

Legislative Council

Thursday, 30 April 1992

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

URGENCY MOTION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Australian Broadcasting Corporation Candidates - General Manager's Unilateral Edict

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter -

Dear Mr Deputy President

Pursuant to SO 72, I give notice that at today's sitting I shall move that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Saturday May 2 1992 at 8.00 am for the purpose of discussing the unilateral edict issued by the General Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that ABC employees who are candidates in this State's forthcoming local government elections stand down from their jobs pending the outcome of the elections and, that if elected, that they resign forthwith from the ABC.

Yours sincerely
P.H. Lockyer MLC

To have the matter debated, Hon P.H. Lockyer will require the support of four members.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON P.H. LOCKYER (Mining and Pastoral) [2.34 pm]: I move -

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until 8.00 am on Saturday, 2 May 1992.

The Standing Orders of this House allow a member to bring forward matters of an urgent nature and have them debated immediately. This is one such matter, one about which I feel extremely strongly. As members are aware, local government election day is the first Saturday in May, which this year is 2 May. Council elections are fought vigorously around the State, more vigorously in some council areas than in others. I will go through a small part of the history of this matter so that members understand the situation.

The Regional Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in Broome, Mr George Manning, a well known citizen in the town and a person regarded as a community worker, was encouraged by townspeople to seek nomination for election to the Broome Shire Council. Mr Manning thought it courteous that he contact the State Manager of the ABC, Mr Glenn Darlington, and point out his intention to nominate for the Broome council. I understand Mr Darlington congratulated Mr Manning on his civic stand, saying it was a good thing that employees of the ABC stand for town and shire councils. He told Mr Manning he had his total support. Mr Manning subsequently placed his nomination as one of 13 people standing for the Broome council.

As some members know, over the years positions on the Broome council have been contested vigorously and there are a couple of factions on that council. I do not wish to get into which faction is right or wrong - suffice it to say one of those factions is headed by a Mrs Robin Hanigan, who, if her faction is able to win a couple of seats at the coming election, will be the next shire president. That matter will be determined by electors of particular wards in Broome. However, that is not the matter before the House.

Mr Manning was approached by Mrs Hanigan and a group known as the Broome Community Council and was told that he should not stand because he works for the ABC, is on air, and therefore has an unfair advantage. Mr Manning rejected that approach because he is a person of fairness who would never use his position to boost his standing in the community as that would be a poor reflection on him. He refused their suggestion. The group then applied to Mr Darlington to direct Mr Manning to withdraw his nomination. Mr Darlington said to that group, "No, I will not do that because I believe Mr Manning is a person of integrity and should not be subjected to the discrimination of this group."

Mrs Hanigan and her group are absolutely determined to get rid of Mr Manning and have tried every trick in the book to do so. Last Thursday the Broome Community Council learnt

that the Managing Director of the ABC, Mr David Hill, would be in Halls Creek to open a new Aboriginal broadcasting commission studio. The group contacted Mr Hill saying, "We understand you will be in Broome on Saturday, 25 April. We would like to have a meeting with you to discuss funding for Aboriginal broadcasting in the Kimberley." As I understand it, included in Mr Hill's entourage was Mr Darlington and other senior members of ABC management. They subsequently met with this group, including Mrs Robin Hanigan, to find that the subject the group really wanted to discuss with Mr Hill was its demand that Mr Manning not be a candidate for the Broome council. To my astonishment, as a consequence of that meeting Mr Hill called Mr Manning in and said to him, "Mr Manning, I direct you to withdraw your nomination for election to the Broome Shire Council. Also, as from last Saturday, you will not carry out any on-air duties. You will also withdraw your nomination. If you do not, and if you are elected on 2 May, your employment with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation must be terminated."

Hon George Cash: That is an offence against the Criminal Code and the Local Government Act.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: Members should hear me further. As a consequence of that, yesterday Mr David Hill issued a general memorandum to all ABC staff in Australia saying, firstly, that it was not possible for any of them to be a candidate for local government elections in Western Australia; and secondly, that if someone was already a councillor he would have to resign his position with the ABC. The first knowledge I received of this was at 11.45 pm yesterday when a distressed George Manning contacted me to seek my advice as to what help I could give. I spoke on ABC Radio this morning and I have spoken to a number of members of the ABC. I have also done a considerable amount of work on the matter. This unilateral decision by Mr Hill overrides a decision made by the ABC's Manager, Radio, Western Australia, Mr Glenn Darlington.

The decision will affect several people. For the last 26 years Mrs Annette Knight has been what is known as a part time permanent employee of the ABC in Albany, reading the news, of which she makes a first class job.

Hon Bob Thomas: She also has a Saturday morning show.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: I am now advised by my colleague opposite that she also has a Saturday morning show. Mrs Knight also happens to be the Mayor of Albany, so by one stroke of the pen, by a unilateral decision made by the Managing Director of the ABC after a meeting with a disaffected group in Broome, he has asked Mrs Knight to give away a job she has held for 26 years because she is the Mayor of Albany.

Another member of the ABC staff, Delys Ambrosius, happens to have just been re-elected unopposed to the Bunbury Town Council.

Hon Doug Wenn: That tells you how good she is.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: It does; it shows that she is doing a first class job in that community - so much so that nobody saw fit to oppose her because everybody believed she was doing a very good job as a councillor. All of us in this Chamber would like to be re-elected unopposed. It does not happen very often. I understand Ms Ambrosius is one of the program directors with the ABC but also has on-air commitments, but she too will have to give away a job she has held for a number of years.

As well, Mr Hill's decision affects a highly respected member of the ABC staff, one of the regional announcers, Ian Hasleby, who conducts an afternoon session right across the State and who is regarded by members in this Chamber as one of the fairer announcers and interviewers in Australia, and certainly in this State. Mr Hasleby happens to be standing to represent the Civic Ward of the South Perth City Council, which means that, should he be successful on Saturday, he will have to resign from his career with the ABC.

I believe Mr Hill has exceeded the duties he is supposed to carry out for the ABC. His position as the managing director is to oversee policy for the ABC, not to deal with the day to day decisions that quite properly should rest with the ABC's Manager, Radio, Western Australia and/or the regional managers. If this decision were carried out it would be an extreme personal reflection on every member of the ABC staff throughout Australia who might choose to seek an unpaid position on behalf of his or her community by standing for local government. If Mr Manning is elected to the Broome Shire Council, all he can look

forward to in the next three years is his duty to his electors, a great many shire council meetings and committee meetings, some telephone calls from people supporting or not supporting him, and a workload he might not necessarily enjoy. However, he believes it is his civic duty to do that.

Hon E.J. Charlton: In his own time.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: Yes, in his own time. The Mayor of Albany, Mrs Knight, is in her second term as mayor and last time she was re-elected unopposed. For 26 years she has carried out her duties so it is a reflection on her to suggest that she would use her position as a newsreader to further her position as the Mayor of Albany. The same applies to Ms Ambrosius and Mr Hasleby - it is a personal reflection on them.

What Mr Hill does not say is that he happens to be the President of the North Sydney Rugby League Club. What is to say that decisions made at that club are not contrary to his position at the ABC? I am not saying they are, but what is to say they are not? What is to say that some of the policy decisions he makes - such as whether the ABC should broadcast rugby rather than Australian Rules football, or baseball instead of rugby league - are not overshadowed by his being the president of that rugby league club?

Hon Max Evans: He used his high profile to take part in the tobacco sponsorship debate in New South Wales.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: Exactly. In this case his decision, which has only just been made, should be knocked on the head now. No fair member of this Chamber would allow this sort of nonsense to go on. This morning a very unfortunate Mr Darlington, whom I regard as a top manager of the ABC and a very good operator, had to go on ABC Radio and defend the decision made by Mr Hill. Mr Darlington was reminded that he had already congratulated Mr Manning and said what a wonderful thing it was for him to stand for the Shire of Broome, and had given him full support, but all of a sudden Mr Darlington had pulled the rug from under Mr Manning. Mr Darlington was in a very invidious position. He had obviously been directed by Mr Hill, and he said there had been a change in policy and that ABC staff could not be involved in these things. That is absolute rubbish. Why is this position any different from that of the new member for Ashburton in another place, who was the Roebourne Shire President and the Clerk of Courts in Karratha? What difference does it make that Hon Max Evans was a senior accountant in Perth? Just because people choose a career path with the ABC, why should they be penalised because they are ordinary citizens of Western Australia who want to do their civic duty in their own time? Why should a small group run by Mrs Hanigan in Broome be able to persuade the most powerful person in the ABC to do this? When Mr Hill made this decision I believe he did so because he thought it would be better for everyone, and that to stop all this mucking around in Broome he would stop Mr Manning from standing for the council. However, the Local Government Act provides that once the ballot has been drawn a candidate cannot resign his position or stand down. The only way a candidate can do that is to die, and George Manning does not want to die.

It is ludicrous to think that a decision was made by Mr Hill just because he was pressured by Mrs Hanigan - who, I might say, happens to be the President of the Broome branch of the Australian Labor Party.

Several Opposition members: Aha!

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: To its credit the ALP has not supported her at all, because many people do not believe she is the most appropriate person to be the Shire President of Broome. Whether she becomes shire president I will leave to the judgment of the people of Broome. I could easily say that it was because of her involvement with the ALP, but I know that she approached at least one member of this Chamber who represents Broome who flatly told her to go stand on her head as he was not going to support her - it was not Mr Nevill; it was one of the other two.

Several members interjected.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: No love is lost between Hon Tom Stephens and this lady.

Hon P.G. Pental: She can't be all that bad then.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: She formed a committee, and Mr Stephens would not support her. I am not against the direction for these people to stay off air until after the election on

Saturday - that is reasonable, even though it is still a reflection upon them. However, I am greatly annoyed that a small group was able to persuade Mr Hill to give a direction to Mr Manning to stand down.

Mr Hill has now realised that a number of people employed by the ABC are either councillors, former councillors or candidates. For instance, Mr Pat Harding, a long time and highly respected ABC broadcaster, was a Mundaring Shire councillor for some time. He no longer holds that position, but nothing was said to him when he did. The Mayor of Albany, Mrs Annette Knight, is in a similar position. Mr Hill has realised that he has let a monster out of the bag. If four or five ABC employees are councillors in Western Australia, a large number of ABC employees must hold similar positions in other States; that is, on-air ABC employees and councillors. I am aware that in another State a mayor is a current ABC employee.

Mr Hill needs to withdraw that direction with some urgency, and if he does so I will back him. If he says that these people cannot go on air until after Saturday's election, I will live with that. However, he must remove the sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of these people; that is, if they win the election they must resign from the ABC. That is against everything we stand for, including United Nations conventions, equal opportunity legislation and a whole raft of principles. But mostly it is against common decency which we should extend to these people. If we ban such people from standing for election, members should consider the numskulls forming short queues to be candidates. Today it is the ABC, but tomorrow it may be WA Newspapers Pty Ltd.

Hon P.G. Pandal: You would never have a journalist elected again. What a shame that would be!

Several members interjected.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: Mr Hill has made an enormous mistake, and he should be man enough to recognise his mistake and withdraw his direction. Let these people suffer the fact that they may not go on air until after the election, but the direction must be withdrawn. The Legislative Council should be very worried and angry about Mr Hill's decision. The next step is to take this matter to the Commonwealth level. In discussions with my Commonwealth parliamentary colleagues I understand that at this very moment the Senate is considering a similar motion, or at least a number of questions will be asked. I seek the support of the House for the motion.

HON R.G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [2.54 pm]: I support Hon Phil Lockyer's proposal and I use this forum to congratulate the member for his comments on ABC radio, which I heard, in which he said much of what he said in moving his motion.

This issue caused me to refer to my files to investigate Mr Hill and his appointment and his conflict of interest. I found an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* by Maximilian Walsh dated 14 April 1988, dealing with this issue. For introduction I use my words, not Mr Walsh's, although his words substantiate what I will say about David Hill.

David Hill is a product of the worst excesses of the graft-ridden Wran Labor Government.

Hon Graham Edwards: Tell that to Mr Metherell.

Hon Doug Wenn: We should have expected that from you.

Hon Graham Edwards: Fancy quoting New South Wales at the moment. Why do you not get your champion, Mr Greiner, over here? What a joke!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order!

Hon Graham Edwards: What a great comparison; we welcome that, Mr Pike.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest that the Minister will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate if he wishes.

Hon R.G. PIKE: I do not need the protection of the Chair from the dopey, inane and stupid comments from the limited capacity Minister.

Hon Graham Edwards: You have just made a big political blue.

Hon R.G. PIKE: The Minister's comments speak for themselves, and we will hear about those in the adjournment debate today. The Minister seems to think that a loud voice is a

substitute for facts and particulars, but we will prove a case with precision.

Returning to the motion, I refer to the Walsh article headed "When the jobs for the boys become the order of the day". Notwithstanding the views of the Government in this place, particularly Hon Minister Edwards, we will now consider the views of Mr Walsh, a journalist well known for his non-partisan comments. He writes -

Take, as perhaps the most publicly visible example, the appointment of David Hill as managing director of the ABC. Hill was appointed chairman of the ABC after a personal interview with Prime Minister, Mr Hawke. Hill's credentials for the job were being pushed by one Sydney-based Labor network while his rival for the post, Brian Johns, was being championed by another Labor network.

Hill's appointment was an overtly political one, breaking with all past precedent. Legitimate fears about its implications were compounded when Hill was quickly installed, by rather irregular means, as the managing director of the ABC.

The article further continues -

However, in recent history there is no doubt that the Federal administrations of Whitlam and Hawke and the State administrations of Wran, Cain and Unsworth have institutionalised political patronage in a way which was not done by their conservative opponents in the past.

