

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr President, may I ask for your direction on that matter? Is there a *sub judice* rule in our Standing Orders?

The PRESIDENT: To the best of my knowledge there is no *sub judice* rule in our Standing Orders, but again to the best of my knowledge it has always been the practice to observe the *sub judice* rule if it is known by the presiding officer or the member concerned that there is an action in the court.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I accept that. I did not want to stop the member from speaking.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: As far as I am aware legal action had not been taken this morning, but it may well have been taken today. So I shall not proceed with the subject.

I am trying to bring before this House the general standard of tactics of a minority group in this State who threaten the livelihood of employers, employees, and small businesses which are trying to operate against great odds.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What is the dispute about really?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have said that I will not continue with that subject, and I will not. I make this point: I have been accused of suggesting that unions should be bashed, which is totally incorrect. I believe the union movement is an essential and very important part of our life today. I believe it gives dignity, respect, and a great deal of protection to the working man. Many years ago when men, women, and children were working in impossible conditions and virtually gave their blood to survive, the union movement did a great job and rescued them from that situation. But the pendulum has swung. Now in many cases these same employees, members of the union movement, are being exploited by their own leaders. So the pendulum has swung right across.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is not true.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: These people are being exploited for political gain. I believe a small number of union leaders do not have any regard for the working man; all they are trying to do is to disrupt the economy and to bring this Government or any Government to its knees.

I am concerned that this Government may not take some action to overcome this problem. I hope it will do so. I hope the time will come when there will be secret ballots and voluntary membership of unions; I hope there will be free movement of the public and access to public areas without obstruction or intimidation. I believe the public should have this protection and should not be blocked and threatened as they are on occasions.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I would not belong to a union that I had to belong to.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am very pleased to hear that. We have seen a proud people and a great country—the United Kingdom—brought to its knees by the activities of some unscrupulous leaders and by the completely reckless activities of part of the union movement.

On the 13th December, 1975, the public indicated that they wanted a responsible government and that they were prepared to work, given the opportunity. The State Government must make sure that they have the opportunity to work, regardless of the threats that are held over them.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: They will be sorry.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Someone said, "They will be sorry". I am making the point that we should be giving protection to those men and women who wish to work, who do not wish to be members of a union, and who wish to have freedom of access with the rights of the individual that we accept in this country. I hope this State carries out its duties and does just that. The public made a decision on the 13th December. They said that they wanted responsibility, not revolution. Mr President, I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Lyla Elliott.

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

**THE HON. N. McNEILL** (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [9.29 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).  
Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 13th April, 1976

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

## ANZAC DAY ACT AMENDMENT BILL *Assent*

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bill.

## QUESTIONS (22): ON NOTICE TRANSPORT

1.

### *Ring System Bus Service*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

When is it intended to implement a ring system of mini buses to complement the clipper service.

as promised by the National Country Party in its policy speech for the last State election?

Mr OLD replied:

An investigation has been made into the proposal to implement a ring system of mini buses to complement the clipper service. This has shown that a service of this nature is not required at present. However, the matter is being kept under review so that when the time is opportune the proposed new ring system may be introduced.

## 2. STATE SHIPPING SERVICE

### *Modernisation*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

When does he intend to implement the Premier's election promise to continue the modernisation of the State Shipping Service?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The pattern of transport in the north-west and Kimberley is changing, and in view of the present depressed state of activity in the region, the future role of the State Shipping Service is presently not clear.

Taking into consideration the present low tonnages, the type of cargo being carried, the facilities and working times available at the various ports, the present unit load vessels operate very efficiently, and have the capacity to do so for some years ahead.

The commission's technical officers keep abreast of modern technology in ship construction with a view to its application at the appropriate time.

In the meantime, the Government anticipates receiving a further extension of the time restrictions placed on the import of these vessels.

## 3. ROAD TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

### *Resignations*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police:

Will he advise the number of patrolmen who have resigned since the Road Traffic Authority came into operation?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Nine since 1st June, 1975.

4.

## POLICE

### *Officer/Head of Population Ratio*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police:

If they are available, will he advise me of the latest figures showing the number of policemen employed per head of population for each State in the Commonwealth?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

As at 30th June, 1975, the number of police officers employed per head of population for each State in the Commonwealth was as follows—

Victoria, 1:587;  
New South Wales, 1:579;  
Queensland, 1:576;  
Western Australia, 1:525;  
South Australia, 1:506;  
Tasmania, 1:450;  
A.C.T., 1:327;  
Northern Territory, 1:197.

5.

## RAILWAYS

### *Annual Report: Information and Statistics*

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

With reference to the annual railways report which clearly shows since 1972 information and general statistics have been drastically reduced, will he please advise of the reasons for the change of policy?

Mr O'Connor replied:

Government agency annual reports are public documents and along with other rail systems throughout Australia, Westrail is operating in an increasingly competitive field.

Statistical data previously published contained information which conceivably could be used by competitors to their advantage. To maintain uniformity with other systems and influenced by the cost factor, presentation of Westrail's annual report was changed to provide an overview for general publication. A separate statistical supplement with restricted circulation is produced for use within the organisation.

6.

## HEALTH

### *Venereal Disease Clinic: Northam*

Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) In relation to the Minister's press release regarding venereal disease clinics being established in regional centres, would the Minister

advise if Northam is among the regional centres to have a clinic?

- (2) If "No" would the Minister give his reasons?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The population and notification figures do not warrant a special clinic. The local doctors, with assistance from the Perth clinic, provide an efficient service.

## 7. HOUSING

### *West Northam: Programme*

Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Housing:

Will he advise details in relation to the proposed State Housing Commission complex at West Northam, in relation to the following matters—

- (a) number of houses to be constructed;
- (b) size of units;
- (c) proposed date of commencement;
- (d) the programme for occupancy of the homes?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) The overall approved plan for the Throssell Street subdivision will produce 171 dwelling units made up of—

Single detached houses, 117;

Duplex, 18;

Back to back duplex, 12;

Town houses, 20;

Aged persons units, 4.

No sizes, in terms of number of bedrooms, are specified.

In line with current policy of the State Housing Commission, serviced lots will be made available to the private sector for purchase by individuals and project building organisations. The timing of release, conditions of sale, and number of lots to be released will be determined in the light of demand.

- (b) to (d) The first stage of the Housing Commission's building programme in the subdivision comprises five single detached houses (3 bedroom) and two duplex units (2 bedroom) for which tenders will be negotiated in November, 1976, with the contractor selected to mount the commission's core programme in this area.

Subject to satisfactory negotiations construction should commence early in 1977 with a completion time of some eight months.

## 8. VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS AND DRIVERS' LICENCES

### *Service Personnel*

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Traffic:

- (1) Is he aware of the problems and inconvenience being caused to naval personnel when on being transferred from State to State they are compelled to keep changing their vehicle registration and licences?
- (2) Is he prepared to review the regulations pertaining to the above with a view to alleviating the problem for service personnel in general?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Where servicemen, or other persons, are frequently transferred between States or Territories of the Commonwealth, some inconvenience may be caused because of statutory requirements of all States for residents of their State to license vehicles with them.

- (2) The Road Traffic Act provides for a vehicle licence issued in any other State or Territory of the Commonwealth to a person not ordinarily resident in the State of Western Australia to be deemed a vehicle licence under the Act.

Uniformity of licensing requirements between all States and Territories of the Commonwealth is desirable and it is unlikely that agreement would be reached where unrestricted use of a vehicle, bearing another State licence, would be allowed to a person who has become a resident of the particular State.

In Western Australia tolerance is exercised to servicemen driving vehicles registered in another State.

## 9. WATER SUPPLIES

### *Dulyalbin Storage Tank*

Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) At the present rate of consumption, what is the expected life of the water stored in the Dulyalbin water storage tank?
- (2) Has a sample of the water been recently tested to ensure it is fit for human consumption?
- (3) If so, what was the result of the test?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Three weeks without rain.
- (2) and (3) This is a 1 million gallon (4 500 cubic metre) roofed concrete tank supplied by a rock catchment. It is not customary to sample supplies of this type and cleaning of the tank is carried out as necessary.

