Eastern States - I speak particularly of racing, but I understand the case is the same for trotting - purses have been increased.

Mrs Beggs: That is not true. Western Australia has the highest stakes, and has more revenue from trotting than any other state in Australia. That is totally wrong.

Mr THOMPSON: The relativity between Western Australia and the Eastern States has changed. It may well be that trotting has the highest stakes, but the relativity has changed. In order to attract horses from the Eastern States, pretty sizable purses have to be offered. The gallopers know that, which is why they have significantly increased the purse for such races as the Perth Cup, initiated the Australian Derby in Perth, and attracted the best horses in Australia to our summer carnival. In recent times they have not been in a position to make that offer, and consequently the quality of our racing has declined. The Government cannot shrink from the responsibility that it has in this respect.

By its actions, it has created a situation where racing in particular in this State has gone from being the cream of Australian racing, if one takes away the Melbourne and Caulfield Cups and one or two other Eastern States' principal races, to a situation where it is considered not worth competing in by Eastern States competitors. It is not the fault of the administration of racing and trotting in this State; it is the fault of the Government because it decided irresponsibly that it would grab a lump of the money that had hitherto flowed to racing and trotting. It did not do that to bring itself into line with what was happening in the Eastern States because, even after this Bill is passed and we return to the situation where six per cent of TAB profits go to racing and trotting, the Government will still get far more out of TAB funds than does any other Government in Australia. The Government, therefore, cannot deny its responsibility in this matter.

Mr Read: Are you suggesting that trotting has suffered that fate because of the purses offered in the Eastern States? Fred Kersley, who knows a bit about trots, said recently that Eastern States' trainers would not bring their horses over here because the standard of racing is so good that they know they do not stand a chance.

Mr THOMPSON: That may be one person's opinion, but a more significant reason is that it does not pay them because the purses here are not lucrative enough to attract them.

Mr Read: Have a look at the stakes.

Mr THOMPSON: I am not saying that the stakes are not higher than the stakes in the Eastern States; I am saying they are relatively less now than previously. I do not know what the distance is from Perth to Sydney but the distance from Sydney to Perth and back is double that. I can relate my remarks to equestrian events in which I am involved. Recently the Australian Championship three day event was held at Werribee Park in Melbourne.

Mr Wilson: Which the Government was very generous in supporting.

Mr THOMPSON: Yes, it was, but it needed to be because it was extremely costly. Ten horses from Western Australia went to compete at Werribee Park. They competed very successfully. Clayton Fredericks won one of the classes. William Wordsworth, a son of a member of the Legislative Council, finished fifth in the open class with another Western Australian finishing eighth. This was against people of Olympic standard. We should all be very proud of their success. However, it is extremely expensive to travel to those events. By comparison, when we hold an event here we battle to get people to bring their horses across the Nullarbor. Western Australia has the richest show jumping circuit in the Southern Hemisphere, but only a handful of horses come from the Eastern States to compete. By contrast, considerably more competitors go to the Eastern States to compete. They need to do so to keep up with world standards.

That should give members an indication of what is happening in the racing and trotting industry. We need to maintain high stakes - higher than the Eastern States - to lure the Eastern States' trainers and owners to bring their horses to Western Australia. History will show that that is what happened for some time. However, as a result of the actions of this

Government, that situation changed to the detriment, not only of the elite of the industry, but also it impacted on the bread and butter industries to the point where people involved in racing and trotting were battling to make a reasonable living out of it.

Those are the reasons that this Government was forced to institute this inquiry. Some people were actually bleeding and the racing and the trotting industry is a very important unit in our economy. When racing and trotting people hurt, the people who produce the feed and the people involved in a myriad of other industries also hurt. Those people were hurting to the extent that the Government was forced to institute this inquiry and, after the inquiry had been established, it was rumoured that drugging of horses in the racing industry was rife. The Premier of the day said that he would expand the terms of reference to enable the inquirers to look at that facet of the industry. I have happily gleaned from the report that there is no evidence of drugs being used in the industry. That puts to rest many of the rumours that were circulating in this town.

Mr Trenorden: Rocket Racer was never a part of the inquiry.

Mr THOMPSON: I am not suggesting that the horse was. However, it was because of that that the Premier of the day announced that the terms of reference would be broadened to enable the inquirers to look at the drugs in racing question.

Mr Trenorden: It was never done. It did not inquire into that.

Mr THOMPSON: It may not have, but it had a brief to do so. I suggest it did not make a significant report on that facet of the industry because it is relatively clean.

I pay tribute to the administrations of racing and trotting in Western Australia. It is my personal opinion that the Western Australian Turf Club and the Western Australian Trotting Association administer their respective codes as well, if not better, than administrations elsewhere in Australia. I think it is a great tribute to them that there was no condemnation in the report of the way the sport has been administered.

Mr Trenorden: That is a joke.

Mr THOMPSON: Will the member tell me where it has condemned the administration? There have been suggestions for change. People in the industry have suggested that it would be better if the industry were structured differently.

Mr Evans: What about the bashing of the steward?

Mr THOMPSON: That has been dealt with by the police. Is the member suggesting that the bashing of the steward resulted from a decline on the part of the administration of racing, because that is not what I am saying? I am not condoning that by any stretch of the imagination.

Mr Evans: All is not lily white in the industry.

Mr THOMPSON: No, but we are talking about a very colourful sport. Horse racing will also attract some very shady people and some very colourful people; that is the mystique of the game. That is why people go. Anyone who goes to the races and expects everything to be fair and aboveboard lives in cloud cuckoo land. As far as it is possible for racing and trotting to be administered on a fair and equitable basis, that has been done in this State. It is because it has been that I pay tribute to the racing and trotting committees which have operated in this State over the last couple of decades. It does not mean that there are not some people in the racing and trotting world who have some complaint about the administration of the industry. Regardless of who administers racing and trotting in Western Australia there will always be complaints because that is the nature of the industry.

I refer now to what has been included in this Bill as a result of the Quin inquiry. In fact, I think that if people in the racing and trotting industries, particularly those people associated with the racing code, read the recommendations that flowed from that inquiry and compared them with what is included in the legislation they would have to scratch their heads and say, "What is going on here?" because the legislation does not substantially reflect the recommendations of the Quin inquiry. A number of significant recommendations are missing from the Bill.

As the Opposition spokesman on racing and gaming, I was forced into making a public statement before the recommendations of the inquiry were released. What happened was that

the Minister and the people close to her were leaking information to the Press, and that generated a fair amount of comment. A number of people telephoned me to ask my view about the Racing Industry Development Authority. At that time I did not know there was anything called RIDA. I then put out a statement that it was my belief that the Western Australian Turf Club was well administered in this State and I would not favour transferring the control of racing from the existing system of administration to RIDA. It is a view which I still hold and which I will discuss shortly. Even today there are people in racing circles who think that the transfer of the control of racing from the present Turf Club to RIDA forms part of this legislation. It does not.

Mrs Beggs: I have not met anyone who has said that. We have announced that this is a transition.

Mr THOMPSON: I am glad the Minister has walked away from that recommendation of the inquiry and I hope she continues to stay away from it.

Mrs Beggs: I have not walked away from it.

Mr THOMPSON: If the Minister has not walked away from it, why is it not included in this Bill? If the Minister were dinkum about accepting the recommendations of the inquiry she would include it in this legislation. I think she secretly shares the view I hold. The Minister, in her second reading speech, said that the racing and trotting industries have only 12 months in which to clean up their act, otherwise she will impose RIDA.

I do not think that the racing and trotting administrations have been squeaky clean in their relationship with their country cousins.

Mr Trenorden: That is an understatement.

Mr THOMPSON: I suppose it is a matter of degree. However, it will not be a situation which she will have the opportunity to address because in 12 months I will be the Minister and I will make the decision. I am glad she has not included the RIDA provision in this legislation because it would be detrimental to the racing industry.

I know there are people who are deeply concerned about the way in which racing and trotting is administered and that people in the country feel they are being discriminated against. There may well be some justification for that concern, and I hope that the administration in each of the two codes will address that concern. Regardless of which body is put in charge of racing and trotting there will always be people in those industries who will be dissatisfied with the way they are administered. Under the present system of administration, avenues are open to people involved in those two industries to do something about the situation. The constituency for the Western Australian Trotting Association's committee is 800 people and in the case of the Western Australian Turf Club approximately 2 500 people elect its committee. I put it to this House and to the industry that it is far easier to influence the relatively small number of people involved in decisions about how to elect a committee than it is to influence a Government. Should RIDA be implemented, the situation will be that the Minister of the day will appoint the people who will constitute that body. It may well be the Government will make some very wise decisions and put racing in the hands of very competent people from the industry. However, Governments quite often make very bad mistakes. If we had an authority governing racing and trotting, how would people in the industry aggrieved with decisions made by the Government-appointed body air their grievances?

Mr Trenorden: No-one is suggesting that should happen.

Mr THOMPSON: It is suggested in the report.

Mr Trenorden: Rubbish! Show me where it is addressed in the report.

Mr THOMPSON: Who will appoint RIDA?

Mr Trenorden: The opposition to RIDA is in the report. RIDA is not the body that will govern racing. It will deal with planning.

Mr THOMPSON: If the member for Avon falls for that, he will fall for anything. I suggest that he consider what is happening with greyhound racing. A very competent body was established to govern greyhound racing. I ask the member whether he is suggesting that under the chairmanship of Sir Desmond O'Neil, greyhound racing was not well administered by the committee.

Mr Read: It has turned right around and it is now making money.

Mr THOMPSON: It was competently administered by a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Desmond O'Neil. This Government has allowed the situation to develop where greyhound racing is in the hands of one individual.

Mr Burkett: It has never operated better. It was on the brink of disaster.

Mr THOMPSON: For the sake of the argument I will concede that Mr Smith has dragged greyhound racing from the brink of disaster. What would have happened had he been less than competent? Indeed, some people in the industry say he is less than competent. I have had a queue of people come to my office claiming that greyhound racing is going down the gurgler because of that man's administration.

Mr Burkett: It is not. It needs another training track and that is what they are all saying.

Mr THOMPSON: I have had the proposition put to me that they need another two or three training tracks. Indeed, one person who wants to establish a training track in the electorate of Avon cannot get Mr Smith to agree to it.

Mr Burken: You know it is true and I know it is true - they need another training track. The industry has never operated better in Western Australia than under the present administration.

Mr THOMPSON: I advise the member for Scarborough that it operated far better under a committee chaired by Sir Desmond O'Neil. The industry was happy and contented and it worked well. This Government was not prepared to continue Sir Desmond O'Neil's appointment. It did not even write to him to thank him for his contribution to the industry. It allowed his appointment to lapse and it did the same to the rest of the committee. All the Government has done is to appoint an executive officer, and I put it to the House that he is operating illegally.

To come back to the point I was making, it may well be that the Government -

Mr Burkett: If he was doing such a good job, how much money were you pouring into the industry? Certainly a lot more than \$250 000.

Mr THOMPSON: That is not the case at all. Sir Desmond O'Neil had built up an investment fund of about \$400 000 or \$500 000. That has all been frittered away. My friendly foe from Scarborough is trying desperately to prevent me from making the point that I want to make. It may well be that the Government will appoint someone to administer racing who will do the right thing and do it effectively, and that would be all right. However, from time to time Governments appoint people who are not acceptable to those in the industries they are set up to control. What would happen if a body which was set up to control or administer the racing industry did not have the confidence of the industry? What do people in the industry do to change that situation? Under the present situation, the Western Australian Trotting Association would lobby a constituency of 800 and the Western Australian Turf Club would lobby 2 500 people. If the body were appointed by the Government, its constituency would be over a million.

After people in the industry give some thought to the prospect of having their industry administered by a Government body, as distinct from a body drawn from the membership of the respective clubs, they will come to understand that they are better served by the present situation. The devil you know is better than the devil you do not know. I accept that the point of view I expressed is not shared by a substantial number of people associated with both racing and trotting, particularly country interests. I have received many letters from people in the country advocating our support for the establishment of a racing industry development authority. Such people saw that as a means of getting redress for what they believed to be poor administration by the two bodies which currently administer the respective codes.

I would be keen for the Minister to tell me whether it is intended in the life of the Parliament to introduce legislation to establish an independent appeals tribunal, which was one of the significant recommendations in the task force's report. If she does not intend introducing the legislation in this Parliament, why not? I have always felt that appeals against the decisions of the racing stewards should be made to the body which employs them. I have confidence in the stewards who administer the sports in the State at present. I think they do a good job.

It is a difficult job. When considering the powers given to stewards and comparing them with those given to other enforcement bodies in our democratic society, I cannot help wondering how we ever put such powers into the hands of individuals. However, when I consider the nature of the industry or sport that they attempt to regulate and some of the characters involved in it, I come to accept that the powers they have are not excessive and are necessary for them to be able to keep reasonable control over the industry. There probably have been some miscarriages of justice, which may well have been compounded by the appeal process which is presently in existence. That is why the report's recommendation to establish an independent appeals tribunal is a very sound one. The recommendation is universally accepted by people in the industry. I know several committee men who are very uncomfortable about having to sit on appeals against decisions made by the stewards whom they are responsible for employing.

Mrs Beggs: The trotting and greyhound industries both have independent tribunals. They don't want statutory approval for them. If it was of real concern, they could implement them straight away. They don't have to wait for legislation. There is no time to get legislation drafted in time for this session.

Mr THOMPSON: The Minister has indicated that there is no way that legislation will come before the Parliament this session. From the time I heard her second reading speech, I knew that would be one of the recommendations of the inquiry that would not be implemented.

Mrs Beggs: That's absolutely incorrect. That's the next part of the legislation.

Mr THOMPSON: Why wasn't it included in this legislation?

Mrs Beggs: The member would know better than I the pressures on parliamentary draftspeople. It was impossible to go through all the complexities in the inquiry's report. The things that the Western Australian Turf Club and the Western Australian Trotting Association wanted most were the financial provisions, because they desperately needed financial relief. That's exactly what we have given them.

Mr THOMPSON: I will accept that there was a desperate need for financial relief. To that extent, the inquiry got the Government off the hook. The Government grabbed the recommendations that suited it and ignored the others. I simply do not accept that there was insufficient time for the Bill to include a provision for the establishment of an independent appeals tribunal. I give the Minister an absolute guarantee that the moment we become the Government we will move to establish that body.

Mrs Beggs: We have given that guarantee.

Mr THOMPSON: The Government has given the guarantee; it is easy to make a promise.

Mrs Beggs: That's what you are doing.

Mr THOMPSON: I am not the Government. If I were the Government, it would not be a promise; it would be a reality. However, for the time being members opposite are in Government and they have not carried out their responsibilities. The inquiry was instituted to get the Government off the hook. The thing that really annoys me is that a lot of people in the racing industry really do not understand that they have been conned. That was the con of this inquiry. It was just a smokescreen.

Mrs Beggs: I think you are underestimating the industry by saying that they have been conned. That is an absolute joke and it is a real insult to the administration.

Mr THOMPSON: I called a meeting of representatives of all the associations involved in racing, which took place a couple of weeks ago; I produced a copy of the Bill and told them what was in the legislation and what was not in the legislation with regard to the recommendations of the inquiry. Most of them were shaking their heads and wondering what the inquiry was about. Blind Freddie could see that the Government needed to correct the financial plight besetting the codes in this State. It was not necessary to hold an inquiry to work out that there was a problem as far as funding was concerned; it was as plain as the nose on one's face, and the industry knew that was the case. The industry hoped that a number of other recommendations, which addressed matters which it perceived to be problems, would be picked up by the Government. I hope that the people in the industry will come to understand that this Government dipped its sticky fingers into the cookie jar to fund extravagant election promises made when it sought office in 1983; and that because of some

rather unusual activity in recent times the cookie jar had more in it than previously. Therefore, the Government has been able to give back to the racing and trotting industries money which it had virtually stolen from them during those years. I hope that people in racing and trotting will understand that that is the score. It is interesting to note that when the task force report was due to be released snippets of the report were conveyed to the community. Some people were privy to that report - although the Opposition was not - and all sorts of speculation took place. I do not know who was responsible for the strategy of the leaks that took place, but I think to a large extent it worked in the Government's favour because there are still people in the industry who do not understand just what has happened.

Mr Read: Do you agree with the statement that this report was primarily dealing with drug problems in the racing industry?

Mr THOMPSON: It included that aspect, but initially the inquiry was set up to look at two aspects, one of which was the funding arrangements.

Mr Read: Your views are divergent from those of your leader.

Mr THOMPSON: I know what the member for Mandurah is getting at; my views are no different from those of the Leader of the Opposition, but I have perhaps gone into a little more depth than he has. Certainly a number of people associated with the trotting industry believed that the reason for the inquiry was the suggestion that the drugging of horses in the racing industry was rife. That is why people associated with trotting decided to stand aloof from the inquiry. For whatever reason the trotting industry decided not to participate in the inquiry, I believe it was a mistake on its part. Indeed, many people associated with trotting today concede that it was a mistake.

Mr Read: The administration made that decision and it was wrong. It was bad administration.

Mr THOMPSON: It was a mistake, and I will not say that it was as a result of bad administration. Faced with the belief that the principal reason for the establishment of the inquiry was the drugging of horses in the racing industry, and bearing in mind that the trotting industry was relatively clean in that regard, why should it want to be part of an inquiry into that issue? People in the trotting industry are prepared to concede that it was a mistake not to participate; but mistakes will occur from time to time.

To a large extent the whole inquiry has been futile. However, I pay tribute to the three gentlemen who carried out the inquiry; they have been praised by many people in racing for doing a very thorough job, and they have also been criticised by people in the trotting industry, who feel that they missed out in this respect. Many people feel that the recommendation made by the inquiry - which is the subject of this legislation - to change the formula on which the TAB funds are to be distributed between racing and trotting to a 70:30 split, is an equitable arrangement. However, it is a simplistic formula that does not take into account the factors which impact on trotting. That is why I repeat that when the Liberal Opposition becomes the Government it will institute an inquiry to ascertain the impact of these financial arrangements on the trotting industry. If it is shown that the effect has been inappropriate, a Liberal Government will take steps to correct the matter. I am a political realist and I am aware that this legislation will pass the Legislative Council because of the numbers in that House; 16 Government members will support the legislation, and of the remaining 17 members I can think of a couple who will support the Government's legislation because they are very pro the racing industry. One of those members is Hon Philip Lockyer who has made it absolutely clear that he will support the 70:30 split proposed in the legislation. It will become a fact of life; but the other fact remains that as a result of this legislation initially the trotting industry will be much better off. It will start to feel the bite of the change in financial arrangements only after the passage of time.

Mr Read: If it does not improve.

Mr THOMPSON: Yes, and I very much doubt whether it will improve.

Mr Read: That says something about the administration.

Mr THOMPSON: No, it does not say anything about the administration; it says something about a number of matters which have an impact on the industry. Initially the trotting industry will be better off as a result of this legislation, but as it moves towards the 30 per

cent take, away from the present 40 per cent return from the TAB funds, it will start to feel the pinch. By that time the Liberal Party will be in Government and it will institute an inquiry.

Mr Wilson: How long will that be?

Mr THOMPSON: It will not be too long; an election will be held between 4 February and 11 March.

Mr Read: You have not checked with the Leader of the Opposition lately.

Mr THOMPSON: When members have been around this place as long as I have, they will know these things. I am half way through a long and illustrious parliamentary career; I have been in this place for 18 years.

Mrs Beggs: The people in the trotting industry have been offered an inquiry; the Government will institute one immediately if the industry wants it. However, there does not seem to be any consensus about whether they want that to happen.

Mr THOMPSON: The one thing that people in trotting are absolutely certain of is that the Minister is doing them in the eye. The Minister and I were guests of the Trotting Association at its annual dinner dance. The Minister went to the dais to make a presentation. She had obviously felt the chill wind on the back of her neck all night because when she spoke she said that had she been in possession of all the facts when she took her recommendation to Cabinet they might have done something else but that Cabinet had made a decision and her hands were tied.

Mrs Beggs: That is absolutely incorrect. I said that sometimes one is in a position where one has to make judgments or decisions. I said, "I am in that position and when I made the decision I had all the information available at my disposal. I made the decision. I did not expect it to meet the approval of everyone." That is exactly what I said.

Mr THOMPSON: I will not argue with the Minister.

Mrs Beggs: The member had had too many glasses of red wine, that was his problem.

Mr THOMPSON: I did not. I will not suggest that the Minister is not telling the truth, but I bet she is glad that no recording was made, because my understanding of what she said was that had she been in possession of all the facts another decision might have been made. She appealed to the people in trotting to "get in there and have a go". The Minister said that she had the greatest respect for those people, that they got in and had a go, and that if they finally failed and could not make it they could come back to the Government which would make sure that trotting did not go down the gurgler. That was the message from the Minister to the people present on that night. That may have satisfied some people and allowed her to get away from the dais without losing her scalp, but when this legislation starts to impact on the industry I am sure that they will not be happy about what has happened.

I make clear that when we are in Government we will institute an inquiry to establish just what has been the impact on trotting of the changed funding arrangements and, if it is shown that hardship is being encountered, we will change things. The National Party has an amendment on the Notice Paper in relation to another matter I have mentioned, the effect being that the Government would take less TAB funds than it is, with the aim of bringing it more into line with what is happening in the other States; the philosophy behind the amendment is that if the Government were taking less there would not be the conflict between the two codes. It is a sad thing that this Government has pitted one code against the other. People who have lived a harmonious existence - and there has always been great rapport between trotting and racing people - have been pitted against one another by this Government and they are in turmoil. That is a sad thing for those two industries. People who meet socially on a regular basis now find themselves in conflict because of the way in which the Government has handled this matter.

I summarise that the inquiry was instituted because the Government found that there was a problem in relation to funding, particularly for racing. However, it was a problem confronting both the trotting and racing industries. They had something to regret in that respect because those two industries got into trouble because of two decisions made early in the life of the Burke Government, the first to increase the amount of money taken from TAB profits, and the second to establish the casino. I was one on this side of the House who was

not opposed to the establishment of the casino. It has proved to many people that there was a demand for it. The back street, shady gambling that was going on has been cleaned up and there is more opportunity for police to be effective in that area than was the case previously. Western Australians, by their actions, have overwhelmingly supported the casino. I have been in the place only two or three times but was amazed at the number of people present. It is not the sort of place that I would encourage people to attend as a matter of course, but I think it is good for people who go out to dinner to call into the casino to rub shoulders with some interesting characters, to have a bet and to go on their way. However, I do not condone or support the habitual gambler.

Mr Cowan: Are you one of the people who goes out to dinner and calls in, or one of the interesting people?

Mr THOMPSON: I am one of the interesting people. I do not support people becoming habitual gamblers. Many people were gravitating to shady gambling places around Perth or going to the races to do their gambling. I think, to a large extent, the clientele of the casino are well behaved and it is something that is accepted by the community. Also, it has been a good employment generator and in many respects has done well. However, it has impacted on the racing and trotting industries and for that reason the Government was obliged to do something to clear up the funding for the two codes. That was the reason that an inquiry was instituted. The Government has walked away from many of the major recommendations of that inquiry and it will be judged by the people associated with racing and trotting in this State as having abrogated its responsibility.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [3.27 pm]: The National Party has a clear position in relation to this Bill. However, before I get to the heart of my comments I point out that this Bill has caused my telephone to ring more than has any other Bill introduced since I have been a member of this Parliament. I believe we should go over the history of why this Bill is before the House. It started with the scandal and controversy surrounding the industry some time ago. If members remember, at that time there was the bashing of the Chairman of Stewards; certain race horses staggered over the finishing line and caused quite a bit of controversy; there was use of the drug elephant juice; the Western Australian Turf Club continued to make promises to country clubs and caused a rift between those country clubs and itself, remaining aloof and unsympathetic to the rest of the industry at a time of crisis; and there was a decline in the industry which decline had started in 1983, and had become well established by 1986-87 and which was sparked off by a one per cent increase in the turnover tax in 1983.

Over those few years before the inquiry the Turf Club sold many of its assets in an attempt to remain on top of its financial situation. Race horse registrations were falling; industry professionals were making statements about not receiving a reasonable income; attendances at race clubs were falling; there was a substantial public perception of corruption; yearling sales were down 22 per cent, which had several ramifications on the breeding industry, which was in a state of panic because if that decline had continued the industry would have been wiped out; there was public criticism of individuals who were members, were on the committees and also owned horses; there were criticisms that it was too easy for individuals to gain racing licenses; and there were problems with the appeal system.

I am not suggesting that that is a complete list of the problems that brought about the Quin inquiry. I am sure that no-one would argue with the statement that the Minister received absolute support from the industry, the people involved in the inquiry, and from this Parliament in relation to that inquiry. I was involved at hearings on several occasions when the task force met. I had then, and have now, nothing but admiration for the three people involved on that task force inquiry. I will read a quote which appeared in the Pinjarra Race Club Annual Report, statement of accounts of 1987-88, which appeared after the report of that inquiry became available and which will give the House an indication of what an important provincial club thought about this report. It states -

We are unanimous in the belief that the Report should be accepted in full. Indeed, acceptance or otherwise of the Report could be likened to 'Custers Last Stand' for non-Metropolitan T.A.B Clubs.

This is a very important statement, which clearly describes the position of non Totalisator Agency Board clubs and, in cameo, country clubs. They are in severe trouble, not only

because of the financial situation but because the Western Australian Turf Club refused to take up its responsibility towards country clubs. I will read a couple of quotations from the response received from the Government, as indicated in a media statement of 22 June 1988 from the Premier, where he said -

"The Government agrees with the thrust of the Task Force recommendations but they are too complex and too interdependent to be introduced quickly," he said.

Anybody who has read the report will know that is a lot of rubbish. The report is clear and simple to follow, and its recommendations could have been introduced by now without there being any problems. There is no complexity in the recommendations of the report. The Government is really saying that its mates at WA Incorporated were against it. The statement says also that -

"The report made it clear that increasing amounts of money from Government would not solve all the industry's problems.

I find that a fairly unusual statement because most of the problems of the industry relate to over taxation. This State taxes the industry at a far higher rate than does any other State. What the Premier means is that the industry is not going to get its money back. There is a clear indication in the statement that the Premier believes it is the Government's money. However, that money is generated by the industry, and it is not the taxing of profits which gives the Government its money, it is the taxing of turnover, which has nothing to do with profits. The Government is taking an arbitrary percentage of money out of the system. The Quin report has a far better solution: The Government should be entitled to a percentage of the profits. The report says that percentage should be 50 per cent, and my party believes that is the correct solution to the problem.

There is further on in the media statement a quote from Mrs Beggs, where she said -

... the establishment of an independent Racing Industry Development Authority, as recommended by the report, had been deferred until the complex financial implications were studied.

What he meant to say was that the Minister had been beaten in the party room.

Mrs Beggs: I am not a "he"; I am a "she".

Mr TRENORDEN: I am quoting the Premier.

Mrs Beggs: No; I said that.

Mr TRENORDEN: If that is so, I apologise. I thought it was a direct quote from the Premier. It starts off, "Mrs Beggs said", and I thought that was an indication from the Premier of what Mrs Beggs said.

Mrs Beggs: I will explain that to you later.

Mr TRENORDEN: I am pleased about that. I will put on the record now that on several occasions while this report was being prepared I backed the Minister's position, and I continue to do so. I do not believe the Minister's position has changed in regard to aspects of the Quin report - and I am not talking about the split between racing and trotting - but I believe she was beaten in the party room. What annoyed me, and what annoys many people in the industry, is that the Quin report was sent first to the Western Australian Turf Club so it could peruse it and make its telephone calls, but when the report went to Cabinet the question was already over and beyond dispute, and it was lost there and will remain lost. The action being taken by the Government is the oldest in the book: Form a committee, and bury it. Members may remember that when Nero decided he was going to set up a greater plan for Rome, he took that plan to the Senate, which decided to form a committee to look at his plan. Nero knew then that his plan had no chance, so he set fire to the city. That is basically what is happening here. We all know the best way to bury a report or action is to give it to a committee. The Government has no intention of introducing the balance of the Quin report.

Mrs Beggs: Can you prove that?

Mr TRENORDEN: Why is it not in here?

Mrs Beggs: I will explain why it is not here.

Mr TRENORDEN: I do not wish to be nasty to the Minister, but -

Mrs Beggs: That is just destructive nonsense. That sort of irresponsible comment, at a time when the industry needs confidence, will not do it any good.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is not an irresponsible comment; it is a statement of fact. I have only 22 minutes left. There is a lot I want to say.

Mrs Beggs: Innuendo is not a statement of fact.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is not anything to do with innuendo. Anyone who has read the Quin report will know the recommendations are simple, positive and precise, and could have been adopted by now if the Government had wanted to do so. They have not been recommended because they were defeated in the Cabinet room, and that was the end of the question. The establishment of a racing industry development authority is important. People are saying that this would take away from the Turf Club the functions it performs now, but what it would do is take away from the Turf Club the functions that it has never performed. The Western Australian Turf Club is responsible for the planning and development of the industry, but its track record in this area is abysmal. There is a very well documented requirement in the Eastern States for the industry and the Government - no matter what its colour - to work together so that decisions such as the 1983 decision do not happen. The establishment of RIDA would help that to come about. The Western Australian Turf Club has never applied itself to the development of the industry, as the Quin report points out, and if one looks beyond the report, the chances of developing our racing industry are not paramount as far as the Eastern States are concerned but are paramount in Asia, where we could set up our horses, telecast our racing, and where there is a massive population which is very keen on betting, gambling and horses. We could promote and sell our products and technology to the Asian markets, and in so doing we would increase our tourism and business links with that important market.