In conclusion, here we have a totally impartial senior journalist illustrating a point. Mr Walsh is well known for his attacks on members of the Labor, Liberal and National Parties, mainly in the Federal sphere. He writes in the most precise terms possible that the Wran Labor Government backed the Hill appointment. That is nothing new in the history of the Australian Labor Party, especially if we direct our attention to WA Inc in this State and the appointments, ramifications and obscenities involved in those events.

Point of Order

Hon DOUG WENN: WA Inc has absolutely nothing to do with the debate before the Chair. The member has moved totally off course from the subject matter.

Hon Graham Edwards: No wonder Mr Lockyer looks embarrassed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Bob Pike was attempting to draw a comparison between various States. I will not ask him to withdraw; I ask him to confine his remarks to the motion.

Debate Resumed

Hon R.G. PIKE: I was merely making the point that historically the obscenities of patronage, graft and corruption endemic in Labor Governments is not isolated to the Wran New South Wales Government; it is found with the present Government in this State. In conclusion, it is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Hon Phil Lockyer has quite properly pointed out the manifest hypocrisy, unfairness and blatant -

[Laughter.]

Hon R.G. PIKE: Laughter will not deter me from my course. Labor Party graft, particularly in the case of Hon Graham Edwards which was not exposed before as it will be in the future - Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order! Hon Bob Pike has the floor. If we hear him in silence, he may conclude his remarks sooner.

Hon R.G. PIKE: I will conclude, as I tried to do before the dopey interjections, that Hon Phil Lockyer has properly drawn the House's attention to the inconsistency of Mr David Hill, the gentleman in charge of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the unfair political interference on his part. He is very close to the matter because it was that very system which was used to create a job for him in the first place.

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural) [3.01 pm]: My thoughts are totally in line with those of Hon Phil Lockyer and the across the board approach he has taken on this serious issue. This is a very black day for those people in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or in any other organisations which face similar circumstances to those caused by Mr Hill's

decision. The woman in question, as reported by Hon Phil Lockyer, is already a shire councillor in Broome. By her actions through Mr Hill, she has sought to ensure that Mr Manning and other people will not be successful in local government elections. It is one thing to believe that someone has an unfair advantage in a contest.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Will the people behind the Chair please lower their voices.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: However, to be a sitting councillor as is Mrs Hanigan and use those tactics, far exceeds fair play. My thoughts concur with those of Hon Phil Lockyer; the situation is serious. The people in question have worked for the ABC for a long time; they did not join it during the past few weeks and automatically seek nomination for local government in order to take advantage of a situation. We all know who are the people involved. Irrespective of their alliance with political parties, they are well-known for themselves and for what they stand and they will be judged accordingly. The people in the district should make their judgment on that basis, not because they have been made aware that the contestants are employees of the ABC. I support Hon Phil Lockyer's bringing this matter to the attention of the Parliament. It is a sad day when unilateral action is taken by the head of the ABC. Recently we have seen the ABC make some substantial and dictatorial cuts in its services. Nonetheless, it has been supported by people throughout the nation, particularly in country Western Australia. We are all aware of the initiatives taken by regional ABC. They have widespread support because they are not only unique but also a very critical part of country society. Mr Hill's action is distasteful in the extreme, and the National Party is opposed to it. If he has not already realised that, he has made a serious mistake. If anyone has any influence on Mr Hill that person should convince him to bow out gracefully and reverse his decision.

HON MARK NEVILL (Mining and Pastoral - Parliamentary Secretary) [3.06 pm]: The speeches by Hon Phil Lockyer and Hon Eric Charlton were both constructive and measured and those members are to be congratulated on their argument. They contrast with the irrelevant argument and personal attack by Hon Bob Pike which contributed nothing to this debate. As usual, he dredged around in the past. I have not once seen him look to the future. When he does that, he may make a contribution in this place which will be recognised by more members. His contribution to this debate was irrelevant and took away the focus from the sensible points made by his colleague.

Hon R.G. Pike interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon MARK NEVILL: Hon Phil Lockyer was quite fair when he mentioned the difficulties in Broome. It is clear that Mr Hill's decision does not relate to situations in other areas of the State where Australian Broadcasting Corporation staff are sitting on local councils. This brouhaha no doubt evolved from Broome. For a long time in Broome two camps have existed which do not fully align with political parties. One may loosely be called a pro-development camp and the other an antidevelopment camp. A struggle has taken place firstly by the antidevelopment camp to hold a position or two on the council, and it has succeeded. That is healthy because on any council a wide range of views should be represented. Aboriginal people, conservation-minded people and pro-development people should be represented. It is a positive trend when most people are able to be represented on a council.

I know councillor Robin Hanigan personally and I admire the woman. However, I do not agree with many of her political views. Although I get on quite well with her socially, that does not mean I agree with everything she does. During the first week of the school holidays I was sitting in the Annelies Swiss restaurant with my two youngest daughters where I saw George Manning walk to the ABC office and return with some paper. In my muted, dulcet voice I said hello as he walked past. He did not hear or recognise me and walked into the Broome Real Estate office, of which the proprietor is Alan Griffiths, from which a few people were coming and going. I thought that either a meeting of the Broome racing club was being held or people were putting their heads together for the local government elections. They may have been there for some other reason, but those were my private thoughts which I am now making public. I left the matter at that. George Manning would make an excellent councillor in Broome and I think David Hill has made a mistake. I believe

he has been inadvertently caught in a local situation, many of which can be quite nasty at times.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: It is very healthy to have a vigorous election. I don't oppose that.

Hon MARK NEVILL: This antidevelopment group sees George Manning as a member of the other camp and not as an independent person. I do not know whether he is. However, that is the basis for the decision. The Broome Community Council was out of order in seeking that meeting with David Hill because two members of that group were the wives of two of the candidates. There are misgivings among some of the Aboriginal community in Broome about George Manning because he made one insensitive remark on radio - one which I would not repeat in this House. Although I do not think his comment on air was very sensitive, I accept that we all make mistakes and say things that we would not say if we had our time over again. Unfortunately, the spoken word never comes back. It was an unfortunate incident.

There are also some misgivings among sections of the Broome Aboriginal community about the ABC not doing enough to train local announcers. I do not know whether that is true. However, the ABC, including George Manning, has done a magnificent job in the Kimberley. I also give credit to David Hill for taking a personal interest in the area. Both Aboriginal and normal ABC networks have been set up in the Kimberley and are doing a magnificent job. It is unfortunate that this situation has evolved. I hope David Hill realises that his decision is wrong. I will be the second person after Hon Philip Lockyer to congratulate him if he changes his decision. This is not the first time in Broome that somebody has been pilloried for running for council. Hon Tom Stephens will remember Father Michael McMahon, a Catholic priest, being pilloried for running for council; but it was his right to run for council. Everyone has that right unless precluded by the Local Government Act.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: It is a right we would vigorously defend.

Hon MARK NEVILL: Yes. Father Michael McMahon would be possibly seen as a member of the other camp. Broome is unique, and because of that, this situation has developed.

There is a lot of interest in the Broome council elections this year because four candidates are vying for only one position. I have no objection to any of the members of the Broome council. They do a good job. If other councils around the State had the healthy debates that the Broome Shire Council has they would be better off. No decision of the council goes through without an opposing point of view being expressed. It is certainly not a council that rubber stamps every decision. I wish all the candidates well. I do not believe for one second that George Manning will lose his job if he is elected on Saturday. I rang Mr Darlington today to clarify an item in the motion moved by Hon Philip Lockyer indicating that these people would have to resign forthwith from the ABC. I sensed him hedging on the phone. He said that matters would be dealt with on a case by case basis. I asked him whether they would be sacked or taken off air and he said that that was yet to be decided. I do not think either will occur. Anyone in such a prominent public position has a great responsibility to act fairly and impartially if elected and to not use that position to promote his or her views or to encourage the views of certain sections of the community.

The other reason I think this decision will change is that it breaches section 152(1) of the Local Government Act. That provision states that it is an offence for -

A person who -

- (a) promises, offers or suggests valuable consideration, advantage, recompense, reward or benefit for, or on account of, or to induce -
 - (i) candidature at an election;
 - (ii) withdrawal of candidature from an election;

The directive by the ABC that broadcasters should choose between their position as an announcer and councillor conflicts with that section of the Act. In this case it is an infringement of the rights of those people to tell them not to stand for local government elections. Local government elections are very different from State and Federal elections in that councillors are not paid.

I hope sincerely that this decision by David Hill is reversed. Obviously, it was made in a hurry. The meeting was last Saturday and, as Hon Philip Lockyer said, when David Hill was approached by these people he obviously thought that the easiest way to defuse the situation was to ask the local ABC announcer not to run. That may have been a good solution if indeed he had decided not to run. However, George Manning has his heart set on getting on the council. I wish him and all other candidates well next Saturday. I hope that whoever is elected makes decisions in the interests of Broome. I have a residence in Broome and take a close interest in the town. I congratulate Hon Philip Lockyer for his constructive contribution. I hope that this decision is reversed and that none of these candidates is prejudiced in any way after the election.

HON DOUG WENN (South West) (3.17 pm): I support the motion and congratulate Hon Philip Lockyer for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I heard him speaking on this matter on Australian Broadcasting Corporation talkback radio this morning and his contribution was informative and it alerted many of us to the situation. He stated that he did not know what was going on until nearly midnight last night. With this quick response he has given us a chance to respond. It is disappointing that his colleague who sits behind him and three members to his left took the opportunity to do his usual mudslinging from the gutter. I understand now why recently he had to sit on two phone books. I am surprised he did not sit on the dictionary also, because that is where most of his words come from.

I am extremely disappointed that this matter had to come to this place before all Western Australians were made aware of it. It is much the same situation as that which I spoke about last night in relation to Telecom. It seems that the ABC is headed in the same direction as Telecom and that it will be dictated to from the Eastern States. Already, most of our night time programs come from the Eastern States, as does the program on Sunday morning from six until 10 o'clock. This is a continuation of what I was trying to emphasise to the House last night and we should be careful.

I am surprised that Mr Hill, after talking to a small group of people in Broome about a council election, made the decision he did and then went national on it. I wonder whether he has not had input on this matter from other avenues. I am not defending his decision; in fact, I abhor it. I do so because I know Del Ambrosius personally. She is a member of the Bunbury City Council and is standing unopposed for her second term. That indicates that the people in her ward are more than happy with what she has done. Del Ambrosius has put her heart and soul into her job in council. She is basically a backup person for the ABC during the week if an announcer is sick or is unable to work, and is called in to handle programs on that basis. She usually does the talkback program from 9.00 to 10.00 am, but also broadcasts the sports program on Saturday morning. She does an extremely good job and her program is broadcast in the major country areas of the south west. She is completely fair in all the opinions she expresses. She does not express her personal opinions on the program to such a degree that she would offend anyone at any time. I listen to her programs on the radio quite often and I have never heard her raise local government politics, unless she has been specifically requested by the management to do so. In those circumstances I know she seeks permission from council to do so and on those occasions she speaks as a councillor rather than as an ABC employee.

One could understand the decision made by Mr Hill if the position of local government councillor were a paid position; it would then become a different issue. I was an employee of Telecom in 1983 and 1986 when I ran for a seat in Parliament. On the day the writs were issued I had to hand a written resignation to Telecom, which was held until after the election and the declaration of the ballot. When I lost the election the note of resignation was withdrawn and I went back into the job without any loss of status and salary. If a person won the election the resignation would apply for one term as a parliamentary member, after which that person could again take up the former job, if he wanted to. Who would want to? I do not think I would be very welcome after my comments on Tuesday. It is interesting to note that all my telephones went bung yesterday.

Hon P.G. Pental: You blokes have been doing that for years.

Hon DOUG WENN: Does the member mean turning telephones off?

Hon P.G. Pental: I will not say that.

Hon DOUG WENN: It is no good having a telephone if one does not listen to what is said.

A brawl is going on in the north of this State and advantage has been taken by someone. The group concerned must have put up one hell of an argument to be able to convince the national chairman of the ABC to make a decision that will affect every employee of the ABC throughout this nation. It must have been a ripper argument.

Hon George Cash: It is against State Government policy, because this State Government encourages people to enter local government.

Hon DOUG WENN: Yes, the State Government encourages people to stand for local government and many members in this House appreciate that local government is a stepping stone into State or Federal Parliament. Although it is an unpaid position, in many ways local government councillors are regarded by the community as similar to paid members of Parliament. They are frowned on when people do not agree with their decisions and they cop the same amount of abuse as members of Parliament, even though their work is voluntary. Undoubtedly, some people gain from it and we are aware of examples from the past. Of course, local government politics is becoming a party game, and yesterday candidates in the local government elections were reported in the Press as taking photographs of individuals who had parked their vehicles illegally. That is a disgraceful way to run a campaign.

Obviously, Hon Tom Stephens and, perhaps, Hon Tom Helm understand what is happening in Broome, although I am not familiar with the problem. However, I wanted to mention Del Ambrosius. I also know a little about Mrs Knight, a councillor in Albany. She is respected by the community and she does not raise politics on her program. Her husband is a former Liberal Party member of the Legislative Council. She does a great job. If she did not do so, like us, when election day came she would lose her seat. Hon Phil Lockyer indicated that he proposed to talk to Mr Hill by telephone.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: I tried all morning.

Hon DOUG WENN: It is disgraceful that this should happen. If it were a paid job, I could understand the decision. However, it is voluntary. These people are fair and above board, and if they were not, they would soon be told by the electorate. I thank Hon Phil Lockyer for raising this matter and I support the motion.

HON TOM STEPHENS (Mining and Pastoral - Parliamentary Secretary) [3.25 pm]: I, along with others, have just had lunch with the Dalai Lama and in that context I come to this place from listening to lessons of peace, compassion and friendship and all the messages of the Dalai Lama.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: I hope they were not lost on you.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I come here facing two shocks: The first is coming back into this Chamber and the second is entering into this debate of which I was not aware until now. I have been wafting in the beautiful thoughts of the Dalai Lama.