# 10. TRAFFIC OFFENCES

## *Toodyay Race Meeting*

Mr MOILER, to the Minister for Traffic:

On the occasion of the last race meeting of the Toodyay Race Club last season, on or about 9th October, 1975, Road Traffic Authority personnel apprehended a large number of race club patrons on the approach road to the race course. Would the Minister advise—

- (a) how many infringement notices were issued on that day to persons using the approach road;
- (b) how many types of infringements were issued and the numbers of each type;
- (c) what was the total amount levied in fines for the infringements?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) Nineteen.
- (b) All for failing to stop at a railway crossing "Stop" sign.
- (c) \$380.

# 11. TRAFFIC LIGHTS

## *Toodyay Race Club: Approach Road*

Mr MOILER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Toodyay Race Club or the Toodyay Shire Council requested the installation of lights at the rail crossing on the approach road to the Toodyay race course?
- (2) Has a request been made to position a flag man or person to control the traffic generated by the race club patrons over the rail crossing on the occasion of the club's meetings this coming season?
- (3) If "Yes" will he agree to the request?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) The proposal will be investigated.

12.

## ELECTORAL

### *Combined Roll: States and Commonwealth*

Mr CARR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) How many States is the Minister aware of in which State and Federal electoral rolls are maintained separately?
- (2) Does the Minister agree that the maintenance of separate rolls constitutes a duplication of resources?
- (3) Is there any advantage in maintaining separate rolls?
- (4) If "Yes" will the Minister please indicate the advantages?
- (5) Has the Government discussed with the Federal Government the possibility of using common electoral rolls?
- (6) If "Yes" to (5), what was the result of such discussions?
- (7) If "No" to (5), will the Minister initiate such discussions?
- (8) If "No" to (7), will he please explain why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Two.
- (2) to (8) An arrangement has been entered into between the Governor-General of Australia and the Governor of the State of Western Australia in relation to joint electoral rolls. A clause in the agreement states that the arrangement shall come into force on a date to be fixed by the respective Governments.

In 1974 the Government considered this matter and decided that no action be taken at that time.

The administrative procedures and relative merits or otherwise of the proposal are still under consideration.

13.

## HEALTH

### *Abrolhos Islands: Chemical Toilets*

Mr CARR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Further to his answer to question 21 of 7th April—

- (1) Will the Minister advise the results of the representative bacteriological examinations referred to, including details of when and where the samples were taken?
- (2) What testing has taken place at the islands to confirm in practical application the tests referred to in part (2) of his answer?
- (3) Will the Minister advise the dates of the two visits referred to in part (3) of his answer and indicate which islands were visited?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) In all representative bacteriological samples, no salmonella, arizona or edwardsiella isolated. Samples taken from Pigeon and Rat Islands in April, 1974.
- (2) Bacteriological water samples taken of sea water adjacent to islands. Also animal and bird life bacteriological swabs taken.
- (3) July, 1974;  
July, 1975;  
All islands visited.

#### 14. MENTAL HEALTH

##### *Tresillian Hostel: Sale*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Government have a firm commitment with the Nedlands City Council regarding the sale of Tresillian hospital?
- (2) Does the selling price remain at \$125 000?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.

#### 15. HEALTH

##### *Retarded Children: Accommodation*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many profoundly retarded children—up to and including teenagers—are currently accommodated by the State?
- (2) Where are these accommodated and what are the numbers at each place?
- (3) How many profoundly retarded children in the above category are known to be in the State?
- (4) What unsatisfied requests for accommodation for these children do Mental Health Services have?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) There are 97 profoundly retarded persons below the age of 19 at present accommodated by the State.
- (2) Scarborough hostel, 18;  
Dorset hostel, 14;  
Tresillian hostel, 18;  
Princess Margaret Hospital, 31;  
Nulsen Haven (State subsidised), 16.
- (3) 173.
- (4) 76 places (15 urgent and 61 eventual (non-urgent)) are required for persons at present living at home. Thirty-one places are also required for children presently accommodated in ward 10 Princess Margaret Hospital for Children.

#### 16. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

##### *Ilmenite Upgrading Plant*

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Is the Government aware of any feasibility study being currently conducted regarding the possible establishment of an ilmenite upgrading plant in Western Australia?
- (2) If so, when is it anticipated that a decision will be reached?
- (3) What are the locations being considered?
- (4) Has the company or companies concerned approached the State Government for information which could assist them with their feasibility studies?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not known.
- (3) Various parties have considered various locations.
- (4) Yes.

#### 17. WASTE DISPOSAL

##### *Recycling Plant*

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has the Government discussed the possibility of establishing a rubbish recycling plant at Rockingham?
- (2) If so, what progress has been made regarding the discussions?
- (3) Is one of the by-products associated with this type of plant methane gas?
- (4) Could the plant when established augment gas supplies in Western Australia?
- (5) If so, to what extent?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes. An approach was made last year by a company for establishing a commercial waste processing system at Rockingham.
- (2) The process proposed by the company was examined by the Metropolitan Refuse Disposal Planning Committee and my department. It is considered that although the basic idea could be possible, much more study and research would be required before the process could be considered viable.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) and (5) If such a plant were built it is unlikely the quantities would be significant, other than in a very local sense.

## 18. PORT AT WILBINGA

*Establishment*

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) When is it anticipated that investigations will be completed into the possibility of a new port being established at Wilbinga, south of the Moore River?
- (2) What was the amount of funds made available for the study by the Federal Government?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The current investigations should be completed by about June, 1976.
- (2) \$340 000.

## 19. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Merrydown Wine Co. Ltd.:**Wine Production*

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) When is it anticipated that the British company Merrydown Wine Co. Ltd. will make a firm decision as to the setting up of a production plant in Western Australia?
- (2) When did a representative of the company visit Western Australia?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Negotiations and studies now in train suggest that a decision either way will be reached within the next six to nine months.
- (2) 30th March to 2nd April, 1976.

## 20. HEALTH

*"Clanger Molloy" Comic: Review*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Did the Health Education Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council review the comic book "Clanger Molloy"?
- (2) If so—
  - (a) when;
  - (b) with what result?

Mr RIDGE replied:

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

## 21. POLICE

*Bank Holdups*

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Would he advise how many bank holdups there were in Western Australia in—
  - (a) 1971;
  - (b) 1972;
  - (c) 1973;
  - (d) 1974;
  - (e) 1975;
  - (f) to date in 1976?

- (2) Would he list the numbers of arrests for each year relating to the bank holdups for the above and the charges and sentences imposed in each case?

- (3) What is the minimum sentence for bank robbery and what are the bail requirements?

- (4) In view of the increasing number of bank holdups that are occurring, will he agree to a review of the sentences with a view to imposing heavier sentences?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Bank Holdups—

- (a) 1971—1;
- (b) 1972—3;
- (c) 1973—1;
- (d) 1974—3;
- (e) 1975—10;
- (f) 1976—Nil.

Holdups on Other Types of Premises and Private Persons—

- (a) 1971—8;
- (b) 1972—17;
- (c) 1973—20;
- (d) 1974—25;
- (e) 1975—37;
- (f) 1976—13.

- (2) Bank Holdup Arrests—

- (a) 1971—1;
- 1972—3;
- 1973—Nil;
- 1974—3;
- 1975—14;
- 1976—Nil.

Other Type Holdup Arrests—

- 1971—12;
- 1972—6;
- 1973—18;
- 1974—23;
- 1975—26;
- 1976—5.
- (b) 1971 3 years, minimum 10 months;
- 1972 6 years, minimum 3 years (2 charges);  
8 years, minimum 5 years;
- 1973 Nil;
- 1974 6 years, minimum 3 years (2 charges);  
5 years, minimum 3 years;
- 1975 4 years, minimum 12 months;  
3 years, minimum 8 months;  
4½ years, minimum 16 months;  
6 years, minimum 3 years;

1 absconded bail, not yet located;  
 7 years, minimum 3 years;  
 12 years, minimum 7 years (2 charges);  
 12 years, minimum 5 years (2 charges);  
 12 years, minimum 5 years (2 charges);  
 1 hearing of appeal against conviction pending (not sentenced).

All charges were robbery while armed or in company.