An example of a development mistake is Lark Hill, which was established without a feasibility study being undertaken. There are plenty of people who say that facility will never work in the dead of winter. There has been no responsibility for or control of the development fund, and there have been big problems, such as those at Lark Hill, where a large V drain was sunk around the track to solve the water problems. It has been argued that the track will be successful because it is on sandy soil and water will instantly disappear. However, a survey was not conducted to find out the correct situation. Grass was planted at Kalgoorlie racetrack without looking at the soil type and at how easily grass would mix with that soil type. At Northam they went ahead with a turf track - which was commendable - without checking the water supply. The water supply turned out to be okay, but for a while it was touch and go. Someone within the system should have done a feasibility study, and we have seen in this, and in countless other cases where development funds have been spent, a lack of responsibility to follow through. It is necessary to have a body responsible for these areas.

The TABs need a massive overhaul. The TABs were introduced to combat the illegal SP bookies who were operating at the time and to give revenue to the Government. The TAB does not have a charter to promote betting; it has a charter to hold a line against the illegal operation of SP bookies. The TAB has done that, but that was a long time ago and is yesterday's news. The TAB should be looking to promote the industry and to promote itself, which it does not do. If one were to go into a TAB shop - as I do frequently, because I do not mind admitting I have a flutter from time to time - one would find they are very drab and uninteresting places to visit, particularly those TABs controlled by the board. The TABs which are leased out tend to be a bit better. If we look at the introduction of footy betting, or whatever it was called, there was virtually no publicity about its launch.

That was a fairly major change to the Totalisator Agency Board and the whole of the Western Australian public should have been made aware of it; certainly the football public should have been made aware of that change. Betting people at the TAB shops were, but outside those shops little was done in the way of television or radio stations putting out results. Innovation is not a strong point of the TAB. If it were a lot more active it could increase turnover, which would also generate more income for Government and, more importantly, for the industry.

The Western Australian Turf Club has opposed the Quin report and it has won the argument.

Mrs Beggs: Did you say they opposed the report?

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes, I did.

Mrs Beggs: Why, then, would they be saying publicly that they support the recommendations of the Quin report?

Mr TRENORDEN: What have they done about it? The Minister told the member for Kalamunda a few minutes ago that the Turf Club could have done things. I agree - it could have done many things. It is mouthing words.

Mrs Beggs: It is terrible to come here and denigrate people.

Mr TRENORDEN: I am not a fan of the Turf Club but I have only 15 minutes left and so I will press on. If this Bill is passed unamended it will mean the death of country clubs. Peanuts are tipped out to the country clubs from the Turf Club and it will not supply enough income under this Bill to help country clubs survive, as per the quote from the Pinjarra Race Club. That is the crux of the matter. While the Turf Club controls the industry, country clubs will struggle and that has been the history for the last 70 years.

Under the Government's taxing structure, 34 per cent of gross profit is taxed in the racing industry while the casino is taxed at 15 per cent of gross profit. If we look at what the racing industry, the third biggest industry in the State, contributes to this State as against the casino, it is unbelievable that the casino's tax is less than one third that of the racing industry. Even with the Government's changes under this Bill, the racing industry's tax will be reduced to 24 per cent, as against 15 per cent. The industry will still be taxed at a much higher rate than the casino although the contribution to the State by the racing, trotting and greyhound racing industry is substantially stronger than that of the casino. As well, country racing supplies 253 meetings in the course of a year, and in the metropolitan area the Turf Club provides something over 70. That is important to the breeders, owners and trainers of the racehorses because most racehorses never see Ascot or Belmont. If the country clubs are to continue to be placed under the pump, where are the horses going to race? Those meetings will no longer be held.

The National Party's amendment to this Bill seeks to change the split to give country racing its deserved income. In fact, if we look at the figures in the Quin report, in 1986-87 country racing generated 36.3 per cent of TAB turnover; in 1985-86, 39.4 per cent; and in 1984-85, 38.6 per cent. That is roughly 38 per cent, and country racing receives back from the Turf Club - and also will receive back under this Bill - 14 per cent. That is absolutely disgraceful. The National Party's amendments will change that split to 70:30, whereas in fact and in logic it should be 62:38. The services supplied by the Turf Club total \$1.2 million. The eight per cent I have left with the Turf Club in my amendment will pay \$1.3 million to the Turf Club, which would pay it for the services it supplies free of charge to country clubs. At that rate, country clubs would be receiving what they are earning, which is the whole point of the Government's Bill. If one is logical, so is the other.

A reduction in turnover tax to five per cent will bring the industry back to a level of taxation comparable with most of the other States, with the exception of New South Wales, which is taxed at 5.5 per cent. At five per cent the industry would not be undertaxed in terms of other States; it would be taxed in the upper bracket, but the rate is fairly comparable with the other States. The industry must be projected forward on a growth arc into a situation where it can look forward with confidence, and that really means money. If my amendment from six per cent to five per cent were accepted, greyhound racing would receive an extra \$200 000, pacing would receive an extra \$1.2 million and racing would receive \$2 million extra. Those extra dollars are sorely needed. As well, if we look at what happens to the projected revenue from tax, it goes back to the same figure quoted in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure report dated 30 June 1988. The estimate was \$40.5 million. If we put the turnover tax back to five per cent, those figures will balance and in fact, if turnover increases, the Government will be in a position of gain rather than loss.

The five per cent turnover tax is really a must because the whole argument is about income. Unfortunately, in recent weeks the argument of racing versus trotting has developed, and this Bill can be substantially blamed for that argument. Many people have rung me in recent days putting the argument that one has to survive at the cost of the other, which I think is a very poor result of this Bill. However, the most important thing overall, in all the arguments,

is the perception of the industry in people's minds. In my experience of talking to people, the three codes of trotting, racing and greyhound racing have a very poor public image. I would like to tell a story about that perception. It could easily come out of the member for Gascoyne's electorate. It is the story of a bookie and a punter at a race meeting. It was a three horse race and the favourite was at 2:1. The punter decided to put \$1 000 on the favourite at 2:1. He did so, but the bookie did not turn the price down. The punter decided to put another \$1 000 on the horse and did so, but still the bookie did not turn the price down. The punter put a further \$1 000 on the same horse but still nothing happened. The punter had \$3 000 in total on a three horse race with the favourite at 2:1, but still the bookie did not flinch. The punter said to him, "I am absolutely amazed. Why don't you put the price down?" The bookie said, "As no one is around, I don't mind admitting to you that I own the favourite and it does not have a chance." The punter said, "This is going to be a slow race, because I own the other two." Unfortunately that is a fair perception of what is happening in the industry, and it must change.

Mr Cowan: What is more, the race has not finished yet.

Mr TRENORDEN: It is still going on - and it started in 1987!

The net result of this Bill is that in four or five years' time a cry will be made for another inquiry, and I doubt if Bill Quin will be really pleased to become involved in another inquiry as this one has been substantially ignored. The public's perception must be changed, and to change that perception we really have to demonstrate that there is change. The recommendations of Bill Quin's excellent report are there for all to see. RIDA, the first charge system, and the changing of the method of getting revenue are all excellent. The only area about which I have some argument with him is the percentage split between trotting and racing. To put it simply, I believe trotting has a strong argument for its percentage not being so harshly dealt with but I do not believe that now is the time to go into that because the principal reason why this debate should be strong and put clearly in the public's eye is not to have a fight between trotting and racing but to put this industry into a position where it can grow.

This is the third largest industry in this country; it is labour intensive and has a substantial capacity to grow. In all three codes a fair go is needed. In the Eastern States all three codes are growing but in this State we are witnessing a decline. As members of Parliament we should give the industry a chance and members of the National Party intend to do that - not that we see this legislation as a panacea as we would have preferred to see Mr Quin's recommendations introduced. Those recommendations are not included in this Bill and the Minister has already indicated that no further changes will be introduced in the life of this Government as a result of the Quin report.

The National Party's involvement in this question is not finished with the end of this Government. We look forward to being in Government and to strengthening the position of the industry, particularly that section which is in a slump - country or non metropolitan racing. Our amendments seek to address that section of the industry.

MRS BEGGS (Whitford - Minister for Racing and Gaming) [3.52 pm]: I thank both members for their contributions to the debate. Regardless of some of the inferences made by the member for Kalamunda, it is known in both racing and trotting circles that the Government is conscious of its responsibilities to this great industry, not only because no Government wants any industry to fail but also because we are conscious of the amount of money which both industries return to Consolidated Revenue. With that money Governments can deliver many services to the community.

I wish to clear up a few matters which perhaps some people in this House have out of perspective. The inquiry into racing resulted from consistent lobbying from both the racing and trotting sections of the industry to the Government for a reduction in turnover tax. I was not the Minister for Racing and Gaming when that tax was increased, but both industries were consulted. Whilst they were not happy, they understood the plight which the Government faced at that time because of a shortfall in revenue as a result of previous maladministration, and that the Government had a commitment to honour certain undertakings to the community. The industry agreed to accept a higher turnover tax, as the industry consists of responsible members of the community, as long as the Government reviewed the situation after a time.

I was the Minister for Racing and Gaming when the industry asked for a review of the tax as applied to the industry. I took a proposition to the then Premier and Treasurer; he agreed a need existed for a review of the tax because there was added competition - on line Lotto and the casino - and the Government should consider the financial plight of all sections of the industry. Solutions would be found which were acceptable not only to the industry as a whole but also to the community and the Government which has responsibility in other areas.

Suggestions have been made that perhaps this legislation was brought about by the scandals attached to the casino and for that reason the trotting section did not wish to participate. That is incorrect.

Mr Thompson: Some people in the trotting code think that was the case. People believe that to be true.

Mrs BEGGS: That is totally incorrect. Letters were sent to administrative bodies of both racing and trotting giving the reasons for the inquiry. If misinformation was given by anyone in possession of that correspondence, that is something which is beyond my control because the Government does not control the Western Australian Trotting Association or the Western Australian Turf Club.

Mr Thompson: And I hope it never will.

Mrs BEGGS: That is the member's opinion. The difficulty is that diverse opinions are held within the industry; it is very difficult for the Government to have a consensus point of view and for all sections of the industry to be absolutely happy with announcements made or inquiries held by the Government. The member for Kalamunda stated that this legislation corrects the impact of the increase in turnover tax introduced in 1983. No-one denies that impact, and the package we put forward now returns the turnover tax to a six per cent rate and applies a range of other financial relief at the same time. Both sections of the industry are happy with this legislation.

The completion and opening of the casino in 1986 meant increased competition but the TAB turnover last year increased substantially. The report is yet to be tabled but the results are incredible. The trotting share continues to decline regardless of that and members may say that is because that section has to compete at night. I know that particular problems may apply to trotting but members should understand that trotting has received 40 per cent of the turnover for almost 20 years. That turnover has not been generated for some years but that section of the industry has had the advantage of that increased revenue for some years.

Mention was made of comparison between the States. As I have said by interjection, the return to trotting is higher in this State than in any other State. The stakes are also the highest in this State for the trots. Eastern States' trainer-owners take away our prize money; the local industry needs to be confident that the stakes offered will give a reasonable return. The member for Scarborough supplied the following figures: On 14 October at Gloucester Park, six races offered stake money of \$10 000 each; one race offered stake money of \$11 000. The member for Scarborough has stated that no other trotting club in Australia can offer such generous stake money at a normal non carnival weekly trotting meeting.

Whilst we can consider those figures I reiterate that my comments recently at a dinner are absolutely correct. A turnover generated system is the fairest and most equitable system for determining which code receives what share of revenue generated. Maybe, as a result of that fair and equitable system, problems will be highlighted for trotting. If it appears that that section cannot compete aggressively enough, the Government will not see it fail. We have offered the industry an inquiry, if that is what the industry wants. I do not wish to institute an inquiry which does not have the full support of the industry. From information received over the past week, it appears that there is a huge divergence of thought on that matter. I have met all sections of the industry to give reassurance of the Government's position.

Mr Cowan: Perhaps the industry wants members of Parliament -

Mrs BEGGS: They want some members of Parliament? That is legitimate. I have heard some people intend to seek endorsement for seats around the State on this issue. I do not know that that will actually improve the trotting industry's position. It may do.

Mr Cowan: It may not improve the Government's position.

Mrs BEGGS: Let us be sensible in this debate. I want to address the issues sensibly and reasonably. We are talking about two industries which are very important.

Mr Cowan: So am I.

Mrs BEGGS: Many people's lives depend on them.

Mr Cowan: I am putting a new perspective on them.

Mrs BEGGS: If that will ensure the viability of trotting in this State, I would support it, but I am not sure that it will.

The Government has been criticised for not bringing all the recommendations of the Quin report forward because we do not support that report or because I did not receive the support of my Cabinet colleagues. That is absolute nonsense. At this stage this legislation is not intended to reflect all of the recommendations of the Quin report. Our final decision in relation to the turnover tax and the ratio between racing and trotting has modified the effect on trotting because the Quin report recommended that we go straight to a turnover generated system.

Mr Thompson: We are talking about something that involves gambling. I will bet that these reports will gather two inches of dust before you pick up any more of the recommendations.

Mrs BEGGS: We have made an absolute commitment to the trotting and racing industries that we intend to implement all of the financial implications and some others, including the criminalisation of racing offences and the first charge system.

Mr Trenorden: Don't you have to have a RIDA on that?

Mrs BEGGS: Yes, or a form of RIDA. However, we do not have to have the same sort of RIDA as is recommended.

It was very interesting that the member for Kalamunda raised queries about the administration of the greyhound industry. He said that people in trotting circles have indicated their concerns to him about the industry.

Mr Thompson: People in greyhound circles have also.

Mrs BEGGS: Perhaps the trotting industry should be a little concerned because, under the administration of Trevor Smith, the greyhound industry has gone from seven per cent of all turnover to over 10 per cent.

Mr Trenorden: He has fought for the TAB to take on Eastern States dogs. It took him years to get the TAB to do that.

Mrs BEGGS: But he did it. The efforts by that person should not be denigrated without any substantiation. When somebody works as hard as Trevor Smith has worked, it is unfair that unsubstantiated criticism of his efforts should come from this Parliament.

An industry appeals tribunal will be established in the next session of Parliament. The legislation is still to be drafted. Top priority has been given to the financial provisions that we think are necessary. The trotting and greyhound associations already have an industry appeals tribunal. If members of the Western Australian Turf Club consider they cannot wait for the legislation, they can set up their own in a non statutory way; there is no problem with that. I agree with the member for Kalamunda that it is essential that one is set up because it is very difficult for members of the committee to hear many of the appeals depending on the circumstances at the time.

The remainder of the recommendations in the Quin report are being dealt with by the departmental committee. Drafting of legislation dealing with those recommendations will take more than a year. When I spoke to members of the industry, I was informed that they did not want to wait that long. This legislation has the total support of the racing industry and some support by the trotting industry, because it reduces the turnover tax by one per cent. It also enables combined pools to be transmitted between the TAB and totalisator which is a benefit to trotting. It also enables \$1 million to be injected into country racing and trotting and deals with unclaimed dividends. That will have a huge beneficial financial impact on both racing and trotting.

Mr Cowan: The Government took the unclaimed dividends off the industry.

Mrs BEGGS: We did not take the unclaimed dividends at all. That section of the industry only got 25 per cent. The principal clubs had to contribute to that as well.

Mr Trenorden: You have not explained to the industry how that will happen. Nobody knows. The TAB is stating the unclaimed dividends will be distributed under the old formula because there are no instructions in this legislation.

Mrs BEGGS: The unclaimed dividends go into the racecourse development fund and submissions are made as to their distribution.

Mr Trenorden: You and other people have made statements about how the million dollars will be applied. However, no direction is given here. According to the TAB, the money will be handed out under the old rule because it has been given no instructions.

Mrs BEGGS: That is not exactly right. We made the announcement that the Government intended that the unclaimed dividends would be used in country areas, particularly depending on the needs of those areas. They will have to demonstrate their needs to a committee which will be set up under this legislation. It will make its decisions depending on the priorities of country racing and trotting. However, discretion has to be used. In some cases, the priority might be to improve facilities.

Mr Trenorden: One priority is to reduce debts. They cannot do that under the current rules. Many clubs believe that some of the money will be applied to reduce their debts, but they cannot see how that will occur.

Mrs BEGGS: We have given an absolute commitment that the committee will have the flexibility to do what is in the best interests of the industry. If a club is floundering because it has a huge debt to service, the fund can be used to service that debt.

Mr Trenorden: Are you saying the fund can be used to pay off debts?

Mrs BEGGS: Yes.

I have dealt with most of the comments made by speakers in the debate. The member for Kalamunda said that the Opposition has given a commitment to the trotting industry that it will set up an inquiry when it is returned to Government. I have pointed out already that the Government will set one up too if the industry thinks that it is in its best interests. If the member for Kalamunda wishes to lead a delegation with every section of the industry supporting an inquiry, the Government will establish it immediately.

I emphasise the Government's commitment to both sections of the industry and also to the greyhound industry, which is not directly involved in the controversy surrounding the legislation. It is essential that the Government addresses some of the issues that have been detrimental to the industry over the last couple of years. One of those issues is the reduction in the turnover tax. There has also been some animosity between trotting and racing over the years because of the inequities in the distribution of the TAB turnover. I do not expect that the Western Australian Trotting Association will be happy with having money taken from it. However, I expect it to be a little enthusiastic about its future. Trotting has undergone enormous changes in the last 20 years. I have witnessed many of those changes because I come from the south west and grew up in trotting circles. I understand that it is a very important industry, particularly in country regions. With this legislation, the Government hopes to make the trotting industry more aware of its responsibilities to the public.

Any industry that is constantly subsidised cannot survive. Subsidisation leads to a complacency that would inevitably lead to the demise of any industry. I do not think that is the right way for a Government to give support to the trotting industry. By its actions in recent times, the Western Australian Trotting Association has demonstrated that it will not lie down and accept that over a period of 11 years its turnover will drop to 30 per cent of the total Totalisator Agency Board turnover. The association and I are confident that it has the ability to increase its market share considerably. In the past its product has been very attractive to the public and I am sure that in the future it can make it even more attractive and, as a result, the 70:30 split which is outlined in the legislation will never become a reality.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Thomas) in the Chair; Mrs Beggs (Minister for Racing and Gaming) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 18 put and passed.

Clause 19: Section 28 amended -

Mrs BEGGS: I move -

Page 16, lines 25 to 37 - To delete subsection (3a) and substitute the following subsection -

(3a) Notwithstanding subsections (2) and (3), where, of the moneys received by the Board in a racing year in respect of bets on horse races run in the State, the percentage of those moneys received in respect of bets on trotting races run in the State is greater than -

- (a) the percentage specified in subsection (3) (a) or (k); or
- (b) the percentage specified in subsection (3) (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) or (j) in relation to bets on horse races run in the State,

as the case may be, with respect to that first-mentioned racing year, the Board shall -

- (c) increase the percentage, or percentages as the case requires, of moneys to be paid to the Association for that racing year to equal the percentage of moneys received by the Board in that racing year in respect of bets on trotting races run in the State; and
- (d) decrease the percentage, or percentages as the case requires, of moneys to be paid to the Club accordingly.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr TRENORDEN: I move -

Page 16, after line 37 - To add the following -

- (c) in subsection (4) (a) -
by deleting "twenty" and substituting "thirty"; and
- (d) in subsection (4) (b) -
by deleting "eighty" and substituting "seventy".

The intention of this amendment is to give to country racing the same advantages achieved in paragraphs (a) and (b) of the amendment moved by the Minister. According to Quin's report, in the last year 36 per cent of racing revenue was generated by country clubs. It is also true that services provided by the Western Australian Turf Club cost money - for example, employment of stewards, the listing of nominations, and so forth. There is some argument about the costs, but my amendment would still have the Turf Club receiving eight per cent to cover the cost of those services. That is why the amendment refers to a ratio of 30:70, instead of one of 38:62. It is important that we allow moneys to flow through to country clubs so that they can remain viable and hold race meetings. As I mentioned in another speech, 253 meetings each year are held in the country and they have to be financed. Each of those meetings would run between six and eight races, thus enabling a quite large number of horses to compete. Anybody with any affiliation with the industry would know that it is exceedingly important for people breeding, owning or training horses to be able to get a start for those horses.

The Quin report also pointed out the importance of country clubs being able to maintain their facilities and to pay the stakes required to maintain a viable industry. That has not been happening. The Quin report says that conditions, facilities and amenities in the country clubs are on the decline. Certain clubs have not made a profit for many a year. The operating capital of the Pinjarra club, for example, went down by \$54 000 last year. Some might say that the club could be better administered, but I do not think that is the problem. The problem is that attendances at meetings went down and the income received from the TAB went down. Those reductions led to a squeeze on the club, which is a very substantial club. The situation is not greatly different with the clubs in Bunbury, Northam, and elsewhere. They are all under pressure. I have heard an argument that trainers in the metropolitan area

are not happy about paying the transport costs to participate in meetings held at country clubs. If the country clubs had enough income, they would not have to ask for the up front costs that are associated with country race meetings. They could reduce those costs. If the stakes were substantially higher, the rewards would be higher, and people involved with transporting the horses would be much happier to move them around. No matter how much we shuffle the facts around, unless we do something about the situation large numbers of horses will not get a start. The two metropolitan courses, Ascot and Belmont, cannot handle any more racing than at present. Therefore, we have to make sure that the country clubs survive.

People will no doubt argue that the amendments are not necessary because the Western Australian Turf Club will administer the money correctly to allow the industry to proceed in a healthy manner. Since the principal Act was enacted in 1917, the Western Australian Turf Club has had that responsibility and it has consistently failed to carry it out. In fact, some years ago two members, Messrs Baxter and Gayfer, were involved in an inquiry into this same problem. At that time the Bill was removed by Hon Mick Gayfer who was a member of this House, I think the member for Avon Valley, at that time. It was removed because the Turf Club promised it would rectify the situation. What happened to those promises? They were all right for a year or so and then amounted to nothing. They will continue to amount to nothing while the Turf Club has its hand in the till on one side and tries to run its clubs on the other; it has trouble juggling its money. All this amendment does is give to Caesar what Caesar earns, which is a fairly reasonable approach. It would increase dramatically the income of country clubs and, more importantly, country clubs would know what their income was, and it would be a fair bit higher than it is now. That could not be turned off by the Turf Club as it has been many times in the past. I commend the amendment to the Committee and say without equivocation that the country clubs deserve our support.

Mr THOMPSON: I support the amendment. It is clear from comments coming to me from people in the industry that insufficient money is flowing to country racing interests. The detail given by the member for Avon highlights that problem. I believe that much of the disquiet in the industry at present would dissipate if more money were put into supporting country racing. It is true that metropolitan courses are under pressure, but I suppose it is possible with different management strategies for there to be more race meetings held in Perth. I know that there are many metropolitan interests which would like to see more racing held in Perth. However, this is a large State and we should attempt to decentralise as much activity as possible.

Country people have always had a deep interest in racing. One need only look at the number of race clubs that were once around the country to confirm this. I can remember as a boy races being held at Mullewa and in many other small communities. Country people, by their participation in the sport, have demonstrated their desire to have racing in their communities. Having said that, I must say that I think country racing interests have to accept the fact that times have changed and that there needs to be consolidation of country racing. Bearing in mind rising costs, it will be hard to sustain all the country racing operations. While I applaud the amendment moved by the member for Avon, we must be realistic and recognise that it will not be possible to maintain all of the racecourses and clubs in country areas. However, there is a need for more money to flow to country racing and this amendment will achieve that. It has my support, and I hope the support of my colleagues as well.

Mr COWAN: One of the features of the amendment moved by the member for Avon is that it does precisely what the country racing industry claims should happen to the trotting industry; in other words, the country race clubs have made very clear to us as representatives of country constituencies that the trotting industry has been receiving a greater share of TAB revenue than it deserves. It has been put to them that they have fragmented the racing industry in general and really should be combining to argue for a greater share of TAB profits rather than the Government getting the majority of it. Both the racing and trotting clubs should be combining and asking for a greater share of TAB profits instead of racing clubs being set against the trotting clubs. The country race clubs have asked for the trotting industry to reduce its share so that the race clubs can get their hands on a greater amount of money, and the Government gets home free. That is what has happened in the past.

Under this amendment race clubs would be told that they are generating 36 per cent of racing revenue in this State yet are getting only 20 per cent and that it is time they went to the

Government or to the Turf Club and said that they want closer to their share of the revenue generated. That is the purpose of this amendment. The split of funds at the moment to which the Western Australian Turf Club is entitled is 80:20. We recognise that there are gratuities which enter into the equation. The Turf Club, for example, provides stewards, but it does not represent the full additional 10 per cent that we are talking about, I am sure. I have never seen the statistics to verify that it does. However, we have said to the country race clubs that they deserve a split of this nature and that we would amend the Minister's Bill to bring that about. It is certainly what country clubs deserve and I ask all members to support the amendment.

Mrs BEGGS: The amendment moved by the member for Avon seeks to amend section 28(4)(a) and (b) of the TAB Betting Act to reduce the amount of TAB profits retained by the Western Australian Turf Club from 80 per cent to 70 per cent. That would mean that country and provincial clubs would have their amount increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent but that amendment only relates to the Western Australian Turf Club's share of TAB profits. Is the Leader of the National Party not interested in what happens to trotting?.

Mr Cowan: That is right.

Mrs BEGGS: So the Leader of the National Party does not want the share going to country trots to increase?

Mr Trenorden: Country trots have not got the problem.

Mrs BEGGS: For that reason alone I would be reluctant to accept the amendment because we would have to amend section 28(5) of the TAB Betting Act, which requires the Western Australian Trotting Association to distribute 20 per cent of TAB profits to country trotting clubs. That would create a further inconsistency between country racing and trotting clubs, which is something that the Leader of the National Party has just claimed he is trying to avoid; in fact, he claims he is trying to unite them.

Mr Trenorden: There are only 12 country trotting clubs. There are 30 or 40 racing clubs.

Mrs BEGGS: There are substantially more.

Mr Trenorden: That is why it is not a problem.

Mrs BEGGS: The member for Avon cannot say that it is not a problem because there are only 12 country trotting clubs. I have already established an interdepartmental committee as a result of the Quin recommendations which is to examine a report on the method of funding between the TAB and non-TAB country clubs. The members who have spoken have all pointed out that there are other benefits flowing to country clubs from the principal clubs, whether it be trotting or racing, such as the cost of stewards and those sorts of things. Both the Leader of the National Party and the member for Avon have admitted that they do not know exactly what is the value of those services.

Mr Trenorden: It is \$1.26 million.

Mrs BEGGS: It is hard to determine, because one has to work out the number of race meetings.

Mr Trenorden: I agree. However, the Turf Club says it is \$1.26 million. I think it is a great deal less.

Mrs BEGGS: I think the member might find that in some cases it would be a great deal more. We have set up a committee in relation to this matter, and it is not as simplistic as some members might think - just to take away 10 per cent of the income of the principal club. I am not saying that that is impossible, but we do not want an ad hoc decision made. I think the days of making decisions without knowing all the facts are gone as that is very dangerous. The committee will examine all of the implications of the financial impact of the recommendations in the Quin report. We will also be looking at the first charge system in relation to TAB profits. We will implement those things by 1 August 1989. Once the report is with me I will know the financial implications to the nearest cent.

Mr Stephens: If you imagine the position in August 1989, we can change what we are doing now.

Mrs BEGGS: I do not think anyone should.

Mr Stephens interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Thomas): Order. This dialogue is very interesting, but the speakers should address the Chair.

Mrs BEGGS: I reject the amendment on the basis that quite significant proportions of money are involved and should not be implemented without knowing the implications.

Mr TRENORDEN: The Minister is wrong, because the facts and figures are very clear. One does not have to be a mathematician to work them out. The gratuitous services supplied by the Turf Club for country clubs are put in the Quin report at 10 per cent. That makes it \$1.26 million. Looking at current figures, the Turf Club says that is 11 per cent of its current income, on seven per cent of turnover, which is around about the same figure. It is just over \$1.2 million.

It needs no Gunga Din to work out those figures. I have had them checked and I know them to be factual. We want these clubs to survive. Several clubs are in severe financial trouble because the money tap has been turned off; they cannot enjoy what they earn. It is clear that on last year's figures they are earning 36 per cent of racing turnover, or taking the average over three years, 38 per cent of racing turnover, according to the Quin report. The Turf Club pays them 20 per cent under this Bill, plus, on Quin's own amended figures, around 10 per cent. Working out the figures I have given, that balances. They are not complicated; they are not some sort of conjuring act by a mathematician. It is not necessary for a committee of gurus to sit down for 12 months to work them out. The industry must survive in the next 12 months.

The member for Kalamunda raised the question of the reduction in country clubs, which is wrong. It is a matter of how many starts horses can have as they build themselves up through their graduation to the metropolitan area. If we start reducing the venues and taking away clubs, somebody else must make those starts and a corresponding cost remains. Some minor details may be changed, but the basic costs remain. If this industry is to allow people to start their horses in the country and graduate through to the city, ending up with the champions we all wish to see, they must have the income to be able to establish them. The Minister did not paint a fair picture when she said that she needs time and a committee to look at the financial balance. The equation is very simple; if I can work it out I am sure she can.

Mr COWAN: I want to remind the Minister that when she said it would be tough on the Turf Club to reduce its level of funding, she must have forgotten she intends to increase this funding as a result of the provisions of this Bill. She is not going to reduce the level of the Turf Club's funding.

Mrs Beggs: By an extra \$1 million.

Mr COWAN: I am not sure it would be \$1 million.

Mrs Beggs: Probably more.