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

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I understand from the details I have been given that David Hill has instructed local government candidates who are employees of the ABC to either withdraw their nominations or, if elected, to resign from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. I join with those members who say he has made a mistake - a mistake he should quickly correct. However, as I have a very happy and pleasant association with the Broome community, I understand some of the sensitivities of that community and some of the issues that could have led to such a situation developing. I am cognisant of the facts of some recent local history which involved the local chamber of commerce, which is sometimes characterised as being the old chamber of commerce. The current chamber of commerce is under a very different leadership, whose aim is to broaden the appeal of that body and to make sure all sections of the Broome community are represented. At least some members of the old chamber of commerce called on the employer of another candidate at a previous local government election and asked the employer to use pressure to force that candidate to withdraw his nomination. That candidate was a Catholic priest and the employer was the Bishop of Broome.

Hon P.G. Pandal: A particularly close friend of yours.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I get on quite well with the Bishop of Broome and the relationship has moved from trenchant warfare to a very cordial basis. He would no doubt agree that our relationship has had its ups and downs, but that has been on the basis of whether he was moving in the right direction. I saw him recently and had happy and cordial discussions with him. I am happy to associate myself with the motion which is critical of the mistake David Hill has made. The Bishop of Broome was asked to make a candidate withdraw his nomination, but he refused to do so and that person stood for council election. In that context, the issue was raised by people on the other side of the local debate. I take great exception to the suggestion by my colleague, Hon Mark Nevill, that Father McMahon is part of an antidevelopment campaign. He is in no way antidevelopment. In fact, he is the strongest advocate for development in Broome that is to the benefit of all sections of the community. I can tell those people in the community who might wonder at times what I am on about in my involvement in politics in that community that it is to champion that cause. I am not a prohibitionist against development. I am not a supporter of the prohibitionists or of the antidevelopment lobby.

[Resolved, that the motion be continued.]

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am a supporter of those elements within the Broome community that see the wisdom of developing that community for all sections of the town - the long term residents, the Aboriginal people, the mixed-race community, the wider non-Aboriginal community and the newly arrived community - and, in that context of trying to do that, maintaining for Broome a harmony in which jobs and economic development are available for all. One might want to take offence at the candidacy of people in high profile positions, such as a parish priest or an ABC announcer, depending upon on which side of the fence one sits. However, as I have put to the House, and as I am sure is the case from what Hon Phil Lockyer has stated, people should stand back a bit and think about the impact of what they are doing. It was not wise to complain about Father McMahon's candidacy because, in retrospect, we now see the other side of the debate responding in kind by complaining to the employer of the local ABC radio announcer.

Hon P.G. Pendal: You are drawing a long bow. In the case of the ABC, we are talking about a public institution which is denying an employee the right to run for public office. It has nothing to do with the Bishop of Geraldton.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It has something to do with the Bishop of Broome. We need to understand the history of this complaint. The people who lodged this complaint need to be cognisant of the fact that as a result of the strong and solid work of the ABC and its managing director, David Hill, and also of people like Sister Veronica Brady and former Senator Neville Bonner, the ABC has produced a superb network of radio stations and local community broadcasting for all sections of the community in the Kimberley, and particularly for Aboriginal people. In that context, Aboriginal people and others are springing up from within the community and participating in the use of that media, and they may want to run for election to local government. I suspect that one person is running in the current spate of local government elections from the position that she currently occupies on an Aboriginal radio station in that region. The people who lodged this complaint, who would not represent all Aboriginal people in the Broome community, should have been blessed with more foresight because I hope they would not seek to use this blunt instrument, which could have the effect of denying the opportunity of candidacy for local government elections not only to George Manning but also to other suitable candidates who may come either from the ABC's own network or from the broader public radio network that has now emerged, with public funding, in the Kimberley. I cannot think of a category of employee who should be barred from candidacy for local government elections.

Hon Reg Davies: Australian servicemen.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: If they are barred, I do not believe they should be. Anyone should be entitled and encouraged to participate in local government elections and to nominate for election. George Manning is one of a number of extremely good candidates in the forthcoming local government elections for Broome, and I believe that in the fullness of time this brouhaha may give him a secret weapon - a sense of injustice that will be perceived in the local Broome community. This precipitous action on the part of David Hill will probably increase his chances because there will be a sense of his being the underdog, and I imagine that he could pick up even more votes.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: That will not help him if he does not have a job on Monday.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He does not have the opportunity today of withdrawing his candidacy for the local government elections because under the Local Government Act he is not entitled to withdraw his candidacy, no matter what edicts David Hill may hand down. Therefore, if on Monday David Hill suggests seriously that George Manning should resign and thereby cause a by-election, David Hill needs to know from all of us that that is not an acceptable solution to this situation. I am pleased that Hon Phil Lockyer has brought this matter to the House, and I hope we can quickly put to David Hill the view of this House and encourage him to withdraw from his mistaken decision. I hope that whatever is the outcome of the local government elections for Broome, the people who are elected will serve that community with a commitment to the broad interests of all sections of the Broome community and no longer look back to the days when the Broome Shire Council paid scant regard to a significant section of that community.

HON P.H. LOCKYER (Mining and Pastoral) [3.36 pm]: I thank all members who contributed to this important debate. Urgency motions should be used not for political purposes but to bring to the Chamber important matters, and it is obvious from the contributions of members that they agree with me. Hon Doug Wenn correctly pointed out that the position of councillor is not a paid position, although I understand that councillors in Queensland are paid a fee to attend council meetings. I do not object to the vigorous campaigning that is going on in the Broome Shire Council campaign. It is good to have a couple of camps and for people to have diverse opinions. I am not a great lover of Robin Hanigan and she is not of me, but I will always respect her right to do what she is doing.

Since opening on this matter I have looked at the Criminal Code, and I believe that David Hill may well have contravened that code. Section 104(2) states that any person who wilfully interrupts, obstructs or disturbs any proceedings at an election is guilty of an offence. This debate has been raised in the right manner, and I hope it is passed on to Mr Hill that he has made a mistake. For the first time, I agree with Hon Tom Stephens; he is absolutely right. I remember when he was campaign manager for Father McMahon - I might say unsuccessfully.

Hon Tom Stephens: I was a strong supporter of Father McMahon's campaign, but he lost his campaign. I have never lost a campaign.

Hon P.H. LOCKYER: He lost his campaign the day he appointed Hon Tom Stephens as his campaign manager. I remember the pressure that was applied to Bishop John Jobs to sack Father McMahon and to say to him that he should not be allowed to be the Catholic priest of Broome. I opposed that, because even though Father McMahon's camp was not necessarily the one that I would have supported, he had every right to be there, in the same way that George Manning, Annette Knight, Del Ambrosius or Ian Hasleby have the right now. I hope David Hill will be man enough to admit that he has made a mistake; and I think he will be because, regardless of what we have heard today, he has done a lot of good for the ABC in the Kimberley and in the west of Western Australia. He has made a bad mistake here; however, he can redress that very quickly. Although I have never met the man - I tried to contact him today - I have watched him and have admired some of the things he has done. Anybody who gets to be the head of a rugby league club is no wimp. He would be no wimp if he came in here and said "Look, I made a blue here. We will revert to the previous situation. I won't let this group of people in Broome influence me, and I think all will be forgotten." I thank members for their contributions to the debate.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF AUSTRALIA

Report Tabling - Extension of Time

HON MURIEL PATTERSON (South West) [3.41 pm]: I present a report of the Select Committee into Achievements of Indigenous Peoples of Australia seeking an extension of time in which the committee should report. I move -

That the report do lie upon the Table and be adopted and agreed to.

Question put and passed.

[See paper No 124.]

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon P.G. Pendal, and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON P.G. PENDAL (South Metropolitan) [3.42 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is designed to overcome a serious deficiency in Western Australia's ability to protect its unique flora and fauna. For a long time conservation groups have pleaded with the State Government to take action against imported plants or weeds which are having a major adverse impact on our national parks and remnant areas of bush. So far, those pleas have fallen on deaf ears. As I will indicate shortly, the Government recognises the problem, but has been unaccountably reluctant to do something about it. The Opposition has therefore resolved to take the lead and introduce this Bill which will arm the authorities with the legal capacity to help save important parts of our natural estate - including precious wetlands - from serious damage.

In November last year the Opposition asked a series of questions about the plant "watsonia" which had been flowering abundantly in not only the south west, but also in places like King's Park. The Government agreed with us that the plant, a species introduced from South Africa, was a threat to native wildflowers. But the Government washed its hands of the matter by saying it was not a threat to agriculture. By extension this meant that the powers of the Agriculture Protection Board Act could not be used against such imported plants. Subsequent to this, the Perth branch of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia (Inc) petitioned the Opposition in the following terms -

While valuable extensions to our conservation estate are continuing to be made, several of our members have again voiced their concerns in regard to the lack of legislation to control environmental weeds. These weeds (such as watsonia and bridle creeper) are having a major impact in our national parks and remnant areas of urban bush but, as yet, there is no Act requiring their control. The Perth branch of the Wildflower Society would urge you to bring on environmental weed legislation as a matter of urgency.

Further inquiries by the Opposition showed that the plants represented an insidious threat because to most people they were green and attractive. Few people understood that they were, in reality, a threat to native plants, with the capacity to seriously damage precious wetlands. As well, they offered native birds and animals little or nothing. The Government, meanwhile, had been approached by the Busselton Naturalists' Club (Inc) as far back as last June about another environmental weed - this time pampas grass which was spreading throughout the south west of the State.

In a response to the president of the club, Mr Bernie Masters, the Minister for the Environment advised that because pampas grass did not pose a threat to agriculture - as opposed to the conservation estate - the Agriculture Protection Board did not propose to declare the plant "outlawed". The Minister advised that his department had agreed there was a need for legislation to control exotic plants and animals which threaten nature conservation values. That was in October last year. Six months later still nothing has happened, despite all the resources at the Minister's disposal. This casual response belies the seriousness of the threat which, in the case of pampas grass, is a problem in many States. In Western Australia it is a special threat to wetlands on the swan coastal plain and in eucalypt woodlands.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon P.G. PENDAL: In Tasmania the Forestry Commission offers substantial financial inducements to landowners to replace pampas grass, which, to quote the commission -

... poses a very real threat to our forests and parks due to its invasive nature.

Among the adverse effects are a reduction in forest growth, smothering of natural plant communities, and a reduction in recreational and aesthetic values of forests caused by the weed's invasion of walking tracks, roadsides, streamside reserves and other areas. In the Perth metropolitan area most infestations are small, but they are widespread. The largest infestation is in the Osborne Park swamplands where about two square kilometres are densely affected. Other significant infestations are along the Swan River foreshore at Maylands-Bayswater and the Monier sand quarry off Ranford Road, Canning Vale. Other infested locations are at Armadale, Bullsbrook, City Beach, Como, East Perth, Greenwood, Thompson's Lake Reserve, Lake Jandabup wetlands, Badgerup Lake and Lake Joondalup at Wanneroo. Those locations are identified by J. Dodd and S.G. Lloyd in their October 1991 Department of Agriculture paper "Naturalised Pampas Grass in Western Australia".

Meanwhile new forms of the problem are being referred to the Opposition, including concerns expressed by the Armadale-Kelmscott branch of the Western Australian Wildflower Society. This group has been the most active on the subject of tambookie grass and weeping love grass from as far back as 1984. The group points out that tambookie grass is present along the Great Southern Highway in both the Beverley and York Shires, having spread from the railway line in the past two years. Tambookie grass was introduced into Western Australia from South Africa by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in the late 1950s because of its great promise as a pasture forage grass. It was not terribly successful. Its main threat is its very aggressive nature and ability to spread. Apparently the abundant dry material from this and other grasses acts as a fuel for fires, especially during dry temperature and low humidity conditions prevailing in late summer.

In a submission put to the Select Committee on Bushfires in Western Australia the Armadale-Kelmscott branch of the Western Australian Wildflower Society said that research was needed -

... on the ecological impact of introduced plant species to indigenous flora and fauna and subsequent changes to the natural fire regime.

The Bill seeks to begin an attack on this most serious environmental threat to Western Australia by inserting into the Act a new section titled "Environmental Weeds". Under that new section the Minister will be given the power to declare any non-native plant, shrub, tree fern, creeper or vine an environmental weed. Owners will be required to eradicate or control such weeds. If they fail to do so they can be directed to do so or the department can remove the plants. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Fred McKenzie.

COLONIAL HERITAGE OF PERTH PROTECTION BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon P.G. Pandal, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - THIRTEENTH DAY

Motion

Order of the Day read for the resumption of debate from 29 April.

Debate adjourned to a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Hon D.J. Wordsworth.

[See p 1534.]

ROAD TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Minister for Police) [4.38 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

During 1990-91 the Government, as part of its road safety strategy, attempted to introduce an across the board blood alcohol limit of 0.05 per cent aimed at reducing the number of drink driving related deaths and injuries on Western Australian roads. The proposal met with strong resistance from Opposition members of this House who saw fit, by amendment, to apply the 0.05 level only to those people under the age of 21 years. The subsequent Bill in the form reported to the Legislative Assembly on 22 October 1991 was far from acceptable to the Government and was allowed to lapse. This Bill seeks to readdress this issue, as forecast in the Governor's Speech during the opening of Parliament on 12 March.

Before dealing with the main thrust of the legislation I will outline some of the other changes included in the Bill which address anomalies regarding the application of the 0.02 per cent blood alcohol limit regulations. Contained in the Bill is provision for the 0.02 per cent offence to apply to persons holding a learner's permit and to those who have never held a licence or who, if issued with a licence, would receive a probationary licence. It is necessary to ensure that the 0.02 limit is not inadvertently applied to drivers who have held a motor driver's licence for more than 12 months or who may, for example, be found driving under suspension. It is also important that where a probationary licence is suspended and cancelled the driver remains subject to the 0.02 limit. Probationary licences remain in effect for one year and this legislation does not seek to change that.