- (3) No minimum. Police will not allow bail on armed holdup charges. It is the prerogative of the magistrate before whom the offenders appear to set bail. Bail requirements must be substantial and in accordance with the type of offence. It is assessed in order that the offender is put under an obligation to appear in court.
- (4) The present penalty for armed holdup is life imprisonment with or without a whipping.

## 22. LEGAL AID OFFICE

### *Takeover*

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

Is it the intention of the Government to set up machinery for the purpose of taking over or controlling the activities of the law society's legal aid office?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Matters of legal aid have been the subject of discussion between the Attorneys-General of the Commonwealth and States.

No decision or commitment has been made as yet, due to the desirability to reconcile various legal aid systems operating throughout the Commonwealth.

## QUESTIONS (5): WITHOUT NOTICE

### 1. IMMIGRATION

#### *Relaxation on Nominations*

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Immigration:

- (1) Is he aware of an article on page 28 of this morning's issue of *The West Australian* headed "States to get more say on migrants", which states in part: "A meeting of Federal and State Immigration Ministers in Sydney yesterday agreed that the States would now be able to receive nominations for unassisted migrants from Britain"?

- (2) If so, is it expected this will lead to a relaxing of the currently very stringent regulations relating to the number of people who are allowed to immigrate at the moment?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) As a result of the agreement which was reached between the States and the Commonwealth at yesterday's meeting, there will in the future be a great deal more flexibility in meeting the labour requirements in Western Australia. At the same time the States and the Commonwealth will of course be cognisant of the situation which applies in respect of unemployment in Australia.

### 2.

### EDUCATION

#### *Guidance Officers: Geraldton and Midlands Area*

Mr CARR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

Further to his answer to question 27, part 2(b), of the 7th April—

- (1) Who are the two guidance officers located in the Geraldton and Midlands area?
- (2) What schools are they attached to or based at?
- (3) What schools do they serve?
- (4) Is their location at their present school to be for the duration of the 1976 school year; if not, for how long will they be so located?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The Geraldton and Midlands district includes Carnarvon. Mr E. Sharpe and Miss L. Rogerson have been stationed in Carnarvon during this term. In addition, two officers from the metropolitan area have been in Geraldton for several days and will be there until Easter.
- (2) and (3) Schools in the Carnarvon and Geraldton area according to need.
- (4) No. Their movements will be determined by the needs of students in schools. It is believed, however, that a suitable person has been located and will be based in Geraldton during second term.

3. **MENTAL HEALTH**

*Kareeba Nursing Home: Sale to Belmont Shire*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

I understand the Minister has the answer to the following question without notice which I asked on Thursday last—

- (1) Is it a fact that the Kareeba Nursing Home has been offered for sale to the Belmont Shire Council?
- (2) If so, when was the decision to do that made?

Mr RIDGE replied:

The Minister for Health apologises for the oversight in not making the answer available last Thursday. The answer is—

- (1) and (2) Informal talks have been held with the shire president about the possibility of acquisition of Kareeba by the Shire of Belmont for purposes of a "C"-class hospital to be operated by the shire in view of its insistence that Kareeba cannot be used for profoundly retarded persons.

No formal offer has been made, but a letter will be sent in due course by the Minister for Health, following up the informal discussions to ascertain the official views of the shire council.

4. **WAGE INDEXATION**

*Government Attitude*

Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

In view of the varying and conflicting positions his Government has taken to date on wage indexation, could he state quite clearly for the benefit of the House the Government's present attitude towards indexation and give an idea how long that attitude will persist?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The Government's position has been made very clear in public statements by the Minister for Labour and Industry, in the evidence which has been given to the Industrial Commission, and in statements I have made myself. We will now be appearing before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and I am hopeful that as a result of the findings of that commission in due course we will arrive at a degree of sanity in the situation. I have made it very clear that while the Government supports

indexation we must remind everyone, including the work force of this country, that if we had automatic indexation to the full extent every quarter there would be no abatement of inflation and certainly no reduction in unemployment. It is the Government's objective in its representations to State and Federal tribunals to ensure there is complete understanding, particularly at the national level, that if there is not some abatement of the present increases and a more stable situation is not introduced inflation will continue and unemployment will not only stay where it is but it will get worse.

That is the basis on which we are making representations to the commission at both State and Federal levels, and if the honourable member wants any more specific details I suggest he address his further questions to the Minister for Labour and Industry who will be only too delighted to fill in the details and give him a chance to take advantage of the situation to inform the workers of this State just how responsible this Government is.

5. **SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE**

*14th and 15th April*

Mr J. T. TONKIN, to the Premier:

Will the Premier advise the House as to the proposed sitting times for Wednesday and Thursday of this week?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for asking this question. It is proposed, with the concurrence of the House, that we should sit at 2.15 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday), and continue after tea; and on Thursday (Easter Eve) that we sit at 10.00 a.m. and adjourn as reasonably close as we can to 12.45 p.m.

I think members will appreciate the reason that we wish to terminate the proceedings at approximately 12.45 p.m. on Thursday. The arrangements are in the hands of the Joint House Committee. However, that is the intention at the moment and I hope it is convenient to all members. I appreciate this opportunity to ensure that all members understand what is intended by way of special adjournment motions tonight and on Wednesday night.

## COMMONWEALTH-STATE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

### *Premiers' Conference: Ministerial Statement*

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Treasurer) [4.51 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I seek leave of the House to make a statement regarding the revised Commonwealth-State financial arrangements agreed to last Friday.

The **SPEAKER**: The Premier seeks leave of the House to make a statement. Is leave granted? As there is no dissentient voice, leave is granted.

**Sir CHARLES COURT**: I thank the House for giving leave to make this statement. I believe it is desirable to record this in *Hansard* as expeditiously as possible so that members will be aware of the proposed revised arrangements which will take effect from the next financial year.

I believe it is appropriate that I inform the House of the new Federal-State financial arrangements which were agreed upon at the Premier's Conference held in Canberra last Friday. The conference followed an earlier meeting between the Prime Minister and State Premiers in February at which agreement was reached on the broad principles of the new scheme.

A considerable amount of work has been done also by Commonwealth and State senior Treasury officers and last week's conference had before it a detailed document, prepared jointly by the Commonwealth and State Treasuries, setting out the technical guidelines necessary for the successful operation of the new arrangements.

The officers also isolated the key issues on which ministerial decisions were required before finality could be reached.

I am pleased to report that the conference was a most successful one and was conducted in an excellent co-operative spirit. There were many aspects of the scheme still unresolved on which the Commonwealth Government could have taken a position which would have made it less attractive to the States. However, it is also pleasing to record that the Prime Minister gave every consideration to the views expressed by the Premiers and deferred to the wishes of the States on almost every key point.

We can now be assured that stage 1 of the new income tax sharing scheme will come into operation next financial year and will replace the present Financial Assistance Grant arrangements.

Payments to the States in 1976-77 will be based on a predetermined percentage of personal income tax receipts in that year. At long last, a Commonwealth Government has conceded the claims of the States for restoration of their rights to levy personal income tax and has acknowledged our right to a share of current personal

income tax receipts. Although a lot of work remains to be done on machinery matters, I am confident that the scheme will now operate successfully and to the advantage of the States.

The new arrangements are to be introduced in two stages. Stage 1, to commence next year, covers the income tax sharing proposals. Stage 2, which will operate from July, 1977, provides for the States to be able to levy a surcharge or grant a rebate of personal income tax if they so elect.

The main features of stage 1 are as follows: The aggregate amount to be divided between the States will be determined in 1976-77 and subsequent years as a fixed percentage of personal income tax collections including receipts from provisional taxpayers but excluding dividend withholding taxes. The percentage will be that represented by the Financial Assistance Grants paid in 1975-76 over personal income tax collections in 1975-76 multiplied by 100. This percentage is approximately 35.

The percentage so derived will be applied to net cash collections of personal income tax in 1976-77 to arrive at the aggregate payments to the States in that year. Payments in the following years will be calculated in the same way.

The aggregate amount so obtained will then be divided between the States initially in proportion to their existing shares of the Financial Assistance Grants payable this year. Subsequently, the distribution will be according to a formula which maintains the present *per capita* relativities but also takes account of the different rates of population growth in each State.