Mr COWAN: It will be less. I am talking about the current division of funding given to the Western Australian Turf Club for redistribution to its own organisation - to the metropolitan area and to all other country clubs on an 80:20 basis. I am addressing this amendment and pointing out to the Minister that there will not be a reduction of total funds to the Western Australian Turf Club because the Minister will increase the level of funds to both codes of racing by reducing the rates of turnover tax from seven per cent to six per cent. These changes to the distribution ratio between racing and trotting as a result of the change to the turnover tax will increase the funding to the Turf Club prior to distribution by almost 20 per cent on the 1986-87 figures. There will be an increased base from which the racing industry's internal distribution will take place. For that reason the Minister is not lowering the Western Australian Turf Club's access to funding but she is giving the country clubs access to funds which they generate through the TAB.

The whole of the Minister's argument about changing the distribution ratio of funds between codes has been based on their ability to generate funds. The Minister is not taking that argument to its natural conclusion - to the internal workings of one code, the racing industry. If the Minister looks at the trotting industry I am sure she will find that the ratio of revenue generated by country trotting as opposed to metropolitan trotting would not be quite the same.

Mrs Beggs: I stick to my argument.

Mr COWAN: Perhaps, but the statistical data would be there. I have not had the chance to take out the details; I do not have the resources which are available to Government or to the Liberal Party. We find that in this case, where the Minister is building her argument on the distribution of funds between codes and on the proportion of revenue generated by those codes of racing, when we look at the proportion of revenue generated within the code itself - racing, forgetting about trotting - suddenly it does not apply. That seems inconsistent.

There are two inconsistencies in this legislation. The first is that the Minister is prepared to say that the clubs should earn closer to the revenue they generate when she is talking about the different codes, but she is not prepared to take that into the single industry itself and apply that principle. The other inconsistency is that gambling does not have a level playing field. The tax on the casino in no way represents the ratio of tax on gambling on horses, trotters and dogs. In one instance the Minister has a tax on gross revenue of, I think, 15 per cent, and that would not represent 50 per cent of profits. In the case of the TAB turnover tax it represents more than 50 per cent of profits. This is what we will do after the election - and I can inform the member for Kalamunda of this - provided we are successful. We also have a hurdle to jump, but we will level the playing field in both those areas.

Mrs BEGGS: The member for Avon pointed out that the Quin recommendation talks about the fact that \$1.2 million is what it costs the principal club to service country race clubs in terms of stewards and all those extraneous things. This amendment seeks to increase the amount of money going to the country and provincial clubs. I have already said that the report says approximately 10 per cent, which is \$1.2 million. Under this legislation we have reduced the turnover tax and we have said \$1 million of that is to go into the Race Course Development Trust while this interdepartmental committee looks at the complexities of distribution between non TAB and TAB country clubs, because it is not as simple as the Leader of the National Party believes. The first charge proposal is quite complicated and I do not pretend to understand it myself because there are so many different things that the principal clubs do for the country race clubs that I am quite sure that the country race clubs themselves are not aware of what it would cost. If we were to accept this amendment, we would have to accept that the country clubs would then have to take responsibility for some of those charges themselves. I do not think that is in the best interests -

Mr Trenorden: Why?

Mrs BEGGS: Because that is the whole theme of this. I agree with the member - in principle it is absolutely right that it should go to turnover generated, but then each club would have to be responsible for all of its costs. Some country clubs would suffer greatly under that system. Therefore I am not prepared to accept an amendment on the basis of some information but not all of it, because I think the member would find that in the final analysis, unless we have all of the figures at our disposal - and we have gone through it very carefully - some country clubs would be sorely disadvantaged. I do not want to be the Minister who takes that responsibility until I am absolutely sure the figures are correct.

Mr TRENORDEN: I am disappointed that the Minister did not listen to my argument. I have just spent 20 minutes talking about why the split should be 30:70 and not 62:38. If the Minister's position is that country clubs should pay for their own services, I agree with that and we will amend these figures to 62:38 because that is the real position of earnings of country racing. We have left eight per cent in there because the gratuitous services supplied by the Turf Club, which cost \$1.2 million, can be met from that eight per cent. The Minister argued about the 10 per cent, saying that it is close to \$1 million; but the country share of one per cent reduction in turnover tax is \$360 000. So the 10 per cent that I am talking about, on the Minister's own argument, represents \$180 000, not \$1 million. In fact, the Minister is way out of the ballpark on that figure. This is a very important issue and if the Minister is saying that the Turf Club - and I agree that it would be typical of the actions of the Turf Club to tip the cost of its gratuitous services onto the country clubs - will do that, let us make the split 62:38, like the earning ratio. However in my amendments I have left that eight per cent in favour of the Turf Club to pay for the \$1.2 million, which it says it costs to administer services on behalf of country clubs. No-one has been able to prove that it is \$1.2 million; no-one has ever seen the figures; that amount just comes out of the Turf Club like waves rolling onto the beach. It has never been audited or checked, and no-one actually knows the

figure. However, I will accept on the surface that it is \$1.2 million because the Turf Club says it is. My amendments give the Turf Club \$1.2 million and give Caesar what Caesar earns. It gives to country race clubs the 10 per cent they earn. My leader correctly pointed out that this is coming from a bigger cake. It will not hurt the Turf Club at all; we are not talking about a figure of over \$1 million. If one looks at the total argument, \$450 000 is the share of country racing from the development fund, with \$360 000 from the one per cent turnover, which is \$810 000. That is without my amendments. If one adds my amendments to that, it becomes \$990 000. It is simple arithmetic.

Mr THOMPSON: I want to restate my support and I think the support of my colleagues for the amendments of the National Party. The Leader of the National Party correctly reported that we are talking about a significantly increased pool of funds from which would come the money that would flow to country racing if these amendments were carried; but with respect to the services supplied by the principal club to country clubs, I certainly hope that nothing is ever done which will result in that service not being provided because I believe that having one body responsible for such things as handicapping, the provision of stewards and all of that for racing throughout the whole of Western Australia contributes greatly to the health of our racing industry. I think that if we forced individual clubs to provide their handicapping services and their supervision by way of stewarding, we would finish up with all sorts of nonsense and irregularities. I certainly hope that nothing done by this Parliament will lead to that situation. Indeed that is one reason I am vigorously opposed to transferring the control of racing from the hands of the Western Australian Turf Club because no matter how much a Government might try to force onto the Western Australian Turf Club the responsibility to provide those services to the rest of the State, if the Turf Club does not have the control of the total industry, I think it will simply say, "Go jump in the ocean", and that would lead to a scenario where the clubs have forced upon them the responsibility of providing the services now provided by the principal club. There is a very rational and organised administration and supervision of racing under the present structure and I hope that remains.

Mrs BEGGS: For the last 10 years the industry has been trying to find a perfect formula between the city and country, and between non TAB and TAB country and provincial clubs. We are looking at a really complex formula, and we have already indicated that we will go to turnover generated once we have determined the first charge between city and country. I totally agree with the member for Kalamunda; I think it is essential for the wellbeing of the industry that the control of the stewards, the handicapping and all of those things remain with the principal club or one body, otherwise there will be absolute chaos. I think there would also be absolute chaos if I were to accept these amendments without examining them in detail. The committee is there; it is looking at all of those things and it is going to do this in a responsible way, consulting with the industry and with all of the figures before it. To take a pot shot at what is an appropriate figure to distribute to country clubs is not only irresponsible but may prove to be disadvantageous to a lot of country clubs in the long term.

I reject the amendments and ask members to accept that the interdepartmental committee has been set up with every good intention of ensuring that any disparities between city and country racing can be resolved in a sensible and controlled way.

Mr Trenorden interjected.

Mrs BEGGS: The Turf Club will not have a choice because it is by legislation that we change the ratios. That is what I intend to do once I have the evidence before me. I certainly do not intend to do it in the way the member for Avon has suggested.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (19)

Mr Cash	Mr Greig	Mr Schell	Mr Reg Tubby
Mr Clarko	Mr House	Mr Stephen	Mr Watt
Mr Court	Mr Lewis	Mr Thompson	Mr Wiese
Mr Cowan	Mr Lightfoot	Mr Trenorden	Mr Maslen (Teller)
Mr Grayden	Mr Mensaros	Mr Fred Tubby	

Noes (26)

Mrs Beggs	Mr Peter Dowding	Mr Marlborough	Mr Troy
Mr Bertram	Dr Gallop	Mr Pearce	Mrs Watkins
Mr Bridge	Mr Grill	Mr Read	Dr Watson
Mr Burkett	Mrs Henderson	Mr Ripper	Mr Wilson
Mr Carr	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr D.L. Smith	Mrs Buchanan (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Cunningham	Mr Hodge	Mr P.J. Smith	
Mr Donovan	Mr Tom Jones	Mr Taylor	

Pairs

Ayes
Mr Bradshaw
Mr Hassell
Mr Crane

Noes
Mr Parker
Dr Lawrence
Dr Alexander

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 20 put and passed.

Clause 21: Section 2 amended -

Mr TRENORDEN: I move -

Page 17, line 17 - To delete "6" and substitute "5".

The amendment increases the amount of money which would flow from the TAB by \$3.4 million. It has been clearly demonstrated by all speakers that the real problem with the industry is that it is overtaxed. If my amendment is successful, not only will it increase the percentage of turnover being returned to the trotting industry by \$1.2 million and to the racing industry by \$2 million, but also it will increase the return to the greyhound industry by \$200 000. That will have a profound effect on those associations. It will also increase the money flowing through to country racing.

The Minister does not seem to comprehend that non metropolitan TAB clubs are in severe trouble and that the amount of money that will be generated by this legislation will not solve their problems. Their collective debts amount to more than will be available to them. We all know that not all of the clubs are in trouble. Some of the smaller non TAB country clubs are doing quite well. They survive on trophy donations and sponsorship. However, almost to a club, the clubs termed "provincial clubs" are in severe trouble. Country clubs which currently receive \$2.5 million pay out in excess of \$5 million. The WA Turf Club which has an income of just over \$10 million pays out \$9.4 million in stakes. Country clubs pay out twice as much as city clubs in terms of revenue received/stakes paid. Country clubs require money to survive.

The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure reveal that actual receipts from all gambling taxes totalled \$43.83 million in 1987-88. The Government is giving back one per cent of the turnover which is what it received in a windfall last year. It is not returning any more than the estimated receipts. The Minister will argue that the Government cannot afford to pay an extra \$3.4 million to the racing industry. However, it will take a very small increase in turnover of the TAB's funds for the Government not to be involved in any extra payout. In fact, the South Australian TAB recently introduced a system which provides that the odds showing on the screen at the time one places one's bet are the odds one receives. It is a simple system of running the bookies' figures. If the screen shows that a horse is paying \$10, one receives \$10 - the payout is not averaged.

What that would do for our TAB turnover is absolutely dramatic; what it would do for the bookmakers might be another question. If the TAB could only lift its game and become more efficient - promote itself a great deal more and not be so control oriented - the increased turnover could easily compensate for the additional one per cent that I am proposing should go to the industry. In fact, on my figures - and I concede they are only my

figures - a 13 per cent increase in TAB turnover would give the Government a positive cash flow even if my amendment is carried.

To reiterate what I have already said, it is very important for country clubs, the trotting industry, and even the Turf Club itself, that enough money is available in the system to put the industry on a growth path. All members, when making their speeches, have pointed out that this State is dramatically over taxed, even at six per cent of turnover. Each State has a different method, but the highest of the other States is New South Wales at 5.5 per cent and, according to the Quin report, Queensland has 2.5 per cent. If the amendment is carried the position in the Western Australian industry could well place this State high in the tax rate within the industry. The South Australians have done the right thing in their system, which is recommended by the Quin report, in that there is a first charge system, certain placements of moneys into a development fund, and the Government and the industry share the rest of the profits on a 50:50 basis. According to the Quin report that makes the tax just over five per cent, which is the figure about which I am talking. If the Government is serious about the Quin report, and the Minister says it is, there should be no argument about reducing the tax to five per cent. The cost to the Government would not necessarily amount to anything at all. If the system encourages better races and becomes more entrepreneurial because it has the money to promote itself, and if the TAB becomes a bit more efficient and promotion oriented, the money would be there for the Government.

Mrs BEGGS: It is very easy for members who are not on the Treasury benches to come up with a flippant suggestion about reducing a palatable tax yet a further one per cent. I do not have to explain this; the member already knows that in addition to the \$4 million revenue that the Government will not get in this financial year, a reduction of another one per cent would mean a loss of a further \$4 million. I do not want to sound as though we have totally neglected the position of country racing and trotting. I have already said that the on course totalisator tax will be reduced from the beginning of February - and this is in the legislation - by one per cent. We have said that \$1 million of the \$4 million tax reduction this year will go to the Racecourse Development Trust to be shared among all country racing and trotting clubs. Apart from that, we have given a commitment to look at the whole question of the return of profits to country trots and racing through an interdepartmental committee. I could use the same argument that I used in respect of the previous amendment and say that I will not act as an irresponsible Minister, in terms not just of what that would mean for racing and trotting, but also the Government's wider obligation and commitment to the whole of the community. To accept an amendment like this would mean that Government revenue would reduce by another \$4 million, and to accept that without knowing the impact -

Mr Cowan interjected.

Mrs BEGGS: The Government could not accept that amendment, as a responsible Government, without knowing how it would impact on the rest of the community. We have an obligation to the wider community and the National Party has not even thought about that. On that basis I reject the amendment moved by the member for Avon.

Mr THOMPSON: This amendment moved by the National Party is supported by me and the rest of my colleagues, and certainly is not a flippant move. The Government acted flippantly when it ruthlessly took one per cent away from racing some time ago. In the meantime, a casino has been established here and the revenue that the Government has received from that casino must be substantially more than the \$4 million lost by reducing the tax to five per cent. I do not think that is an irresponsible approach. Had the Government not generated a significant income from the casino it might be reasonable for this Parliament to balk at the proposal to increase the amount of money from TAB funds which goes to racing. The Government has received a significant amount of money from the casino. I do not know precisely how much it gets annually -

Mr Trenorden: \$11.5 million.

Mr THOMPSON: The Government receives \$11.5 million which it would not receive but for the casino. In the context of the gambling dollar, racing and trotting would be better off and getting closer to, but still a long way from, the situation of their brother and sister clubs in the Eastern States where the Government takes less from the TAB than does this Government. This is far from a flippant suggestion, and it is a suggestion which we

wholeheartedly support. Weeks ago I put out a statement in the name of the Liberal Party saying that on our return to Government we will certainly look at reducing the amount of money that the Government takes to well below the figure that the Government is now suggesting it should take. I wholeheartedly support the amendment moved by the National Party.

Mr TRENORDEN: I wish to continue the argument put forward by the member for Kalamunda. The tax raised from the casino is a shade under \$11.5 million, on the basis of a 15 per cent tax on the profit. A lot of the money lost to the casino would have been flowing through the TAB if the casino had not been established. The TAB at that time was taxed at 34 per cent, not 15 per cent as is the casino. I am not saying that all the money which goes through the casino would have gone through the TAB, but arguably a great deal of it would have gone through the TAB and been taxed at 34 per cent. On those figures the Government and the industry would have had revenue in their pockets. What the Government has done is stolen revenue from the pocket of the industry and put it in its own. How one can logically argue that the tax on the casino should be 15 per cent, and that on the industry 34 per cent, or, if amended, 24 per cent, is absolutely beyond me.

The Leader of the National Party has already said that it is an uneven arrangement, and that is absolutely correct. Given that in a few months' time there will be a change on the Treasury benches, that will be changed. The National Party is at one with the Liberal Party on this matter. We shall create a situation in which this State does not impose higher taxes on this industry than does any other State. Not enough has been said in this debate about the amount of money generated by the industry, its labour intensive nature and its effect on the economy of this State. Many people are involved in the industry. A couple of days ago I spoke to greyhound trainers, and I have been speaking to racing and trotting horse trainers for some time; very few are making money. In fact, at a meeting held in Wanneroo attended by the member for Kalamunda and the Minister, Bill Duffy and Fred Kersley - the latter one of the best trainers of harness racing horses in Australia - both said that they could not make enough money to survive in the industry. Mr Kersley said he was seeking a licence to train gallopers, if my memory serves me correctly. The Government has been greedy by accepting \$11.5 million from the casino, without acknowledging that the establishment of the casino has squeezed the dollars and the life from those three vital sports and that one industry. The Government will not know for 12 months how much money it will receive from this tax; it is not impossible that the turnover from these industries will improve to such an extent that the Government will not incur a loss, or that the loss will be minimal. Bearing in mind what has happened in TABs in other States, particularly South Australia in the last 12 months, Government revenue may not be down in this area. If the TAB in Western Australia can be encouraged to be a little more adventurous, it may be possible to match the revenue received in other States.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (20)

Mr Blaikie	Mr Grayden	Mr Mensaros	Mr Fred Tubby
Mr Cash	Mr Greig	Mr Schell	Mr Reg Tubby
Mr Clarko	Mr House	Mr Stephens	Mr Watt
Mr Court	Mr Lewis	Mr Thompson	Mr Wiese
Mr Cowan	Mr Lightfoot	Mr Trenorden	Mr Maslen (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (27)

Mrs Beggs	Mr Peter Dowding	Mr Tom Jones	Mr Taylor
Mr Bertram	Mr Evans	Mr Marlborough	Mr Troy
Mr Bridge	Dr Gallop	Mr Pearce	Mrs Watkins
Mr Burkett	Mr Grill	Mr Read	Dr Watson
Mr Carr	Mrs Henderson	Mr Ripper	Mr Wilson
Mr Cunningham	Mr Gordon Hill	Mr D.L. Smith	Mrs Buchanan (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Donovan	Mr Hodge	Mr P.J. Smith	

Pairs

Ayes

Mr Bradshaw
Mr Hassell
Mr Crane

Noes

Mr Parker
Dr Lawrence
Dr Alexander

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 22 to 28 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with an amendment.

HORTICULTURAL PRODUCE COMMISSION BILL

Message - Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purpose of the Bill.

VETERINARY SURGEONS AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the second reading.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [5.20 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Leave granted for the following text to be incorporated.]

Mr PEARCE: The Veterinary Surgeons Act provides for the registration of veterinary surgeons and regulates the practice of veterinary surgery in Western Australia. The Bill deals with professional matters. It seeks to amend certain activities relating to the Murdoch School of Veterinary Studies, and provides for the registration of veterinary specialists. It also increases the disciplinary options available to the Veterinary Surgeons Board. The opportunity has also been taken in this Bill to tidy up some sections of the Act bringing these into line with more modern drafting format where this is appropriate. I will outline the main amendments.

Section 20: A new section 20AA provides for the honorary registration of veterinary surgeons of high standing within the profession who are either over the age of 65 years or of very long standing. It is intended that this be extended only to those who wish to remain registered but are no longer actively practising in the profession. The amount of money forgone is small and the honorary registration is seen as a small gesture to highly regarded older members of the profession. Honorary registration is available along similar lines in some other States.

A new section 20AB provides for the registration of veterinary specialists. Increasingly, veterinary surgeons are specialising in certain areas, for example, surgery, or ophthalmology, or radiology. They gain the necessary postgraduate experience and formal qualifications and practice in the specialist area by direct access to the public or by referrals from other veterinary surgeons. The public will benefit by this amendment as in future they will be able to recognise which veterinary surgeons have particular specialist expertise. The amendment provides for the prerequisites to be prescribed. The registration of specialists is being carried out in liaison with other States so that there will be a high degree of national uniformity.

Section 23: The present section 23(2a) provides for a range of disciplinary actions which the Veterinary Surgeons Board may impose on a veterinary surgeon who has been found guilty of unprofessional conduct. The amendment will increase the flexibility of the board in dealing with such cases, by permitting the board to impose conditions on the guilty

veterinary surgeon's registration or his practice of veterinary surgery. Such restrictions could, for example, limit certain of his professional activities for a time, until he has re-established himself and is able to regain full, unqualified registration. This new power is seen as beneficial in protecting the public.

Section 24A: An addition to section 24A(2)(1) ensures that it is legal for a veterinary student to perform certain limited procedures while at veterinary clinics or hospitals. The current legislation is not clear on this matter.

Section 26A: A new subsection 26A(6) ensures that it is legal for a university to conduct a registered veterinary clinic or hospital. Legal opinion is that the current registration may not provide for the legal operation of the Murdoch Veterinary Clinic. This amendment will put that beyond doubt.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

CRIMES (CONFISCATION OF PROFITS) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House), read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the second reading.

MR PEARCE (Armadale - Leader of the House) [5.23 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

[Leave granted for the following text to be incorporated.]

Mr PEARCE: This Bill is proposed as a major weapon in the fight against crime and, in particular, organised crime. A number of inquiries in Australia, including the Williams, Costigan and Stewart Royal Commissions, have reported on the large profits which can be made from crime and the ingenuity which is directed to concealing such profits. This Bill is to enable the confiscation from criminals of both the proceeds of crime and the property used in the commission of crimes. The aim of the legislation is to deter criminal activities by attacking the primary criminal motive - monetary profits - and preventing the use of those profits in other criminal activities. The Bill therefore represents an additional and stronger measure than such traditional methods of punishment as fines and imprisonment. The Misuse of Drugs Act already allows the courts to order the confiscation of profits and assets connected with the illegal drug trade. This Bill, however, goes much further. It applies to all indictable offences and to any offences prescribed by regulations as serious offences.

The purpose of the Bill is to confiscate and forfeit to the State -

all proceeds of crime;

all profits of criminal activity, whether gained directly or indirectly;

all property used in the commission of indictable or other serious offences.

To accomplish this, the Bill empowers courts to make orders confiscating profits of crime and property used in the commission of a crime. It also allows courts to make restraining orders in respect of specified property. The Supreme Court will be able to make such restraining orders where a person has been or is about to be charged with a serious offence. The court also will be able to order the production of documents which could assist in identifying or locating property used in or derived from the commission of a crime.

The Bill enables courts to make pecuniary penalty orders requiring criminals to pay to the State an amount of money equivalent to the estimated profits derived from their crimes. It also enables the registration and enforcement in Western Australia of restraining and confiscation orders made under corresponding legislation in other jurisdictions, and authorises search warrants for the seizure of property used in or derived from a serious offence in another jurisdiction. This legislation, including its reciprocal interstate enforcement provisions, is the result of agreement by the Standing Committee of Attorneys

General to achieve uniform legislation throughout Australia. Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and the Commonwealth have already enacted confiscation legislation broadly along the lines agreed to by the Standing Committee.

The Bill represents a careful balance between competing interests. On the one hand, there is a need for law enforcement agencies to be able effectively and efficiently to freeze and confiscate assets associated with criminal activity. On the other hand, the rights and interests in such assets of innocent third parties, who have no involvement in criminal activity or knowledge that the assets were derived from or used in a crime, must be protected.

Forfeiture Orders: After a conviction for a serious offence, the court will be able to order that any property used in or in connection with that crime, or any proceeds derived directly or indirectly from the commission of that crime, be forfeited to the State. Applications for forfeiture orders will be made by the prosecutor within six months after a person has been convicted of a serious offence. Forfeiture orders can also be made against persons who have been charged with an offence but who abscond before the charge is finally determined. Forfeiture orders may be made even if illegally used, acquired or derived property has passed to a person other than the original offender. This will allow courts and law enforcement agencies to get to such property which is only nominally controlled by third parties. The Bill is therefore a major attack on the laundering of the proceeds of crime. At the same time, the Bill protects the rights of third parties who acquire property in good faith and for value. Third parties are to be notified of applications for forfeiture orders, are to be given the opportunity to be heard by the court, and can obtain a court order declaring the nature, extent and value of their interest in the property and directing the Crown to return the property or pay them.

Pecuniary penalty orders: Courts will be able to order offenders to pay an amount of money equal to the value of the benefits derived by the offender committing a serious offence. These benefits may include increases in the value of the offender's property, and any service or advantage provided to the offender or another person at the direction of the offender as a result of the commission of a serious offence. Where there has been a conviction for a serious offence, the courts are to presume that an increase in the value of the offender's property is a benefit derived from the commission of the offence. Where it is a serious drug offence the Bill provides a rebuttable presumption that all of the offender's property at the time of the application and within specified time limits was derived as a result of that offence. In assessing the value of benefits derived from an offence, courts will be able to go behind corporate structures and treat as the offender's property any property that is under the offender's effective control.

Restraining orders: This legislation will enable the Supreme Court to make orders freezing assets where a person has been convicted of a serious offence or is charged or about to be charged with a serious offence. In urgent cases interim restraining orders for a maximum of seven days may be made without notice to persons who might have an interest in the property. Normally notice of applications must be given to persons with an interest in any property that is the subject of a restraining order application. To safeguard the rights of innocent persons, the court can require the applicant to give undertakings as to the payment of damages and costs and impose such terms and conditions on the order as the court thinks fit. The Supreme Court will have wide discretionary powers in relation to the freezing of property. For example, the court may direct the Public Trustee to take control of property, and order the examination of a person whose property is restrained, or any other person, to ascertain the nature and location of property which may be liable to confiscation. The order may also provide for living and business expenses and legal costs of people whose property is subject to a restraining order.

Search warrants: The Bill provides for magistrates to issue search warrants to authorise the police to seize property used in or derived from the commission of a serious offence in another jurisdiction. These powers are also available for serious offences committed in Western Australia without derogating from existing powers. Seized property must be returned to the person from whose possession it was taken if no charge is laid within seven days or no application for a forfeiture order is made.

Information gathering: Part 6 of the Bill will enable law enforcement agencies to gather vital information. They will be able to obtain documents relevant to tracing property and money

which has been used in or derived from criminal offences when the Supreme Court orders the production of documents. Where property cannot be identified with sufficient particularity, or there are reasons to believe a production order is unlikely to be complied with, or may prejudice effective law enforcement, a Supreme Court judge may issue a search warrant to enable police to search for and seize documents.

The Bill also provides for monitoring orders. A Supreme Court judge may order a financial institution to provide to police information over a specified period about transactions conducted through accounts held by a particular person. Monitoring orders are available only in relation to serious drug offences. Except in specified circumstances, the financial institution is not to disclose the existence or operation of a monitoring order.

Interstate enforcement: As I have indicated, this legislation is part of a uniform approach agreed to by the Standing Committee of Attorneys General. The Bill therefore will permit forfeiture or restraining orders made in another State applying to property in Western Australia to be registered in the Western Australian Supreme Court, and such an order may then be enforced as if it were made in WA. This will enable local authorities to enforce orders against assets in this State in Western Australian courts. Any alteration or variation of such interstate orders must be made in the jurisdiction where the order was originally made - that is, the State where the offence was committed. This will enable all issues relating to interstate forfeiture and restraining orders to be resolved in the original jurisdiction, thereby preventing litigation in different States about the same offence or order. The Supreme Court, when varying a Western Australian order which is registered in the Supreme Court of another jurisdiction, may require that the costs of a third party with property in another State be paid.

This legislation is an important measure to provide courts and law enforcement authorities with effective powers to combat serious crime and to deter it. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Mensaros.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Dr Gallop) in the Chair; Mr Peter Dowding (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Division 2: Parliament, \$6 461 000 -

Mr COURT: Initially I would like to comment on question time in this Parliament. The Opposition has proposed on a number of occasions this year to modify the way in which question time is undertaken. I believe question time is an important part of the proceedings of this Chamber. The three main proposals we have put forward are for question time to be brought forward to the beginning of the day's sitting; for it to be extended to 45 minutes; and for the electronic media to be allowed to participate in question time. Our concern is that in recent years there have been changes to the way in which modern communications have developed. The Federal Government now has most of its proceedings fully covered by the electronic media, in the form of radio. We are now seeing the advent of a greater number of AM and FM radio stations which cover a range of interests. I believe the time has come when people want to listen to the proceedings of State Parliament, and particularly to question time. I know that there are some problems, which have been raised, and that the Speaker, along with other members on his side of the House, does not support the concept of the electronic media being involved because of the concern that questions asked during question time could be taken out of context. I agree that that could be a problem, and for that reason we should consider the possibility of question time being broadcast live during the day at the earlier time slot at the beginning of the sitting. Members opposite tend to ask who would want to listen to question time - it is a funny sort of half hour in the Parliament - but I think they and other members would be surprised to know how many people in the community would want to listen to question time in this Parliament.

I urge the Leader of the House to reconsider the proposals we have put forward. We are prepared to sit down and work out a practical way to ensure that question time will not be distorted by the media's taking questions out of context. I would be surprised if, given the

increase in the number of radio stations, there were not a radio station prepared to air all of question time, and not just take out one question at a time. These days we have many talkback shows on the radio, both in the morning and in the afternoon - programs such as "Drive Time" and "Nightline" - and this State Parliament is one of our most important debating venues. A lot of people are interested in the subjects discussed on those programs, and I believe the time has come when all of question time should be on the electronic media. We should have a set of rules worked out whereby television stations can cover question time with certain safeguards so that distortion does not occur when questions are taken out of context.

The second point I raise in connection with the running of the Parliament concerns the improvements that have taken place in producing *Hansard*. I believe the introduction of computers and word processors, and the fact that the daily *Hansard* is produced so quickly, is a great improvement in the service provided to the Parliament. Many members ask questions in this Parliament, and they often need to do a quick recall of the questions that have been asked previously. The *Hansard* is indexed for the previous year, but it would be great if, on a week by week basis, we could have a computer printout of the questions asked in the Parliament. I do not doubt that the system has that capability, and I would appreciate some indication of when that service will be available. I do not know about other members, but I often spend a lot of time going through *Hansard*, trying to find questions that have been asked in the previous couple of weeks.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued at a later stage of the sitting.]

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House).