The main intent of the Bill is to pursue the introduction in this State of a 0.05 blood alcohol limit for motorists. It is the Government's firm intention that this limit should apply to all drivers. The Government is not prepared to merely target the novice or young driver. A 40 year old motorist is just as dangerous to other road users after consuming too much alcohol as is a driver in his or her late teens. It is the Government's view, and one shared by traffic police, that the risks associated with drinking and driving do not conveniently diminish with age. The Bill before the House provides for a 0.05 blood alcohol content offence to be dealt with by way of an infringement notice, with no automatic loss of licence, but with the loss of six demerit points which would alert the offender to the fact that any subsequent 0.05 offence may result in a three month disqualification of his or her licence by way of the demerit point system.

I am aware, in reintroducing this legislation, that a move to a 0.05 BAC limit will be unpopular in some areas. However, the Government is encouraged by the strong support it has received from responsible organisations in our community, including the police, State Emergency Service workers, the Royal Automobile Club of WA, the Australian Medical Association, other distinguished medical bodies such as the Royal College of Surgeons and, we believe, the majority of people in this State, as evidenced by the latest Westpoll published this week in *The West Australian*. The Westpoll results were very similar to polls conducted last year showing that about 71 per cent of city people and 67 per cent of country people now support a reduction from 0.08 to 0.05 in BAC. In addition to public support, ample evidence is available for the Government - and the Opposition - to justify a tougher attitude by Parliament to drinking drivers. Experience in other States and the Australian Capital Territory has shown that the introduction of a 0.05 BAC has decreased markedly the incidence of driving under the influence. In effect, people have become more aware of their drinking and driving habits and have moderated their alcohol intake accordingly.

In essence, the real issue before the House today is not whether the legislation restricts unfairly the rights of individuals in relation to drinking and driving but whether it meets community concerns about road safety; in particular, the obligation of this State's legislators to find ways of reducing the incidence of drink/driving related deaths and injuries.

The Legislative Council Select Committee on Legislation reported in December 1990 that, "After hearing from statisticians supporting both sides of the argument, the committee reached the consensus that the statistical evidence did not support a lower BAC. Any decision on this matter would therefore need to be a political one and should be taken in the interest of the greater community good."

It may be convenient to disregard the evidence of the National Centre for Research into the Prevention of Drug Abuse which states that the adoption of a 0.05 BAC is entirely consistent with scientific evidence currently available. It may be convenient to ignore the evidence of Dr Ross Homel, a researcher at Macquarie University, who states that the introduction of a 0.05 BAC in New South Wales led to a 13 per cent decrease in Saturday fatalities prior to the

introduction of random breath testing in that State. It may also be convenient to disregard the results of Dr Peter Cairney of the Australian Road Research Board who discovered that the risk of crashing at 0.05 BAC is double that at zero per cent BAC and that the risk doubles again at 0.08 BAC. However, what cannot be ignored is the latest evidence available to us through a report released this month by the Federal Office of Road Safety in Canberra. That data was collated over a 12 month period and reveals that since the introduction of 0.05 in the Australian Capital Territory in January last year, there has been further evidence that the lower BAC limit has reduced significantly the number of drinking drivers at the serious end of the scale.

Statistics from random breath testing for the 12 months since a 0.05 BAC was introduced show that drink driving at the 0.10 BAC level decreased 26 per cent compared with 1990. At blood alcohol levels above 0.15 - and we are talking about drivers who are well and truly drunk - the reduction was 41 per cent. The most startling result was in the category in which we would probably put the Rambo driver - those with a death wish for themselves and other road users, and a blood alcohol level above 0.20 - where the reduction was an amazing 58 per cent. The results showed also a massive reduction in the number of drivers with blood alcohol levels between 0.05 and 0.08: From 363 cases per 10 000 tested in 1990 to 34 in 1991.

On the strength of this evidence alone, a responsible Government is, in my view, compelled to introduce legislation to achieve 0.05, and a responsible Opposition is compelled to support it. The Select Committee on Legislation stated that any decision made on 0.05 would need to be a political one, made in the interests of the greater community good. The Government has made that decision in the interest of all Western Australian road users. Last year, 33 per cent of all motor vehicle deaths involved a drinking driver with a blood alcohol level above 0.08. If Opposition members share in a genuine desire to reduce road carnage, it rests with them to put aside politics and make a decision in the interests of that "greater community good".

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the Opposition).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY - THIRTEENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON D.J. WORDSWORTH (Agricultural) [4.46 pm]: I join other members in thanking His Excellency, Hon Sir Francis Burt, AC, KCMG, QC, on his Speech at the opening of the fourth session of the Thirty-third Parliament on 12 March 1992. I congratulate the Governor and Lady Burt on the contribution which they have made to this State during their term as Governor and Governor's wife. Obviously it is not easy to be a figurehead because it entails a heavy administrative and social function, as well as extensive travelling around country areas. This role is not a new one for Sir Francis Burt, for as Chief Justice he was called upon on many occasions to be Lieutenant Governor, and I guess that collectively he has probably served a record term in the State. Sir Francis Burt is a Western Australian. His family farm is just out of Katanning. He has set a fine example for all to follow. Indeed, when the Government found it necessary to form a committee to set a code of conduct for accountability for this Parliament, Sir Francis Burt was the obvious chairman. I know that the members of my electorate, which stretches from Esperance to Geraldton, join me in wishing the Sir Francis and Lady Burt a happy retirement and long life. Without doubt, they endeared themselves to rural folk during their many extensive country tours.

I wish Hon Jim Brown a pleasant retirement from this House. I enjoyed his company both on and off the bowling green, and he made a contribution to this place. I wish Hon Kim Chance a fruitful term here. I also wish Hon Garry Kelly every success in his new office as Deputy President and Chairman of Committees.

At various times during the Address-in-Reply debate I have commented on the state of the nation and have looked at the economic situation facing Australia. I have to admit that the majority of my comments were made well before Australia had the debt that it has today. In fact, they were made when we had a debt of between \$40 billion and \$60 billion, when I first became concerned about where we were going. I was interested to read this statement by

Paul Keating, and perhaps members opposite can tell me when he made it -

Tonight I am proud to be able to tell the Australian people that we now have strong economic growth, many more jobs, a substantial fall in inflation and declining interest rates. The Government's policies are on track.

That was a lovely statement to be made by the Federal Treasurer of the day. For those who do not remember, that statement was made in 1984. Australia's foreign debt then was \$27.9 billion - which, incidentally, was up 21 per cent on the previous year. That was after the Federal Labor Government had had more than a full year in office. During Treasurer Keating's 1985 Budget speech he said -

I've outlined the Government's strategy for the new financial year. It's a strategy that builds upon our very significant successes and puts further behind us the despair and economic failure of the former government.

Mr Keating loves slinging off at others. When he said that, the foreign debt had risen to \$51.2 billion, up 84 per cent on the year before. When handing down the 1986 Budget Mr Keating said -

The 1986-87 Budget which I have presented tonight rings the changes on a more robust, aggressive Australian economy.

Great! The debt at that stage was \$75 billion, up 46 per cent on the previous year. In 1987, a year later, Mr Keating said in his Budget speech -

Notwithstanding the enormity of the trade difficulties we have faced, our economic strategy is now bearing fruit.

And what had happened? The foreign debt had climbed to \$82.9 billion, an increase of 11 per cent. In 1988 Mr Keating said -

The nation is successfully emerging from its most severe economic crisis in a generation . . . this is one that brings home the bacon . . . Our foreign debt burden has already stabilised and begun to fall.

The foreign debt then was \$92.8 billion, up 12 per cent on the previous year. In 1989 Treasurer Keating said -

As a result of the Government's economic policies, Australia will emerge from the recent high level of spending without a recession and with its economic and social structure improving.

He said that only two or three years ago, and what happened? Foreign debt passed \$100 billion, up another seven per cent. In 1990 Mr Keating's words were -

This year inflation will fall further, the current account deficit will markedly improve and employment will pick up . . . (all) delivered without the misery and despair of high employment and a savage recession.

That came straight from Mr Keating, but in 1990 the foreign debt rose by 24 per cent to \$124 billion. I do not have a quote from Mr Keating for 1991, and I am sorry about that.

Hon Bob Thomas: He was not Treasurer then, that is why.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: However, I will quote from a statement made by Mr Keating in 1992, after he became the Prime Minister. He said -

The Keating Government's economic strategy is to accelerate recovery from recession, and at the same time build a stronger Australia. It is a four-year plan. It begins now with an immediate boost to spending and employment. It ends in 1995-96 with the Budget back in surplus and dramatically reduced marginal income tax rates for most Australians.

At that stage our foreign debt had reached \$145 billion, up 17 per cent on the previous year. So over those eight years our foreign debt rose from \$27 billion to \$145 billion - in other words, it multiplied five and a half times - yet Mr Keating had the nerve to say in 1990 -

I have the Treasury in my pocket, the Reserve Bank in my pocket, wages policy in my pocket and the financial community . . . both here and overseas in my pocket.

I really wonder if that claim was true or whether Mr Keating would not do better to deny that he had any management of it at all. I turn now to a statement made by Mr B.A. Santamaria, who said -

All other economic questions are irrelevant before the level of Australia's foreign debt and the rate of interest which we must pay in order to roll it over. This ultimately determines our domestic interest rate, which ultimately determines whether or not our economy can get off the ground.

The heart of the matter is not primarily the excess of imports over exports, but the \$13 billion we have to find annually to pay interest, a figure driven remorselessly upward by the ruinous factor of compound interest.

I suppose what has happened to this country is the same as what has happened to so many small businessmen and in particular the farming community, about which I know more than most other businesses. We now have a One Australia plan, which everyone hopes will be the answer to our problems. I do not know if members opposite can remember the major point of the One Australia plan. Does anyone know anything about it?

Hon Bob Thomas: What was the question?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Just give me one point out of the One Nation package.

Hon Bob Thomas: Just one point?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: The growth forecasts in Mr Keating's One Nation package project that the Australian economy will grow in real terms by 4.75 per cent in 1992-93, by 4.5 per cent in 1993-1994 and by 4.25 per cent in 1994-95. I wonder where he chose those fantastic figures, because over the last 20 years there has been only one period in which we have succeeded in matching the performance he is proposing; that is, in the three years after the serious recession of 1982-83. If we are to match these terrific growth rates Mr Keating thinks we will achieve each year he will obviously depend very much upon productivity. In the 1980s we managed to increase our productivity in this country by less than one per cent, in spite of the large amount of money poured in by way of our national debt. On one occasion we experienced great growth in this country during the boom years around the world. It was a time of commodity boom when over three years the price of wheat increased by more than 30 per cent, the price of wool by more than 270 per cent, gold more than 360 per cent, and oil by almost 50 per cent. At that time Australia's economy grew at an annual rate of 4.6 per cent. So much for our chances of experiencing that again when one looks at how Mr Keating is going about trying to achieve his predicted recovery.

I mentioned earlier the economic plight of the farmers. I do not intend to go through that situation blow by blow. We have debated that topic quite a bit in this House. However, it is interesting to note the emphasis placed on that matter by the Government. I now quote a letter to the newspaper by the Western Australian senator John Panizza. The figures he cites include the following -

The Federal Government's One Nation statement provides a good indication of who the prime minister considers important in the future of Australia.

Let us compare benefits to be provided to Australia's beleaguered farmers, to those currently being provided to the Waterside Workers.

FARMERS

75 percent interest rate subsidy for carry on finance for wheat	\$16.6M
Rural Adjustment Scheme - part A (long term structural adjustment) over next 3 years	\$30M
Rural counselling over next 3 years	\$2.6M
Total	\$49.4M
Benefit per farmer	\$352.86

WATERSIDE WORKERS

Redundancy packages over past 3 years	\$170M
Statutory Levy on industry for contribution to redundancy packages	\$150M
Total	\$320M
Benefit per waterside worker	\$94,117.65

Given Australia's reliance on rural exports, this situation is outrageous, particularly when one considers our farmers are indirectly forced to contribute to the industry packages via the statutory levy.

In other words, the waterside workers' statutory levy. The article continues -

Farm exports constitute 27 percent of total exports, and as such 27 percent of the \$150M industry contribution to waterside workers redundancy packages ... will be passed on to the farmers.

That is, about \$45 million.

It is interesting that questions were asked in Federal Parliament about how many farmers were on the dole. The answer was one. It does not appear that for all these promises by the Federal Government to provide help to farmers there is much in it for the rural community. Many people might be a little uncertain about our national debt, or even about what \$1 billion represents. What if our national debt does increase by \$40 billion in one year? What does \$1 billion mean to people? The average person finds it difficult to associate himself with debts of \$1 billion. Perhaps I could use an example as a reminder to the House and to other people of how other countries might be expected to use \$1 billion. I quote now from *The Weekend Australian* of 4-5 April. The article on aid to Russia reads -

States of the former Soviet Union would require \$US40 billion (\$52 billion) in foreign financing next year - twice the amount they were receiving for 1992, the head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Mr Jacques Attali, said yesterday.

And further on -

In Paris, Mr Attali welcomed the proposed \$US24 billion aid package from the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries to the Commonwealth of Independent States, but said eastern Europe was not yet at the end of recession and underlined that its problems were as much trade-related as financial.

And further on -

It was "no exaggeration" that the eastern half of Europe was faced with the threat of 50 million unemployed, a balance of payments deficit in 1993 of some \$US40 billion and a collapse of State structures and prospects for growth, Mr Attali said.