This is of particular significance to Western Australia because our rate of population growth is consistently higher than the Australian average and unless this was recognised in the distribution formula, the *per capita* relativities could move against us. As it is, the payments to Western Australia will reflect our higher population growth rate.

There are two important guarantee provisions. Firstly, that the States will not receive in any year—I emphasise “in any year”—less than they received in the previous year. Secondly, for the interim period until the time of the first review of the arrangements, each State will not receive less than it would have received under the present Financial Assistance Grant formula.

The latter guarantee, which was sought by the Premiers, is a most important gain for the States because it protects our position during the next few years when indexation of personal income tax and possibly other taxation reforms are to be introduced. The prospect of these changes creates some uncertainty as to the growth of income tax yields in the immediate future, and it is therefore reassuring to

know that during this settling down period, we can be no worse off than under the present arrangements.

The guarantee provisions are a complete answer to those who have criticised the income tax sharing scheme on the grounds that we could be worse off than under the Financial Assistance Grant formula. As it is, we can be better off and almost certainly will be, but we cannot be worse off.

A further important provision is that the Commonwealth has agreed to pay the States one-twelfth of their annual entitlement each month during the financial year. This arrangement will ensure a steady flow of cash to the States as under the present arrangements and will avoid cash problems arising because of the irregular pattern of income receipts.

It has been agreed in principle that it is desirable for as many specific purpose grants as possible to be incorporated in the general revenue payments with an appropriate adjustment being made to the percentage used to determine the States' share of income tax.

However, it does not follow that all specific purpose grants will be incorporated in general purpose payments and each will have to be considered separately to determine if it is appropriate for this course to be followed. It has therefore been agreed that this aspect of the arrangements should not come into operation immediately but will be referred for study and report by officers over the next few months.

I now turn to stage 2 of the scheme which provides for each State to be able to levy a surcharge of income tax or to grant a rebate of tax if it so elects. As I have remarked stage 2 will come into operation a year after stage 1; that is, from July, 1977.

Any surcharge or rebate will be expressed as a simple percentage of the Commonwealth tax. Assessment provisions will remain uniform throughout Australia; that is, a State will not be entitled to vary such items as deductions for dependants, medical expenses, education expenses, etc. However, the rates of State income taxes may vary from State to State.

The Commonwealth will be the sole tax collecting authority and will collect State income taxes as an agent for the State.

States with a lower taxable capacity than New South Wales and Victoria will receive equalisation payments from the Commonwealth to ensure that they receive as much *per capita* from their taxes as the larger States would have received from the same rate of tax. The equalisation payments will be received even though the larger States may not have imposed a State income tax. On reflection, when members study this document they will realise that is a very important provision

so far as the States, apart from the so-called standard States of New South Wales and Victoria, are concerned.

State income tax legislation and matching Commonwealth legislation will be necessary for the introduction of stage 2. These will need to cover the Government to Government arrangements and establish the rights and obligations of taxpayers who will have recourse to the courts.

I should emphasise that it is not mandatory for a State to levy its own income tax but the provision is there to enable individual States to do so if they so decide. Members will appreciate that it could be desirable to introduce a small State surcharge to enable desirable reforms and concessions to be made to other State taxes.

The arrangements will be subject to review within five years. Treasury officials have been asked to consider and report on the appropriate form that the review might take.

I am confident that under these arrangements the States will fare better than under the Financial Assistance Grant. We have an assured share of personal income tax receipts which is at last acknowledged as a State tax as much as a Commonwealth one.

I believe that over time we will obtain more money under this arrangement but I must warn against the assumption that we will have more money to spend next year. We need to know much more about the likely yield of income tax receipts next year and the possible effects of moves to introduce indexation of income tax before we can make judgments as to the amount we are likely to receive in 1976-77. However, we cannot receive less than we would expect to receive under the improved Financial Assistance Grant formula and we could do a little better.

There is also the question of the amounts likely to be made available under the various specific purpose grant programmes which are currently being reviewed by the Commonwealth. Possible reductions under this heading could offset, in part, gains from the new general revenue arrangements.

We will also have to live with a greater degree of year by year fluctuation in our principal source of revenue as income tax receipts are generally more volatile than the present formula grants. This is the price we must expect to pay for a greater degree of independence and I have no doubt we will be able to adapt our budgeting and accounting procedures to cope with the change. Of course, we also have the two guarantee systems.

The conference also discussed proposals that local government should also share in Federal financial income tax receipts.

Federal grants to local government as recommended by the Grants Commission amounted to less than 0.8 per cent of personal income tax collections this year. However, most capital cities and many metropolitan local authorities and provincial centres did not share in these grants.

To allow for all—I emphasise “all”—local authorities to participate and for payments to be lifted to a meaningful level in relation to the financial problems of local government, there is a need for a substantial increase in the share of personal income tax allocated to local government. In correspondence with the Prime Minister and again at the Premiers' Conference I have emphasised this point.

The Premiers also stressed the need for an early decision to be made on the amount to be provided to local government in 1976-77 so that distribution formulae can be settled and local authorities know where they stand for budgetary purposes.

The Prime Minister stated that his Government was not in a position to indicate a definite amount until its own budgetary planning was more advanced. However, he gave a categorical undertaking that local government would participate in the income tax sharing arrangements in 1976-77, and stated that the Commonwealth hoped to be in a position to announce at the June Premiers' Conference the amount to be provided to local government next year.

It is my belief and this view is widely shared, that local authorities should eventually receive 2 per cent of personal income tax collections. To achieve that target immediately would require a threefold increase in Commonwealth general purpose payments to local government, and given the serious budgetary problems of the Commonwealth it could be too much to expect a lift of that magnitude next year. I have therefore suggested to the Prime Minister that he might aim to achieve the target of 2 per cent by progressive increases in the payments over two or three years.

However, the important thing at this stage is that local government will be provided for in the Federal Budget next year and that all local authorities will participate according to a formula to be determined.

The Federal Government's policy is that payments to local authorities will be made in two categories.

Payments in the first category are to be on a weighted *per capita* basis to ensure that all authorities participate in the arrangements while having regard to the particular problems of more remote shires many of which are required to serve large areas with a small ratable population.

The second category of payments will be special or “topping up” grants made to those local authorities with special problems. The latter grants will be made on the recommendation of a State equivalent of the Grants Commission, the form and structure of which will be decided after consultation with local government in this State.

It is my hope that we can devise an effective formula which will allow the greater part of the funds available to be distributed according to the formula, leaving the smaller component available for special grants in cases of particular need. In this way, local authorities will be assured of a consistent and predictable payment under the income tax sharing arrangements which will be theirs as of right.

For these reasons, the Prime Minister is also keen to ensure that the greater part of the payments is distributed among all authorities on an agreed formula basis. I might add that that policy which we support will not necessarily be followed in other States.

Treasury officers who were involved in the development of the formula used for the distribution of State grants to local government are currently working on this problem and we hope to put some proposals before representatives of local government soon.

However, it should be understood that the development of a formula and the proportion of the total funds that can be distributed in this way without disadvantaging shires with special difficulties, depends very much on the total amount of funds to be provided and the degree of supplementation for authorities previously denied grants.

Therefore we cannot expect to reach finality on these two related points until after the June Premiers' Conference when we expect to be advised of the amount to be provided to Western Australia in 1976-77.

In the meantime we will endeavour to go as far as possible in discussions with local government towards agreeing on a distribution formula and also determining the appropriate body to recommend “topping up” grants.

These are history-making developments and I believe the Premiers' Conference last week will be seen in future years as a turning point in Federal-State financial relations and the beginning of an era of greater State independence and increased self-reliance.

I again thank members for the opportunity to have this statement recorded so that it will be readily available for them for the answering of queries they might receive in their several electorates.

# ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: EIGHTH DAY

## Motion

Debate resumed, from the 8th April, on the following motion by Mr Tubby—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency:

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

**MR MAY** (Clontarf) [5.09 p.m.]: Like previous speakers, I should like to congratulate the member for Greenough on his speech in this House when he moved the Address-in-Reply. I am fully conscious, as he is, of the task he has in front of him to emulate the performance of his predecessor—a man who was well liked on both sides of the House. I am quite sure the present member for Greenough will make his impact in due course in contributing to debates in Parliament.