STATEMENT - BY THE SPEAKER

Question Time - Changes

THE SPEAKER (Mr Barnett): Before I take questions without notice I want to address the matter which was just being debated. I certainly do not have any intention whatsoever of stopping people saying whatever it is they want to say in this place, but I just want to make it perfectly clear to members that the statement that was made, or that I thought I heard made, that there are no changes to question time because of me, the Speaker, is not correct. Question time takes place in the current format because of an agreement between members of both sides. The fact that one side or the other has, subsequent to that agreement, changed its mind and now wants changes has no bearing on whether or not I should change it. In fact, I have said repeatedly that I would be quite happy to facilitate a change that is required by all members; but just because one or two members want a change is no reason for me to change it.

Having said that, I ask members to please feel free to go ahead with whatever they wanted to say in the debate, but bear in mind what I have just said.

[Questions taken.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 pm

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Burkett) in the Chair; Mr Peter Dowding (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Division 2: Parliament, \$6 461 000 -

Progress was reported after the Division had been partly considered.

Mr COURT: Before the tea suspension I asked for some indication as to when the system

will be upgraded for the quick recall of questions. We are getting used to the tremendous advantages of computerisation, and no doubt we are close to having that available.

This section relates to the actual building costs associated with Parliament and it has concerned me that during the last few years there has been a rather haphazard approach to the structural changes taking place in this Parliament House. I would like to think that a long term, overall view can be taken of this Parliament because I believe that Parliament is a very important, if not the most important, part of our democracy. Accordingly, the facilities in Parliament House should enable all the people who work here to have good conditions. We are all aware that the poor facilities affect the staff who work in Parliament House more than they affect the members of Parliament. Parliament House has outgrown its function and instead of the debacle that took place over the building of the spa and the health facility - I certainly did not approve of the way that it was undertaken - I would like to see an overall plan in place so the proper facilities can be provided, because in the long term this place should be a prestigious building befitting the parliamentary system that we proudly inherited.

As we are referring to the salaries, wages and allowances of the people involved in running this Parliament, I want to say "thank you" to all the people involved for all the work that they do in making sure that this place keeps ticking. We come in here and everything is organised because behind the scenes a lot is being done to ensure that this Parliament operates in a proper manner. To all those people I say, "thank you".

Mr WATT: I also wish to comment on the matter of question time which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised. I want to indicate my dissatisfaction, not so much with the way the Speaker handles question time, but with the way question time has evolved and, in particular, the increasing number of dorothy dix questions and the answers that are given to them. I am perfectly willing to concede that a number of factors have contributed to the present situation, but it is about time that all of us took some action so that question time is as it was intended to be. I clearly recall that when I first came into this Parliament 15 years ago, we were told that questions without notice was a time that was intended for members to seek information of a somewhat urgent nature that could not be otherwise obtained by a question on notice. The Ministers were expected to answer questions briefly and concisely.

Mr Peter Dowding: On that basis we would never answer a question - they were meant to be questions on notice, but because of the urgency you wanted an immediate answer. That is novel.

Mr WATT: I can assure the Treasurer that that is the way the intent of question time was explained. They were the ground rules.

Mr Peter Dowding: When you were in Government.

Mr WATT: Yes.

Mr Peter Dowding: Of course. We have given question time more latitude.

Mr WATT: If the Treasurer would care to browse through *Hansard* and look at the types of questions without notice asked by Opposition members - and by Government members - he would not find the same number of dorothy dix questions on those occasions by Government members. That came later. If the Treasurer had been listening, he would know that I did concede that a number of factors have contributed to the decline in question time.

Question time has become a time for ministerial statements. On occasions I have sat and timed question time. Often between 50 per cent and 75 per cent of question time is taken up with what in effect are ministerial statements. That denies members the opportunity to use question time for legitimate purposes. That is a great shame. Members often feel they would like to obtain information of an urgent nature and the opportunity is not available to them. The time has come for the members responsible for the management of this House, on both sides, to get together and decide that question time is not the time for ministerial statements. The situation is a farce. Reading through the guidelines offered to members in the question booklets under the heading "Answers", we find that the answers should be confined to the points contained in the question with only such explanations as render the answer intelligible; extraneous matters should not be introduced to an answer. It is a long time since an answer to a question has fitted those rules. I wish my remarks on this matter to be added to the request made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for question time to be improved.

I turn now to a matter of a personal nature because this section of this legislation deals with the authorisation of expenditure for the payment of staff. I refer to the Clerk of the Assembly. It may not be known to a majority of members that after the conclusion of this session of Parliament, Mr Bruce Okely will be taking long service leave. By the time this Parliament resumes - if all things go according to plan - Bruce will have taken his retirement.

Mr Hassell: Is he old enough?

Mr WATT: He does not look old enough. I appreciate very much the courtesy Bruce has extended to me over the years. Bruce was a friend of mine before I entered Parliament and some people would be surprised to hear that I once sang in a church choir conducted by Bruce. His musical talents then were much better than mine are ever likely to be. Bruce commenced work in this place on 4 December 1950 as a trainee junior clerk in the Assembly. On 16 January 1952 he was transferred to the Joint House Committee staff; from 25 January 1954 to 4 June 1954 he served in the audit department; on 8 June 1954, he was appointed assistant clerk of records and accounts; on 1 July 1966, he was appointed clerk of records and accounts; on 1 July 1970, he was appointed Clerk Assistant of the Assembly and Librarian; and on 2 December 1975 he was appointed as Clerk of the Assembly. It is of great credit to Bruce that he has worked his way up through the system and become the holder of this very important office in the affairs of this State - and not only that he was appointed to the position but also that he has filled the position with distinction. I am sure that his position has been a difficult one and that people from each side of the House swear that he is a card carrying member of the other side.

Mr Peter Dowding: I am sure he has more sense.

Mr WATT: I am sure he has too. In my view, Bruce has always conducted his activities in a completely impartial way. On behalf of the Opposition, I wish Bruce well in retirement, should he not be present in this place when next this House meets.

Mr HASSELL: I was not aware of the matters raised by the member for Albany but I endorse his remarks about the Clerk of this House.

Unfortunately, I have to deal with a less pleasant matter in relation to the Budget allocation to the Parliament. I support the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Albany regarding the abuse and misplacing of question time. I wish to take those remarks further. The truth is that the Government has worked assiduously over a period to completely reduce question time - and questions on notice - to a level of farce. The Government has put Opposition members only - for under the rigid discipline imposed by the Labor Party there is no probing of the Government by its backbenchers - in the position of playing a cat and mouse game to get information. It is a cat and mouse game where we spend our time following up leads, given to us by the public about matters which the public regard as scandalous, at Press conferences outside this Parliament, when we are able to obtain verification of these matters because this Parliament is not working properly.

We have had a classic example of that in the past 24 hours, when the Treasurer has given five different versions in relation to the losses incurred by the Western Australian Development Corporation on the McLean Brothers and Rigg Ltd dealings. One version included the statement that the Treasurer made in this House tonight during question time that the Opposition was acting in a shameful or improper way in exposing the dealings of the development corporation. What an extraordinary thing it is that the Treasurer of the State should be condemning people who represent the public for exposing the dealings of a Government body. The public and Parliament are entitled to know what is going on, the Treasurer will not tell Parliament what is going on, yet he bears the responsibility within Parliament to make these things public.

Does the Treasurer really say that the public are not entitled to know about the losses incurred through the Danbury group of companies and the State Superannuation Board? Does the Treasurer really say that the public should be kept in the dark about the extraordinary dealings of Mr Len Brush, when he was Chairman of the State Superannuation Board, and the cause of the losses of millions upon millions of dollars? What is the Treasurer saying about his attitude in the way he deals with that question?

When the Western Australian Development Corporation is raised in this place, the standard

answer from the Government is that it is an independent, commercial body which operates outside the purview of Parliament except insofar as it may lodge or table an annual report. What an absurdity it is when the Treasurer of the State, representing the Labor Party and a Labor Government, wants to go out into the public arena with Mr Horgan and hold a Press conference to trumpet the fact that the development corporation is making millions of dollars' profit - a puny amount of \$10 million this year - but does not want to disclose to this Parliament, in answer to questions or otherwise, the loss side of the ledger.

I will give a couple of concrete examples of the way in which the Treasurer is treating this Parliament and reducing its operations to the level of absurdity. I am sure you would agree, Mr Chairman, that it is ironic that on the very day we start debating the money we are voting to Parliament and, as we will soon, the Treasurer's own Estimates, I received an answer to a question which has been sitting on the Notice Paper since 20 September, in which the Treasurer refused to disclose any information which is directly relevant to the Budget now before the House. I want to explore where we are in this Parliament, when such an attitude is being constantly expressed by the Treasurer.

Mr Carr: We are in about the same place as we were when Charlie Court was running the place.

Mr HASSELL: I remind the Minister that if that were true - and I do not accept that it is - Sir Charles Court always answered questions about the Budget properly.

Mr Carr interjected.

Mr HASSELL: Let me assume, for the sake of argument, that the Minister is correct. I would point out to him that he and his colleagues issued a policy in 1983 relating to Parliament in which they stated all the things which would be changed. In each case they said, "We are going to improve the operations of the Parliament; we are going to have a proper committee system; we are going to make sure the Parliament is accountable; and we are going to give answers." In question 1271, on the Notice Paper of 20 September, I asked the Treasurer -

In the last two months has the Government made any payment or advance or given any guarantee or undertaking of payment, advance or guarantee to any of the interests associated with Mr Bond or Mr Connell or Rothwells Limited in connection with any of the announced or unannounced dealings of the Government with those parties or any of them?

That is a totally legitimate parliamentary question, which goes to the very heart of the responsibility of Government to account to this Parliament for what it is doing with taxpayers' money. What I asked the Premier was, "What dealings are you doing with the people's money? What dealings have you done? What guarantees have you given?" Is the Treasurer saying the public are not entitled to know the answer? Is the Treasurer saying that it is not legitimate to ask about dealings with Mr Bond or Mr Connell? Are Mr Bond, Mr Connell or Rothwells such friends of the Treasurer that their dealings fall in a different category from those of other people?

I contrast the way the Treasurer approaches this matter with the way in which the Deputy Premier approaches it. Despite the enormity of the differences which I have with the Deputy Premier and his philosophies, I have found over the years that he does try to give answers to questions. He believes that, by giving out the truth, at the end of the day he will save himself a lot of embarrassment. The Treasurer was caught up in Kununurra, way out of town, with issues being raised about WADC. He was so confused about those issues, because he had not got the information, that he made a complete fool of himself by giving five different versions of his answer to the media before he got back to Perth, where Mr Horgan hastily told him that there was a loss of \$2.95 million on a guarantee, and there was a write-off of \$597 000. The Treasurer then had to frame a new set of answers and we ended up with five different versions.

Mr Peter Dowding: That is just nonsense. That is childish.

Mr HASSELL: The Treasurer's behaviour is childish. The Treasurer is a dishonest man. The other day the Deputy Premier was asked a question by me about a guarantee given by the Technology and Industry Development Authority. I do not believe that guarantee should have been given and I will take the matter further later. The Deputy Premier answered that

yes, a guarantee had been given for this reason, and its basis was x and y. There was the answer. However, when I asked the Treasurer about the liability incurred by his Government with Mr Bond and his interests, Mr Connell and his interests, and Rothwells and its interests, the reply - not answer - is, "If the member has a specific concern I will be happy to address it." I do have a specific concern.

Mr Peter Dowding: What is it?

Mr HASSELL: That concern is the question that was asked.

Mr Peter Dowding: What are you saying? What is your concern? Why don't you say what it is instead of wanting to go on a fishing expedition through Government? What is your concern?

Mr HASSELL: Could I point out to this dishonest Treasurer that it is not permitted, under the Standing Orders of this Parliament, to make statements when asking a question. I asked the Treasurer if the Government had given any undertakings, payments or guarantees to Bond, Connell, Rothwells or their interests, in the period of two months.

Mr Peter Dowding: How do I know what Mr Bond's interests are, or anyone else's interests?

Mr HASSELL: I guess that if the Treasurer gave a guarantee or undertaking to Bond Corporation, he would know that it was one of Mr Bond's interests, would he not?

Mr Peter Dowding: Yes, but you have not asked me that. You have asked a fishing question which would be impossible for me to answer.

Mr HASSELL: It is true that the Treasurer may not know about all of the interests of Mr Connell or Mr Bond. However, he knows whether he has done any deals with either of those people.

Mr Peter Dowding: That is not your question. You have cast a net over a whole range of issues by asking questions which you know are not legitimate.

Mr HASSELL: The situation exists in this State right now relating to the operations of this Parliament and concerning the Budget. The Government has committed itself to a \$1.5 billion petrochemical project. The Government has arranged for a payout of money borrowed from a Government instrumentality to Mr Bond, Mr Connell or to someone else, in connection with a guarantee that the Government gave last year which has never been authorised by this Parliament. The Government is involved in all kinds of deals of an extraordinary nature with Mr Bond and Mr Connell, deals that are completely unprecedented in the annals of the political history of this State. In those circumstances, it is appropriate for the Parliament to be told whether the Government has made any payments or advances to these people or whether it has given any guarantee to them.

It is a fact that the Government rescued Mr Connell once; it rescued the Rothwells company last year. That is on the record. It is also a fact that the Government has been deeply embarrassed by the guarantee it gave. Yet, when I asked the question two weeks ago whether the Government had received any indication that there would be a call on the guarantee, the Treasurer refused to answer that question, too. What is the point of our having a Parliament which is supposed to oversee the expenditure of taxpayers' money through a Budget if the Parliament is rendered absolutely ineffectual and impotent by the refusal of the Government to be accountable for what is being spent and for the liabilities being incurred? I ask the Treasurer again whether it is true that the Government received indications that there was likely to be a call on the Rothwells guarantee. Does the Treasurer say that the Parliament is not entitled to know the answer to that question? Does the Treasurer say that the Parliament is not entitled to know whether, in the last two months in the course of this complex series of dealings, the Government has made a payment to Mr Bond, Mr Connell or Rothwells?

Mr Peter Dowding: If that is what you want to know, you should frame a question which asks me that. That is a fishing expedition, and you know it.

Mr HASSELL: I will tell the Treasurer why the questions have to be framed the way they have been. It goes back again to the honesty of the way in which matters are dealt with. In the last 24 hours I have heard Mr Horgan say that it is not correct that the WADC paid out \$3 million on the guarantee of McLean Bros and Rigg Ltd. It is indisputably correct that it paid

out \$2.95 million precisely. Yet there has been a barrage of media comment from the Treasurer and Mr Horgan trying to escape facing up to that fact. They are trying to escape on the flimsy ground that if it is alleged the amount is \$3 million, the allegation is wrong because the figure is \$2.95 million. Therefore, I frame my questions to this Treasurer in broad terms. Does the Treasurer believe it is not legitimate for the Parliament to have answers to those questions?

On 22 September I asked the Treasurer question 1341 which was in four parts. The question was very specific about particular dealings of the State Superannuation Board. The first two parts of the question were answered. Part (3) of the question stated -

Who on behalf of the board concluded the put option/guarantee deal negotiations leading to the completion of documentary liability in June 1987?

In the debates in this place where we have sought to extract from the Government a proper explanation of what was going on with the Superannuation Board and the Danbury group, there was considerable conflict over factual material and whether that put option agreement was concluded in February 1987 or June 1987. The Treasurer relied on statements that were made after February 1987. However, the factual material brought to the House which has never been explained by the Treasurer indicated that the deal was originally agreed to in February 1987. Therefore, that issue remains unanswered in the cloudy confusion of non-answers by this Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible to Parliament for the activities of the State Superannuation Board which concluded the deal. That was a very simple question to him and it has not been answered.

I then asked a series of questions about a statement by Mr Rolston, and whether Mr Rolston was reported correctly in *The West Australian* when he said that unfortunately an investment was made in one of the Danbury group of companies on the basis that the company was going to be listed. It was not listed and the money was lost. Mr Chairman, I am sure that you, as a businessman - you have had some experience in these matters - would understand that if you subscribe for shares in a company that is to be listed, you believe that it will be listed on the Stock Exchange and that, on the day it was first quoted, you will be able to sell the shares for a price, whatever that price is.

You would also anticipate that there would be a marketplace for dealing with those shares. What was established as a matter of fact, not by me but by Mr Rolston, the Chairman of the State Superannuation Board, was that certain shares were subscribed for in a Danbury company on the basis that the company would be listed. They were not listed and all the money was lost. Does that not legitimately raise in the minds of people the suspicion that something went radically wrong and, indeed, something improper was done? When money is subscribed to a company that is to be listed one expects that one's money will be kept safe and sound until all the shares are subscribed for and everyone is given an equal chance in the marketplace. That did not happen and it was not I who said that; it was Mr Rolston, the chairman of the board.

In part (4) of question 1341 I asked the Premier the following -

In relation to the statement by the current chairman, Mr Rolston, that moneys were paid to a Danbury company that was to be listed on the Stock Exchange, but was not in fact so listed -

(a) what was the sum total of the payment to that company; . . .

Are we not entitled to know that? Is that not a legitimate parliamentary question? My question continues -

(b) when was it made;

(c) how much was lost; . . .

It is a fact that the Treasurer could not controvert that every single penny lost by the State Superannuation Board has to be made up by the taxpayers of this State. The member for Avon knows all about that because he is an expert in the field of superannuation and he took part in the debate when the Bill for the new superannuation scheme was brought before the Parliament.

Mr Peter Dowding: You are a man possessed. You would find something odd under every rock. You have no idea how to deal with this issue. You are so inflamed by your possession.

Mr HASSELL: That is the sort of contempt that the Treasurer continues to show for this Parliament.

Mr Peter Dowding: That is not contempt for Parliament. You are asking questions that are impossible to answer most of the time and when the answers come in you do not like them.

Mr HASSELL: I wonder whether the Treasurer wants to tell the Chamber now that it is not possible to say how much was lost by the State Superannuation Board in the Danbury company referred to by Mr Rolston.

Mr Peter Dowding: What does the answer say?

Mr HASSELL: Would the Treasurer like me to tell the Chamber?

Mr Peter Dowding: Read it.

Mr HASSELL: I will come to it. The answer that the Treasurer gave to my question was, "See answer to question 1327", but that answer does not deal with the issue.

Mr Peter Dowding: What does it say?

Mr HASSELL: I am not going to read all of it out.

Mr Peter Dowding: Don't read all of it - read the relevant bits.

Mr HASSELL: The Treasurer can look it up.

Mr Peter Dowding: What does it say?

Mr HASSELL: The Treasurer will read what it says in the four and a half page answer.

Mr Peter Dowding: Four and a half page answer! That is what I mean!

Mr HASSELL: That question is not answered at all - it is not dealt with.

Mr Peter Dowding: I said you are a man possessed. You never gave a four and a half page answer when you were a Minister.

Mr HASSELL: The Treasurer's answer to the three line question was a volume of abuse equivalent to what he is giving now. It was simply abuse and that is the very point I am making. I thank the Treasurer for underlining it so clearly. It is helpful to have his cooperation. That is what I am talking about in relation to the operation of this Parliament - a total, deliberate and considered contempt with which this Treasurer deals with the Parliament and its functions and which he shows to members who disagree with him. Because he does not like the way in which I raise the Danbury issue his response is to abuse me - not to give the facts.

I am telling the Treasurer and the Chamber that the Parliament's role and status will be reduced and it will continue to be reduced for as long as people like the Treasurer continue to abuse the Parliament in the way in which they treat it. What I have done is to draw a very sharp distinction between the attitude repeatedly displayed by this Treasurer and the attitude displayed by the Deputy Premier. It is interesting that last year it was the now Deputy Premier, the then Minister for Economic Development, who was called on by Premier Burke to explain the Rothwell's deal. He did explain it to the Parliament. Subsequent events have proved that his hopeful and, indeed, confident assertions were utterly wrong.

Mr Peter Dowding: Why is that?

Mr HASSELL: It would take me more time than I have to explain it.

Mr Peter Dowding: You are making a serious assertion. Back it up.

Mr HASSELL: If the Treasurer extends my time I will go into it. I will back it up when I have the time to do it fully. His basic assertion was -

Mr Peter Dowding: That it would not cost the community anything, and it didn't.

Mr HASSELL: One thing he said was the bad debts were \$36 million, but they are \$350 million. That is only one thing out of a whole range of things that he said. The little diversionary tactic used by the Treasurer does not alter the fact: The fact is that last year the Deputy Premier explained the Rothwell's deal and this year he has explained the equally embarrassing and equally scandalous petrochemical deal. I can say with absolute confidence and without any motive except for sorrow - if that is a motive - that it is a deal that will not

work out and it will be to the detriment of the State. It will fail because it cannot possibly work.

Mr Peter Dowding: What cannot work?

Mr HASSELL: The total capitalised cost of the petrochemical plant has destroyed its economics. The Government's \$400 million blue sky payout has destroyed its economics.

Mr Peter Dowding: You would love it to fall over.

Mr HASSELL: I would love the Government's deal to fall over and I know for certain it will. At least the Deputy Premier has answered this Parliament. There is not the aggro towards him that there is towards the Treasurer who will not tell the Parliament the truth.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr PETER DOWDING: I ask the member for Cottesloe to withdraw the assertion that I did not tell the Chamber the truth.

Mr Hassell: I said you will not tell the truth.

Mr PETER DOWDING: To accuse me as being a person who will not tell the truth to the Chamber is an issue to which I object.

Mr HASSELL: Mr Chairman, I submit to you that the Standing Orders of this House only require a withdrawal in defined circumstances. Those defined circumstances are where the language is unparliamentary. The assertion that a member has not or will not tell the truth to the Chamber has never been ruled unparliamentary. I do not believe that under the Standing Orders there is any point of order under which the Treasurer is entitled to demand a withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: Long before I came to the Parliament a precedent was established with respect to unparliamentary language or words which might be considered offensive in reference to any member. I refer to such words as "trifles with the truth", "try to tell the truth", "treacherous", "treason", "untruthful", "untruth", and so forth. In the chapter "Rules of Debate" in the Standing Orders, it states -

No Member shall use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to any Member of the House.

A number of words used in the previous speech could easily have been challenged as being offensive. Therefore, I ask the member for Cottesloe to make a withdrawal.

Mr HASSELL: Mr Chairman, I withdraw.

Committee Resumed

Mr MENSAROS: In considering this Division, "Parliament", I would like to follow up the matter raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that Parliament House should provide proper accommodation for all members and the staff instead of only temporary, makeshift additions and, worse still, the internal partitioning of rooms recently begun.

In this connection one has to remember that only a year or so ago a magnificent plan was submitted to the Government of the day. That plan would have catered for a permanent - if that expression can be used - building without any waste. It would have accommodated Public Service departments much more cheaply than the hiring of offices in fairly expensive St. George's Terrace buildings until such time as the building could be fully utilised by the Parliament. The plan would have enabled us to do away with the eyesore boxes in the corridors, but it would have left the Chambers and the main building intact.

The plan was magnificent. The cost would have been spread over four or five years. It is a great pity that the then Premier, to use the colloquial expression, "chickened out". Presumably he did so because it is never popular to spend money on parliamentarians. To some extent, that it is not popular is our fault because, generally speaking, we cannot claim to be popular, let alone respected, as we were in days gone by. Nevertheless, the Government, particularly given the financial conditions disclosed in the subsequent two Budgets, should not have made a decision that was so shortsighted because of a fear of bringing down the wrath of the media. I would not know whether the then Premier made the decision because he knew that he would not be affected because of his intention to retire, unbeknown to others at the time. Whatever the reason, it was a very wrong decision because

it showed that very little importance is placed on the institution of Parliament which indirectly still has an important place in media reporting.

I turn now to the subject of the repeal of the Legislative Review Committee, something to which we reluctantly agreed. Had we not agreed, the committee would still have been repealed. The committee, albeit a body outside the Parliament, did a magnificent job. We were able to check its assessment of delegated legislation at all times. The Attorney General abolished the institution by legislation and instead referred these methods to the newly established Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation. At the time, I said that the exercise must have been undertaken with the intentions of saving money, not a great deal of money, and perhaps saving the Government some embarrassment. The committee was an objective, outside body which examined delegated legislation. The Attorney argued that by creating the Joint Standing Committee the task was being brought back to the Parliament, as is proper. I do not think it is the proper thing to do. As with other Select Committees within the Parliament, the majority rules. That does not necessarily mean that the majority is always right, particularly when the task is to examine critically legislation or regulations brought down by one's masters, the Government which comes out from the majority in this Parliament.

The committee has been established for some months now. To my knowledge, no amount of money has been spent on it. Perhaps some of the existing officers of Parliament have been burdened with some work to do, but I do not know of any member's involvement in the deliberation and consideration of these questions. The net result is that we have lost a service which was manned by tremendously good people. I can say that from personal experience because I knew some of them. They did a tremendous job and were very good lawyers. Our predictions were right. It is a great pity that we have virtually done away with these services.

Finally, I join the member for Albany in wishing the Clerk, Bruce Okely, all the best during his retirement. We had a very close and amicable relationship and I have very much appreciated the assistance and advice he has given me.

Mr STEPHENS: I pay tribute to the work that Bruce Okely has done and to the excellent assistance that I have received from him throughout my parliamentary career of some 18 years. I know that I speak for all members of the National Party in my expression of these comments. I know that no-one is indispensable, but I feel that for some time after Bruce Okely has left, his services and his manner will be deeply missed. The Parliament will be well served if whoever replaces him aims to maintain the same standards.

Other National Party members and I have previously made reference to the standard of debate and behaviour in Parliament. Every member of Parliament must be seriously concerned about the public attitude to and the public opinion of Parliament and members. One way to overcome the problem would be for each and everyone of us to look at his own standard and performance in the House. In doing so, some procedures could be set up which may be of assistance. Frequently members use parliamentary privilege to expose certain matters, and I have no objection to the use of that parliamentary privilege if it is correctly employed. I question whether anyone else has. However, from time to time the public, and even members of this House, question whether that privilege has been abused, particularly when advantage is taken of that privileged position to malign a member of the public. As parliamentarians, we should give serious consideration to giving any person so aggrieved the right to come before the bar of this Parliament and state his case; that would give him the same privilege as the member of the House who has attacked him. If members of this Parliament were aware that members of the public could be given this right, they might perhaps be more circumspect in their use of parliamentary privilege. I am not suggesting that every person so aggrieved should be forced to come to the bar of the House, but that they be given the right to state their case before the Parliament. They would then be on the same level as the member making the allegation in the first place.

I have been concerned for some considerable time at the number of questions to which the answers have been deferred. Ministers have more staff assistance at present than I have ever known them to have in the 18 years I have been a member of this Parliament. Notwithstanding that assistance, I have never known of so many answers to questions being deferred as has been the case in the last couple of sessions of Parliament.

Mr Troy: The volume of questions has increased.

Mr STEPHENS: I do not think the volume of questions has varied that much, and certainly the ratio of staff numbers to questions asked is no worse. I suggest that perhaps Ministers have such large staffs that the staff cannot agree among themselves as to the appropriate answer and, therefore, the questions go into the too hard basket, leaving the members desperately seeking answers lamenting.

Mr Crane: The problem is that the staff used to be professional public servants and they are now all political appointees.

Mr Troy: I would like to hear you repeat that to the Public Service.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Moore will not need to repeat that statement because I intended to make it myself, and it has also been said by the member for Floreat. To a large extent the Public Service has been politicised. This would be acceptable if the policy were put before the people at election time and they were aware of the Government's intentions. This politicisation of the Public Service has to a large degree destroyed the morale of certain sections of the Public Service.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This chitchat is all very well, but suddenly 11 members are entering into the debate. I ask the member for Stirling to talk through the Chair and not to invite interjections. If he does invite interjections, members will reply, I shall get angry with them, and I am sure the member does not wish me to become angry with him.

Mr STEPHENS: I was aware that I could rely on your protection, Mr Chairman, and for that reason, notwithstanding all the interjections, I kept speaking to the point. I had the feeling that members were trying to drown me out, and that the truth was hurting, but I did not fall into the trap of replying to them.

The politicisation of the Public Service has had an effect on the morale of people who were making a career in the Public Service. At one time they could work their way through the system with diligence and with some hope of obtaining a top position. That is no longer the case. In many instances the appointments to senior positions are politically motivated and are made from outside the Public Service. Having said that, I am not opposed to members of the Public Service gaining experience in the private sector for short periods on secondment; likewise it would be beneficial for members of private enterprises to spend short periods on secondment in the Public Service. However, I am completely opposed to the current level of politicisation, of which the public should be made aware, and will be during the election campaign. The public can be rest assured that corrective measures will be taken after February next year when the National Party will be in Government.

I have the highest regard for the staff of Parliament House, and I am sad to say that since I have been a member suggestions have been made on some occasions - I do not know whether or not they were correct - of unfair dismissal, or pressure being brought to bear on staff members to resign. If those rumours were true - and I have reason to believe that some of them were close to the truth - we must establish some mechanism whereby the staff can appeal against such dismissal or pressure and be assured of fair play. During the last session of Parliament legislation came before this House which, when enacted and proclaimed, will enable the staff to join a union, which may give them some protection. Although several months have passed and I have made several inquiries, the provisions relating to Parliament House staff have not yet been proclaimed and the staff do not have any protection. As a matter of urgency the Government should ensure that a mechanism is set up so that staff can be assured of fair play. I go further and suggest that the legislation should be checked and any necessary amendment brought to this House to ensure that staff who service the Assembly come under the jurisdiction of the Clerk of the Assembly, and those working in the Legislative Council come under the jurisdiction of the Clerk of the Council. That would be an appropriate course to follow. Those two officers are the heads of the departments and it would be right and proper for them to have control of and responsibility for the employment, discipline and, if necessary, dismissal of staff.