We all know what has happened in Russia with the breakdown of its entire political system of communism and how that country has made dramatic changes to its financial operations and so on. I have referred to that article because it contains very interesting figures. It is expected that \$A52 billion will put Russia right, when Russia is the country that put a man in space, then ran out of money and could not bring him down again. Yet Australia has been going through \$40 billion as if that amount were peanuts. How can a little country like Australia which has not had much go wrong with it, other than the Keating Government, solve Russia's problems with \$40 billion when Australia goes through \$40 billion every few years. The situation is frightening.

Talking about what \$40 billion will do, *The Weekend Australian* of 14 March contains an article on Latin America by John Dury of New York as follows -

Last year, according to Salomon Brothers, \$US40 billion (\$53 billion) in new capital flowed into Latin America, compared with \$US13.4 billion in 1990.

And further on -

Latin America has about 400 million people and a gross domestic product (GDP) equal to two thirds of Eastern Europe.

So, Australia's debt has increased as much as is expected in Russia and as much as has occurred in Latin America. It is obvious that Australia is in grave trouble and that the chance of this country achieving a 4.4 per cent growth - which is implicit in Keating's Budget - is nil. We did it once, during a resource boom throughout the world, but it does not appear that another resource boom is about to take off throughout the world today. For what it is worth, our net foreign debt runs at 35.6 per cent of our gross domestic product. In other words, one third of the value of all that Australia produces could meet its foreign debt. We know that it

will not occur. It is generally recognised around the world that a foreign debt of 40 per cent of GDP is the breaking point in any country's economy. We are so close to this that it does not matter. I suppose all we can say is thank goodness we are not Russia. However, it looks like we might be going close to that level in the none too distant future when we see how the country is being run.

We see Mr Keating trying to divert attention from the economic problems by releasing his One Nation policy, which seems to be designed not to unify but to divide Australia. Obviously, he is attempting to distract the people of Australia from unemployment, business stagnation and our run down finances. He has attacked many Australian icons, particularly those centred on the British Empire and our association with Great Britain.

He has denigrated Great Britain's role in the defence of Malaysia during the last war, conveniently forgetting the part Britain had to play in Europe, where it stood alone following the collapse of France. In 1942, the United States of America had not committed itself to the war, yet Great Britain had been at war since 1939. She had fought the war alone for four years. Although it was understandable that Great Britain was not able to hold Malaysia, she nevertheless was not frightened to commit her troops to its defence. It was certainly not due to a lack of bravery on the part of her forces in that battle that Malaysia fell. The British contribution to Malaysia's defence was symbolised by the presence of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, which were two of her navy's largest ships. One does not need to be a student of war to know that that represented a gallant commitment, because those ships were sent knowing that they would be without air cover, without which they could have been destroyed.

Not content with attacking Britain on that issue, Mr Keating set about, as only an Irishman could, destroying the image of the Anzac. He suggested that young Australians had not died for anything worthwhile, certainly nothing Australian. We must consider the situation at that time. Mr Keating ridiculed Australia's going to war and helping Britain in foreign countries such as Turkey, which is a long way from Australia. However, the majority of the trade we had in those days was with Britain. She gave us Empire preference for our products. We had the ability, if we chose, to trade with other nations, but we chose Britain because it had a large market. At that time Asia did not have much money with which to buy our products. It is easy today to look back and ridicule the events of those times. Fortunately, today we do not need to rely on Empire preference; Asia has developed and buys our goods. In fact, the development of Japan and some other Asian countries represents an outstanding success, as their economies are matching those of Europe.

I did research to establish which battle should be considered Australia's most significant, as I thought it was about time to consider whether Gallipoli was the time that Australia came of age. I referred to a book by Peter Firkins, a well known Western Australian historian and author. In that book, titled *The Australians in Nine Wars*, I read with interest Australia's commitment in Gallipoli and I wondered whether the battle for the Kokoda Trail would be a more worthwhile contender. Although Australia had been committed to send a force of some 20 000 persons at the outbreak of war, the force which actually sailed for Gallipoli was approximately 2 000 persons. Perhaps that is an incidental figure, but during the whole of the First World War Australia sent 121 324 horses to various places; therefore, if we did not supply a huge number of troops, we did supply a large number of horses. This was in the days before vehicles became refined, and consequently horses were important. I now quote from Mr Firkins' book to give members some idea of the situation at Gallipoli. Referring to a time towards the end of the Gallipoli campaign, he writes -

... Australians were put to a supreme test when their positions were attacked by four Turkish divisions; a total of 42 000 men. From 3.30 a.m. onwards, wave after wave of the enemy came from the direction of Wire Gully in front of 400 Plateau. They outnumbered the 17 500 Anzacs, all that there were to oppose them in the whole bridgehead, by more than three to one. The Turks screamed "Allah, Allah," as they advanced into the terrible fire of the Australian defenders who yelled back bits of slang they had picked up in Egypt: "Saida," "Backsheesh," and "Eggs-a-cook."

The Turkish formations were shredded by the storm of fire. Only a few men reached the parapets of the Australian trenches and they were dealt with by the bayonet. At Courtney's Post, the Turks forced their way into one bay by the use of bombs, and

several attempts to drive them out were repelled until Lance-Corporal Albert Jacka leapt into the trench. Single handed, he killed seven, shooting five and bayoneting two. For this epic he received the first Victoria Cross to be awarded to an Australian soldier in that war.

The crippling losses suffered by the Turks compelled them to call off the attack. After about two hours fighting, over 4 000 of them lay dead and 7 000 wounded in front of the Australian lines. The defenders themselves had suffered 628 casualties.

Although many Australians suffered awfully at Gallipoli, it was in fact a scene of much heroism and successful fighting. Attacks have been made on the British regarding the conduct of this campaign and I recall seeing a film on Gallipoli showing Australian troops advancing before British artillery had finished their bombardment. My father was involved in that part of that battle and he indicated that, although the battle was shocking, it would have been much worse without the British shells weakening the Turkish position. While we lost many men it would have been a lot worse without British artillery. Unfortunately at that stage the Australians had little more than rifles and a few machine guns. Without the British artillery the Australians would have been annihilated. That was just part of the battle at Gallipoli. History has not done us too much harm in saying that was the first major use of Australian troops.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Doug Wenn): Order! I particularly direct that comment to the two members between the speaker and me.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: All those who went to Gallipoli were volunteers. It was a major commitment and history has recorded it as one of our most significant battles. It is one which we can use to commemorate Australia's contributions in time of war and then appreciate the peace that it won. Instead, Mr Keating has preferred to, shall we say, "kiss the Blarney stone" at Kokoda and forget all about Gallipoli being a significant event. If he had looked at his history books, perhaps he would have seen that Milne Bay was probably just as important as Kokoda. The Japanese fleet which was deployed to attack Australia had been seriously depleted at the battle of Midway, but nevertheless those Japanese who remained were advancing across New Guinea to Australia, and Milne Bay was where they had to land to go across the Kokoda Trail to Moresby. It is rather interesting reading about those two great battles. I recommend that if members have the time they read Peter Firkins' *The Australians In Nine Wars* or do as I did and research the topic. I will quote Dudley McCarthy's *South-West Pacific Area-First Year* which is Series 1 Volume V of *Australia in the War of 1939-1945*. It is probably one of our official histories of the world war and was printed by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. McCarthy recorded the number of troops committed to New Guinea at the time, and a notation on page 115 states -

At the end of June the total strength in the whole of New Guinea was: A.I.F. 1,098; militia 12,273; American 2,208. The Americans were mainly "service", and not "combat" troops. A heavy proportion of the Australians were in lines of communication, maintenance, fixed defence and anti-aircraft units.

That was in the whole of New Guinea and relatively speaking the battle in New Guinea was fought with a fairly small number of troops. Certainly it was not the type of battle that went on in the First World War when a mass of men were sent over the trenches. One of the interesting things about the battle of New Guinea, that Mr Keating has drawn to our attention, is that it is the first time that Australia went into war with conscripts. McCarthy indicated that the 1 098 AIF troops were volunteers and the 12 273 militia were conscripts. As it happens conscription was something with which the Australian Labor Party violently disagreed during the Vietnam war. It is rather interesting when one looks at the efforts made by Australians in the New Guinea fighting to note the very important part that the New Guinea natives played. We hear a lot about the efforts of the fuzzy wuzzy angels in bringing out our wounded. Perhaps not many member realise exactly what took place in New Guinea at that time. I will quote from *Australia in the War of 1939-1945* at page 116 where McCarthy states -

On 15th June the hand of military authority fell heavily on the native labour force of the two Territories. Morris invoked the National Security (Emergency Control) Regulations to terminate all existing contracts of service in Papua and New Guinea and provide for the conscription of whatever native labour might be required by the

Services. He ordered that "the Senior Military Officer or any District Officer" might employ any native upon such work and subject to such conditions not inconsistent with the order as he might think fit; that all natives so employed should enter into a contract of employment for a period not exceeding three years; that no labourer duly engaged for or in any such employment should:

1. Neglect to enter into a contract of employment;

In other words they were straight-out forced. McCarthy continues -

2. After he has entered into such contract -

- (a) desert from such employment;
- (b) absent himself without leave;
- (c) refuse or neglect to perform any work which it is his duty to perform;
- (d) perform any work in a careless or negligent manner.

Rates of pay were set at not less than 8/- and not more than 15/- a month for "skilled labour"; not less than 8/- and not more than 10/- a month for "heavy labour"; from 5/- to 10/- a month in certain other circumstances. Food and certain personal necessities were to be provided.

As I stated earlier, at that stage there were 10 000 indentured labourers in Papua and 35 000 in the mandated territory. Not all of those were taken into the war, but the New Guinea natives far outnumbered the Australians at Kokoda and at many other battles. They did more than carry out our wounded. Without them the Australians would not have been able to survive as there was no way of getting food to the troops on the Kokoda Trail other than to carry it in by manpower. Some use was made of horses, but in the main supplies had to be carried in by manpower. The natives also bore arms. While I cannot give the comparison of the number of natives bearing arms with Australians bearing arms I would imagine it was quite high. This history reveals that practically every patrol that went out in New Guinea had considerable native manpower. They were bearing firearms. Many were members of the Papuan Infantry Battalion and other rifle brigades. I mention this because the recent newsreel footage of Keating on the Kokoda Trail showed Papuans sitting there solemnly, some showing photos of themselves in action. They have not been paid compensation nor the wages that they have been promised. Mr Keating has suggested that we should change our focus from Gallipoli - which was fought by volunteers from Australia and who undoubtedly made great history for us - to a battle where Australians conscripted people of another nation to fight with them and then did not pay them! Perhaps he should think a little more of the natives; perhaps then those who survive today will receive the compensation they deserve. The part they played was significant. Fortunately, we managed to turn back the enemy at Kokoda and also at Milne Bay, which was probably the more significant battle because it was fought by Australians without the help of the natives. Personally, I am not very concerned about whether we choose one battle place or another. This concentration on Kokoda is a diversion by the Government. I have been passed an article from the *Economist* of 28 March with the headline "Republic or not, we will still be broke". I think that describes the very things I have been endeavouring to say.

I will not get too involved in the debate on the flag other than to refer to the flag as a rallying point. Traditionally, before mechanised war, troops concentrated on the flag as their rallying point. I guess that today it is still a rallying point to a certain extent. We fly the flag on school playgrounds, public buildings, hospitals, at the Olympic Games and on other sporting occasions. I am not worried about there being a Union Jack in the top corner of our Australian flag. I think the major point is that our flag should be identifiable by Australians. I do not think it matters whether people from other countries do not recognise it. If I were to show members half a dozen foreign flags with stripes, I am sure they would not be able to tell me to which countries they belonged. Perhaps, if an art competition were held we could find a new design that was more appropriate. However, in the past we have successfully rallied under our present flag and know it as the Australian flag. I think the Union Jack on our flag is appropriate because, however much Keating would like to destroy it, we have a very strong British connection and cultural background; it is history and cannot be erased. Even the Labor Party has the Union Jack in its logo.

Hon Tom Stephens: We would be just as happy to have a new Australian flag.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: As I said, I will not make a great issue of this matter. I hope we do not end up as we have with our national anthem. On Anzac Day, sheets were handed out with the words to our national anthem so that people could sing it.

Hon Tom Stephens: They were only for the elderly.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Hon Tom Stephens can stand up in a moment and sing it for us.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I inform Hon David Wordsworth that the second verse causes me problems.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I will close on that. I think that we should return our attention to the Australian economy, to balancing the Budget and to developing a climate for business expansion and reduced unemployment.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Margaret McAleer.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [5.35 pm]: I move -
That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - Secret Ballots

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan) [5.35 pm]: I draw the attention of the House to a matter about which there is a certain amount of agreement; that is, secret ballots. As members recall, Australia has a very good record on secret ballots. In fact, for many years secret ballots were known throughout the world as the "Australian ballot" due to its early introduction into Australia. However, it was not introduced into Australia with universal approbation. The first debate was held in Victoria and, when it was suggested, Colonial Secretary Edward Deas Thompson said that it was "not only unconstitutional, but un-English". He also said -

No Englishman would desire to do that secretly which ought to be done fairly and openly.

When the first Legislative Council of Victoria was elected in 1851, it had open voting. However, in due course a secret ballot was suggested. The Melbourne *Argus* wrote in favour of a secret ballot as follows -

Such a system as this does not suit some of our honourable members, and some holding their heads pretty high, too, half as well as a system in which men can be driven to the poll in droves and forced to vote in accordance with orders or in obedience to the dictates of a tyrant majority or minority, as the case may be, which chooses to adopt the most uncompromising means for securing its objects. What other valid reason can be urged against the ballot?

The matter was debated in the Legislative Council in relation to the new Constitution and was passed 33 to 25, with the Government members in the minority. A number of people voted against it with the following comments being recorded -

Campbell, said that those unable to write their names openly in a book were not fit to exercise the responsibilities of electors. John Pascoe Fawcner said that the secret ballot would 'tend to make men living lies', and the Surveyor General, Andrew Clarke, said that, bad as the existing voting arrangements were, the secret ballot would be '10,000 times worse.' Another member, a Beckett, said that the ballot 'would lower the tone of character throughout the colony.'