One matter I wish to deal with tonight is the delay that is being experienced in the answering of correspondence to members of Parliament by Government departments. In this regard I refer to a number of departments. There are a number of instances which I could quote but I feel there is no necessity to quote them. I believe the departments themselves have to take steps to endeavour to speed up the process of replying to requests not only from members of Parliament but also from the public generally.

When a member of Parliament receives requests from the public for certain matters to be attended to he immediately writes to the department concerned; and it may be weeks before he gets even an acknowledgment of the letter he has written. During this time the letter may have gone astray; there may be something it has received the letter which has been written. Then one receives a reply saying wrong. One must then repeat the letter or write to the department to ask whether that the matter is being attended to. It is not good enough.

When I was Minister for Mines and we received correspondence from people, especially from members of Parliament, an immediate acknowledgment was forwarded to the persons concerned. If the matter was not resolved or finalised within 10 days a further letter was sent indicating that the matter was being further investigated, probably because the nature of the complaint protracted the inquiry. I ask the various Ministers whether they could possibly request their departmental heads to expedite the replies, because not only is

this matter causing inconvenience to members of Parliament but also it appears to the constituents that they are not receiving the attention which they believe they should be getting.

I feel that I should bring to the attention of the House one instance of the delays. Last year the Karawara estate was being established. Koonawarra school is very close to that State Housing Commission area. We could see that the roads which were to go past the school could cause a considerable hazard to the children if a fence was not erected around the school prior to the school holidays being completed. So I wrote on several occasions and drew to the attention of the Minister that a fence was required around the school. I did not receive any reply. Then I wrote again and I received an acknowledgment saying that the matter was being considered.

I let the matter lie for several weeks and then I contacted the Minister's secretary and I was advised that the matter was being attended to. That was about November last year. I waited until after Christmas and then I telephoned the Minister's office and again asked his secretary what was happening with regard to the fence around the Koonawarra school. He said he would find out what was wrong.

At the beginning of the year I again telephoned the Minister's office. I said, "Do not worry about answering the correspondence because the fence has now been completed." The fence had been put up before I received any word that it was to be erected. This is the sort of thing with which we have to put up and it is just one instance of what is going on in the various departments. I am not saying that all departments are at fault but a number of departments need to look at matters of this type.

One further matter about which I am concerned is the assurance which was given by the Premier to this House last year regarding reporting to Parliament on his overseas visits. He gave an assurance to this House that he would confer with the Leader of the Opposition and at an appropriate time would report to Parliament, as he has done tonight on a most important subject.

We consider that the trip overseas which the Premier undertook was a very important matter. On the 13th August last year I asked the Premier—

In view of the number of official overseas visits the Premier has undertaken since being in Government, will he indicate whether it is his intention either to fully or partially inform the Parliament regarding the outcome of those visits?

The Premier replied—

If it is the wish of Parliament, I will be only too pleased to do so. If such is the feeling of the Opposition, I will

confer with the Leader of the Opposition as to what would be an appropriate time to make such a statement.

I do not know what the appropriate time is but a number of months have elapsed since the Premier gave that assurance to Parliament. He is always saying, "What I say to Parliament is right."

Sir Charles Court: You are going to get just that report.

Mr MAY: I am glad the Premier interjected because on Thursday, the 16th October last year—three months later—I asked the Premier a further question, as follows—

In view of the fact that it is in excess of two months since the Premier indicated he would confer with the Leader of the Opposition regarding an appropriate time to inform Parliament concerning his overseas visits, will he advise—

(a) whether he has conferred with the Leader of the Opposition;

(b) if not, when is it his intention to report to the House on his overseas visits?

That is more than two months after the assurance the Premier gave to this House. The reply which the Premier gave to my question was as follows—

(a) and (b) I have not conferred with the Leader of the Opposition on this particular matter. I regret the oversight, but I shall do what the honourable member has requested next week and arrange a time which is mutually convenient.

Sir Charles Court: That is right.

Mr MAY: If that is not saying something to Parliament which is not true, then I do not know what it is. Here is the Premier blatantly telling the House that he would do something; he said it on two occasions; yet now in April, 1976, he has not reported. I know the reason; it is because he does not have anything to report.

Sir Charles Court: You will get the shock of your life when you see the report.

Mr MAY: We will get a shock! The Premier gave Parliament two assurances, but neither has been fulfilled.

Sir Charles Court: It will be fulfilled.

Mr MAY: That is the trouble with assurances from the Premier. He should apologise to the House for misinforming Parliament.

Sir Charles Court: You will be shocked with the report you will get from me and the Minister for Industrial Development.

Mr MAY: The Premier could have said all that when he made a statement to the House. We could have given him the same opportunity which we gave him earlier this afternoon. The Premier did not

have the courtesy to ring me or my office to say that he could not find time to make such a statement. That is the sort of treatment we are getting from the Premier. I think it is a shame that Parliament should be treated in that way.

Mr Grayden: You have more time than the Premier. Why did you not ring up to find out?

Sir Charles Court: The member for Clontarf will get a surprise when he sees the joint report by the Minister for Industrial Development and myself.

Mr MAY: I will be surprised when I see it. Another matter I wish to refer to concerns the blatant acts of duplicity and deception perpetrated by a political party in trying to gain capital out of an industry and a section of the community. I refer to the goldmining industry.

Recently the member for Kalgoorlie wrote to the Prime Minister in a last ditch attempt to obtain some assistance for the goldmining industry, not only in respect of Kalgoorlie but also Mt. Magnet. He wrote a letter to the Prime Minister dated the 11th February, and on the 30th March he received a reply from the Prime Minister.

To indicate the double standards of the Liberal Party and the National Country Party, I would draw attention to what the Prime Minister had to say in his letter, and then I shall refer to what had been said previously by some of the present political leaders of the Liberal Party. In his letter the Prime Minister said that no responsible Government could knowingly make a substantial outlay of public funds when there was a very real possibility that retrenchments could take place in two or three years' time.

Here is the Prime Minister telling us that no responsible Government should give aid to the goldmining industry. The Premier, the Minister for Mines, and other members of the present Government were very critical of the Whitlam Government and claimed it had not given assistance to the goldmining industry, yet here we have the Prime Minister saying no responsible Government could give assistance to that industry.

It is interesting to note some of the comments that have been made by the leaders of the Liberal-National Country Party Government. In *The West Australian* of the 6th November, 1975, certain comments made by Senator Durack and Senator Chaney were reported as follows—

Outside Parliament Senator Durack and Senator Chaney (Lib., WA) accused the Government of fiddling while the industry ground to a halt and people lost their jobs.

"Senator Wriedt's attitude is incredible", they said.

"We fear that up to 3 000 people might be displaced because of the current situation.

"The Government has a moral obligation to prevent people being thrown out of work. It is running away from its duties.

"Unless the Government accepts some responsibility Kalgoorlie will slowly die."

That was a statement made by Senator Durack and Senator Chaney in November last year.

When I went to Kalgoorlie with the Premier, the Minister for Mines, and the Leader of the Opposition at the invitation of the task force which had been set up by the Boulder and Kalgoorlie councils, Senator Durack was present and was seated at the table.

When Senator Durack was asked to make comments about the situation, he said he had just been in touch by telephone with the Federal Leader of the National Country Party (Mr Anthony), who had given him an assurance that if a Liberal-National Country Party Government were returned at the general election to be held on the 13th December, it would provide aid to the goldmining industry.

Another assurance was given by Mr Lynch, the present Federal Treasurer. In *The West Australian* of the 4th December, 1975, the following report of his comments appeared—

Mr Lynch said that the coalition parties recognised the peculiar difficulties being experienced in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder region.

They acknowledged that it was important for established communities such as Kalgoorlie and Boulder, which had made a great contribution to the nation, to remain viable and not be neglected because of developments which might be taking place in newer decentralised regions.

It would be more sensible and more economic to support already decentralised areas such as Kalgoorlie and Boulder which had a real resource backing, than to pour millions of dollars into creating a new regional centre.

That was what Mr Lynch had to say.

It is interesting to note what the present Prime Minister said in his letter to which I made reference earlier. The last paragraph is as follows—

It is untenable to argue that because the Government has given assistance to other industries it must do likewise in the particular case of another industry.