Mr Troy: National Party representatives at the next Joint House Committee meeting will hear significant progress in this regard.

Mr STEPHENS: I am pleased that I will hear about it; I have raised it a couple of times in the Joint House Committee meetings and progress has been abysmally slow.

Mr Peter Dowding: You have not addressed the key issue which really affects the Parliament; that is, whether or not the Parliament will be the arbiter, in the sense of who works here, through the Joint House Committee. The problem is that the staff have requested that it be the Industrial Relations Commission. Many people on your side of the House, and some on ours, query whether the Parliament is in a special category that ought not to have a court or commission as its decision-making body.

Mr STEPHENS: I am aware of that. Months have been spent on this problem. Surely we are not so incompetent that it takes that long to arrive at a decision.

Mr Peter Dowding: It is not for the Minister to make a decision.

Mr STEPHENS: It is six or seven months since the legislation was passed by this House subject to being proclaimed.

Mr Peter Dowding: You are as much a person who should be finding a solution as anyone else.

Mr STEPHENS: I know, and on a couple of occasions I have raised this matter at meetings of the Joint House Committee.

Mr Peter Dowding: What is your opinion?

Mr STEPHENS: The real solution would come if the relevant staff were responsible to the Clerk of the Assembly as the departmental head or to the Clerk of the Council in relation to those people employed in the Council.

Finally, there is one issue of concern to taxpayers; that is, the question of the parliamentary superannuation fund. I was surprised when I returned just before this session of the Parliament to learn that the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal had increased parliamentary pensions retrospectively by a maximum factor of 14 or a factor of 0.1 for every year a person retires prior to age 65. It is clear after researching the matter that the Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Tribunal has the right to make the determinations and the right to determine from when those determinations will take effect. What I am questioning - and I am surprised that the Government has not challenged this happening - is that they have made a determination with respect to this factor on the allowances from 1 January this year when the legislation to allow it passed this House in June of this year. They have breached a fundamental principle of the law in doing that. I do not profess to be a lawyer, but I have taken up the question with several lawyers who have said that that is breaching a fundamental principle of the law, to go back to legislation before it was enacted. At the time the legislation passed the Leader of the House stated - and this is reported in *Hansard* - that there was no intention to make it retrospective, yet that is exactly what has been done and in so doing a principle of the law has been breached. As a private citizen, I could take the matter before the court and challenge it, but I think that the Government should challenge the validity of that happening.

Mr Pearce: I thought there was some possibility that the tribunal would be exercising its right, but it was not the intention of the Government to do that.

Mr STEPHENS: The tribunal has the right to make the determination, but I am challenging its right to make that determination at a point when it was not law; that is the point I am making. I notice that the Premier is silent. As a lawyer he possibly agrees that the principle was breached but is not prepared to interject, but he was free with his interjections a while ago but not at the moment. I wonder why.

Mr Peter Dowding: I do not think the member is right.

Mr STEPHENS: The way to prove me wrong is to take the matter before the court. I am sure that taxpayers would be prepared to meet any costs involved in doing that. I trust the Premier will take up that point.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: I will speak briefly on several subjects the first of which will echo the comments of my colleague, the member for Floreat, when he spoke of Parliament House. It is a pity that the former Premier did not grasp the nettle and budget for a new Parliament House for Western Australia. I think I echo the views of all members in this place when I say that this House is inadequate. I think that if there is a variance of opinion about that comment it is only a matter of degree. I believe that in 1988 we are long past the time when

every member should have his own desk and seating in this Chamber. I believe that present arrangements, particularly those for Ministers, reflect the cramped conditions. Those conditions in no way do justice to the piles of books needed, the research that has to be undertaken, the *Hansard* volumes that need to be stored, or the Standing Orders or other volumes that are used as part of the daily procedures when this House is operating. I would like to think that whoever is Premier and Treasurer next year will put aside the money necessary to provide adequate alterations or, if deemed necessary, a completely new Parliament House for Western Australia.

Parliament House is, of course, part of our State's assets. It should be something that we do not just literally look up to but look up to because of its grandeur and the fact that it reflects the wealth of this State. It should create a feeling of pride for all Western Australians, who should have a House of Parliament at least as good as those in some of the States of America. I think particularly of Austin in Texas where they have a grand building. I do not think it is beyond the capability of this State to have a building of that nature to replace this totally inadequate building, inadequate not only for members but also for all staff from the dining room up to and including *Hansard* and other of our top officers who are so necessary to the running of this institution.

Included in that ought to be sufficient planning to sheet in that part of the freeway in front of Parliament House from the Hay Street freeway overpass to the St Georges Terrace freeway overpass. I believe that the remnant of the pensioners' barrack, as sacred as I believe it was when it was complete before the planning and the subsequent building of the freeway, ought to be shifted as well to give the people of Western Australia and members in this place a clear view down St Georges Terrace.

Mr Trenorden: It would not be bad if that area were covered and grassed because the arch would not then be as bad as it is now.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: It is an emasculated monument.

Mr Stephens: Previously it was a monument to democracy. Parliament made that decision.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: On this side of the House we think Parliament is a democracy.

Mr Stephens: The member for Murchison-Eyre was on the other side of the House at the time the decision was made.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: Perhaps I was philosophically, and I understand what the member means. It is very difficult to walk to Parliament House. I believe that it should be easily accessible to all Western Australians and to other people who want access to it. It is not presently easily accessible and has parking problems. It is an uphill battle for elderly people to walk here and they have to come over the Hay Street overpass or the St Georges Terrace overpass. I do not believe that it is essential for the remnant of the pensioners' barracks to be shifted, but it is probably desirable. It seems incongruous to me that one of the classic examples of a colonial hotel, the Esplanade Hotel, should have been completely torn down with not a shred remaining yet the remnant of the pensioners' barracks is still here. I am not saying that because the Esplanade Hotel was torn down everything else should be torn down; the parallel I draw is that it should not have been torn down and I do not believe that the pensioners' barracks should have been touched as it was a great reminder of our past and a great monument to our pioneers and to the British people who established this State when there was virtually nothing here.

Mr Blaikie: I think that when there are a few traffic accidents on Mounts Bay Road around the area where the Government is redeveloping the Swan Brewery site, future members of Parliament will be cursing the Dowding Government for what it has done there.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: As my colleague, the member for Vasse, has said, over the past decade there have been several fatal accidents on Mounts Bay Road and the risk of such happenings in the future will be exacerbated by the redevelopment of the old Swan Brewery. If ever anything ought to have been torn down and made into a park it is the old Swan Brewery.

It is well known in this place that this refurbished turn of the century building is inadequate. Notwithstanding the fact that the former Premier, Mr Burke, put his foot in the water when he issued the proposed plan for a new Parliament House and found that water a little cold, I do not believe that that was an adequate test.

I believe that the concept of a new Parliament House could be sold to the public of Western Australia in the right and proper manner and over a period of time. We will have to face the need for a new Parliament House. It is not fair on anybody here, and particularly Ministers, to have to work under such cramped, inadequate and archaic conditions as we are all forced to work under in this place.

Mr Trenorden: What about Hansard?

Mr LIGHTFOOT: I mentioned the Hansard staff prior to that.

I want to move on to consider the Government media monitoring unit. Last year, as I recall it, I asked the then Premier whether the Opposition could have access to the transcription service undertaken by the Government media monitoring unit of all talkback and current affairs news programs on television and radio. The answer came back in the negative: The Premier did not consider that the Opposition should have access to that taxpayer funded service.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Dr Alexander): I point out to the member for Murchison-Eyre before this debate proceeds that the expenditure he is referring to is not, as far as I can see, under Division 2 which we are now discussing but rather under another Division of the Budget. We are now on page 30, so if the member wishes to make remarks related to this matter, I ask him to wait until a later time.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: I am perhaps a little anxious and I am getting ahead of you, Mr Deputy Chairman. I want to pass on to the topic of the members' offices. I found when I came to this place from a country electorate as isolated as is Murchison-Eyre that the offices there were similar in their inadequacies to those in Parliament House. I wrote to the relevant Government department and requested an upgrading of the offices. I did not receive an answer, but notwithstanding that I will pursue the matter. I want to point out that there has been in certain circumstances a quantum leap forward in respect of some of the facilities offered to members. I refer particularly to computers, electronic typewriters and facsimile machines.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I believe this expenditure is covered under the Division relating to the Department of the Premier and the Department of the Cabinet.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: I thought this was covered on page 30.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member might be able to draw my attention to the relevant section, but as far as I can see this is an item covered under the budget of the Premier.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: It may be covered under the expenditure relating to the Joint House Committee.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; that covers purely internal staffing matters for both Houses.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: Mr Deputy Chairman, if it is your wish that I talk on this at a later stage when we get to Division 4, I will do so. The only other subject I have to talk about is telephones.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I do not wish to restrict the member's ability to speak at all, but simply to confine the debate to the relevant part of the Budget.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: I take note of what you say, Mr Deputy Chairman, but if you do not wish to restrict members in speaking, you have done quite a good job on me. I will speak on those subjects at a later stage of the debate.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I am simply doing my job as required by the Standing Orders.

Mr BLAIKIE: I want to make some comments about this section of the Budget and to take up in part where my colleague, the member for Murchison-Eyre, left off. My colleague commented in relation to the Government media monitoring unit. I want to indicate clearly to the House that service is simply a service for the Government. I am indebted to the Parliamentary Library Service for providing me with information about the Government's Press releases.

Mr Hassell: I would not mention that, if I were you, because the Premier might cut it off.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Premier can cut it off if he wants to.

Mr Peter Dowding: I would not cut it off. I sometimes have to get the Liberal Party Press releases from the library because the Liberal Party will not give them to us.

Mr BLAIKIE: It is well known and recorded that the Government will issue Press releases to all and sundry, like confetti going out of fashion, but if any Opposition member wants to get a copy of a Press release from Government services -

Mr Peter Dowding: Is that right?

Mr BLAIKIE: It is very difficult, if not impossible, to get it.

Mr Peter Dowding: That has never been brought to my attention.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am bringing it now to the Treasurer's attention. I am very thankful, as a member of this House, for the Parliamentary library, which is from time to time able to give out these media releases, and which provides an important service to all members of Parliament. I suggest to the Treasurer as a constructive criticism that when his Ministers make statements, they automatically become public documents, and it would be just as easy to ensure that Opposition members receive the documents.

Mr Peter Dowding: I do not disagree with that, but I must tell you that your own leader's office will not give out to my staff copies of the releases he has issued - and they go out from there at taxpayers' expense, with Liberal Party banners and slogans all over them.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Treasurer's staff are probably only getting their own back. There can be a quid pro quo.

Mr Hassell: That is not correct because for a long time, under the former Premier, none of that material was made available as a matter of policy.

Mr Peter Dowding: When your party was in Government, you would not even give the Opposition a telex machine in Parliament House at its own expense, so your credibility is zilch; that is not to say the member on his feet has that lack of credibility, but you certainly have it.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am suggesting it is necessary for the Government to make a change. I want to come back to the comments I started off with and to recognise the importance of the Parliamentary Library Service to all members of the House. Having said that, I say to the Treasurer it is about time the Government, with its media monitoring unit and its staff of scores of people, lifted its game and made media statements available to members of Parliament because that could result in a saving for the Parliamentary Library Service in terms of hours of service and its cost to the Parliament. It has been the practice of previous Federal Governments to issue Press releases in bulletin form and make them available to all members of Parliament, be they in Opposition or Government. It can be accepted that the Opposition members might have received their Press releases a day or two late, but at least they received them, and that was part of the service of Government. I believe there is an opportunity for the Government to improve the functioning of Parliament House by being more open in its release of material than it currently is. We are talking about a Budget of \$6 461 000 for Parliament, and we could probably see \$10 000 cut off the appropriation by not needing to have the work done twice.

I want to join with other members in referring to question time, which, as has been indicated, has turned into a farce. There is a responsibility on the Government to look closely at what it is doing. I have been a member for some 17 years, and in the last couple of years question time has become quite farcical. It is very easy for members on the Government side to say, "When you were in Government five years ago there were Ministers who gave long drawn out answers to questions." That may have been the case. I can recall one or two Ministers who gave extensive answers, but they also gave extensive speeches on whatever they might have been handling. If this Parliament is to function properly, there is an obligation for question time to be available to all members. It is a very important part of the proper functioning of the Parliament. Parliament is not simply an extension of the Executive. Members on this side of the House have consistently complained about Parliament being treated as an extension of the executive arm of Government. A number of Government

members in the House tonight may not see it in the way members on this side of the House do. Government members will never see it in that way while they are on the Government side. Let me warn members on that side that the day will come when the sides change and the standards set by this Government in relation to ensuring the farcical approach to question time will be the standards that the new Government will take on. I am warning Government members that the standards which are currently established are deplorable.

Mr Donovan: Are you saying the standards are bad?

Mr BLAIE: What I am saying is that the standards now are deplorable. I am warning members opposite that in the event of a change of Government they should be very cautious that those standards are not retained as the norm for parliamentary conduct at question time. The member for Morley-Swan may well smile about it, but I warn him that once a precedent has been established in the Parliament, that precedent is continued. If we complain bitterly from this side of the House about the conduct of Ministers and the way they answer questions, and the way Dorothy Dixers are served up and Ministers use question time as an opportunity to give parliamentary statements rather than answer questions, when the sides change I can assure members opposite they will have more of that back again, but in a much improved version. I deplore current practice and I deplore what may well be a changed circumstance.

Mr Donovan: I don't understand you. Say it again.

Mr BLAIE: I suggest to the Premier and his Ministers that they had better change their performance and take heed of the criticisms which are consistently raised by members on this side.

I refer now to the way the Address-in-Reply is treated by the Government. On a number of occasions over the years I have brought forward matters during the Address-in-Reply debate, and I have hoped that Ministers or officers of the Government would reply to me and to other members on some of the matters raised. Whether it was simply to indicate how a project could or could not be achieved, at least previously members had the knowledge that the Minister or the Government officers had taken the opportunity to read the Address-in-Reply debate; but I question whether that is done now at all. Not only that, but on most occasions the Ministers concerned are not in the House; they treat the Address-in-Reply as boring tedium. The Address-in-Reply debate is one of those rare opportunities where members have the opportunity to bring forward matters of concern. I doubt whether any members opposite, apart from the Minister for Works and the Minister for Local Government, have been in Opposition. Only a third of members opposite have ever been in Opposition; two thirds of them have only sat behind the Government. I suggest to those members that when they become Opposition members of Parliament and they raise matters in the Address-in-Reply debate, which is a debating vehicle set aside specifically for members of Parliament to raise matters of electoral or general concern, if they expect a future Government to give serious regard to their comments, there should be an obligation by this executive arm of Government at least to acknowledge comments made.

The Address-in-Reply debate has in recent years continued with the Government paying virtually no heed to it whatsoever. The only time the Government ever pays any attention to it is when there is an amendment criticising some aspect of Government. Then the Premier or his Ministers reply, a division is called and we return to the debate again. Standards have dropped dramatically. It is part of the Government's obligation to the public that it should not treat the Parliament with the contempt it does. The Government has an obligation, at least if the Ministers are not prepared to read *Hansard*, to ensure that their officers read *Hansard* and relate back to Ministers any matters of consequence which members may have raised. A number of members make very important and valid points which require attention and should gain the attention of the Government. Even if the Government says it is not prepared to do anything about the matter, at least the concern should be acknowledged. Without some form of referral, members on the Opposition side are wasting their time bringing forward matters when the Government treats them and the Parliament with contempt.

This continues through to the debate before the Chamber tonight; that is, the Budget debate. In this first part of the Budget debate - Part 1, Parliament - there is a Budget estimate in the order of \$7.11 million this year, which is an increase in expenditure over last year of

\$1.5 million, a fairly substantial amount. However, the total amount of money contained in this whole Budget is some \$4 billion and this is the first opportunity all members have had to scrutinise the expenditure of Government. As an example, item 20 of the Miscellaneous Services Division shows an amount of \$750. When we come to that Division I will ask the Treasurer what that \$750 was expended on, to whom it went -

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Dr Alexander): Order! If the member for Vasse is going to ask that question at that stage, I would ask him to do just that and not ask it now.

Mr BLAICKIE: Mr Deputy Chairman, I am raising this in the context of parliamentary debate and the matter in relation to Part 1, Parliament. I intend to continue in that vein to give you the reasons why I need to frame that question. What I have said is that I will ask the Treasurer a series of questions about why that \$750 should or should not be spent; the Treasurer will have his folio and will flick to the number and give us a full and detailed answer. However, if we want to find out about the Government's expenditure of \$35 million on the Kimberley pastoral leases we are told it is none of our bloody business because that matter happens to be treated as commercially confidential. We are told, "That is part of the Western Australian Development Corporation, and as members of Parliament you have no right to know. The Government will not tell you because it is commercially confidential." If we want to find out about other things -

Mr Hassell: If you want to find out about the police, it is an operational matter.

Mr BLAICKIE: That is right; and last year the Government became involved with a guarantee -

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Vasse has not satisfied me that his foreshadowing of a question is relevant to the expenditure under discussion here, under Division 2. He is making points about the importance of parliamentary debate but in response to that I would point out that Standing Orders for this part of the Budget require him to speak on that Division which is under discussion. While some of his remarks certainly have related to that, many of them have not and I think he is stretching the bow here a little by talking about matters well beyond this particular Division; that is, parliamentary expenditure. I would ask him to confine his remarks to that expenditure.

Mr BLAICKIE: The parliamentary expenditure amounts to some \$7 million and it includes the amount of money spent on the salaries of members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, and how the Parliament will be conducted. I repeat that the Government is treating the Parliament with contempt, as a farce, and as an extension of its own Executive arm. The Government is simply caucusing and muzzling its own members, and I am warning Government members that they will rue the day they set the deplorable standards for debate and reply in this Parliament. If those standards are continued when they are sitting on this side, they will rue that day for ever and a day.

Mr Deputy Chairman, I believe I have ample justification to draw analogies about the way the Government regards the Parliament, and when it comes to the scrutiny of Budgets and expenditure it is deplorable the way the Government simply refuses to provide to members of Parliament in Parliament assembled information that the Government decides is confidential. That makes a farce of the Westminster system, the system under which we live. You, Mr Deputy Chairman, may well have a slightly different view, but I have some 17 years' experience of its never being conducted in the manner in which it is conducted today. I suggest to the Government that times will change and the Government will need to change its ways because while items cannot be questioned Governments can simply sign blank cheques and have no scrutiny at all by the Parliament.

My final comment is that with a total budgetary expenditure of \$4 billion the Government has an obligation to explain not only those circumstances that are contained within that Budget but also those other expenditures to which taxpayers will be committed in any event. I look forward to the Treasurer's response.

Mr CRANE: I would like to make a few comments on this part of the debate pertaining to Parliament. A strange change seems to have come over the attitude of members of Parliament, particularly concerning the building of the improvements to Parliament House. When these were first introduced by the previous Treasurer, Hon Brian Burke, if my memory serves me correctly - and I would like someone to jump up in this place and tell me I am

wrong and show it in *Hansard* - I was the only member of Parliament who had the courage to support the redevelopment of Parliament House. Everyone else said it was a great idea but it was not the right time to do it; my comment at the time was that it is never the right time to do it.

Mr Peter Dowding: That is dead right.

Mr CRANE: I thank the Treasurer very much; I know I am dead right. It is remarkable that some members seem to change their minds more often than they change their socks, but I do welcome the change. It is absolutely marvellous, because if one goes into the foyer of Parliament House one will see a plaque which says this place was officially opened on 23 March 1964; that was the final building of this Parliament. However, if one goes up to another place one will find a very old picture of the laying of the foundation stone on 31 July 1902. To my limited ability in mathematics, that suggests that it took us 62 years to build this Parliament - almost as long as it took Noah to build the bloody ark. What a remarkable achievement! We in Western Australia ought to be proud of ourselves for such an achievement. A short time afterwards, a very good plan was prepared by the Public Works Department - a commendable plan, I might add - which showed a sensible redevelopment of this Parliament House which was pretty well described by my colleague, the member for Murchison-Eyre. It took over the Freeway in the front and made it a tunnel, reclaimed all that area and brought in land, but it did - and I would correct my colleague - include the Barracks Arch as the grand entrance up to Parliament House where we could all walk up.

Last year or the year before, at one of our annual Joint House Committee meetings in the dining room, I asked what had happened to that plan. I did stress the point that I hoped any improvements made to this building would be made in accordance with that plan so that eventually we would have that wonderful presentation which had been prepared - and I do not know where it is gathering dust - but I also made the suggestion that that plan be put on show so that the public themselves could see it.

Contrary to what most parliamentarians think - that they have all the brains - they are not the brains trust for our society. The public, in most instances, have more brains than members of Parliament, and if the public are given an opportunity to look at this plan to see its potential, I have great faith in their recognising that that \$100 million - or whatever the figure is - suggested for the redevelopment of Parliament House is worthwhile. The public I am sure will grasp the nettle and ask us to do the work over a number of years. Something must have gone wrong tonight because suddenly people have regained a little bit of courage. I do not know whether it is dutch courage or a realisation that they were wrong and that only one member of Parliament was right when he came out and supported it. I had to make that point very strongly and I am waiting for someone to say I was wrong. If I am wrong, I will be the first person to apologise, but thank God we have now some people who are prepared to recognise that this place needs improvements. When one goes up to the top storey, where *Hansard* is located, and sees the cubicles along the corridor there, one realises that it is a ridiculous place. It is worse than what I have read about Chinese brothels. Actually, when the cubicles were first built I went up there and on one of doors put a note which read, "Knock twice and ask for Nellie."

This is the most important building in Western Australia and yet it is a hovel, both for the people who work in it and for the members of Parliament themselves. If any member wants to question that, he should just walk into my office on the top floor and see whether there is any room for putting anything. I could not even use a lot of the equipment made available by the Government this year because there was not room to house it in my office; I could not swing a cat in it. We have to run this State, we have to look after our electorates, yet we have accommodation which is not third rate but fourth rate in which to operate. I believe we should decide very quickly to support the members who have suddenly seen the light and do something about progressing with that plan to redevelop Parliament House. It is a great plan, but first let us put it on show. Let the people of Western Australia - and they do have a few brains - look at the plan to see what their future Parliament House will look like. It is the most important building, with the possible exception of the Governor's residence - it is at least equal in importance to that - in Western Australia and yet we have to operate in something that took 62 years to build and is totally inadequate.

I thank the members who have suddenly decided that maybe I was right. I said earlier I was

glad to be leaving Parliament because I am sick and tired of being right 10 years later. A few people ought to recognise that point. We are not as stupid as we look. We do use our brains and we have the ability to think. I pride myself on my ability to think not just to the next election, as most parliamentarians do, but to the next generation. That is what we should do in this place; we should not just worry about whether we will win the next election but we should be concerned about doing our job for Western Australia and for our electorates. If members do that, they will not have to give a damn about the next election; the people out there will make sure that they are back here doing it for them. That is a little message for some members on the other side because it is a lesson they could well heed. It has certainly worked very well in my instance.

I know I will receive a lot of flak here, but I maintain what I have maintained for a long time: Electorate offices have in many instances, and possibly most, not been electorate offices but electioneering offices. I believe that if Parliament House were developed as it ought to be, the offices of members of Parliament ought to be in this place if their electorates are within 50 miles of Parliament. If a member's electorate is beyond that distance and he cannot commute, there is a good argument for having an electorate office in his electorate. In my own instance - in the electorate of Moore - there are some reasonably large towns, so where could I locate the office? If I put it in Moora, would people in Toodyay enjoy that? I do not think they would like it very much at all. Now that the electorate is changing and moving further into the Mt Marshall area, it will be worse still. The only time I have ever moved an office out of Parliament House was when the electorate took in the northern part of Wanneroo, and the greater part of my constituents were within those few miles of the centre of Wanneroo. I moved my office there but as soon as the electorate changed back to its old boundaries and went a little further, I moved the office back here because it was the only place that could adequately serve the electorate as it is presently constituted. Anyone with the slightest nous will realise that is the case. I could not have my office anywhere else because all people at some stage commute to Perth and therefore this building needs to be adequately provided with office space for members of Parliament whose electorates are within 50 miles of the Perth GPO, and those for whom, as in my instance, it may not be appropriate to put it anywhere else. Some people might have all sorts of grand ideas of where I ought to have it, but I am telling the Chamber right here and now that my electorate would not stand for it. The only place a member representing an electorate such as mine could have his electorate office is in Parliament House, and yet my office is so cluttered that one could not swing a cat there. I have not been able to operate properly; I have not been able to put in the machines which were available, and so I generously gave one away so that the party could make use of it in Parliament House. I could not put it in my office; Dot and I had a good look at the office and asked, "Where the hell are we going to put this?" The only thing we could have done was put it where Dot sits at the typewriter. She could have sat on top of it and typed. That would not have been satisfactory at all; one cannot do away with a typewriter.

Mr Peter Dowding: It is meant to be there instead of the typewriter.

Mr Thomas: To whom did you give it?

Mr CRANE: It is somewhere in the building. I believe we use it collectively between a few members.

Mr Thomas: I hope it is not being used for electoral purposes.

Mr CRANE: Of course it is not. It is only used for electorate purposes. I can send a telex away on it every now and then if I feel like it. It is time we recognised what we ought to do with parliamentary offices, so that parliamentarians can have adequate facilities to service their electorates.

The previous speaker, the member for Vasse, also mentioned the matter of questions. I do not profess to be a very long serving person in this place; I have ticked up almost 15 years, which I suppose is a bit longer than some members. However, I have seen a tremendous deterioration in the services offered by the Parliament to members in the area of asking questions which are of importance to their electorates. I have become very angry once or twice when I have had important questions to ask pertaining to my electorate and I have not been able to ask them because there were too many dorothea dixers, or ministerial statements, being given. Dorothea dixers are asked of Ministers who give a reply which is three or four

foolscap pages long; time ticks by and in the half hour allocated I am often not able to ask questions which are important to my constituents. That is what I am here for.

Mr Peter Dowding: You know what happened when Dorothy Dixer's collapsed and we did not have any? The troops over there spent the time frantically writing questions.

Mr CRANE: That does not matter. The Dorothy Dixer's should not have been there in the first place. I am not blaming the Government for them at all. If we really want to lay the blame where it ought to be laid, Hon Cyril Rushton started that business when we were in Government. Let us be honest and fair about it. I have always tried to be fair. Members opposite have become ever so much better at it than he was. Those facts can be substantiated in *Hansard*. I am sure the Clerk of this House would agree with me because he knows exactly what happens in this place. We ought to revert back to the system where members of Parliament can ask important questions pertaining to their electorates. I have never tried to take the mickey out of the Treasurer or anybody else. I have asked questions of genuine concern to my electorate and I have not tried to make the Treasurer look an idiot. If I wanted to do that I would not need to be in this place. It is not my place to do that. My place is to ask questions of concern to my electorate, yet I am denied that opportunity because we spend most of our time listening to Dorothy Dix questions or ministerial statements. I am glad that the Speaker is sitting in the corner because I know that he respects a lot of what I say.

During my 15 years in this place, the answers to questions on notice were received within a parliamentary sitting. Public servants were very good at answering parliamentary questions. If we had to wait longer than the next sitting that was considered a long time. In those days, Ministers would read the answers to questions on notice and while that took a lot of time, perhaps it was not such a bad system after all. Now we find that we can put questions on notice and if we receive answers to some of them during that session of Parliament, we are doing pretty well. I have received replies by letter to questions, which I had asked three months previously, after the close of session. This is not the system that we ought to have in this place. As members of Parliament we ought to do something about this situation.

If the members of the Press - who are not up there - were doing their job they would bring this matter to the notice of the public through the newspapers. Questions, either on notice or without notice, are a farce. The deterioration which has taken place in this House over a number of years ought to be brought to the attention of the general public.

I agree with the comments made by the member for Stirling regarding the conduct of this place and parliamentary privilege. I agree that there is a need for parliamentary privilege because at times we need to bring up matters in this place which cannot be brought up in any other way. We need to be responsible when we do this. Over the next week or so I will probably need to bring up a very important matter concerning community welfare but I will do so without any pleasure to myself, recognising that this needs to be done and, therefore, I am the only person who can do so in this way. That is why parliamentary privilege is provided - not for me to tear strips off the Treasurer or anyone else in this place. That is wrong. We should not get down to personalities; we should realise that Parliament has deteriorated in a serious way over the 15 years in which I have served. This Parliament does not have the feeling of decency that it used to have and because that feeling has gone the effectiveness of Parliament has gone also. My heart bleeds for the Speaker sometimes when he tries to keep order in this place. I am very aware of his problems because during my term on the other side I was Acting Speaker for a long time and Deputy Chairman of Committees. I spent a lot of time in the Chair controlling people in this House, and one side was not controlled more than the other. God help anybody who insulted the Chair or this institution. That is how it has to be. We could all help the Speaker by observing the rules of protocol, that common decency which should have been instilled in us during our school years and during our growing up years. If school children behaved in the way that many members of Parliament behave, there would be a hue and cry.

I notice that members of the Press have returned to the gallery. I hope that they take up the point I made about their not reporting that question time in Parliament has turned into a farce. If they have not reported on the situation after I have repeated it four times, that shows their bloody ignorance. I cannot put it any other way. They know. Let them not say they do not know about it. I have just told them again. I do not think they will report on this but I will be the first to thank them if they do.

With those comments about question time and the development of Parliament into a decent place, I put the plan forward for public scrutiny - perhaps we can put it in the R & I Bank where we usually put these sorts of things for the public to see. Let the public decide whether the plan is a good one and worthy of the public of Western Australia. Something should be done about laying the foundations of a program which would be built over the next five or six years. I do not expect this to take place in one year.