However, in March 1856 it was passed into the Victorian Constitution and it worked very well. The Constitution of South Australia established in 1856 provided for election by secret ballot. The Electoral Act of 1857 also provided for putting squares against names. The first election in South Australia with the secret ballot was held in April 1857. The secret ballot was adopted in New South Wales and Tasmania in 1858. Queensland followed in 1859 and Western Australia in 1879. Secret voting has applied in elections of both Houses of the Federal Parliament since the formation of the Commonwealth. The secret ballot became known in the United States of America as the "Australian ballot" and was adopted by

New Zealand in 1870, by Britain, British Columbia, Canada, and Belgium in the following seven years, and later by many other countries. That information is contained in J.F.H. Wright's *Mirror of the Nation's Mind: Australia's Electoral Experiments*. It is something of which we should be proud because it enables people to cast their ballot without any fear that influence will be brought on them after the ballot for the manner in which they cast their vote. This is one of the essential bulwarks of our democracy.

Section 127 of the Electoral Act states -

- (1) Upon receipt of the ballot paper the elector shall, subject to the provisions of section 129, without delay -
 - (a) retire alone to some unoccupied voting compartment and there, in private, mark his vote on the ballot paper in the manner hereinafter described;
 - (b) fold the ballot paper so as to conceal the names of the candidates, but to disclose the initials of the presiding officer, and exhibit it so folded to the officer, and then forthwith, without unfolding it, deposit it in the ballot box;
 - (c) quit the polling place.

That is our provision for a secret ballot. Members will note that section 127 is subject to section 129, which provides for assistance to electors and reads -

- (1) On request from an elector the presiding officer, an assistant presiding officer, or a poll clerk, in the presence of such scrutineers as are present . . . shall mark the elector's ballot paper according to the instructions of the elector, and fold and deposit the ballot paper for him, after which the elector and any person appointed by him, shall quit the polling place.

The problem is this: Illiterate voters in Western Australia are deprived of the secret ballot and that is something of which we should be extremely ashamed. India, with something like 600 million people, many of whom are illiterate, manages to conduct elections without resorting to the means we resort to here. The reason I raise this issue is that recently I was in Onslow for the Ashburton by-election. I was extremely concerned that people who are illiterate were embarrassed about having to ask for assistance and could not come out and say openly that they could not read. It applied mainly to elderly Aboriginal people. However, I did notice a white person who I suspected wanted assistance. In the end that person went into the polling booth to mark the ballot paper. I suspect that person was illiterate because illiteracy is not confined to elderly Aborigines in our community, but certainly that person was too embarrassed to seek assistance. Most of the people who sought assistance were obviously embarrassed; some were not.

Why should it be that in our sophisticated country people who are illiterate are deprived of a secret ballot and are forced to seek assistance when we could use the simple measure used on the subcontinent of India; that is, placing symbols on the ballot paper which are readily recognisable? It would provide the opportunity for people to cast their vote without having to seek assistance. Members must bear in mind that at the recent by-election many of the people who cast their vote were able to write the figures 1, 2 and 3 even though they were incapable of reading the ballot paper. If we had pictorial symbols against the names of the candidates to enable voters to identify them we would go a long way towards solving this problem. Either that, or we should look at optional preferential voting. It is disgraceful that the only way we have dealt with this problem is through section 129(2) of the Electoral Act. It allows a person to go into the polling booth proffering a how-to-vote card. Section 129(2) reeks of a section which has been written into the Act by politicians for the benefit of politicians. It enables politicians to get valid votes out of electors and it does not solve the problem of the illiterate voter who wants to make up his own mind in the privacy of the polling booth. As politicians we should look to the interests of the voter rather than the interests of political parties, which could solve the problem by providing for symbols on ballot papers. With not having a secret ballot we have some of the very ills which have been described. How can a person in a community such as Onslow vote and pretend it is a secret vote when it was, with the situation that prevailed at that polling booth, clear how that person voted? The polling officer or the scrutineer, such as I was at the recent by-election, may not say how that person voted, but there is a very good chance that everyone standing around knew exactly how that person voted. It is not the proper way to allow people to vote.

The Aboriginal people of Western Australia, particularly the elderly, are badly served by our present electoral arrangements. As members of Parliament we should take on the responsibility of doing something about it, and the solution is quite simple. All illiterate people would find it considerably easier to deal with ballot papers if recognised symbols were placed on them. They would then be afforded a secret ballot in the same way as the electors who can read and write.

Adjournment Debate - Sexual Harassment Allegations in Parliament House

HON P.G. PENDAL (South Metropolitan) [5.46 pm]: Before the House adjourns I will raise two matters. The first relates to the speech I made in the adjournment debate last night about comments made publicly by the Premier about the allegations of sexual harassment within Parliament House. In the course of that speech, and subsequent to it, I was challenged by a number of members opposite, not the least the Leader of the House and Attorney General, who argued that in fact the Premier had not said the sorts of things I suggested she had said and that I had misunderstood her. For the record I will read what the Premier said in public yesterday, because without any shadow of doubt it confirms my original statement.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You are talking about her statement in the Parliament, as you did last night?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Yes, I am talking about what she had to say yesterday.

Hon J.M. Berinson: In the Parliament?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: We will come to that in a minute. The Premier made a public statement in the course of which she rejected the notion that there should be a Joint Select Committee of Privilege of the two Houses of Parliament, and she gave certain grounds. I reported to the House last night that included in those grounds was that we could not necessarily expect a Select Committee made up of members of Parliament to be able to bring in an unbiased or fair conclusion because, in the words of the Premier, she had heard in the corridors only yesterday about the sexual proclivities of certain members. I was challenged on that and I was told by none other than the Attorney General that what I said was a misrepresentation of the facts. I will quote in part what the Premier said in public yesterday in response to the suggestion for a joint Select Committee -

... I can think of no worse vehicle for undertaking that investigation than a Select Committee of Privilege. The first question would be who would sit on such a committee. Which one of us here, given the way the matter has been conducted in the media, could confidently predict that having been selected to be a member of the committee some allegation would not then be made against us? Who could confidently predict that? I have already heard in the corridors of Parliament today several names mentioned as being unsuitable because it is believed they have certain sexual proclivities.

If there are any doubts about what those words mean, I suggest the person having difficulty must be suffering from some form of dyslexia or mental aberration. The plain meaning of those words is as clear as a bell.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It is quite different from your representation of yesterday.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is not at all. I am starting to worry that the Leader of the House is suffering from loss of memory, although I am told that happens with advancing years. We have seen before that many people around here have a selective memory about what happened last week, last month or some years ago. I leave the point where I left it last night; that is the sort of conduct the Premier has complained about when used by others, yet she is reduced to peddling innuendos about members who have sexual proclivities. I rest my case.

The second matter I mention is that in recent weeks in the course of my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate I advised that my electorate office had been the subject of a disconnection order by the State Energy Commission because the Government had not paid the bill. I also pointed out that the SEC officer who came to disconnect the power supply said that similar action was being taken in other offices. I think he said it was happening to Hon Joe Berinson's office.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Rubbish.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The SEC officer said that I should not feel too put out because it had happened at Government House also.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Who is having who on?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The Leader of the House has frequently said that he does not read newspapers, and perhaps he should sometimes. Following those events I asked the Minister for Education a couple of questions about whether the Ministry of Education had been able to pay its bills.

Hon Kay Hallahan: Yes.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The Minister responded on that occasion to the effect that it had trouble paying its bills. She said on that occasion that this was one of those colourful turns of phrase that I go on about. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that it is reported in *The West Australian* today that the next victim on the list was none other than the Valuer General's Office, where the power had been cut off for the same reason.

Hon Fred McKenzie: The bill went to the wrong address.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Members opposite can make all the excuses in the world.

Hon Fred McKenzie: I read the newspaper.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: So did I. If Hon Fred McKenzie accepted the explanation given in the newspaper, some people around here are sillier than I gave them credit for.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Is it a fact that you have received your salary this month? If we pay that, we will pay anything.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The young lady who delivers salary cheques to members will tell the Leader of the House that when she delivered mine yesterday I said I would take it straight to the bank because I would not put it past the Government to put a stop order on that also. Those comments are purely speculative but the disconnection of the power supply is fact. The office of the Valuer General has been a victim, and other Government departments are in the same situation. The SEC is not silly. As a statutory agency it wants to balance its books and knows that it would be easy to go down the gurgler. It has many assets to protect.

Hon E.J. Charlton: It does not have a new power station.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: That is just as well, because otherwise there might be more disconnections. Having been denigrated as I was some time ago and having been told that it was a figment of my imagination that the electricity supply to Government offices was being disconnected, we now find that it applies not only to electorate offices, but also to Government agencies. My one regret is that on this occasion my secretary was too efficient; she immediately rang the Premier's office, which made sure the order was reversed. I would have preferred her to be inefficient for once and to have allowed the electricity supply to be disconnected. I do not know why the Governor is retiring or whether it has anything to do with the disconnection of the electricity supply to Government House! I do not think that has influenced him. It is now reported that another Government department, in addition to those I reported previously, has had its electric power supply cut off. I do not know where it will stop, perhaps only when this crowd are thrown is of office and some semblance of order is restored to the finances of this State.

*Parliament House - Visitors in the President's Gallery
Oceanic Overseas Chinese Organisation Delegates*

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): I draw the attention of members to the visitors in the President's Gallery who are delegates to the Oceanic Overseas Chinese Organisation taking place in Perth under the leadership of Mr Francis C.R. Lee. On behalf of honourable members I wish them all the best for their conference and I hope they have an enjoyable stay in Western Australia.

[Applause.]

Adjournment Debate - Sexual Harassment Allegations in Parliament House

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [5.56 pm]: I take the opportunity in this adjournment debate to invite Hon Phillip Pendal to withdraw the unfortunate statements he made yesterday in the adjournment debate.

Hon P.G. Pandal: A fat chance.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Slim is the preferred nom de plume.

Hon P.G. Pandal: I have been waiting several weeks to say that.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You were right the first time.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I will not object to that. I have heard that one before also.

I invite Hon Phillip Pandal to withdraw his unfortunate statements made in adjournment debates last night and tonight concerning the Premier's comments in yesterday's question session. Hon Phillip Pandal should acknowledge at least that he misheard the Premier's statement or misunderstood it when he spoke in the adjournment debate yesterday. He should also admit that, despite all the time he has had to study those comments, he has again failed to understand them.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I ask members to conduct the adjournment debate with some decorum.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I again invite Hon Phillip Pandal to reconsider. I realise he may find it difficult to speak again in this debate but in the course of the next nine minutes I am willing to allow him time to interject. He has chosen to misunderstand the Premier, with the result that he has made incorrect statements in this place.

Hon Graham Edwards: That is not new for him.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am deeply shocked.

Hon T.G. Butler: He has trophies for it.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Hon Phillip Pandal said in the adjournment debate last night that he had heard in the Premier's response that her reason for not supporting the establishment of a Select Committee was that she had heard in the corridors that the sexual proclivities of some members of Parliament might ensure that the matter was not properly heard. He was corrected by the Leader of the House, or at least challenged, and had a chance to reconsider his comments. He said that he was not misrepresenting the Premier and that she made the type of innuendo that she has been complaining about for the past two weeks and hence his opening remarks about the double standard. The Premier's statement, which I acknowledge Hon Phillip Pandal has read in part into the record -

Hon P.G. Pandal: I am happy to have it fully read into the record.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am afraid I must put the speech in context because Hon Phillip Pandal left out the last sentence.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KIM CHANCE: The Premier said -

Which of us here, given the way the matter has been conducted in the media, could confidently predict that having been selected to be a member of the committee some allegation would not then be made against us? Who could confidently predict that? I have already heard in the corridors of Parliament today several names mentioned as being unsuitable because it is believed they have certain sexual proclivities.

The next sentence is the one that was omitted.

Hon P.G. Pandal: "That is the most appalling outcome of this sort of behaviour."

Hon KIM CHANCE: The Premier went on to say -

That is the most appalling outcome of this sort of behaviour.

Hon P.G. Pandal: That is correct. The member is spot on for once!

Hon KIM CHANCE: Hon Phillip Pandal has patently misunderstood what the Premier was saying.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You tell us what she meant, then.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order! I suggest that Hon Kim Chance direct his remarks to the Chair and not to the unruly interjectors. I will not interject on him.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Hon Phillip Pandal's accusation was that the Premier, in effect, by repeating the scuttlebutt when she referred to some people's names being mentioned as being unsuitable because they had certain sexual proclivities, might have ensured that the matter of sexual harassment would not be properly heard.

Hon P.G. Pandal: That is exactly what she said.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is Hon Phillip Pandal's inference of what she said.

Hon P.G. Pandal: It is her implication.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The Premier actually said that few members could be sure that no allegations would be made against them subsequent to their selection to serve on the committee.

Hon P.G. Pandal: That is charming.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Who can be sure? In fact the Premier went on to say that few of us could confidently predict that no allegations would be made against us. We are not personally responsible for allegations people make against us and that is exactly what the Premier was saying. I believe Hon Phillip Pandal understood that and deliberately misrepresented the Premier.

Hon P.G. Pandal: I think you have misunderstood.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Phillip Pandal has already made his contribution to this debate and he should leave it at that.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The Premier actually described the mentioning of names in the corridor in relation to certain sexual proclivities as -

... the most appalling outcome of this sort of behaviour.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Hear, hear!

Hon KIM CHANCE: I think the Premier was talking about the behaviour of Hon Phillip Pandal.

Hon Peter Foss: What does that mean?