The present Federal Treasurer has said Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and other goldmining centres which had a particular interest

would be assisted by the Government; yet in his letter the Prime Minister says it would be untenable for this to be done.

I am pointing out the double standards that exist as between the Liberal Party and the National Country Party, and I am indicating what information they made available in an endeavour to convince the people of Kalgoorlie that the goldmining industry would be given every possible assistance if a Liberal-National Country Party Government were returned at the election on the 13th December last.

That information was given, because the Liberal Party and the National Country Party wanted to get rid of the then sitting member, Mr Collard. The Liberal candidate, Mr Cotter, said that if a Liberal-National Country Party Government were elected, Kalgoorlie would receive its support. Unfortunately the then sitting member, Mr Collard, was defeated, and the Liberal candidate was elected.

It is interesting to note that neither the Premier, the Minister for Mines, Senator Durack, Senator Chaney, Mr Cotter, Mr Lynch, nor Mr Anthony has made reference to the letter from the Prime Minister which has just been made public. It is strange that not a word has been said by these people who before the election held on the 13th December last were running around the Kalgoorlie electorate pledging their support for the goldmining industry; but as soon as their Government gained office not a further word has been heard from them. It is an indictment of the Federal Government to promise aid to the goldmining industry for the sake of winning the Kalgoorlie seat; but after winning that seat it has not done anything about the matter.

We all remember how during the last session the Opposition in this Parliament was heckled continually about the actions of the Whitlam Government. Now that the boot is on the other foot not a word is heard from the Government, and people could be excused for thinking that the parties on the opposite side of the House constitute the Opposition, because their members are so quiet on this issue. No useful purpose would be served by the member for Murchison-Eyre saying anything.

Mr Coyne: I will get around to you.

Mr MAY: I will have something to say about his efforts. In one of the news releases put out by the Premier, he said that as the shadow Minister for Mines I could do better than to criticise his Government, because his Government had done more than the Tonkin Government did when it was in office.

I preface my remarks on this matter by saying that the Premier had put forward a suggestion to the Whitlam Government that approximately \$6 million was required to assist the goldmining industry at Kalgoorlie; and that of that amount

the State Government was prepared to make available one-quarter on a loan basis, free of interest, for a period of three years. This proposal was put before the Whitlam Government, but there was no answer from it.

Prior to the Whitlam Government going out of office, this matter was submitted to an interdepartmental committee to investigate the possibility of assisting the goldfields. The recommendation of the committee was delivered to the Prime Minister just prior to the last Federal election held in December, 1975. It was not dealt with prior to the election.

We have the situation where the Premier of this State claimed that the Opposition did not give the goldmining industry any support when it was in Government. The \$500 000 which the present State Government allocated to Kalgoorlie was part of the \$1.25 million it said it would be prepared to lend the company concerned, if the Commonwealth Government also made a loan of \$4.5 million from Commonwealth funds.

The Premier was very confident there would be a change of Government after the Federal election in December, 1975. This was the sole reason that he decided to make available \$500 000, because he thought that after the December election the incoming Government would comprise the Liberal and National Country Parties.

Regarding the \$500 000 allocated to the Kalgoorlie area, I would point out that in 1971 the Tonkin Government allocated \$300 000 under a pay severance scheme for the transitional period, to assist the industry to transfer from goldmining to nickel mining. I would like to know the present-day value of the \$300 000 allocated in 1971 as compared with the \$500 000 allocated in 1976 by the present Government. I would think that the \$300 000 allocated in 1971 would be equal in value to between \$600 000 and \$700 000 at the present time. I did intend to check this out, but I did not have the time.

It is quite wrong for the Premier to say that the Tonkin Government did not give any assistance. He knows that to be incorrect. He should have clarified the situation fully, but he did not do so. The people of Kalgoorlie are awake to what has happened, and that is why the member for Murchison-Eyre is so concerned. He knows that he cannot go around the Murchison area now and blame the Whitlam Government. All he can say is, "I am sorry I cannot do anything to assist. We have put up \$500 000 to assist the Kalgoorlie area, and we have made a guarantee of \$300 000 to assist Mt. Magnet, but we cannot do anything further because our hands are tied."

The member for Murchison-Eyre has been very quiet on this issue. He is like all the other members I mentioned earlier in my speech who have kept quiet after

the Prime Minister came out in his letter saying that no responsible Government could make a substantial outlay of public funds available to the goldmining industry.

I referred to this matter when I attended the public meeting held at Mt. Magnet. I gave an assurance that any money made available by the present Federal and State Governments to the goldmining industry would be supported by the State Opposition.

Mr Coyne: Why did you not tell that public meeting that your Government would not help Hill 50?

Mr MAY: I will get around to that meeting. I am pointing out that the Tonkin Government made more money available to the goldmining industry than has the present Government, and the money was made available in worse circumstances than we face at the present time.

I will get around to Mt. Magnet presently because the member for Murchison-Eyre might leave the Chamber and I would like him to be present.

At 11 o'clock one evening I was contacted by a member for the Lower North Province (the Hon. S. J. Dellar), and told there was to be a public meeting in Mt. Magnet.

Mr Coyne: There had not been a meeting during the last five years.

Mr MAY: I was informed that there was to be a public meeting on the following day. The meeting had been called by the local authority, and I was asked whether I would like to attend and explain the situation so far as the Opposition was concerned.

We left Perth early in the morning of the next day and arrived at Mt. Magnet shortly after lunchtime. The temperature was about 42 degrees in the shade, and conditions while travelling were not at all comfortable. We attended the meeting and the shire president, Mr Jensen, invited me to sit at the top table with the member for Murchison-Eyre. We were able to speak to a gathering which I think comprised approximately 200 people.

Mr Coyne: There were 120 people.

Mr MAY: The shadow Minister for Mines saw fit to attend that particular meeting at Mt. Magnet but who did the Government send to attend the meeting? Not the Minister for Mines, but the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr Coyne: I handled it without any problems.

Mr MAY: The people said they were expecting more assistance.

Mr Coyne: They did not say that; you said it.

Mr MAY: Those people wanted to know who was going to help them. The meeting was addressed by myself, the member for Murchison-Eyre, Mr Jensen, and a few

other people. The member for Murchison-Eyre pointed out that it was not a situation where assistance could be given to the Mt. Magnet area. He made out a fairly good case, I must admit, but it was different from the case which I put up.

My case was that the Opposition was prepared to go along with the Government if the Government would help.

Mr Coyne: You were completely out of touch.

Mr MAY: No suggestion at all came from the member for Murchison-Eyre. I finally moved that a deputation from those attending the meeting be formed to make a last ditch appeal to the Premier of the State (the Hon. Sir Charles Court). Mr Jensen immediately said that was a good suggestion and he called for members to form the deputation. I was appointed to the deputation, as was the member for Murchison-Eyre and several other people who were present at the meeting.

The member for Murchison-Eyre said that he would have to introduce the deputation, and I said I did not care who introduced it so long as it was received. The Premier was contacted by the member for Murchison-Eyre and I must congratulate the Premier because he agreed to meet the deputation on the following day, which he did. We travelled to Perth and met the Premier, and put our case.

Prior to the deputation the Premier had not indicated that he was prepared to increase the guarantee.

Mr Coyne: Be fair now—a sum of \$800 000.

Mr MAY: It was about \$300 000.

Mr Coyne: It was one-third—one dollar for every two dollars.

Mr MAY: I said there was no offer before the deputation. After we put our case to the Premier he said he would go a little further and that he was prepared to give \$830 000, or one-third. Here is a case of a deputation coming to Perth to see the Premier because we could not get any information from the Premier's representative who went to Mt. Magnet. Had the member for Murchison-Eyre, who was representing the Premier, told the meeting that the Premier was prepared to give a third of the sum of money required, there would have been no need for the deputation to come to Perth. However, not a word was said by the member for Murchison-Eyre; the offer was made by the Premier himself when the Premier knew full well that the companies were not in a position to find the rest of the money.

Sir Charles Court: How do you know that Hill 50 could not?

Mr MAY: The Premier came to light with that offer, having made no other effort to try to obtain finance for the company. He has never taken that action.