The deterioration in this place has hurt me a couple of times although I have always tried to be a gentleman with the Ministers and the Treasurer when dealing with matters in this place. I am concerned that sometimes - and this was not the case in the past - Ministers go out into the electorates without notifying the members. Ministers have travelled to my electorate and I have heard about the trip two or three months later when someone mentioned that a Minister has visited Dandaragan or Moora. During Sir Charles Court's term as Premier, protocol was adhered to strictly. When Ministers went out to an electorate they first advised the sitting member. Standards have slipped. I have made this point in this Chamber a couple of times and I received an apology from Mr Hodge when a matter was wrongly reported in the Press. He did not visit my electorate; the report was that he did. I added two and two together and got two and a half. The Minister made that clear.

I will not name names because the people involved know that they have visited my electorate and have not had the common decency to advise me. I hope that we will put that matter right. I hope when the Leader of the Opposition becomes Premier next March he will instruct his Ministers to treat the Opposition with the required courtesy. It is only a courtesy, but perhaps we will return to the system strictly adhered to when Sir Charles Court was the Premier. It is only common decency that we do so and the Treasurer has a little while in which he can put the matter straight. I do not wish to have to inform the Treasurer that a Minister was in my electorate because this hurts me a great deal more than the Treasurer thinks. It is not necessary; it should not happen. I ask the Treasurer, "Please, put the matter straight" - if that is a nice enough way to ask.

Mr GREIG: During debate on this Division, members have raised issues on which I wish to comment. As one of the newer members in this Chamber, firstly I wish to express my views on the possibility that the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr Bruce Okely, may not be with us when this Parliament resumes after the Christmas break. During the short time in which I have been a member of this place, I have found Bruce to be most courteous and kind in his assistance to me, in familiarising me with procedures, and helping me to settle in. I will miss his kindly counsel in that way. Due to the shortness of my time in this place, I am not able to wax as eloquent as my longer serving colleagues.

Mr Clarko: As long as you remember that.

Mr GREIG: I hope that I may be able to have that length of service, being younger than my colleague, the member for Karrinyup. Mr Bruce Okely has set an example of quiet independence and competence which I have certainly appreciated. I know that the member for Gascoyne has also appreciated that help.

It is appropriate that I inform the Parliament of some of my observations about this place and my views about some of the issues that have been raised tonight. I am saddened by the way question time is conducted in this place. The reason for that sadness has been well documented by other speakers. It is not my intention to go into detail other than to say that I think question time is a farce. The conduct of members during question time does nothing to help the standing of this Parliament in the minds of the public who have no personal experience of Parliament and who may never have entered the precincts of this Parliament or any other Parliament. Their views of Parliament are formed by the radio broadcasts of question time in the Federal Parliament. However, I believe question time in Canberra is no different from question time here. It is totally unsatisfactory. It is not a time for providing information; it is more a time for the Government to abuse the Opposition or for the Government to fill in time. I believe that is an abuse of the privileges of Parliament.

I have found that the only way to obtain information from Ministers is to place questions on notice. I have tried to obtain information from Ministers by writing letters to them on behalf of my constituents. It is a most frustrating exercise. Ministers acknowledge that the matter is being looked into, but inevitably the matter, if it is a matter that will cause some political embarrassment, is obstructed. The member for Moore said that his dealings with Ministers

have always been cordial. I have also attempted to maintain cordial relations with Ministers but, almost without exception, particularly when the matter is something that the Government or Ministers believe would embarrass the Government if they answer the query truthfully, the Ministers fail to deal with the matter or attempt to delay it to gain some political mileage from it at an election. They decide to deliver the goodies a little later at a time more advantageous to them. The result is that the people seeking to represent a constituency do not achieve anything and are not able to represent their electorates efficiently.

I have come to the conclusion reluctantly that it is a waste of time to write letters to Ministers. The only way to proceed is to place masses of questions on the Notice Paper. They then become the property of the public and apparently Ministers feel they have some responsibility to answer them, probably because the Press see the questions and it would embarrass Ministers if they failed to answer them. I am convinced that many of the issues could have been dealt with more appropriately and with more privacy in correspondence with the Minister. The Government should look closely at the question of its accountability to the Parliament, a matter to which speakers with more experience than I have alluded.

I wish also to place on record my observations in relation to the less than satisfactory accommodation of staff in this place. I came to this place from private enterprise. The offices in which I worked were not plush and did not have magnificent views. Nevertheless, the facilities here shocked me. I do not think anybody would acknowledge that until they actually come here and see the conditions under which many people work. On many occasions before I was elected to this place I attended Parliament and met with members and Ministers. On those occasions, I observed the cramped conditions in which people worked, but it did not have much effect on me until I came here as a member and I began to understand the demands that we, as members, place upon the staff, either directly or through the natural processes of Parliament. The conditions under which the staff of Hansard work are not acceptable. If unions were involved in this place, I doubt that it would be tolerated. I place on record my appreciation for the support the Parliamentary Library staff have provided me with. At all times they have been courteous and helpful, and extremely professional in the way they service the needs of the members of Parliament. I have discussed their working conditions with the members of the staff, and the extensions for Parliament House. I believe one of the first things the Government should do is to use some of its industrial relations philosophies that it so happily espouses, and advise the staff of their future accommodation. The library staff are not certain where they will be in the future. I know they have a view of the river and the city, but the noise which comes from the freeway is terrible, and it could be stopped by simple double glazing. Why that was not done I do not know. It would be a waste of time if library staff were moved to a position where they had no view at all. The view would be wasted if the library was located in the basement. Neither the library nor I know what is happening and some consultation would be helpful.

The conditions that other members of the staff work under are less than satisfactory. I have always found it somewhat anachronistic when visiting Ministers in Parliament House. It is difficult to deal with matters in a professional way purely because of the lack of space and facilities. The accommodation problem does not affect only Opposition members. From my observation some junior Ministers share accommodation and that situation can be described only as abysmal.

It is very difficult for parliamentarians to meet with constituents to discuss issues in very cramped conditions. I share my office with three of my colleagues and on many occasions the office is occupied by another of our colleagues simply because his office, which he shares, is occupied by a member who is consulting with a constituent. This happens when Parliament is not sitting. Last Friday I found one of my colleagues conducting a lengthy discussion in relation to his shadow portfolio with three constituents in our office and I had to interrupt them on several occasions. It was insulting to my colleague and it was difficult for the member and the people involved. Obviously, this sort of thing needs to be addressed.

I am not certain whether my colleague, the member for Murchison-Eyre, was suggesting that we should do away with this Chamber when he suggested that a new Parliament House should be built. I am aware of the cramped nature of the Chamber. During the winter recess I had the experience of travelling with the Delegated Legislation and Review Committee on which I serve and to which the member for Floreat alluded earlier. The committee has met

on a number of occasions, but it is difficult to say whether it has done any work purely because it does not have the resources. However, in the process of becoming established the committee met with its parallel committee in the Victorian Parliament and the Standing Committee of the Senate - the Senate Regulations and Ordinances Committee - in the Commonwealth Parliament. It was prior to the opening of the new Parliament House. The House of Representatives and the Senate in the old Parliament House buildings were never of the character of the Chambers in this Parliament. Nonetheless, they were steeped in history probably because of the people who had served in those Chambers rather than the decor. However, they have now moved to an ultra modern style of Chamber which is quite grand, but lacks the sense of history which the Westminster type Parliaments with which we are blessed in this country should have.

I never cease to appreciate the sense of tradition and history in this Chamber. I urge the Government - by the time something has to be done about the problem the Opposition will be in Government - not to do away with this Chamber. If it is necessary to build a new Chamber we should retain the window panelling, the wall panelling, the balustrades and the furniture which create a sense of history and tradition which should not be lost. I hope that members will take my view on board. I do not believe that by moving to an ultra modern Chamber new members of Parliament will be affected in a positive way. I suspect that the members who preceded me would have felt the same as I did when they came into these beautiful Chambers. To that extent, I certainly hope that members on both sides of the Parliament come to grips with the accommodation problem.

I agree with the comments made by my colleague, the member for Moore, when he elicited the agreement of the Treasurer and the Leader of the House, by saying that no time is the right time to spend money on Houses of Parliament. We are now faced with the dilemma of whether we should air condition the existing building or whether we should pull it down. I take the point the member for Moore made and also the point made by the member for Murchison-Eyre that we should take our courage in our hands and proceed to come to grips with the question of the future of the most important place within our State. To that extent, the Government of the day will always have to wear the flak. It is part of the pleasure and the pain of being in Government and I hope that within the next few months we, on this side of the House, will be in the position to have to weather the pain of that decision.

Again, I thank all the staff of Parliament House, particularly the staff of this Chamber for the way in which they have helped me in the process of becoming used to the procedures of Parliament.

Mr PETER DOWDING: If anything has devalued the quality and performance of Parliament over recent months it certainly has been the Opposition's performance. I have not, for a long time, heard so much sanctimonious claptrap from some members of the Opposition.

I would like to canvass some of the points Opposition members have raised. First, is the issue of resources and facilities at Parliament House, to the extent it was touched on in electoral offices, and generally for members and for the Opposition.

I remind Opposition members, particularly the member for Cottesloe, that when they were in Government they were part of the Government that refused the Opposition permission to install in its office a telex machine even though the then Opposition had offered to pay for the rental and cost of the installation and operation of the telex machine. That does not sit easily with the sort of sanctimonious attitude that is now being taken by members opposite in the debate. I do not want to dwell on that too long, but I do not want members - particularly newer members such as the member for Darling Range - to think that the Government has not provided the Opposition with support and facilities in this place. Not only was the Opposition under a Liberal Government denied a telex machine, it was also denied a reasonable photocopier. In fact, it was denied any reasonable access to any facilities. Members will remember that the only way they could get a photocopy done was by taking their copy to a clerk who recorded not only the name of the member, but also the number of copies that he or she sought to have made. At times the clerk actually inquired as to the purpose of the photocopy, the nature of the document and whether it was appropriate for it to be photocopied! I remember having an argument about whether a Labor Party policy document could be photocopied using the Parliament House photocopier.

Mr Court interjected.

Mr PETER DOWDING: It is interesting to hear the boy wonder make some sort of response about it.

Mr Court: That was standard procedure in all offices when photocopiers came in.

Mr PETER DOWDING: No, it was not. Not only was it not standard procedure, the member's father, with all the resources of Government and none of the constraints of the Opposition, kept the Opposition starved of resources. This Government has provided the facilities to Opposition members in Parliament House and in their electoral offices. It has given members travel and other advantages which they never had before and which are basic and fundamental to their performance of their duties. When I was the member for North Province, I actually had to fight to get any access to any sort of charter allowance. The member for Lower North Province, Hon Phil Lockyer, a Liberal Party member, was prepared to get in there and tell the then Liberal Government that that was not good enough. That should set the record straight with respect to the facilities issue.

I now turn to the issue of question time. Parliament has seen the Opposition use question time often not genuinely as a tool to seek information, but as a mechanism for trying to get a headline or, more importantly, to try to throw about innuendo about impropriety. If they use question time for that purpose and fail because their questions are either incompetent or simply wrong, they should not put the blame on the shoulders of the Government. If they want to object that they are not getting answers to their questions, they should ask fair and reasonable questions.

Mr Court: We asked factual questions tonight and you wouldn't even answer them.

Mr PETER DOWDING: The members opposite are so fundamentalist in their views, so excited by the prospect of the chase, that they cannot even be objective about their questions. I remind the member for Cottesloe, whose performance tonight was really quite extraordinary, that on Tuesday, 4 November 1980, in answer to a question without notice on the Cruttenden matter, upon being pressed for an answer which he was reluctant to give, he said -

We have moved from the stage of legitimate public questions being asked in connection with the Cruttenden matter, into the arena of my being subjected to some kind of inquisition -

That is the sort of attitude he took when he was a Minister.

I will now consider criticism of the response that certain information is confidential. I did not come prepared to answer this tonight. I just sat here idly trying to find a couple of examples of what I knew to be right through *Hansard* and I found them in the first volume that I asked for. On page 2902 of *Hansard*, volume 230, of 1980, a stack of questions were asked about that great Liberal Party investment, the Western Australian Trade Promotion Centre, one of the better investments of the Court Liberal Government which was such a buoyant free enterprise supporter. The following questions were asked -

- (2) How many members does the WATPC have?
- (3) How many members joined at the full price of \$416?
- (4) How many members joined at the reduced price of \$156?

I remind members that we are talking of an organisation that was funded by the then Government. What was its answer? It said -

(2) to (4)

This information is confidential to the company.

Mr Hassell: Don't you think people are entitled to know about the losses in the State Superannuation Board?

Mr PETER DOWDING: The member for Cottesloe goes over the top a bit.

In August 1980, a question was asked by Mr Davies of the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce who, at that time, was none other than the present Leader of the Opposition. The question was about the well known success of the Court Liberal Government, Bunbury Foods Ltd. The question reads -

- (a) How much of the Bunbury edible oil refinery output is currently being sent overseas;
- (b) what amount is used for local processing; and
- (c) to where is the rest shipped?

One would have thought that that was a reasonably simple question about a company in which the then Government was investing. I invite honourable members to guess what the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce replied.

Mr Court: You tell us.

Mr PETER DOWDING: I invite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to guess at the response. Does he reckon that the question was a fair one?

Mr Court: You are the one giving the speech; you give us the answer.

Mr PETER DOWDING: The answer, in part, reads -

- (b) and (c)

This information is confidential to the company.

Mr Davies asked another question of the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce on the same day with respect to the Bunbury edible oil refinery. It reads -

Will he table the security documents supporting the guarantee between the Western Australian Government and Bunbury Foods Ltd. -

Mr Court: Is this the best you can bring up on those 20 years we were in Government?

Mr PETER DOWDING: No, it is not. It is the best I could find after having heard what was said by members opposite and spending five minutes looking through a randomly selected volume of *Hansard*. The attendant would be able to tell you that I just asked him to get me a 1980 volume of *Hansard*. That is how I found these examples. I just chose a volume from all the volumes that are there and came up with these examples. The question reads -

Will he table the security documents supporting the guarantee between the Western Australian Government and Bunbury Foods Ltd as well as the side agreement collateral to the security documents?

The answer states -

Securities in the name of the R & I Bank as guarantors on behalf of the Government are held by the bank. The securities involved are registered mortgages ... Securities may be cited at the Titles Office and Corporate Affairs Office.

The side agreement is a commercial agreement between Government and the company.

The Government was clearly saying that it would not provide that information. I could give further examples. For example, the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce was asked what was the total annual consumption in Western Australia of all types of edible oil and by-products. The answer was given that the information was unavailable due to statistical confidentiality. I am not arguing that there is not a good case for saying that matters are confidential; but I am saying that it is the height of hypocrisy for the Opposition to say that there is no case for commercial confidentiality in such matters, because that is exactly what the Opposition claimed in relation to this matter. It may well have claimed that quite properly. I was not privy to the details of the total disaster of the investment in Bunbury Foods, a company in which the Opposition was inveigled to invest \$5 million of taxpayers' money, by a man who is a crook and who is overseas resisting efforts to bring him back to Western Australia to be prosecuted. The Opposition not only put the State's money into that project, but also a member of its party took a shareholding and the Opposition supported this person through thick and thin. I could go on at great length to demonstrate that the suggestion that somehow the Parliament has degenerated is a nonsense, and the Opposition is seeking to use Parliament for no better purpose than a grab for power, to denigrate people who should not be denigrated, and to use smear and innuendo. When it does not work - the public is beginning to see that there is no substance to the claim, despite months and months of allegations, assertions and leaks to the

Press, that the Opposition is about to produce something absolutely wonderful - at the end of the day the Opposition starts blaming other people. That effectively disposes of the Opposition's complaint about the way in which Parliament is operating.

In relation to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's comments tonight about *Hansard*, again no Government has ensured that it has provided the facilities to the Parliament and the parliamentary staff such as this Government has. With regard to the efforts made by the Speaker and the Government, myself included, to improve *Hansard* processes, to improve the printing of *Hansard*, and to revolutionise the State Printing Division and the way in which it is handling *Hansard*, no Government has taken on as big a job and gone so far. I have been told that *Hansard* is saving the State \$600 000 a year. I was very closely involved with the modernisation of the State Printing Division and, although the Speaker has indicated what praise should be given to the *Hansard* staff - and I think that is absolutely right and earned - it should also be acknowledged that the workers in the State Printing Division have made a magnificent contribution to that objective. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked whether or not there will be an index of *Hansard*; that matter should be taken up through the appropriate forum; that is, through one of the Joint House Committees. A proposal has been made to upgrade and increase the indexing capacity and I am sure that if the member wants an informal discussion or briefing from the appropriate officer, that could be arranged.

In the same theme, it is extraordinary to note the way the Opposition behaves when it is out of power. No party has given so much abuse to the Speaker outside the Parliament as the Opposition has; I think the Speaker has done an excellent job in ensuring that the Parliament worked and performed, despite a very difficult period. That should be compared with the way in which this Parliament worked prior to 1983. Regularly question time was stopped if there were interjections. A very strong position was properly taken by the Speaker in relation to comments made outside the Parliament and, quite frankly, the comments made by the member for Moore about the sense of protocol and behaviour were absolutely right. It is important that members in the Opposition adhere to the protocol and forms of the Parliament, and it is terribly important to try to behave with some due respect for that process. Just because the Opposition is not getting exactly what it wants, is no reason for it to spit out the dummy and criticise the institution. I am very disappointed and I think any listener would get a very wrong view of the way in which the Parliament has proceeded. Finally, the Government will do its best to ensure that these forms are adhered to and, in relation to questions, it will certainly do its best to ensure that they are answered. Complaints have been made by officers about the volume of questions pumped through by the Opposition, but the Government has made it clear that it will do its level best to answer them all.

Mr Court: Which officers have complained?

Mr PETER DOWDING: Why would I identify somebody that the Opposition could then criticise and say was political? I am disappointed when the member for Cottesloe asks me 57 questions, ranging from political comment to all sorts of things, and then complains when he gets a composite answer that tries to give a fair impression of what has occurred. I am disappointed that the member has denigrated everybody within sight who may be able to supply that information, and I think some Opposition members should dissociate themselves from this sort of over the top comment, and accept that the Government genuinely supplies a huge amount of information to members. That is quite clear from the volume of questions on notice and the questions without notice that have been asked.

Division 2 put and passed.

Division 3: Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, \$650 000 -

Mr MENSAROS: I want to pose a very brief question, which I hope the Treasurer or someone in charge will be able to answer. A Bill entitled Miscellaneous Amendments and Repeals Bill has been introduced in the other place in relation to the Ombudsman's office. It relates to 67 pieces of legislation that it attempts to repeal or amend. The legislation relating to the parliamentary commissioner amending it simply provides for a deputy and an acting commissioner. I notice in the appropriation there is an amount for "Deputy Parliamentary Commissioner". Has that been placed there in anticipation of the Parliament's passing that Bill, or is it a different item and, if the Bill were to be passed, would there be an additional appropriation to fund that amendment to the parliamentary commissioner's Act?

Mr PETER DOWDING: I cannot answer that question. I will try to get that information for the member.

Division 3 put and passed.

Divisions 4 to 17 postponed, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House).

Division 18: Crown Law, \$36 141 000 -

Mr MENSAROS: It is generally accepted that law and order, for want of a better expression, is one of the leading subjects in the political field. This is quite understandable because people are fed up with increasing violence, crimes against property, and particularly with increasing juvenile crimes such as senseless vandalism and motor vehicle stealing. Of course, the public demand some remedy for this. Although the remedy should include, most importantly, some preventive action, there are very few noticeable attempts to do some research in order to find proper reasons for the increase in crime in order to find some long term remedy for the root of the question.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that crime and criminal activities of all descriptions, particularly juvenile crime, have proliferated greatly during the past generation or two. This is a fact upon which almost everybody agrees no matter how they study the subject, what statistics they are using or what remedies they prefer. Neither is there any doubt that this proliferation of criminal activity hurts society and hence the understandable outcry for some sort of remedy. It seems to me that the various remedies and proposed actions offered are only aiming for a short term solution and even there they are divided, pointing often in diagonally opposite directions.

The one direction that we often hear advocates harsher penalties as the start and end of every solution. There are other solutions advocated such as pleading to reduce or even do away with incarceration except in a very few and very extreme cases. Those, of course, are both extreme and quite unrealistic propositions. I think that the target for stopping the proliferation of crime has to be approached parallel in time but involving different directions aiming for both the short term and long term solution. From our side of politics the emphasis within both these solutions is more on the victim and on the potential victim of crime - and that is the whole community - than on criminals themselves.

Within the short term solution we would like to avoid the extremes of either harsher or lighter penalties. Further short term provisions, which we hope could be accepted - and this is incorporated in our policy - are to make the combating of crime easier and to remove it entirely from the political spectrum. The means to do this is the introduction of the office of Public Prosecutor. This is not a new concept - albeit in Australia it is fairly new and only several years old both in the Commonwealth field and in Victoria, as I understand it. If one goes to the continent one finds that almost every country has a longstanding institution of prosecutor's office and the people there have the same status and independence as a judge so decisions about prosecutions and whether they should take place, be withdrawn, or whether appeals should be lodged by the Crown, are made by an entirely independent body.

This is the aim of the Opposition, an aim we have expressed by introducing a private member's Bill into this Parliament which at present has been placed on the bottom of the Notice Paper despite the fact that the Government, through the Premier, has made a public statement by way of a Press release that it will introduce an office like this. It has to some extent created a precedent by accepting, with some amendments that we have welcomed, our proposed legislation for an official corruption commission. I could not see any reason, having done so, why the Government could not at least allow the House to deal with and debate this proposition, which I think is very important from the point of view of the public and the general constituency that we represent. As I said earlier, people are interested in the question of law and order and that is a very vital and important part of a solution.

To deal with the long term solution, which is much different, much more important, and possibly much more controversial, one must consider that this entails the establishment of proper and concise reasons for the proliferation of crime. This study ought to be as objective and all embracing as is humanly possible. However, it will be necessary, as with all research, to have statistics, but just any selected statistics will not lead to the real reason for the increase in crime, nor can those be used where the logical cause and effect sequence is not reasonably established. I regret to say I have not as yet found such statistical studies to

go by. There are plenty of statistical tables as to how crime has increased in terms of percentage, categories of crime, and who occupies the prison institutions according to age, sex and colour, but this is far from what I am thinking about. We have never seen an attempt to explain why crime, particularly juvenile crime, occurred to a lesser extent two or three generations ago in terms of quantity and proportion. It might not have occurred to people that despite the greater social differences between individuals in our society and in previous generations, there was then less crime because the society's ethics and beliefs were different. We have adopted so called social values which some people might advocate and appreciate on their face value, yet unconsciously or deliberately - and I do not know which one - ignore their effect on crime and particularly juvenile crime. I believe that the sexual revolution, the extreme militant feminism, and the rule of affirmative action have helped to spread the tide of disintegration to the family, parents and children, and to the institution of marriage.

Do members consciously realise that marriage is the only contract in our society which can be dissolved unilaterally? We seem to place more importance on a contract to buy a second hand car, because that cannot be dissolved unilaterally, than on marriage, which was claimed for a long time to be the mainstay of society. A marriage can be dissolved unilaterally, without the necessity to establish fault or to have an agreement. We find that 30 years ago married women were not employed in public service, and the breadwinner received a greater salary and paid less tax in order to provide for the family. The situation today is that a male breadwinner may not be accepted for a position, or promoted, if there are not enough women in the same position, according to the rule of affirmative action. We in this society have given ourselves non discrimination, equal opportunity, de facto relationships, eccentricity and self seeking individualism, but have in the process lost the integrity of the family, discipline, responsibility, caring and trust. In one word, we have exchanged for the modern extremes the moral values that taught us clearly to distinguish between right and wrong.

The Government does of course realise that this very abbreviated term of "law and order" is an important question in society, but the Government's reaction to the problem is to conduct a political exercise. The Government has issued glossy brochures and indulged in television advertisements involving the so far respected and neutral position of the Commissioner of Police. There has been no common or individual action to try to prevent or remedy the causes of crime. The Government supports the underlying reasons which, as I tried to point out, are the greatest causes of the proliferation of crime. What I mean is that no-one will deny that the cause of the increase in crime is the deterioration of community ethics and of the family as a base of society. Indeed, we have almost seen the disappearance of the family under the modern catch cries of equal opportunity, non discrimination and the like, and the systematic support of provisions reportedly in line with modern tendencies. The Government of the day - and I am not referring necessarily to only this Government - and we in this Parliament have helped to lower social standards by acknowledging in a greater way the law of de facto relationships, by adopting without reservation the law relating to divorce, and by lending equality to homosexual behaviour so that it is taken in the same context as the normal sexual relationships between husband and wife. It is the lowering of community ethics which is the greatest reason for the proliferation of crime.

I wonder whether there are any statistics available for, say, 30 or 40 years ago which would point out how many families existed which comprised a breadwinner and a home maker/wife compared with the number of such families now existing. I wonder how many families had both parents working full time; how many de facto relationships existed; how many single parent situations existed; how many partners had been previously married; and how many step parents had little contact with the children. If we were to have such statistics it would be quite obvious that is the reason why crime is proliferating. What are we to do about this? Do we try to strengthen the family; does the Commonwealth try to introduce taxation measures which will favour the single breadwinner situation; do we try to implement employment provisions or situations which will allow a woman to be a home maker; do we try to make divorce more difficult? No; I do not think so. I think that we as a Parliament do from time to time encourage these situations, and at the same time the members who do this complain about the increase in crime, particularly juvenile crime.

The short term remedy, as I have called it, is very seldom applied. The reasons are always given but there is no attempt, particularly by this Government, to show the public that the Parliament takes seriously the fight against crime. I have only to recount some of the

happenings during the time of this Government to illustrate this point. Members will recall the O'Connor affair, where there was clearly a violation of law, yet the Government, via the Attorney General, used its discretionary power to annul prosecution. Members will remember that recently, through the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, it was said that the Government would not prosecute a certain company when, even in the words of the commissioner, it was quite plausible that company had committed offences against the law affecting the large majority of small shareholders, because it would be too expensive to prosecute. I wonder whether that is the way to deal with crime.

Lately we had this case which has caused such an outcry; the case of the young man who caused the death of the taxi driver by the name of Tan. The proceedings shocked the whole legal fraternity. Despite very penetrating questions - and I put a number to the Attorney General which apparently shocked him because he postponed them, although on the same day he was able to answer a lot of Dorothy Dixers - he did not consider answering my question because its publicity would not have been to his political advantage. He sidetracked the situation, saying, "I have been advised; I cannot go against advice." However, he had no hesitation in answering questions on the O'Connor case; he was able to use his discretionary power there.

How can this be reconciled with the Government's professing to take very tough measures to fight crime, spending literally hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' money in order to produce pamphlets and television advertisements? They do not advertise the fight against crime but they advertise the Government itself. One can illustrate this behaviour with many examples, but violent action like this should not be recurring, and the victim's family and the community at large should be protected.

I would like to touch on another subject which has a practical side from the point of view of members of Parliament, particularly when in Opposition, and that concerns the enormous amount of amending legislation coming to this House without any consideration whether it is necessary and how long a life it will have. It verges almost on the ridiculous, but it is tragicomical when one reads reports from the UK Parliament in Westminster and compares the amount of legislation submitted to a House of 650 members taking care of a country comprising nearly 60 million people with that submitted to a House of 57 members representing 1.5 million people. Although I have forgotten the correct figures for the amount of legislation, it is less than half what we are dealing with. One can appreciate as a result the serious way in which this question is approached. Many amendments are obviously undertaken without coordination between the departments. One department will push ahead with an amendment, and the next day another department will amend the first one. If one is conscientious enough to take note of what is being amended, one must do a lot of physical work pasting in these amendments, so that ultimately the Act looks like a dog's breakfast with papers hanging out of it. I will give an example, which I think is a correct one, concerning 1985. Act 92 of 1985 amended something, and Act 95 of 1985 re-amended it. Sometimes a paragraph is involved, and sometimes a whole section or several sections are repealed, and the next Bill passed by this Parliament, apparently without knowledge of the previous one, will amend a section which has already been repealed.

I had an example of that this morning when I tried to follow up the fairly large amount of amending legislation which I have. The situation is just as bad as that which we were talking about when members referred to accommodation and facilities.

Mr Grill: Are you saying we have put Bills through this Parliament in this session which have amended section of Acts of Parliament which have actually been repealed?

Mr MENSAROS: That is correct. Not in this session; in 1985. I am almost sure my memory is correct when I say that one was number 92 of 1985 and the other 95 of 1985. I cannot recall which Act the amendments related to; they were general amendments to several Acts. I cannot remember to which parent Act the example I gave referred. I picked this up and I showed it to the records office, but I did not receive an answer. Perhaps it was because the previous Act had not been proclaimed when the next Bill came in. That may have been a simple mistake. Yet, this could not have established either.

I do not wonder that this happens, in view of the proliferation of legislation. Much of it seems to be superfluous, because departments and instrumentalities are changed and changed again according to the whim of the Minister of the day. How were we able to live with the

Public Works Department and with the Lands Department for 80, 90 or 100 years? Did anyone complain? Was there an outcry, or a need for yearly change in the names of departments? We lived quite well, yet today it appears everyone wants these changes.