Hon KIM CHANCE: She is talking about the appalling outcome of this sort of behaviour and referring to the scuttlebutt in the corridors.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I have offered Hon Kim Chance the advice before that he direct his remarks to the Chair and not enter into private conversations with other members in the Chamber. He has the floor and can continue to speak, but should direct his comments to the Chair.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Bob Pike will come to order.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am certain that members opposite understand what I am saying. I am also certain that now the facts have been presented Hon Phillip Pandal - and "honourable" is a word I would always use to describe him -

Hon P.G. Pandal: Hear, hear!

Hon T.G. Butler: You are the only one who does.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am sure he would want to set the record straight by withdrawing his comments which, given the facts, were not only wrong but also dishonourable and should not remain uncorrected.

Adjournment Debate - Transport Workers Union of Australia - Fertiliser Drivers' Membership Fee Threat

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural) [6.04 pm]: My comments relate to the first matter raised by Hon Phillip Pandal about finance. Perhaps the way in which the friends of the

Government are dealing with the matter I am about to raise resulted in the call I had today from a truck operator and his driver who told me that when the driver was leaving the Kwinana fertiliser works he was told by Mr Richard Burton - not the one associated with Elizabeth Taylor - that he had better bring \$187 with him the next time he drove through the gates or he would not get his fertiliser loaded. I contacted the driver to confirm that that information was correct. He told me that it was absolutely correct. I then contacted the Transport Workers Union office and was told that Mr O'Connor was downstairs but would ring me back. I have not received a telephone call from that person so I am unable to have confirmed the position of the representative of the union taking that action.

I am bringing this matter to the attention of members because this is the lowest thing that a union official could come at during times when trucking operators are working days and most nights trying to survive. He is threatening that their fertiliser will not be loaded unless they join the union and is telling the drivers that when they come next time they should bring \$187 with them to do that. What sort of standover tactic is that? The people involved belong to various trucking organisations such as the West Australian Road Transport Association or the Livestock Transporters Association of WA. They have always been levied for union dues as part of the Transport Workers Union, which offers these people little by way of service. Whatever the facts about that, they are beside the point. The important point is that these people have been told to front up with \$187 to join a union or their trucks will not be loaded. That stinks. My advice to the owner and the driver was to tell this man to get lost and to pick up their fertiliser. I also said to give me a call if the truck was not loaded and I would see what we could do to let everyone know what was happening. My message is given to make members aware of what is happening. I hope I have an opportunity to discuss this matter with representatives of the TWU executive so that it ceases to pursue this activity. People should be allowed to get on with their business and doing something positive for the economy of Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.08 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

EXMOUTH - MARINA DEVELOPMENT

Holiday Inn Hotel Group Interest

142. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Holiday Inn group of hotels indicated further interest in a development of a marina at Exmouth?
- (2) If yes, what arrangements or commitments have been given by the Government to this group with regard to exclusive rights to the development?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Holiday Inn group was given a right to develop option over one of the proposed hotel sites. This option was offered to give the company sufficient security to warrant the large expenditure required on design and marketing studies.

TRANSPORT - DEREGULATION

Carnarvon Transport Co-operative Board Meeting

171. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it the Government's intention to totally deregulate transport arrangements in Western Australia?
- (2) If yes, when will this take place?
- (3) Has the Government taken into consideration the effect this would have on the transport arrangements for Carnarvon and in particular the very successful transport company Carnarvon Transport Co-operative?
- (4) Will the Government consider exempting Carnarvon from any change in franchise arrangements particularly taking into consideration the adverse effect on the horticulture and incoming freight to the area?
- (5) Will the Minister agree to have an urgent meeting with the board of Carnarvon Transport Co-operative?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1)-(2)

Since 1983 the Government has acted to substantially reduce the regulation of land freight transport. As from 1 July 1992, commercial goods vehicle licences, and associated fees, will no longer apply to the transport of most commodities. Licences will only be required by vehicles -

transporting "major bulks", such as coal, bauxite, woodchips etc. A review of regulation covering major bulks is being fast-tracked, with a decision to be handed down by the middle of this year;

transporting timber from the Picton-Pemberton corridor to Perth;

transporting commodities to and from some franchised road transport areas, to protect "thin market" concerns.

(3)-(4)

The Government has a responsibility to ensure that freight services within the State are adequate in relation to community needs. This

especially applies where communities are unable to generate sufficient freight to support a reasonable standard at an acceptable cost. There are 11 franchised road transport areas in Western Australia, one of which is Carnarvon. The Department of Transport will be working with the communities involved to help position them with the transition from a regulated environment and to ensure they are able to maintain and manage their own transport system. Should that process identify a requirement for continuing Government intervention then regulation may continue.

- (5) The Department of Transport has met with the Board of Carnarvon Transport Co-operative, and the Shire of Carnarvon, to explain the implications of the decision to alter the need for commercial goods vehicle licences and there will be ongoing consultation. Emphasis was placed on the need for the wider community to establish its preferred transport system and to make a submission to Government if regulation is required. To allow the Carnarvon community additional time to do this, I have decided that the existing transport arrangements for Carnarvon will remain in force until 1 July 1993. I look forward to receiving fully documented submissions on the preferred transport system and will be happy to meet with Carnarvon community representatives, which will no doubt include the Carnarvon Transport Co-operative, at that time.

NATIONAL RAIL CORPORATION - CONTRACTS

Western Australian Companies Protection

181. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

As it is proposed that the National Rail Corporation will take over the functions outlined in schedule 2 of the National Rail Corporation Bill, what action has been taken to ensure that any contract let by the National Rail Corporation, particularly with respect to purchasing, servicing, and maintenance, does not impact unfavourably on Western Australian companies and suppliers who currently provide these services to Westrail?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

The Government will make every effort to ensure that Western Australian companies and suppliers have an opportunity to tender for the provision of services to the National Rail Corporation. However, the National Rail Corporation is a commercial enterprise and it must be expected to make decisions on the acquisition of such services using commercial criteria.

NATIONAL RAIL CORPORATION - KALGOORLIE-KEWDALE RAILWAY TAKEOVER

Predominant User Clause - Westrail User Charge Payment

183. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

If the National Rail Corporation takes over the Kalgoorlie-Kewdale section of railway under the predominant user clause -

- (1) Will Westrail be required to pay a user charge for grain, nickel products and other local traffic hauled on this section?
- (2) If no, why not?
- (3) Will this have an adverse effect on the Westrail-CBH grain contract?
- (4) Will local traffic have a lower transit priority compared to National Rail Corporation trains?
- (5) Will such user charges have an adverse impact on the current Westrail rates for such freight traffic?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) Yes. However, Westrail could be the predominant user from Merredin to Kewdale.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3), (5) No.
- (4) Train priorities will be arranged in negotiation with the National Rail Corporation

NATIONAL RAIL CORPORATION

Kalgoorlie and Merredin Staff Reductions - Clarification

190. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Given that rail personnel at Kalgoorlie and Merredin currently number approximately 206 and 156 respectively, and given further that under the National Rail Corporation best practice operation it is understood that the Kalgoorlie staff will be reduced by approximately 80 per cent, and given that the very real possibility of through running will entail most of the personnel at Merredin becoming surplus, will the Minister clarify the projected staff reductions?
- (2) Should these two centres be the subject of an exodus of Westrail staff and their families, will the Government reject a National Rail Corporation concept in accordance with a resolution carried in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, 7 November 1991?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) Considering that Westrail is the predominant user of the West Kalgoorlie freight yard, the anticipation of a staff reduction of the order suggested is not supported. Projected staff variations will not be clear until the National Rail Corporation has completed the process of determining an enterprise agreement and negotiated the conditions of its corporate plan with the States.
- (2) The interests of this State and those employed in the transport sector will be given full priority. At present, union and State railway management representatives, together with the National Rail Corporation, are exploring an enterprise agreement as the basis for awards that will be applicable to employees of the National Rail Corporation.

NATIONAL RAIL CORPORATION - KEWDALE INTERMODAL TERMINAL TAKEOVER

Staff Employment Future - Operation Tenders

191. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

If the National Rail Corporation takes over the operations of the Kewdale intermodal terminal, either directly or by contract -

- (1) Will the current staff at this facility be assured of continued employment?
- (2) If no, why not?
- (3) Will tenders be called to operate this facility?
- (4) If no, why not?

(5) Will steps be taken to avoid the major users being disadvantaged by a competitor who may be the successful tenderer?

(6) If no, why not?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1)-(2)

Staff requirements at Kewdale intermodal terminal under the National Rail Corporation will depend on the National Rail Corporation's enterprise agreement currently being negotiated.

(3) This is for the National Rail Corporation to decide.

(4)-(6)

Not applicable.

TAXIS - MULTIPURPOSE FOR DISABLED

Current Numbers; Last Licence Issued; Non-availability Complaints

201. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the current number of multipurpose taxis available for handicapped people?

(2) When was the last licence for such a taxi issued?

(3) Has the Minister received any complaints about the unavailability of multipurpose taxis in the last year?

(4) If yes to (3), how many complaints were received?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1) Six.

(2) September 1991.

(3) Yes.

(4) The Minister has received several formal and informal complaints about the multipurpose taxi service. The Taxi Control Board is working closely with the multipurpose taxi coordinator in an attempt to ensure that the current problems with the service are overcome.

TRANSPERTH - SOCIAL WELFARE FARES, BUS AND TRAIN SERVICES

Ratio of Full and Partial Paying Passengers Survey

202. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will the Minister indicate the type of costs included in the social welfare "fare" for Transperth for -

(a) bus services; and

(b) railways services?

(2) Has a survey been conducted in respect of the ratio of full paying passengers as opposed to partial paying or "free" passengers?

(3) If so, what were the statistics?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1) The social welfare recoup made to Transperth, for both bus and train services, is in recognition of the costs involved in operating services of a social welfare nature. These are defined as services provided on weeknights, weekends and public holidays, largely for those members of the community who do not have access to private transport. In addition, there is a social welfare component to normal off-peak weekday services. The level of recoup - 25 per cent of bus and 40 per

cent of train total operating expenditure - was agreed in negotiations between Transperth and State Treasury in 1985. It is extremely difficult to properly separate the cost of the welfare component from the cost of the "commercial" component of total operating expenditure. The recoup represents a recognition by the State Government of the estimated cost of providing a given level of service which is deemed necessary at the current time.

(2)-(3)

At present, full fare paying passengers account for approximately 35 per cent of total patronage, with the remaining 65 per cent being concession or free travel passengers. This information has been derived from a major passenger survey conducted in 1985 and from current ticket sales.

ROADS - ROE STREET, MITCHELL FREEWAY-PERTH RAILWAY STATION
Bridges and Walkways Proposal

207. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the total number of overhead bridges and/or walkways proposed to be erected over Roe Street between the Mitchell Freeway and Perth Railway Station?
- (2) What is the designated use for each of the proposed bridges and/or walkways?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) A working group comprising Government, Perth City Council and Northbridge representatives is examining a number of options to allow access from Fitzgerald Street to the Wellington Street bus station. One of the options includes a bridge over Roe Street. This is the only crossing of Roe Street under consideration.
- (2) The designated use for the bridge is to allow bus, cyclist and pedestrian access across Roe Street and the Joondalup and Fremantle railways.

STATESHIPS - FERTILISER FREIGHT SUBSIDY, WYNDHAM

212. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are any special arrangements regarding freight subsidy for fertiliser in place with Stateships calling at Wyndham?
- (2) If so, what is that subsidy?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1)-(2)

Fertiliser, along with all other cargoes carried on Stateships vessels, is subsidised to the extent that there is a cost in operating the shipping services, as reported annually in the accounts of the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission.

MINERAL SANDS - BEENUP
Final Transport Route Decision

216. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the final transport route for the proposed Beenup mineral sands mine been decided upon?
- (2) If yes, will the Minister table a detailed map of the final route chosen?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1) Yes. The route for the proposed Beenup mineral sands mine is via Scott River Road, Brockman Highway, Sues Road, Sanson Road and Bussell Highway to Bunbury.

(2) See map. [See paper No 125.]

ROADS - MEEKATHARRA MAIN STREET

Resurfacing - Main Roads Department Budget

226. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Police representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the budgeted amount for the resurfacing of the main street of Meekatharra by the Main Roads Department?

(2) Will the job be completed within budget?

(3) If no, what is the estimated overrun?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1) The works through Meekatharra involve reconstructing and resurfacing of the road at a budgeted amount of \$500 000.

(2) An increase of \$30 000 will be required due to extra works.

(3) The total cost is expected to be \$530 000.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LANDCORP - HEPBURN HEIGHTS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, PADBURY

Tenders Notice

133. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Planning:

Some notice of this question has been given.

(1) Is the Minister aware of a notice of an entry in the issue of *Australian Construction Report* dated 13 April 1992 in which LandCorp has called for tenders for the development of 391 housing blocks at Hepburn Heights, Padbury?

(2) What is the location of this development?

(3) Which planning and other approvals have been granted in respect of this land and on which date were such approvals granted?

(4) Is it the intention of the Government to ignore the listing of this land by The National Trust of Australia (WA) and the Heritage Council of WA; and, if so, for what reason?

(5) Did the Minister for Planning state last year that he would recommend to Cabinet that the Government should not proceed with the development; and, if so, was such a recommendation made to Cabinet?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(5)

I confirm that Hon George Cash gave notice of his question but I do not have advice as to the response so I ask him to place the question on notice.

RANDOM BREATH TESTS - EASTER

No 0.08 Fines - 0.05-0.08 Fines Statistics

134. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Police:

The Minister is obviously aware that over the Easter break some 7 000

motorists were stopped for random breath tests and not one was found to have a blood alcohol level of 0.08. Could the Minister advise me how many motorists were in excess of 0.05?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

That statement was wrong and a number of those 7 000 motorists who were stopped were tested and found to be over 0.08. I saw the report and I was quite impressed, so I sought some follow up information. I have been advised subsequently that a very small number - and I have not confirmed that number - measuring in the 50s, were over 0.08. I cannot provide the member with the information he requests as the police do not record whether people have a blood alcohol level between 0.05 and 0.08.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE - SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS

Unreported to Police Offence - Premier's Comments

135. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Attorney General representing the Premier:

Some notice of this question has been given.