Suddenly he said the Government was prepared to make a loan of one dollar for every two dollars raised.

Mr Laurance: So the deputation was successful.

Mr MAY: There was no need for that deputation to come to Perth. The member for Murchison-Eyre did not tell the meeting of the intentions of the Premier.

There is another matter which I feel is very interesting.

Mr Coyne interjected.

Mr MAY: The member opposite will have his turn to speak. There will be an amendment and he can speak then.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MAY: I attended a meeting in Kalgoorlie at which a total of 800 mineworkers were present. I attended the meeting with several officials of the AWU, and we listened to a talk—I suppose it could be called a talk—by Mr Brodie-Hall from the Chamber of Mines; he is also a director of KLV. He spoke for about two hours, and provided a lot of information but each time he came to the matter of aid for the industry he criticised the Whitlam Government. He advised the meeting that he had submitted many reports.

Sir Charles Court: So he did.

Mr MAY: Mr Brodie-Hall said the Whitlam Government should have assisted the goldmining industry. The situation is now very interesting because since Mr Fraser announced that there will be no assistance to the goldmining industry Mr Brodie-Hall has commented that that is understandable because the inflation rate is so high. In his letter Mr Fraser said that Mr Brodie-Hall knew the industry was marginal at the time of his representations to the Federal Labor Government.

Sir Charles Court: Of course it was.

Mr MAY: Mr Brodie-Hall criticised the Whitlam Government, but the Premier of this State, and other members of Parliament I mentioned earlier, have not criticized or said one thing about the letter from the present Prime Minister of Australia. It is very strange indeed that there has been no response from the Premier, from the Minister for Mines, or from anybody else with regard to the letter.

Sir Charles Court: On the point of no word from us—

Mr MAY: The Premier will have an opportunity to speak.

A further public meeting was held in Kalgoorlie which I attended as the shadow Minister for Mines. Other Labor members from the area also attended the meeting. The chairman of the meeting read to us a telex from the Premier which had been sent to Mr Whitlam, and we also heard

the contents of a letter which Mr Brodie-Hall received from the Premier. The duty of chairmanship was carried out conjointly by Mr Hammond and Mr Usher. Unfortunately, Mr Hammond has now passed away. The chairman said it was not to be a political meeting and we were restricted when asking questions.

Mr T. D. Evans: That was Mr Usher.

Mr MAY: I asked the Premier, in this Chamber, whether he knew of the very important public meeting which was to be held in Kalgoorlie. The member for Maylands actually asked the question on my behalf because I was in Kalgoorlie, and the Premier replied that he knew of the meeting. He said he did not attend the meeting because he did not receive an invitation.

Sir Charles Court: Is that not right?

Mr MAY: It was a public meeting. I attended at my own expense. The Minister for Mines did not attend the meeting, nor did the Premier, yet when the people in that area were crying out for support, the Premier was here saying that he was sorry.

Sir Charles Court: No wonder you did not do so well over the weekend.

Mr MAY: It was a public meeting but the Premier said he had done all he could to help the industry. He said that neither he nor his Minister received an invitation to be present at the meeting, so neither of them attended.

Sir Charles Court: That is fair enough.

Mr MAY: The Premier did not receive an invitation to go to Meekatharra. Surely it is up to the Premier or his representatives to go to an area where a serious situation has developed in an industry. The Premier did not even send someone from the Government benches.

Sir Charles Court: We gave practical help.

Mr MAY: I have explained that help was given to the extent of \$500 000. Can the Premier align that sum with the \$300 000 which the Tonkin Government gave in 1971? There is no relativity between the two sums.

Sir Charles Court: Did the Tonkin Government pay that amount over?

Mr MAY: Yes; the Premier does not even know that.

Sir Charles Court: I remember that on one occasion when an offer was made the Government was embarrassed because the company did not go on with the proposition at the time.

Mr MAY: The \$300 000 was approved. The member for Kalgoorlie referred to it in this House and mentioned that the money was not included in the Budget, but was made available to the Chamber of

Mines for the purpose of overcoming the transitional period between goldmining and nickel mining.

That is the sort of thing which occurred but the Premier keeps on saying that his Government was the only Government to give aid to the people on the goldfields and at Mt. Magnet. We have a situation where the Mt. Magnet mine has closed down. The State Energy Commission intends now to build a power house and some of the residents of the town will become employees of the SEC.

Originally, the Hill 50 goldmine supplied the electricity to the town council, and the town council charged the consumers at a fairly high rate. Mt. Magnet will now come under the country towns assistance scheme and consumers will pay about 3c a unit plus \$5 a quarter, whereas previously they were paying 8c a unit. In that respect the people in the area will receive some concession. However, there are not many people left in Mt. Magnet now who will be able to take advantage of a situation caused by the present Government.

Mr Davies: I believe the hospital also has closed down.

Mr MAY: It was always difficult to maintain a doctor at that hospital.

Since the situation which developed at Mt. Magnet and at Kalgoorlie, I have been approached by a person in Western Australia indicating there is a possibility of receiving funds from overseas for the purpose of assisting to overcome the situation at Mt. Magnet. I contacted the person concerned and inquired whether he had been in touch with Mr Crawford of Hill 50. I said the best plan would be to contact the manager and indicate that he had received this offer.

Mr Coyne: It was Mr Checker.

Mr MAY: Mr Crawford was the man to whom I spoke at that time. Mr Checker subsequently came into the discussions.

On four occasions I left a message to be contacted, but finally I had to contact Mr Checker myself. The offer was made to the company and Mr Checker asked me what I thought about it. I said that the offer seemed to be genuine enough and that it should be placed in the hands of the Government because Treasury officials would be able to investigate the matter and find out the source of the money, and what interest would be required.

Mr Coyne: They wanted it for nothing.

Mr MAY: I do not know about that; I am trying to make my point. I arranged for the Hill 50 people to contact the Department of Industrial Development to put forward their case. I did not hear any more about it. I let the matter go for a week or two, and then I rang the Treasury. The Treasury officer said he had not heard anything about the proposition,

and that the department had not received any application from an overseas company to provide assistance to help out with the Mt. Magnet situation.

I then decided to try the Department of Industrial Development and I was told that verbal advice had been received, and also a copy of a letter from the particular company concerned. The proposition had been examined and the department felt it could not accept the offer, so it was rejected. It did not go to the Treasury.

I would have thought the matter should be referred to the Treasury for its expert advice as to whether the offer was viable. Unfortunately, it did not go on. I am raising this matter because there is no evidence that the Government endeavoured to obtain finance from any other source to help out the goldmining industry.

At least our Government made an effort to find out whether any companies were prepared to help, especially at Mt. Magnet where the water had commenced flowing into the mines. Once a great deal of water floods into a mine, that is the end of it. The same situation would apply at Kalgoorlie.

At this time we still do not know the future for the people employed in the gold-mining industry at Kalgoorlie and Mt. Magnet. At a public meeting held in Kalgoorlie, concern was expressed that the retrenchment of the miners there would have an immediate detrimental effect on the business sector of Kalgoorlie. Many young people leaving school would have to leave their homes to live in the metropolitan area or in other regions where alternative employment was available.

When the 600-odd coalminers were retrenched at Collie in the 1960s, alternative employment could be found for them in industries such as timber and agriculture. However, there is no other type of employment available in the goldfields. Therefore, the retrenchment of these men means that families must move elsewhere.

The Federal Government has indicated that it is prepared to provide in excess of \$1 million to help the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie. The other night I asked the Premier a question as to what the State Government planned to do with this \$1 million-odd, and whether it had given consideration to the transfer of the School of Mines to the Western Australian Institute of Technology in my area. The Premier told the House that this was included in the Partridge report and although the matter was receiving consideration it would be some time before the Government made a decision. I would have thought this decision would be made very quickly, because of the urgency of this matter. For many years Governments have endeavoured to decentralise the School of Mines, and it is now held in high esteem

all over the world. Engineers, metallurgists, and geologists who have graduated from the School of Mines have been recruited very quickly by mining companies because the method of training at that institute and the expertise of its graduates is well known.