I come now to the very welcome promise we heard that in due course, perhaps before very long, we will enjoy the situation I advocated about four years ago from this very place during this very same debate, and that is that we should have, as a result of using word processors, via the Crown Law Department or some other agency, updated Acts all the time. I sound a word of warning that it is not enough to have the Act updated. It is very nice to be able to use it when an amending Bill comes in, but at the same time, to appreciate the subject and to be able to debate it, we would need some solution where, in spite of this updating, there would be some indication of the development of amendments as they occurred to the parent Act. I give members one example why that is necessary if the subject is approached seriously. There are probably several examples, but one recent example is this: The Opposition criticised very severely and seriously the Supreme Court Amendment Bill. Our criticisms centred on the provision that the Bill provided an undefined number of Supreme Court justices which would have depended on the discretionary decision of the Government. I immediately took exception to this, because this was a typical way of stacking a court, and that unfortunately has happened in history in various places, and we do not have to go very much farther than Canberra to point to an example.

In order to be efficient and effective in arguing this, it would not have been enough to take an updated word processed version of the Act showing that the number of justices of the Supreme Court is nine. It would have been necessary to know that originally it was three, then it was amended to four, then perhaps to six, then seven, and so on; because one was able to argue that in times of greater necessity - and one could always trace the history of these amendments and increases - a fixed number of judges was added to the court. One can trace, for instance, the time of the biggest development in Western Australia during the 1960s and 1970s when not only resources development occurred but also the accompanying professional services started to develop in Perth instead of people having to go to Melbourne. Accordingly, litigation increased and there was a need for more justices.

One would hope that, despite the fact that it will be completed and available as it exists at the time it is studied in connection with the amending Bill, it will also be available in some easier way - and I cannot think of a properly programmed computer which could not do that - to make available the historical evidence of how the present provisions of this Act developed. As I said, that is very often necessary in order to make a thorough evaluation of the legislation.

With those comments I rest my case. I hope the Government, if not immediately then perhaps later, will make some sort of reply.

Mr CASH: I want to raise a matter that affects this item; namely, restitution that is ordered by a court. Just for the benefit of the Chamber, I raise an example that occurred recently in which a person of my acquaintance who lives in Bedford was the victim of a theft. It seems from the information given to me that an amount of about \$17 000 in cash was stolen from his house and later four persons were charged by the police with this theft. Some of the money was recovered and in due course the matter was to proceed to court, four people having been charged. Prior to the matter coming to court one of the accused committed suicide, which left only three to appear in the court.

All three were convicted of the theft when they went before the court. At that time restitution was ordered against those three people in amounts that the court believed were fit, and quite clearly the gentleman who was the victim of this theft was going to be out of pocket because the court, in general terms, divided by four the amount of money that was stolen and not recovered, and basically apportioned a quarter to each of the people charged. There being only three who were convicted, the gentleman was going to be out of pocket for at least one quarter of the money in any event. Of the three people convicted, one paid the restitution on a regular, I think monthly, basis. It was paid into the Treasury and forwarded to the victim. Another of the offenders paid restitution on an intermittent basis. The third paid no restitution at all; I understand he shot through to South Australia and is now believed to be in custody there on a completely separate charge.

The matter that has been brought to my attention is that every time the victim tried to

approach the Crown Law Department to find out whether or not it was aware that at least two of the offenders were in breach of the court order, the department was not prepared to respond and he was told to contact the Treasury to see if it had any funds that could be forwarded to him. I understand he contacted the Treasury on a number of occasions with no success, but on a final occasion was told by a Treasury officer that the Treasury received restitution payments on a regular basis from all around the State - in fact, all around Australia - and that at times Treasury had some difficulty in deciding just who the restitution was for. I understand there is an account in Treasury which has funds for which the Treasury is not able to find claimants.

It seems to me that if the general outline I have given to the Chamber is an accurate reflection of the facts, either the Crown Law Department or the Treasury is somewhat lacking in the way in which it is handling the matter of court restitution orders. It seems there is a breakdown in communication between the Crown Law Department and the claimant, and in that regard on 12 October I asked the Attorney General, through the Minister representing him in this House, question 1449 as follows -

- (1) What advice, if any, is given to a claimant by the Crown Law Department in respect of funds due to the claimant as a result of a restitution order?
- (2) If no advice is given, what is the procedure for determining if restitution has been made?

The Minister replied as follows -

(1)-(2)

Advice is not generally given, but court officers will, if requested, indicate the effect of the order and the procedures available to enforce the order. The court does not initiate proceedings to enforce restitution - orders except where money is due to the Crown - unless authorised in writing to do so.

I accept the answer as being the current state of affairs but I invite the Minister to look at the general problem of claimants attempting to claim moneys paid by way of restitution, because it seems that at the moment there is or could be a fair amount of confusion in their actually receiving that money. Certainly, as I understand it, the Crown Law Department does not appear to want to press the issue of offenders not making good their restitution orders. They very much leave it up to the claimant to take action against the offender. I would ask the Minister, firstly, whether he would comment on that matter; but in general, to take it up with the Attorney General or the Crown Law Department to see whether we can put in place a procedure that is more easily understood by claimants of restitution orders, and perhaps by various officers in the Crown Law Department and Treasury who are required from time to time to give advice to the public on these matters.

The other matter I want to raise tonight under this item is one that has been raised in this Chamber a number of times, and certainly by the Press quite frequently in recent weeks; that is, the *ex gratia* payment to Trooper David Woodman. Some time ago in this Chamber I related the circumstances surrounding the David Woodman case. I do not want to recite the whole case to the Chamber again; it is clearly set out in *Hansard* and I think it generally fairly reflects the situation that occurred in Fremantle in 1986.

However, I will briefly say for the benefit of members that Trooper David Woodman was a part time bouncer at a nightclub in Fremantle. He witnessed an assault on a young lady directly opposite this nightclub and, with his assistant, went to her aid. When he reached the young lady's side he realised she had been beaten quite severely and he asked bystanders to contact both the police and the ambulance service. Then, along with his assistant, he pursued the two men who had attacked the young lady. Members will recall that as David Woodman approached the last of the two attackers he pushed him off balance and that attacker fell against a car. David Woodman went on to pursue and detain the other person; later he marched both of the attackers back to the scene of the crime, where the police and ambulance people had now arrived, and handed them over to the police officers who were attending the scene of the incident. Later on David Woodman was charged by a now retired police sergeant with assault, as I recall. He appeared in court but the assault charge was out of time and the matter was dismissed. He went home only to find some months later that the retired police sergeant had decided to pursue the matter and was not prepared to let it rest. David

Woodman again found himself summonsed to appear before the courts on a different charge. He appeared before the courts, was acquitted by a jury, and obviously the case was dismissed.

Unfortunately, as a result of having to appear in court to defend himself, David Woodman found himself responsible for costs of \$1 500. That is the amount for which a number of people have asked the Attorney General to make an ex gratia payment, in consideration of the fact that David Woodman acted in good faith when he went to defend the young lady being assaulted, and that as far as he was concerned he did not use anything more than reasonable force at any time to detain both men, who were later found to have assaulted the young lady. It seems that there is a question -

Mr Grill: Only one of them was actually convicted.

Mr CASH: That is the point I want to raise with the Minister and, through him, the Attorney General because it seems that at the time the advice of Crown Law to the Attorney General was that only one of the two people who assaulted the girl was convicted. That is true; the person convicted was a chap by the name of Nutter. He was convicted of assault and he received 12 months' imprisonment.

Mr Grill: I am sorry; I thought you meant both of them were convicted.

Mr CASH: No, one was convicted. The other man was charged but the charges were later dropped through insufficient evidence, but at no stage was it suggested that both of them had not assaulted the girl. That is where the advice given to the Attorney General differs from the advice given to me and to a number of other members in this Chamber. I think the Attorney General is trying to rely on the fact that the other chap involved in the assault - a man called Spencer - was not convicted. He was not convicted because the court did not proceed with the charges; they were dropped. However, if one looks at the transcript, which is something I would like the Minister and the Attorney General to do, there was never any dispute that Spencer was not involved in the original assault. In fact at one stage - and I want to refer to the transcript of the trial - the Crown Prosecutor made the following statement and was later picked up by the judge and required to correct it. The transcript reads as follows on page 31A -

But you've heard now that the evidence is that it was Nutter that assaulted the girl and not Spencer at all?---Well, they both - - -

Did you actually see the fight?

HIS HONOUR: Wait a minute.

MISS VICKER: Sorry.

HIS HONOUR: The evidence is that Nutter was convicted of an assault and the charges against the other man, according to Mr Spencer, were dropped because of insufficient evidence. Now, I think it is important to put to the witness exactly what has been said in court, which is a little different, I think, to what you just suggested to him. Perhaps you can ask it again, thank you.

MISS VICKER: I'm sorry.

That seems to be one of the areas of dispute - whether both men were involved in the assault. Certainly the judge in the case believed both were involved and the Crown seems, for reasons of its own, to have believed at the time that only Nutter, the person convicted and gaoled, was involved in the assault. Through the Minister, I ask that the matter be reconsidered. I do so not just in the light of some conflict as to whether both Nutter and Spencer were involved in the original assault, but really on a question of principle: That is, as a fair minded person, did David Woodman act in good faith by going to the assistance of that young lady who was physically assaulted in the street, firstly asking for assistance to be rendered to her, then running down the street and detaining the two people who assaulted her and handing them over to the police? Is it not reasonable for the community to believe that a person should not end up being out of pocket after being acquitted of a variety of charges laid against him?

From my point of view the charges were unfairly laid against David Woodman, and it is interesting that in the transcript of the trial the CIB officers handling the case were not

convinced that Woodman should be charged at all. I remind members that it was only the now retired police sergeant who pursued the issue. He was accused of having a vendetta against bouncers in general; he does not admit to it but it is certainly the view of people involved in the case. If Woodman is not granted an ex gratia payment, I do not believe it would be reasonable for other people to go to the assistance of people they see being assaulted on the grounds that they may find themselves charged with an offence and, even if they are acquitted, find themselves out of pocket, possibly to the tune of thousands of dollars. I think that is grossly unreasonable and it is not the sort of law and order system we want in Western Australia. There has been some suggestion that the advice to the Attorney General also includes some comment that David Woodman may have used undue force when he detained the people who committed the assault. I have spoken to David Woodman and to others who are close to the case and they say that was not the situation. David Woodman only used reasonable force. I think it must also be understood that a medical report at one stage was tendered by the Government in defence of not making this ex gratia payment, but it failed to recognise that both the attackers admitted they were drunk at the time of the assault. I expect that when one of them was pushed off balance by David Woodman and crashed into a car he may have sustained some sort of bruising. But it was not a wilful assault by Woodman. It was a case of his wanting to detain that person to hand over to the police. Perhaps the Government felt it was in an embarrassing situation and tried to get out of that by arguing that Woodman used undue force. I submit to the Minister that that is not the case. Perhaps on reflection the Crown Law advice to the Attorney General could be quite different, and it would be quite reasonable for an ex gratia payment to be made. The amount is only \$1 500 but a very significant principle is involved.

Mr Grill: On what grounds do you think that an ex gratia payment should be made?

Mr CASH: On the grounds that Woodman acted in good faith in going to the aid of the young lady, and detaining the people who committed the assault; that he did not use undue force, and that he then handed the assailants over to the police as was expected of him. He acted as a reasonable person and, I guess, caused a citizen's arrest to be effected.

Mr Grill: I agree with all of that, but that does not seem to be relevant to the question of costs which is what we are really talking about in relation to the unsuccessful prosecution by the Crown; it seems to be a different matter in a sense. To be successful, one would normally have to prove that there was something grossly wrong about the conduct of the proceedings.

Mr CASH: I take the Minister's point; I understand what he is getting at. If we have a very good look at the advice of the CIB officers who handled the offence - that is, the advice not to prosecute - we see they did not want the matter pursued. The Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime) commended Woodman on the way he had acted. Brigadier Hodges, chief of the SAS in Western Australia, also commended him. I suggest to the Minister that there is probably good reason to ask why the prosecution was advanced in the first place, but I take his point. I invite the Government to reconsider its position, not to say whether it is right or wrong in this case but to review all the facts, invite Woodman to put his case and invite others who have an interest to make submissions to the Attorney General because I believe that we are trying to hang on to technicalities. In the long run, that is not what law and justice is all about. Woodman did act in good faith and, I guess, if the Minister or I were in the same position - that is, being assaulted in a street - we would hope that someone would come to our aid. If so, we would be able to at least try to detain the people committing the assault.

The matter is serious and I invite the Minister to reconsider it. If the argument is that Woodman used undue force, that in itself needs further investigation because I do not believe that was the case at all. It is certainly not the view of Woodman and not the view of others who have since investigated this case.

Mr Grill: Brian Tennant has taken this up.

Mr CASH: Yes, with the Attorney General. Brian Tennant visited me in Parliament House and ran through the matter with me on a number of occasions. I have reams of correspondence from Mr Tennant on the matter and it is something which he will continue to pursue.

I want the matter sorted out in the interests of the community. Whilst it may not be a mitigating circumstance, the \$1 500 involved was part of Woodman's deposit on a house. He is not a person of considerable means who is able to write off that amount. The matter has caused considerable inconvenience and stress and is one which the general public would want addressed. I believe this is a matter that the public would be prepared to support by way of an ex gratia payment. I leave the matter to the Minister to speak to the Attorney General and to make comments on it.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Dr Gallop): I did not interrupt the member for Mt Lawley but it has occurred to me that he touched on all those matters in the general Budget debate some weeks ago. The normal practice is that we do not repeat the arguments contained in previous debates, particularly in Budget debates dealing with particular items. The member for Mt Lawley had delivered a major part of this speech before this point occurred to me. As a general principle we ought to raise new matters in the course of discussing the Budget rather than repeating matters dealt with earlier. Standing Order No 142 clearly deals with this point.

Mr GRILL: First, I refer to the comments made by the member for Floreat. He was somewhat critical of the Government in respect of research into crime. The criticism was rather strange and somewhat unfair in view of the fact that this Government has made an endowment of \$3.5 million towards the setting up of a chair of criminology at the University of Western Australia, which will be engaged almost exclusively in research into the vexed question of criminal law and the nature and cause of criminal behaviour amongst delinquents. The endowment of \$3.5 million is absolutely unprecedented in the history of Western Australia and it seems strange that the member for Floreat should criticise the Government in an area where it has made such an outstanding contribution. Some of the remarks by the member for Floreat in that respect were really a little empty.

The member for Floreat was also critical of the Government in respect of its recent attempts to underline the problems relating to criminal law in Western Australia, law and order generally, and the question of beating crime. The "beat crime" document put out by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is much more than just a glossy document. The document is not particularly glossy; it is a very substantial document. The document is a serious attempt to come to grips with crime in our society. I believe strongly that it is the most important and thorough strategy for attacking crime in our society that this State has seen.

The member referred also to the Official Corruption Commission. I remind him that, although that legislation was brought before the House by the member for Floreat, it was strongly supported by the Government. That legislation was deficient in a number of areas in that it did not go far enough and was not strong enough. The legislation was amended by the Government to make it more effective.

Mr Mensaros: I asked about the Government's attitude to the Public Prosecutor's Office in view of the Premier's statement. The Bill was a private member's Bill which did not have a Message.

Mr GRILL: We certainly intend to proceed with the setting up of the commission. I do not have a date for that, but I promise the member that it will go ahead.

The member also bemoaned what he thought was a decline in family values in this State. In many respects I agree with his remarks. However, I cannot agree with his thinly veiled attack on the status of women in Western Australia. I think some of his remarks were really quite reactionary. This Government strongly endorses the family and family values. In some respects it would endorse a return by many people to a greater reliance on traditional family values. However, the Government cannot support what was, in many ways, a thinly veiled attack on what is a better status for women put in place by this Government.

The member for Mt Lawley referred to restitution orders made by courts and suggested that a more easily understood system of restitution should be put in place. I agree with him. However, I do not think we can be seen to be placing the onus for the following up of restitution orders on the taxpayer. Although the procedure should be better understood by many people, it is the responsibility of the claimant, not of the taxpayer, to follow up that procedure. That does not mean that the claimant should not receive some help or guidance

from the Crown Law Department; he should. I will draw the member's remarks to the attention of the Attorney General to see whether it can be streamlined in some way.

The member also referred, for the second time, to the case of trooper David Woodman. Brian Tennant has also drawn this matter to my attention. I understand that the Attorney General is considering the matter again. I understand also the sympathies of the member for Mt Lawley for trooper David Woodman. I give him an undertaking, as I have given one to Brian Tennant, to chase up the matter with the Attorney General to see whether some payment can be made. It is not normal practice in this State or under British law to make an order for costs against the Crown in serious cases. It has been introduced in Western Australia in relation to minor cases as the member is aware. There might be a trend towards that, but we need to be careful because in some cases it could be a fetter on the police in bringing charges against some people that need to be brought before the courts.

Mr Cash: I understand what you are saying. I have asked for an ex gratia payment, not an order against the Crown.

Mr GRILL: Right. In any event, I understand the member's sympathies for this person and I will take the matter up with the Attorney General.

Division 18 put and passed.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr Pearce (Leader of the House).

House adjourned at 11.08 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ELECTIONS - PUBLIC OPINION POLLS

Public Funds - July 1987-August 1988

1177. Mr COURT to the Premier:

- (1) What public funds have been spent on public opinion polls in the period from July 1987 to August 1988?
- (2) What opinion polls were carried out?
- (3) Were the results made public?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

See answer to parliamentary questions 1548 of 1987 and 773 of 1988.

HEALTH - HOSPITALS

Gnowangerup - Costs

1260. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

Adverting to question 870 of 1988, would he please indicate the total amount of money spent on the inquiry; that is, all costs associated with the inquiry such as solicitors fees for the board, private individuals, the matron, accommodation for people from the Health Department, and any other costs associated with that inquiry?

Mr WILSON replied:

The cost of the inquiry conducted by barrister Michael O'Sullivan was made up as follows -

Michael O'Sullivan	65 401.92
Expenses claim submitted on behalf of Dr Peter Cummins	9 910.50
Expenses claim submitted on behalf of Dr Terrance Gould	<u>2 700.46</u>
	78 012.88

The Government, by agreement with the parties, met the legal costs associated with representation at the inquiry as follows -

Northmore Hale Davy & Leake - representing the Gnowangerup Hospital Board	100 415.86
Taylor Knott & Murray - representing Matron Ruth Griffiths	106 892.08

In addition the Gnowangerup Hospital Board incurred expenses as follows -

Payment of travelling and accommodation expenses to Matron Griffiths	1 740.20
Payment of travelling, accommodation and incidental expenses to board members attending inquiry hearings	<u>2 938.90</u>
	4 679.10

Health Department officials only attended inquiry hearings in Perth. They were not required to participate in the Gnowangerup hearings.

The total of the above payments is \$289 999.92.

STATE FINANCE

Payments - Bond, Mr; Connell, Mr; Rothwells Ltd

1271. Mr HASSELL to the Premier:

In the last two months has the Government made any payment or advance or given any guarantee or undertaking of payment, advance or guarantee to any of the interests associated with Mr Bond or Mr Connell or Rothwells Limited in connection with any of the announced or unannounced dealings of the Government with those parties or any of them?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

If the member has a specific concern I will be happy to address it.

EDUCATION - TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Executive Assistant to the Acting Director - Experience

1427. Mr CASH to the Minister assisting the Minister for Education with TAFE:

- (1) Further to question 1202 of 1988, and his answer to part (3), will he outline the previous experience referred to and credited as being pertinent to the position, the length of this previous experience and the qualifications of the present incumbent?
- (2) Further to question 1202 and his answer to part (4), how many other 21 year old executive service assistants are serving at this level in the Public Service?

Mr GORDON HILL replied:

- (1) Sixteen months' experience as an executive assistant to a director in the Department of Employment and Training involving executive liaison, preparation of briefing papers, organisation of meetings and executive committee work, research, and report writing. Certificate in Business Studies and continuing studies towards a Diploma in Management.
- (2) The Minister assisting the Minister for Public Sector Management advises that there are 24 positions at level 4 filled by officers in the 20-24 age range. The officer referred to is the only 21 year old executive assistant.

HEALTH - HOSPITALS

Heathcote - Closure

1440. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Health:

- (1) On the basis of the Government's previous announcements that Heathcote Hospital would close in 18 months from March 1987, does the Government still intend closing Heathcote Hospital in the relative near future?
- (2) What is the approximate revised date of the closure?
- (3) Where are the existing patients to be accommodated?
- (4) Has the Government commissioned a planning/development consultant to prepare subdivisional proposals for the Heathcote Hospital site?
- (5) Does the Government intend subdividing the site in accordance with the subdivisional proposals to hand?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1)-(3) Firm details about the future of Heathcote Hospital are yet to be finalised.
- (4)-(5) No formal proposals have been considered.

PRISONS - PRISONERS

Meredith, Nicholas - Crown Appeal

1463. Mr HASSELL to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) In relation to the trial of Nicholas Meredith, accused of the wilful murder of Peter Tan, does the Crown have any legal right of appeal against the jury verdict of manslaughter?

- (2) Is the Attorney General concerned that it appears that the name of the victim was besmirched by defence evidence without any adequate response from the prosecution?
- (3) Why was some evidence for the prosecution, relevant to the events at the time of the offence, not called in the trial?
- (4) Why were eight witnesses for the prosecution not called?
- (5) Why was medical evidence not called from Royal Perth Hospital doctors who examined the victim on admission 35 to 40 minutes after the assault on him, and who performed tests and surgery on him?
- (6) Is the Attorney General satisfied that the good name of the victim was fairly treated in the trial, and that the victim's family was fairly and adequately dealt with?
- (7) Will the Crown appeal against the sentence?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) No.

(2)-(6)

It should be remembered that the only issue for determination in a criminal trial is the question of the guilt or innocence of the person charged. Under our system of law the Crown has only a limited capacity to respond to defence evidence which may have the effect of besmirching the name of the victim because strict rules of relevance to the trial must be observed by the prosecution.

All evidence available or known to the prosecution which was legally relevant to the events at the scene was led by the prosecution.

A number of witnesses were not called at the trial because admissions made by the defence made their evidence unnecessary. Evidence was not called from medical staff at Royal Perth Hospital because the evidence of the expert pathologist who was called by the prosecution made that evidence unnecessary.

I am advised that in this particular case there was a significant difference between the injuries directly caused by the assault on the victim and the consequential injuries caused when the victim fell. It was the consequential injuries to the brain which caused death. There is a critical difference between direct and consequential injuries for the purposes of section 23 of the Criminal Code.

In this case, the prosecution was conducted by one of the Crown's most senior and experienced counsel. Every effort that could lawfully and properly be made by him to present the case against the accused was made.

- (7) Please refer to the detailed answer to question 1523(4).

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HOLDINGS LTD - DIRECTORS

1503. Mr MacKINNON to the Treasurer:

- (1) Who are the current directors of WA Government Holdings Ltd?
- (2) When were they appointed?
- (3) What is their annual remuneration?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Mr W. Heron (Chairman);
Dr J. McKee; and
Mr R.G. Bowe.
- (2) Mr Heron and Dr McKee were appointed on 19 August 1988. Mr Bowe was appointed on 10 October 1988.
- (3) Nil.

ADVERTISING - RURAL AREA ATTRACTIONS
GWN Program - State Finance

1506. Mr HASSELL to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Western Australian Government paying for the advertisement being shown on GWN relating to the attractions of the country areas of Western Australia and linking it to EXPO 88?
- (2) If so, what are the purposes of this program and what is the cost?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

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

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS - WATER BORES
Kimberley - Water Authority of Western Australia

1507. Mr GRAYDEN to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1)
 - (a) During 1987-88, what major works, such as the provision of water bores, were carried out for Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley by the Water Authority of Western Australia; and
 - (b) which communities were involved?
- (2) During the current financial year, what work is being carried out by the Water Authority to provide bores for use by Kimberley Aboriginal communities?
- (3) For which locations are plans presently being made for the resettlement of Aboriginal communities, or the provision of new habitation sites in the Kimberley?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

- (1)
 - (a) During 1987-88 the Water Authority of Western Australia constructed major water and/or sewerage works, by upgrading existing schemes or installation of new schemes, for 18 Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley; and
 - (b) Oombulgurri, Noonkanbah, Kalumburu, Bardi, Djugerari, Bayulu, Looma, Wangkatjunka, Balgo, Yiyili, Ngunulum, Darlu-Darlu, Ngiling-Anjaru, Kartang-Ritjarr, Wungku, Looma Galeru Gorge, Ngalingkadji and Joy Springs.
- (2) A major works program is being compiled for 1988-89 by the authority in association with the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, but details have not as yet been finalised.
- (3) The Government is not making plans to resettle any Aboriginal communities from one location to another in the Kimberley. Applications for living area sites are considered upon receipt of applications from Aboriginal groups.

MOTOR VEHICLES - GOVERNMENT
Non Government Licence Plates - 6WA Prefix

1513. Mr CASH to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Will he advise how many authorities he has issued for ordinary, non Government motor vehicle licence plates to be fitted to Government vehicles?
- (2) How many Government vehicles are currently in use or registered with ordinary non Government licence plates?
- (3) How many vehicles are currently registered with licence plate prefix 6WA?

Mr TAYLOR replied:

- (1) Thirty three.
- (2) As at 6 October 1988 - 2 126
- (3) Ninety five.

ROADS - MT MAGNET ROAD
Geraldton - Condition

1514. Mr CASH to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the condition of the Geraldton-Mt Magnet Road?
- (2) Is he aware of the concern of some of the users of this road and the Shire of Yalgoo at the condition of this road, and in particular the section of road from Mullewa to Mt Magnet which comprises a single carriageway apart from floodways and grid crossings?
- (3) Given the volume of traffic on this road and in particular the increase in the number of road trains and tourist traffic, will he ensure that urgent action is taken to upgrade the road and, if not, why not?
- (4) How much will the upgrading cost?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) The Main Roads Department advises that the road is regularly maintained and is in good condition.
- (2) I am aware that some users of the road have expressed a desire that the sections sealed one lane wide be widened. These sections total 102 kilometres in length and the widening work would cost in the order of \$8 million.
- (3)-(4) The Government recognises that it would be desirable to widen the narrow sections, particularly a 10 kilometre section just east of Mullewa. There is a limited amount of funding for roadworks and there are many worthwhile projects throughout the State competing for the funds available. Careful consideration will be given to the possibility of allocating funds for the widening of the road when future roadworks programs are being prepared.

HOUSING - GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES HOUSING AUTHORITY
Allocations - Northam

1517. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Housing:

Could she please advise what allocations have been given to Government Employees Housing Authority housing in the town of Northam?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

The question is unclear in respect of what information is required. However, it is assumed that details on the GEHA building program are sought. GEHA will complete 14 units of accommodation in Northam in 1988-89 at a cost of \$1.058 million. This figure includes nine units carried over from 1987-88, with the other five units being planned to be commenced and completed during 1988-89.

HEALTH - HEAD INJURED YOUTH
Nursing Homes - Accommodation

1522. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many young head injured patients currently reside in nursing homes in Western Australia?
- (2) Has a suitable place been found to accommodate the young head injured as proposed earlier this year?
- (3) If so, where and when can we expect that nursing home to be operating?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Of the latest figures available - September 1987 - there are 67 young people with a diagnosis of head injury. The State does not have any details of young people with head injury who reside in nursing homes in the non Government sector. A survey of the needs of head injured people is currently being undertaken by the Health Advisory Network.

- (2) No single place would be appropriate nor would it meet the legitimate and differing needs of young disabled people. A series of options to provide a range of services is being actively developed which will cover the varying needs.
- (3) I will make a public statement on this matter once decisions have been finalised.

PRISONS - PRISONERS

Meredith, Nicholas - Trial Circumstances

1523. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Has the Attorney been informed about the circumstances leading up to and the trial of Nicholas Meredith on 8 and 9 August before the Supreme Court?
- (2) Is it a fact that considerable evidence was adduced which was documented in the pre-trial period during the police interrogations, such as racial abuse of the victim in the presence of two witnesses prior to the physical assault, which emerged during the police inquiry?
- (3) Is it a fact that photographs taken of the victim's injuries on the day of the assault were not presented as evidence?
- (4) Will the Attorney consider using all avenues open to him in order to have a retrial so that in view of all the available evidence a more adequate penalty could be arrived at?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Yes, by the Crown Solicitor's Office.
- (2) There was a statement from one Crown witness indicating that both he and the accused had each made a racist remark to the deceased prior to the fatal incident.
- (3) Photographs of the victim's injuries were not presented as evidence. The police photographs were not taken until some time after the assault and after major surgical intervention, and the police considered they would not be accepted in evidence.
- (4) The law does not permit a retrial after the acquittal of an accused, and on the advice of the Solicitor General and Crown Prosecutor, the Crown will not appeal against the sentence imposed. However, the Attorney General has requested the Crown Prosecutor to review and report on juvenile sentencing standards, particularly as these are affected by the sentencing provisions of the Child Welfare Act. Attached is a copy of the Attorney General's reply to a question without notice on this subject on 13 October 1988. It reads as follows -

I have received a report on this case from the Crown Prosecutor, Mr Graeme Scott, QC, and have discussed a number of related issues with him. The Crown Prosecutor has recommended against an appeal by the Crown on the question of sentence, and his opinion has been endorsed by the Solicitor General. On the basis of this advice, I have decided that an appeal by the Crown should not be initiated.

The Meredith case involved a conviction for manslaughter in circumstances which the trial judge described as at the more serious end of the scale. However, after taking account of seven months' detention on remand, a head sentence of two years and five months was imposed. It is reasonably clear that a longer sentence would have been imposed if not for the fact that Meredith was 17 years old at the time of the offence and therefore had the benefit of the sentencing provision of the Child Welfare Act.