- (1) Was the Premier correctly reported on radio last night when she said that allegations of sexual assault which had gone unreported to the police constituted a serious offence?
- (2) Is she expressing the principle that when a person knows of an offence or an illegality that person is obliged to report that offence or illegality?
- (3) If so, why did she and her colleagues, including the Attorney General, wait for up to eight years before selecting terms of reference for the Royal Commission which they believed warranted investigation?
- (4) Does her comment on radio last night once again constitute both hypocrisy and selective application of the law?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(4)

I thank the member for some notice of this question. As will appear from the reply which I am able to provide, time has not allowed for proper consideration of the question. The position, as I am advised, is that the Premier does not believe that a report in the terms referred to by Mr Pendal would have been correct. However, she would prefer to check the factual position -

Hon P.G. Pendal: It was a voice report.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: - before providing a substantive response. If the member wishes to take the matter further I suggest he put the question on notice.

KWINANA INTEGRATED EMERGENCY SYSTEM REPORT - PUBLIC RELEASE REFUSAL

Funding Fear Reason

136. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the Minister's remarks yesterday during questions without notice on the integrated emergency system report which he has refused to make public. Is the fear of the Government's inability to fund the implementation of the report the reason why the Minister has refused to release the report for public discussion?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

No, it is not that fear at all. It is in part the fear that people will play politics with what is a very sensitive report. I really do fear that that is what Mr Pendal is on the verge of doing now.

Hon P.G. Pendal: You are frightened of the contents.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: The report has been given to those people who are most involved in the area of emergency management systems. That report has been with local government for quite some time.

I also want to take the opportunity to expand on an answer I gave when Hon Phillip Pental asked whether I had been misquoted. To the best of my recollection and after checking with my staff today and others who were there at the time, I am of the view I have been misquoted. I will contact the newspaper and ask the journalist if she could check her notes.

Hon P.G. Pental: She is insistent that you were quoted correctly.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: I am looking for my notes of that day to make sure the answer I did give was correct. I have a particular memory of that issue because I was given some briefing notes which I struck out. Had I not struck them out I would not have been misquoted. I am concerned to make sure that the information I have given to Hon Phillip Pental is correct. However, it makes no difference to the substantive point that I have no intention of releasing that report.

SCHOOLS - MAINTENANCE Complaints Report - Funding Action

137. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Education:

I refer the Minister to yet another report in this morning's *The West Australian* about the principal of a Perth school who is concerned about the lack of maintenance being done on school property. Is the Minister aware that this is a very common complaint of school principals throughout Western Australia? What action is the Minister taking in the lead-up to the next State Budget for an infusion of a reasonable sum of money to bring the school maintenance in Western Australia up to a point where it is acceptable to the students for the purpose of proper education in the future?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to say in the House today that the report in *The West Australian* is not an accurate report of the circumstances.

Hon P.G. Pental: Are you having a bit of trouble over there with the media?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I do not know about "over there" but I have had one or two problems.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: I know Mr Young.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I do not mind who knows Mr Young. The fact is that Balga Senior High School has been allocated over \$60 000 worth of preventive maintenance this financial year. Most of the work has been done or is nearing completion. In addition, considerable fault maintenance has been undertaken, including 318 separate repairs or faults rectification since 1 January this year. Approximately eight weeks ago a serious problem arose when rain entered the manual arts area, and the necessary work to overcome that problem was undertaken in a matter of days. In addition, a \$1 million upgrade of the school was completed by the beginning of the school year. The report in today's *The West Australian*, regardless of who was the source, was inaccurate.

In last year's Budget the Government gave priority, in tight budgetary circumstances, for \$75 million to be allocated for maintenance and school improvement because many complaints had been made.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: It is still true.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: That is because it is a two year program. I visit many schools and I have seen marked improvements in the maintenance work being undertaken. That has been made possible by that allocation. It does not mean that all will be fixed in one year; that was never the intention. The

Government always said that the \$75 million to be spent over the two years would address many of the concerns and would bring schools into a fairly well maintained condition. That does not mean that members could not visit a number of schools at the end of the two years and find something that needed attention. I am sure that would be possible given the number of schools in the education system. However, that is what the Government has been doing and it has worked well. I do not know what was the circumstance which led to that newspaper report, but it seems to be an out of date report.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC) - BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY

Review Committee Funding Report - Recommendations Endorsement

138. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for The Arts:

- (1) Has the Minister received the report of the review committee on the funding of the Braille and Talking Book Library of the Association for the Blind of Western Australia (Inc)?
- (2) Were the recommendations of that report endorsed by the boards of the Association for the Blind and the Library and Information Service of Western Australia?
- (3) When will the Minister be making her response to that report?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(3)

The department has received the report and I assume that the report and its recommendations would have been endorsed both by the Association for the Blind of Western Australia Inc and the library because a working committee was set up to examine those needs.

Hon P.G. Pental: They have both endorsed it.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I presume that is the case, but I like to be absolutely accurate and I do not use Hon Phil Pental as one of my sources for information. It is nice of him to assist.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order! I ask the Minister to direct her comments to the Chair.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I will be considering the report very soon. The implementation of the recommendations and whether they will be dealt with in the coming Budget or be implemented using existing resources will depend on their financial implications. However, I will be giving that matter attention shortly.

SCHOOLS - MAINTENANCE

Budget Allocation - Building Management Authority or Outside Contractors Expenditure

139. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Must all the money for the maintenance of schools under the special budget allocation be expended through the Building Management Authority or can outside contractors be used?
- (2) Will that be a direct charge against the Ministry of Education's budget or the BMA's budget?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(2)

It was an allocation through the Ministry of Education's budget, and some interesting things have been done. An allocation of \$1 500 has been provided for P & C associations wishing to apply for school improvements they may like to carry out. That has acted as a seeding ground. Often P & C associations' fundraising has been complemented by these funds to help pay for such things as erecting a pergola, laying brick paving or carrying out other school improvements which they thought would add to the quality of the

surrounds of their schools. It has been a useful exercise and has provided P & C associations with support for the good work they do. Many of them have made the money go much further than \$1 500 would normally go. Of course, many parents assist at schools in a voluntary capacity by using their various skills and trades. Minor works are involved, and that money was never meant to be spent on maintenance per se but for school improvement activity. Allocations were also made to principals on a formula basis for jobs up to \$500. Some of that money has gone to local tradespeople; not all the work was done by the BMA.

Hon Max Evans: Are all jobs over \$500 done by the BMA?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: No. Firstly, the \$1 500 school improvement grant goes to the P & C associations which apply for it and whose principals, and the BMA, approve of it. Secondly, funds have been allocated to school principals on a formula driven basis for jobs valued at up to \$500. That was limited because that amount of funding had not been given before. Some of that work would have gone to the BMA but some of it has not. It was a start in involving local communities and having the resources available to do it. Most of the work is being done by the BMA, but not all of it.

Hon Max Evans: About 95 per cent?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: I cannot say. I would have to check that. If the member is interested he can put a question on notice and I will obtain the information he needs.

JET SKIS - SWAN RIVER *South Perth and Kensington Concern*

140. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of serious community concern in South Perth and Kensington over the intrusive nature of jet skiing on the Swan River near the South Perth foreshore and Heirisson Island?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that these jet skis are noisy, a threat to wildlife, and constantly in constant excess of river speed limits of eight knots?
- (3) If so, is the Department of Transport turning a blind eye to this behaviour?
- (4) In view of continual breaches of the law, and the apparent inability to control these activities, will the Minister implement a ban on the use of jet skis in this entire area?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for notice of the question.

(1)-(4)

No. I am advised by the Department of Marine and Harbours that only two complaints relating to jet ski operators have been made to the department in the last two months, and both were made by the same person. Jet skis are no different from any other powered vessel and noise emissions are within the existing permitted levels. There is no evidence to support the view that any particular craft is a threat to wildlife. The areas referred to have no maximum speed limit applicable. Regular patrols are carried out by marine officers from the Department of Marine and Harbours as well as unscheduled visits by those officers to the area to observe jet ski operators. In the majority of those visits and patrols, all operators have been complying with the regulations. There is no evidence to support the allegations of breaches of the regulations and, consequently, there is no intention by the Department of Marine and Harbours to ban jet skis from those areas. Regular visits and patrols will be continued in the areas as well as in other heavily utilised areas of the Swan and Canning Rivers to ensure that good order prevails.

W.J. ROONEY LIBRARY - CLOSURE
Collection Available to Teachers and Public Assurance

141. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for The Arts and Education:

I refer the Minister to last year's controversy over the closure of the W.J. Rooney library.

- (1) Does the Minister recall the absolute assurances she gave in this House on 10 September 1991 that the collection would remain available to teachers and the public?
- (2) Is she aware of the April 1992 issue of *WA Education News* in which it is stated, "Unfortunately the State library does not have the resources to hold the culled collections or provide user services so those interested might keep an eye on State Library Board book sales"?
- (3) Does this mean her assurances are being overridden by her ministry?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(3)

Following the decision to close the W.J. Rooney Library the State Library Board was asked to look at the collection. It became obvious that quite a lot of the educational material would be best left within the Ministry of Education and there are staff available in the ministry for the maintenance of that reduced collection. In making that decision it became clear that a lot of the material was not of very much value to anybody and had not been culled in a long time. I presume that refers to the sale of books.

A lot of the material was transferred to the State Library Board. The material at the ministry is deemed to be of current professional interest to teachers. The historical material which was sent to the State Library Board and to the Battye Library is available to the public and teachers. Certainly a large amount of the material was, I am told, out of date and did not warrant the expense of storage or cartage. We now have a facility within the ministry which is staffed by two people and, as I said, the material at the State Library Board and the Battye Library is available to teachers and the public.

POLICE - VEHICLE THEFT AND HIGH SPEED CHASES

Reduction Reason

142. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Further to his answer yesterday which referred to the statistics on stolen vehicles and high speed chases, has the Police Department advised him of the reason for the major drop in the number of speed chases and stolen vehicles?
- (2) As the figures represent a 40 per cent drop, will he advise why the figures were not mentioned during the debate on the juvenile detention legislation?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(2)

I said when I gave those figures to the House that I was doing so without any real analysis.

Hon Max Evans: They need analysis.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: There is no doubt about that. I am closely watching the figures because I am vitally interested in what is happening. It is my view that the reasons for the drop in those figures are because of the tactics being used by the police, the highly mobile squads and the ability to roster on officers at the time of greatest need - which is often late at night or early morning - the mobility of the patrols, and the calibre of the officers who have been working in this area. In addition, the high profile that car theft has been receiving has contributed to the drop in the figures. The public are responding to community policing initiatives and anti-theft and anticrime strategies and are becoming aware of the need to secure their vehicles.

Hon Max Evans: Were juveniles being detained previously?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: I do not know, and I do not know whether I can check those figures. I have no doubt that the juvenile legislation debated earlier this year did have some impact.

Hon Max Evans: It was only proclaimed in March.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: Members may recall that strong statements were made at that time about juveniles, and I am sure that the legislation did have some impact, but we cannot measure its impact at this time. I am treating the figures cautiously. I do not want to sound as though I am crowing about them because that is not what I am doing. I wanted to put the figures to the House so that members would be aware of what is happening. I hope the downward trend will continue, but that remains to be seen. As I said, I will closely monitor the figures.

PUBLICATIONS - PEOPLE AND PICTURE
Restriction Decision - Poll Support

143. Hon FRED MCKENZIE to the Minister for The Arts:

Is it true that a new poll shows that an overwhelming number of people have indicated their support for the Minister's decision to restrict the *People* and *Picture* magazines?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I thank the member for the question because it is correct that a authoritative poll has been taken. It is at least as authoritative as the interpretation of the Westpoll and it has shown very strong support for my decision. Members will be interested to know that this authoritative survey is known as the "Hallahan poll". The methodology used was that data was gathered by my office which examined published letters to the editor, comments from radio talkback callers, petitioners, letters to my office and telephone calls. The results were that 307 people supported my decision, or thought that I should have gone further, compared with only 26 who opposed my stance. That represents 92 per cent support. Letters have been arriving from Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. Telephone calls and letters are still being received daily. At the meetings and functions I attend there have been countless expressions of support for my actions. The response from the community does indicate a groundswell of support for strong action to be taken in regard to these publications.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Following the lead of the Opposition set by Mr Tubby a year ago!

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: An abysmal lack of leadership from the Opposition; but I am pleased to hear that the Opposition supports my stance. I thought members would be interested in the outcome of the Hallahan poll.

SCHOOLS - FOUR AND FIVE YEAR OLDS
Government Plans - Report Availability Date

144. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Education:

I remind the Minister of a series of questions I asked on 8 April about the Government's plans for the future of the education of four and five year olds. In answer to my questions the Minister said in part, "If the member is patient for a short time we will have that report."

(1) Have I been patient enough, for long enough?

(2) When will the report be made available?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1) No.

(2) I will advise him as soon as possible.

FIRE BRIGADE - QUESTION 300 1991

Letter Received by Minister

145. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the answer to question 300 on Tuesday, 14 May 1991, and ask -

- (1) Has the Minister received a letter from a former employee of the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board advising that coercion was applied to him to ensure that he accepted a newly created position of Government officer?
- (2) If yes to (1), what action does the Minister intend to take, given his earlier answer on this matter in the Parliament?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(2)

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. I have received the letter and I have again referred the matter to the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board, which assures me that the answer given on 14 May 1991 was correct.