For similar reasons, the Court of Criminal Appeal in the Yorkshire case recently changed a term of 21 years' imprisonment to an

indeterminate sentence. This means that, instead of Yorkshire being ineligible for parole for at least 14 years his situation, theoretically at least, can now be reviewed at any time. I do not question the judgment of the court in either of the cases to which I have referred. On the other hand, I share the widespread concern that current statutory provisions affecting the sentencing of juveniles - especially in serious cases where the offenders are approaching 18 years of age - are not sufficiently flexible.

With the agreement of the Minister for Community Services I have therefore asked the Crown Prosecutor to review the effect of the Child Welfare Act on juvenile sentences and to provide an opinion on the desirability of any amendments beyond those already before the Parliament in the Children's Court Bills.

LAND - LANDCORP

State Engineering Works Site - Soil Contamination Removal

1527. Mr COURT to the Premier:

- (1) Will LandCorp be ensuring that before the State Engineering Works site is sold, all contamination to the soils will be removed?
- (2) If yes, what is the cost of achieving this?
- (3) By when will it be completed?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Approximately \$500 000.
- (3) Within six months.

TRANSPORT - RAILWAYS

Spur Line - Gypsum Mine, Norseman

1530. Mr COURT to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What was the cost of building the spur line at Norseman to the gypsum mine?
- (2) When was this spur line completed?
- (3) What tonnage has been hauled out on that spur line?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) \$135 000.
- (2) November 1984.
- (3) Nil.

TRAFFIC - HAZARDS

Swan Brewery Site - Assessments

1531. Mr COURT to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What studies have been carried out to assess the traffic hazards associated with the redevelopment of the old Swan Brewery site?
- (2) Is the off ramp to the new tunnel safe considering it is on a corner and extremely short and also considering the traffic numbers using this road?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Studies have been carried out by both the Main Roads Department and Scott and Furphy Engineers.
- (2) The tunnel off ramp starts before the brewery buildings and is separated from the main carriageways around the brewery building corner. It is therefore quite long, allowing ample time for deceleration before entering the tunnel. Combined with the provision of a barrier median strip the road will be safer than it currently is.

PLANNING - SWAN BREWERY SITE
Construction - Overseer

1532. Mr COURT to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Who is responsible for overseeing the construction work currently being undertaken at the old Swan Brewery site?
- (2) What are the engineering problems to be encountered in building a road tunnel so close to the river?
- (3) Will this tunnel affect in any way fresh water supplies drawn adjacent to it?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Roger Gregson and Associates are the architects and Bruechle Gilchrist and Evans the engineers, working under direction from LandCorp.
- (2) No unusual problems. Dewatering is necessary during construction and provision in the design is required to prevent the tunnel from floating upon completion.
- (3) The expert advice is no.

**TECHNOLOGY - TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**
*Product Development Loan - International Broadcasting
Group Pty Ltd*

1534. Mr COURT to the Minister for Economic Development and Trade:

- (1) Did the Government, through the former Technology Development Authority, give a \$100 000 product development loan to the International Broadcasting Group Pty Ltd?
- (2) If yes, when was this loan made?
- (3) What are the terms of the loan?
- (4) Were the funds used for the development of one of the company's products?
- (5) If yes, what was the product involved?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 24 April 1987.
- (3) Two year loan -
Principal repayable in two \$50 000 instalments on 24 October 1988 and 24 April 1989.
Interest rate 13.75 per cent payable six monthly in arrears -
\$6 875 due 24 October 1987 (paid), 24 April 1988 (paid), 24 October 1988;
\$3 437.50 due on 24 April 1989.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Sophisticated full conference and switching systems.

HOUSING - HOMESWEST
Serviced Lots, Metropolitan Area - Selection and Purchase

1542. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Housing :

- (1) What was the total number of serviced lots in the metropolitan area available for selection and purchase from Homeswest on 30 September 1988?
- (2) Which are the estates and what are the number of lots in each estate?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----------|
| (1) | 131. | |
| (2) | Coolongup | 2 |
| | Koongamia | 1 |
| | Midvale | 32 |
| | Parmelia | 58 |
| | Kingsley | <u>38</u> |
| | | 131 |

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS - "PUTTING FAMILIES FIRST"

Costs

1544. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the total cost of production and distribution of the recent Government publication "Putting Families First"?
- (2) How many copies have been printed and distributed?
- (3) Has a reprint been ordered, and what is the expected cost of this reprint and distribution?
- (4) Were private sector industry groups - institute/associations - approached to help fund the production and distribution of the publication and, if so, who were they?
- (5) How many of these private sector industry groups contributed, and who were they?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) See answer to parliamentary question 1398.
- (2) 30 000.
- (3)-(4) No.
- (5) Not applicable.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS - "BUDGET OUTLOOK"

Costs

1545. Mr LEWIS to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the total cost of production and distribution of the recent Government publication "Budget Outlook"?
- (2) How many copies have been printed and distributed?
- (3) Has a reprint been ordered, and what is the expected cost of this reprint and distribution?
- (4) Were private sector industry groups - institute/associations - approached to help fund the production and distribution of the publication and, if so, who were they?
- (5) How many of these private sector industry groups contributed, and who were they?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Costs known to date total \$34 940.39.
- (2) 21 086 printed; 16 886 distributed.
- (3)-(4) No.
- (5) Not applicable; see (4).

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT - PETROCHEMICAL PROJECT
First Boston Corporation

1546. Mr MacKINNON to the Minister for Economic Development and Trade:

- (1) On what basis was First Boston chosen to carry out the analysis of the petrochemical project?
- (2) Has the Western Australian Government had any previous dealings with First Boston?
- (3) Have any of the other participants or partners in the petrochemical project had previous business connections with First Boston?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) First Boston is internationally recognised as an expert in financial advisory and project valuation assignments.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.

PORTS AND HARBOURS - WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Grain Export - Deepened Ports

1547. Mr REG TUBBY to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In the past 10 years, have any Western Australian ports used for the export of grain been deepened?
- (2) If so, by how much in each case?
- (3) What was the cost in each case?
- (4) How was each case financed?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes. Esperance was deepened this year and Albany in 1978-79.
- (2) By around two metres in each case.
- (3) Cost was \$2.9 million for Esperance and \$6 million for Albany.
- (4) In the case of Esperance, the port authority financed the work through borrowings from the General Loan Fund. A levy was established on cargo to recover the expenditure.

In the case of Albany, the port authority financed the work through inscribed stock and borrowings from the General Loan Fund. A levy was established on cargo to recover the expenditure.

TRANSPORT - GRAIN
Export - Freight Rate Changes

1548. Mr WATT to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are there any moves to alter the method of grain freight charges or wharfage charges for grain exported from Western Australian ports?
- (2) If so, what are the details?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I understand that the Australian Wheat Board has developed a proposal to charge wharfage and two port loading costs on a port-by-port basis. However, the board has recently decided to defer the proposal for 12 months pending further industry discussion.

HOUSING - HOMESWEST
Jurien Bay - Building and Construction

1549. Mr SCHELL to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many Homeswest houses were built in Jurien Bay in-

- (a) 1984;
 - (b) 1985;
 - (c) 1986; and
 - (d) 1987?
- (2) How many are scheduled to be built in-
- (a) 1988; and
 - (b) 1989?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

- (1) (a) Nil.
 - (b) nil;
 - (c) one - GEHA; and
 - (d) nil.
- (2) (a) One - GEHA, spot purchase; and
- (b) one - GEHA.

HEALTH - HEAD INJURED PERSONS
Respite Care - "Spouses Support Group" Request

1551. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he received a request from the "Spouses Support Group" for respite care to be made available for head injured persons?
- (2) What action is he taking in response to that request?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The request was received on 12 October. Respite care will receive a high priority in the plans which are now being developed for the care of the disabled.

HEALTH - CHOLESTEROL TESTING
Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists - Concern

1552. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) With respect to cholesterol testing in shopping centres, is he aware of various concerns being expressed by the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists about -
 - (a) possible non compliance with the infection control guidelines;
 - (b) the accuracy of the tests;
 - (c) the level of expert advice that is available on hand; and
 - (d) the extension of the cholesterol testing service to screening for diabetes, anaemia or any other disorder that is identifiable through blood testing?
- (2) (a) Are these concerns valid; and
- (b) if yes, what action will be taken?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes. A letter from the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists was received on 10 October 1988, and my department is presently examining the issues that have been identified by the member.
- (2) (a) The proliferation of cholesterol testing facilities is a cause for valid concern, especially if the testing procedure is inadequate or the advice given, based on the test result, is inappropriate; and

- (b) the National Heart Foundation has consulted with the Health Department and is in the process of preparing a set of guidelines for cholesterol screening. The Health Department will consider adopting these as formal policy. The Medical Board of Western Australia is the appropriate body, in the first instance, to examine whether any cholesterol screening and counselling service is in breach of the Medical Act.

TRANSPORT - WESTRAIL

Employees - Statistics

1557. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many research officers are employed by Westrail?
- (2) How many people are employed by Westrail?
- (3) What is the breakdown of -
 - (a) the categories of employment; and
 - (b) the number employed in each category?
- (4) How many are employed by Westrail in the city and how many in the country?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Eight.
- (2) 5 609.
- (3) (a) Salaried and wages; and
(b) salaried 1 357
wages 4 252

(4)	Salaried	Wages
City-metro area	1 132	2 875
Country	225	1 377

TRANSPORT - RAILWAYS

Passenger Use - Perth-Fremantle Service

1560. Mr LEWIS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the passenger use numbers for the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988 for the Perth-Fremantle passenger rail service?
- (2) Is this service run at a profit?
- (3) If not, what was the annual loss for the above period for the service?
- (4) Is this service to be electrified?
- (5) If yes, what is the date of the commencement of the electrification?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Separate figures are not kept for each line on an annual basis but a sample count carried out in June this year totalled 11 480 passengers in one day. This compared with a count of 10 834 passengers in 1987 and 10 332 passengers in 1986. For 1988 this equates to an average passenger load of 108 for each trip.
- (2) No.
- (3) It is not possible to separately cost the three suburban lines because of the large proportion of resources which are common to all three, and the problems of allocating revenues to individual lines.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) It is expected that the Fremantle line will be electrified early in 1991.

HOUSING - HOMESWEST
Coorow - Australian Wildflower Farm Pickers

1561. Mr SCHELL to the Minister for Housing:

Is the State Government prepared to meet the need for Homeswest housing in Coorow to house pickers for the Australian Wildflower Farm?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

The 1988-89 Homeswest construction program does not include Coorow. However, Homeswest is currently reassessing demand following an approach from the Coorow Shire.

PLANNING - STATE PLANNING COMMISSION
Swan River Drive - Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme

1562. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Planning:

Why is the State Planning Commission proposing to remove Swan River Drive from the metropolitan region town planning scheme now when, according to his reply to question 1404 of 1988, the whole eastern corridor is still being studied by the State Planning Commission and the Environmental Protection Authority?

Mr PEARCE replied:

The question is based on a false premise. I did not previously say that the whole eastern corridor is still being studied by the State Planning Commission and the Environmental Protection Authority. The eastern corridor major roads study sought to define primary east-west traffic routes within the eastern corridor between Roe Highway and the metropolitan region boundary. Swan River Drive is not within this study area.

WA EXIM CORPORATION - UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Overseas Student Prospectuses - Overseas Printing

1563. Mr MENSAROS to the Minister for Economic Development and Trade:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Western Australian Exim Corporation - representing and promoting tertiary institutions in Western Australia - had student prospectuses for the University of Western Australia printed overseas instead of employing local industry?
- (2) If so, does he agree with this action being in line with the Government's policy?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) See (1) above. Not applicable.

NATIONAL MEDIA LIAISON SERVICE - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
Officers - Western Australia

1565. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware whether any officers of the Commonwealth Government's so-called National Media Liaison Service are based in or operating in Western Australia?
- (2) If yes, how many are there and what does he understand to be their function?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

This inquiry should be directed to the appropriate Federal Minister.

NATIONAL MEDIA LIAISON SERVICE - STATE GOVERNMENT
Media Monitoring Unit Officers - Contact

1566. Mr COWAN to the Premier:

Do officers of the State Government media monitoring unit, or any of the

ministerial Press secretaries, liaise with or have any form of contact with the National Media Liaison Service?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

I am unaware of any arrangements between the Government Media Office and the National Media Liaison Service.

SHEA, DR - WALPOLE
Meeting - Members of the Public

1567. Mr COWAN to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

- (1) Further to question 1388 of 1988 relating to a meeting being organised by Dr Shea to discuss issues relating to the draft management plan of the Walpole-Normalup National Park, are members of the public, other than those interest groups that have received a specific invitation, to be excluded from the meeting?
- (2) If yes, why?
- (3) Which interest groups have been invited to attend?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1)-(2)

A total of 32 groups have been invited to participate in the workshop on Walpole-Normalup National Park to ensure fair representation of all viewpoints. If others express a keen interest they will be considered for inclusion.

(3) The groups invited are -

South West Development Authority
Bushfires Board
Department of Sport and Recreation
Department of Marine and Harbours
Fisheries Department
Waterways Commission
Manjimup Shire Council
Denmark Shire Council
Walpole-Normalup National Park Association
Coalition for Denmark's Environment
Conservation Council of WA
South-West Forests Defence Foundation
WA Inbound Tour Operators Association
WA Tourism Industry Association
South-West Tourism Directorate
Walpole Tourist Bureau
South Coast Adventure Holidays
Apiculture Section, Department of Agriculture
WA Apiarists Society
Beekeepers Section, WA Farmers Federation
WA Recreation and Sport Fishing Council
Walpole Boating and Angling Club
Walpole Yacht Club
Four-Wheel Drive Association of WA
Walpole-Tingledale WA Farmers Federation
Nomad 4WD Club of Western Australia
Australian Anglers Association
Walpole Tingledale Soil Conservation Group
Conservation Committee WA Farmers Federation
Peaceful Bay Progress Association
South Coast Professional Fishermen's Association
Karri Regional Advisory Committee (14 members)

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

THE SPEAKER (Mr Barnett): Last week at the end of question time I may have inadvertently disfranchised certain members of the place who were in no way responsible for my cutting short question time. As a consequence of that I immediately guaranteed to at least one of those members the opportunity to ask the first question today, and so I give the call to the member for Stirling.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT - PETROCHEMICAL PROJECT
EDC, VCM Production - Environmental Hazards

261. **Mr STEPHENS** to the Minister for Environment:

With respect to the proposed petrochemical plant -

- (1) Will the Minister outline the environmental hazards and consequences of the production of EDC or VCM rather than taking the processing right through to the PVC stage?
- (2) What steps will be taken to deal with these environmental hazards and consequences?
- (3) Will additional checks be made on the seaworthiness of ships carrying these hazardous products to prevent a repetition of the *Singa Sea* disaster?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1)-(3)

I cannot believe the member for Stirling is seriously asking me to answer that question without notice. It is a highly technical matter and I am not technically competent to answer that question. I suggest that if he were serious about getting an answer to that question he would put it on the Notice Paper and I would be happy to provide it to him.

WA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - HORGAN, MR JOHN
McLean Brothers and Rigg Ltd - Guarantee

262. **Mr HASSELL** to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that Mr John Horgan, the Chairman of the Western Australian Development Corporation, has not denied in his statements and his officially issued statement that the guarantee given by the Western Australian Development Corporation to McLean Brothers and Rigg Ltd has been paid out?
- (2) Why did the Premier say in public, as he did on Channel 9 the night before last, that, and I quote, "The Liberals are wrong", when it is now both admitted and totally established that the WADC paid out \$2.95 million or thereabouts to the Australian Bank in respect of a guarantee of McLean Brothers and Rigg Ltd, and on the direct admission of Mr Horgan himself, in his statements that the Western Australian Development Corporation wrote off in its annual accounts more than \$590 000 as to part of its investment in McLean Brothers and Rigg?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

(1)-(2)

I take it by that question that the member for Cottesloe is really trying to justify the pretty outrageous attack on the WADC that he launched last week in suggesting that the accounts that had been brought down by the WADC were incorrect. Those accounts are audited -

Mr Hassell: No such statements were ever made.

Mr PETER DOWDING: The member for Cottesloe, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have all tried to suggest there is something wrong with the accounts. The member for Cottesloe is driven in

his fundamentalist way to find something he can get his teeth into to be critical of the Western Australian Development Corporation and its board. The chairman of the board has issued a response which indicates the member for Cottesloe is wrong; that is, that the accounts are correct -

Mr Hassell: That was never in dispute.

Mr PETER DOWDING: - and that in fact the Western Australian Development Corporation's results are good and that it is involved in a variety of enterprises which have given a very good return to the State.

Mr Hassell: Why don't you answer the question?

Mr PETER DOWDING: Because the member has said there is a conflict between what I have said and what the chairman of the board has said. The chairman of the board has rejected the criticism from the Opposition which suggests -

Mr Hassell: He has rejected the criticism but he has not rejected the facts, because he cannot.

Mr PETER DOWDING: The chairman of the board has rejected the criticism because the accounts clearly and properly show the profits of the board. I do not think there is anything more the Opposition can make out of that.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Improvement - Leader of the Opposition's Statement

263. Mr DONOVAN to the Premier:

Could the Premier please confirm the situation on youth and unemployment, given the Leader of the Opposition's statement in Monday's *The West Australian* of 17 October 1988, on page 43, that -

"The only reason there has been a slight improvement for younger teenagers is that school leavers have not yet reached the job market to blow the figures right back to where they belong?"

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

In *The West Australian* on Monday 17 October the Liberal leader is reported to have suggested that the only reason there has been a slight improvement for younger teenagers is that school leavers have not yet reached the job market to blow the figures right back to where they belong.

Mr Thomas: What does he mean, "where they belong"?

Mr PETER DOWDING: Let me take a moment to point out that in the year in which the Liberal Party lost office, youth unemployment in Western Australia was 31 per cent. Nearly 12 000 teenagers were unemployed, but there has been a dramatic change and now 42 per cent fewer teenagers are unemployed.

Mr Cowan: How many of them are still at school?

Mr PETER DOWDING: None of them. The statistics do not show unemployed as a percentage of teenagers; they show the percentage of those teenagers who are not in employment. The statistics of unemployed young people do not give raw numbers of people in the total community and take a percentage of those out of school looking for work; they take those people who are not at school. They take those people who are not in training; those who are outside that system. Youth unemployment in Western Australia has diminished by nearly half. The figures for school, employment, training and apprenticeships in Western Australia are that 14 000 young people are either in apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships or traineeships.

Mr Cowan: I do not think you are right about apprenticeships. You had better check some of those figures.

Mr PETER DOWDING: If the Leader of the National Party wants the figures I can make sure he is given comparative apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and traineeship figures.

Mr Gordon Hill: There was an 11 per cent decline in the years of your Government and an eight per cent increase in the last three years.

Mr PETER DOWDING: I do not carry the figures with me, but I will give them to the Leader of the National Party. I cannot understand how the Opposition can suggest that the policies that we now have in place are not working in terms of providing jobs for young people, because the statistics do not support that stance. There has been a 42 per cent decrease in the number of teenagers looking for their first job when the school-leavers hit the job market. That is a remarkable turnaround. We should concentrate on one group of people, and that is the group between 20 and 35. They are the people who emerged into the job market without adequate training during the Liberal Government's period in office. Despite the recent economic success, many fewer teenagers are unemployed. The Opposition, when it was in Government, did not have an aggressive training policy to provide solutions for young people as they left school. With the establishment for the first time under our Government of a Department of Employment and Training, and the extensive work and energy which has gone into providing to young people training opportunities of the traditional type and the new type, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of young people without skills. The Opposition should know that we have a lot of work to do in respect of that group in the community which was going through schooling and post-schooling periods when the Liberals were in power. I hope that we will be able to address those issues over the next few months. I am very disappointed that the Opposition does not have a better view of the economy when it tries to design its policies for the next election.

WA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - HORGAN, MR JOHN

WA Inc - Non-Participant

264. Mr COURT to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Premier support the statement given last night by the head of WADC, Mr John Horgan, that the WADC was not a part of WA Inc and was not associated with the Connells, Bonds and Dempsters?
- (2) Does the Premier agree that there is indisputable community concern about WA Inc - a concern shared by Mr Horgan?
- (3) What actions does the Premier now plan to take -
 - (a) to discuss with Mr Horgan his concerns about WA Inc; and
 - (b) to curb the activities of WA Inc which are causing so much concern to Western Australians?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

(1)-(3)

I have a great deal of confidence and faith, in the performance not only of Mr Horgan but also a number of other people who have given their time and energy to the Board of the Western Australian Development Corporation. I have not seen a similar expression of support from the Opposition. Despite the many opportunities extended to members opposite, they have chosen to be critical of the organisation, its results and its activities rather than try in a constructive way to get the best for Western Australia. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is probably one of the most vitriolic critics of personalities and individuals -

Mr Court: Nonsense! Since when have I criticised these people?

Mr PETER DOWDING: They have given their best to Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mr PETER DOWDING: The Opposition has been given advice by an American expert in winning elections. The only chance the Opposition has of winning the next election is to throw as much mud as possible. It is very interesting that the Opposition chose an American expert. That is consistent with the sort

of behaviour we have seen from the Opposition. It does not care about Western Australia; It does not care about what needs to happen here. What it cares about is winning power above everything else. It is interesting that that advice came from somebody with no economic stake in Western Australia; a person who does not care about the economy of Western Australia. He could not care if Western Australia sank.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PETER DOWDING: That illustrates the aspirations and the capacities or lack of them of the Opposition. Very real concern has been expressed by right thinking people in Western Australia that one of these days some evidence will be produced to support one of the sneering, critical innuendos and unsavoury allegations made by the Opposition over several months. Unfortunately that has not been done.

SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL - EXECUTIVE
Allowances - Increase Request

265. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

Will the Premier consider approaching the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to request that moneys approved for the Executive be increased?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

I have given some thought to the question of these allowances. What has concerned me is the very unlikely event of the Opposition becoming Government. It is not a concern for any of the allowances of a party in Opposition; it is a concern for the expenditure which must now be allocated for the coming 12 months in the unlikely event of the Opposition becoming the Government. We have to get our sums right now. In that unlikely event, there could be a need to provide extra funds for two Deputy Premiers. The issue which gives rise to whether the allocations will be sufficient is, of course, the controversy over the Deputy Premiership if the Opposition parties were to win.

Now the current Leader of the Opposition seemed to give the nod to the current Deputy Leader of the Opposition last week. He said that he expected to be in Government with Richard as deputy. Understandably that was not very well received in some quarters; nonetheless, superficially it seemed the right thing to say - and we have seen that sort of approach from the Opposition before - so the Leader of the Opposition said it. However, by Friday things had changed and the Leader of the National Party, who is a strong and dominant figure in Western Australian politics, had made his views known. So on Friday, it appeared that young Richard's star was fading a bit, and the Leader of the Opposition made what he meant quite clear when he spoke on the Golden West Network at that time. In reply to this question -

Did you, at any time, infer that Hendy Cowan would not be Deputy Premier?

He said -

I indicated in answer to a question . . . that I wanted to work together with Richard Court so that I could end up becoming the Premier of the State with Richard my Deputy.

So far, so good. His answer continues -

I didn't by that mean, that he would necessarily be Deputy Premier . . . in all probability, Hendy Cowan will be the next Deputy Premier.

I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition cannot join us today, but I understand he has popped over to Victoria to find out from young Mr Kennett how on earth one keeps the numbers together even when one has lost.

WA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - McLEAN BROTHERS AND RIGG LOSS
\$330 Million GoldCorp Return - Treasurer's News Statement

266. Mr COURT to the Treasurer:

- (1) To what \$330 million was the Treasurer referring when he is reported as stating in an ABC news broadcast yesterday in relation to the WADC loss on McLean Bros and Rigg that -

"Meanwhile, the Premier, Mr Dowding, says the Opposition's figures are wrong. He says if anything, they don't take into account the three hundred and 30 million dollar return from Gold Corp, the arm of the W.A.D.C. which is marketing gold coins internationally . . ."

- (2) If the \$330 million should have been included in the WADC's now audited accounts, why was it not?
- (3) Is the \$330 million a gross turnover figure or a net after expenditure figure?
- (4) Is the Treasurer concerned that GoldCorp had a turnover of \$795 million for six months and lost \$1.4 million?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

(1)-(4)

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who obviously has a very substantial and careful Press monitoring service available to him, has a record of a comment which I have not seen. I do not believe that I would have said what I heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say because it would be a nonsense to suggest that GoldCorp's turnover, as such, would have affected a profit situation. I have been at pains to say publicly that the Opposition denigrates for the sake of denigrating even an organisation that has been beneficial not only for Western Australia, for goodness' sake, but also for Australia. This organisation, which was set up by our Government - set up because of our energy and ideas, set up using the Western Australian Development Corporation model, and having some of the most talented people involved in it - has earned for Australia a huge amount of export income. It is an idea, it is a concept and it is an implemented plan which the Opposition could not even contemplate as being appropriate and has only now reluctantly begun to agree is an enormous success. However, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the echo from Cortesloe are suggesting that it has lost money and that is an indication that it is somehow not economically credible. As members opposite well know, it has been through a huge development program which has brought such massive benefits to Australia that even the Liberal Party has reluctantly conceded it is now an organisation which it would keep.

TRANSPORT - TAXIS
Shortage - Random Breath Tests

267. Mr P.J. SMITH to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the current shortage of taxis at certain times of the day, largely as a result of the random breath testing being carried out by the police?
- (2) Can the Minister comment on actions being taken to relieve the situation with particular reference to Bunbury?

Mr PEARCE replied:

(1)-(2)

I thank the member for some notice of that question, which is a particularly ticklish one. In respect of the Perth metropolitan area, there is a general view that the level of service from taxis is not meeting the demands of people now that random breath testing has been introduced, particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings. In response to that demand, the member may know - it has been publicised - that the Taxi Control Board took the precautionary

measure of calling for expressions of interest in the issuing of 30 new licences, which were to be time restricted, shortly before the introduction of random breath testing. That is, they were to be licences not for a full week, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but restricted to those times when the greatest pressure was on - that is, mainly Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and through the weekend. That response was designed to do what was requested. At the same time we have been monitoring very carefully, weekend by weekend, the problems caused by an increase in demand caused by random breath testing to see whether the 30 plates which are to be issued will be sufficient. I am having a meeting with the Taxi Control Board on Thursday this week in order to assess the results of the analysis which has been done so far of the experience of recent weekends. That mostly is with regard to the Perth metropolitan area, but of course the major rural centres are also experiencing pressures in that regard. I understand that the people of Bunbury are seeking increases in the issue of plates on the same basis there as well, and that is a matter I will take up with the Taxi Control Board in my meeting with it on Thursday morning.

The member for Bunbury has raised this matter with me on several occasions since random breath testing became a reality in this State and, as I have said to him, the position is being monitored in Bunbury as well and it is a matter which the board will decide. His approach to me and the careful way in which he has gone about this matter is in stark contrast to the attitude of the member for Mt Lawley, who I understand appeared in Bunbury yesterday and without, so far as I can ascertain, discussion with any aspect of the taxi industry - whether the operators or the customers - over the air promised two extra licences. I do not know whether the member for Mt Lawley has constituted himself into a kind of shadow Taxi Control Board, but I think it is very important when we have to face up to the issue of the service level of taxis that we do not go around promising licences in a willy-nilly way, which may have the effect -

Mr Cash: I said last week that you made outrageous statements, which should be challenged.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: - of undermining the viability of the service. That is particularly the case in rural centres. The willy-nilly issuing of plates in rural centres could have the effect -

Mr House: There are rural centres which do not have taxi services at all.

Mr PEARCE: That is certainly the case.

Mr House: How do you get home from the Gnowangerup pub on a Friday night?

Mr PEARCE: I am sure the member for Katanning-Roe could give advice to members of this House on how that is achieved without incurring the wrath of the law, but I understand that the traditional way of getting home from the Gnowangerup pub on Friday night is in the back of a paddy wagon. The member might know more about that than I do.

It is very important, as I say, that the question of the issue of extra plates, whether they be on a full time basis or on a restricted basis, is done in a responsible way which does not undermine the viability of the industry or the investment made by operators at the time. However, the Government is sensitive to the demands which are being made at present and that matter will be addressed by a special meeting of the Taxi Control Board on Thursday morning, which I will attend.

WATER RESOURCES - AVON RIVER

Activities and Expenditure - General Management Program

268. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Waterways:

- (1) Can the Minister detail the activities and expenditure on the Avon River which he has spoken about publicly and which are outside -

- (a) the budget of the Department of Agriculture;
 - (b) a research grant given to the Avon River Management Committee over two years ago; and
 - (c) apart from a meeting at Muresk called by the ARMC?
- (2) Has the Minister instructed any officers of the department or his staff to organise any meetings with interested bodies to discuss the general management program for the Avon River system?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1)-(2)

The Waterways Commission and in particular Dr Bruce Hamilton and his officers have been actively involved in assisting the local people in managing the Avon River. Numerous meetings and many discussions have been held -

Mr Trenorden: Not by your department.

Mr HODGE: My department does not own the Avon River. The local people are responsible for the Avon River; we have been prepared to give advice and enthusiastic support and cooperation through the Waterways Commission. The member may be aware that I have recently been invited to that part of the world to open a major conference on the future of the Avon River. I readily accepted that invitation and I will be going along to the conference. The member will be pleased to know that I will supply him with quite comprehensive details of my thinking on this matter and what perhaps he and other local people in the general Northam region could do themselves to upgrade and protect the Avon River. No-one doubts that the river could be improved and that at times it runs through degraded areas, but I do not think that the member, or anyone else, should sit back and think that the total responsibility for doing something about this rests with me or the Waterways Commission. It is as much the member's river as it is ours, and we are prepared to cooperate and assist him. I suggest that perhaps the member might like to go along to the conference, which I am to open; he might learn one or two things about the matter.