I would like the Premier to give early consideration to the School of Mines, and I urge him to keep it at Kalgoorlie because it is essential for this tertiary institution to be situated in the mining area. Gold and nickel will not always sell at the current price, and Kalgoorlie will continue to be a large mining centre. However, the only hope of an increase in the work force at Kalgoorlie is through Government assistance.

I intend to move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply, and I feel my amendment will express my feelings adequately, and although I apologise for its length—

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable member has five minutes.

**MR MAY:** —I do not apologise for the information contained in the amendment.

#### *Amendment to Motion*

I therefore move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion—

However we are impelled to draw to your Excellency's official attention the duplicity of the role played by the State Government in collaboration with its party political counterparts in the national Parliament of Australia, with regard, as expressed prior to the double dissolution and general election of the national Parliament of Australia in 1975, to assistance to the goldmining industry of Western Australia and the State Government's patent disregard of that industry, now forlorn since the rejection by the newly-elected national Government despite undertakings given to the contrary by high ranking members of the political parties of which that Government is co-alesced.

We are strengthened in our belief of such duplicity by the fact that the State Government prior to the 13th December, 1975, general election, committed itself to contribute to a development programme for Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd. in conjunction with, at its request, the national Government of Australia and pending the determination of the said general election and allowance of some seven weeks after that election to allow the new national Government to determine how to implement its

election promise to aid the gold-mining industry, provided a loan of \$441 000 to Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd. to enable operations on its Fimiston leases to continue. At the same time a State Government guarantee was provided for Hill 50 Gold Mine at Mt. Magnet under similar conditions which has resulted in a liability on the part of the State Government of an amount in excess of \$200 000.

A letter from the Prime Minister of date 30/3/76 addressed to the member for Kalgoorlie in the Legislative Assembly and published in the *Daily News* newspaper of 2nd April, 1976, referring to the said development programme for Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd., states that "No responsible Government could knowingly make a substantial outlay of public funds when there was a very real possibility that retrenchments could take place in two or three years time, leaving nothing to show for assistance to the development programme".

Since the publication of the said letter the State Government has remained remarkably silent and has not questioned the veracity of the Prime Minister's gloomy forecast of what could have transpired had national Government assistance been forthcoming, nor has the State Government publicly called upon the said company to agree with or dispute the statement made by the Prime Minister that at the time of making the application to the national Government for assistance, the company conceded that "investment at Fimiston was at best marginally economic and involved considerable risks".

In these circumstances the State Government is *prima facie* guilty of gambling with public funds for the sake of party politics.

Finally and most trenchantly we are aggrieved that the State Government, if only to seek to restore its credibility but, even on a more responsible plane has so far failed to assist another company, North Kalgoorlie Mines Ltd., which sought aid for a development programme, from both the national Government and the State Government in the range of \$250 000 when information available suggests that there are good prospects for an economically viable operation for this gold mine with the possibility that another 300 men could be employed

by it, or has publicly disclosed why this project cannot be supported.

Surely Sir, these matters are now of public concern and so is the apparent dismal capitulation by the State Government to continue agitation for assistance to the gold mining industry, including the Hill 50 operation at Mt. Magnet, since the rejection by the Fraser Government of any such aid.

Mr T. D. EVANS: I second the motion.

MR MENSAROS (Floreath—Minister for Mines) [5.53 p.m.]: It is rather difficult to comprehend immediately all the details of this fairly long amendment moved by the member for Clontarf. However, from the speech made by the honourable member, we understand that he has criticised the Fraser Government because it has not contributed any financial aid to the gold-mining industry in Kalgoorlie—and particularly to Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd.—as well as to the Hill 50 mine at Mt. Magnet.

The honourable member did not give any credit to the State Government for the aid it gave to the goldmining industry, and I emphasise that this aid was forthcoming, not so much because the Government thought it would be a good business venture, but more as a social action with the hope of a beneficial result overall. Although the member for Clontarf criticised the State Government for this very action the House will decide this question when it votes on the amendment now before us. Obviously when we attempt to give aid to an industry we do the wrong thing, but if we do not give aid to it, we do the wrong thing also. I realise it is the job of the Opposition to oppose the Government, but one would imagine that the member for Clontarf—a Minister of the Crown for three years—would have put forward more logical criticism.

The member for Clontarf did not tell us the background to the present situation in the goldmining industry. The price of gold declined, and because of the fairly ancient machinery still being used in most of the goldmines, many companies involved in mining gold are no longer profitable enterprises. It was pointed out that if Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd. continued with its operation, it would show a continuing loss. In this respect the statement of the Prime Minister that the Federal Government could no longer contribute to the operation of the company could be correct. However, what the State Government proposed was to give to the company concerned, as well as the other company at Mt. Magnet, a loan which could become a grant because a condition attached to the loan was that it was repayable after three years from profits

which might be made as a result of certain developmental work made possible by the loan. Of course, various technicalities and geological considerations relating to the mine were taken into account and it was hoped—although there was no security about it—that some more ore bodies may be found so that the operation may become profitable later.

The main problem of the State Government was to keep the labour force—or at least the greater part of it—employed until the end of this three-year period during which time the company was to use the loan money for development. One-quarter of this money was to be provided by the State Government, and three-quarters by the Commonwealth Government. Clearly, even the provision of one-quarter of the total amount would have taxed the resources of the State Government considerably, but we had hoped that, after the Federal election of the 13th December, the Commonwealth Government would support our proposal. At no time did the State Government receive any assurance from the Commonwealth Government at that time—the so-called caretaker Government—that such a loan would be forthcoming.

I do not wish to query the statements of the member for Clontarf, but I would like to refer to his comments on the Press articles. At that time I was in Kalgoorlie, and none of the senators to whom the member for Clontarf referred made any statement which could be interpreted as an assurance that their party, when in Government, would make this contribution. However, what they did say was that if elected, their Government would give immediate and serious consideration to the whole question.

Mr T. D. Evans: Wait until you hear something I have to say. I have here a statement made by Senator Durack which the member for Clontarf did not use.

Mr MENSAROS: I cannot speak about anything I have not heard.

Mr T. D. Evans: I will give the time and date.

Mr MENSAROS: As I am very concerned about this problem, I feel I would have remembered it. I did receive an assurance from the Federal Treasurer—whom I contacted by telephone—that the matter would be examined immediately.

The State Government took the matter further. In effect it said that although it did not know whether or not the Federal Government would come to the party, it would allocate money immediately to the goldmining industry in fortnightly or monthly payments so that the work force could be retained. Indeed, this did happen and the situation lasted until the end of January, by which time it was reasonable to expect that the incoming Federal Government would have made a decision. Of

course, we now know that the Federal Government did not come to the party and further payments had to be suspended.

Instead of pointing out the fairly illogical content of this amendment, I would rather assure the House, and for that matter the people in the goldmining areas, that all Governments—State and Federal—have given a great deal of attention to the problem, and there has been sympathy and tremendous co-operation from all sides.

However, I want to emphasise that nothing has happened, or indeed will happen of the gloomy nature that people for reasons best known to themselves have prophesied will occur.

It is a fact that some of the goldmines had to be put on a care and maintenance basis because to work them would not have been profitable. On the other hand, it is a fact that some mines are still working. In addition, employment has not suffered the effects which were gloomily predicted—and I believe the member for Kalgoorlie will bear me out on that point. Enterprising people still are investing in Kalgoorlie; motels and offices are being built, and Government departments are established in the town.

No matter how important the goldmining industry has been traditionally, it is a fact that the future of Kalgoorlie will not hinge on that industry alone. However, Kalgoorlie need not rely only on its goldmining industries, because other projects will be developed, if not in Kalgoorlie, then certainly in places some short distance from the town which are connected with Kalgoorlie as a regional centre, which would augment the economy of the town.

Indeed, it is odd that despite the sympathy which has been expressed for these people who might have lost their jobs, there is still a demand in the Kalgoorlie district for hard-rock miners; nobody can deny this.

Mr T. D. Evans: How far do you extend the boundaries when you refer to the Kalgoorlie district?

Mr MENSAROS: Hopefully, Kalgoorlie would like to consider itself as the centre of the eastern goldmining district; I believe Kalgoorlie would also consider that the Yeelirrie development, right up to Agnew and other places would fall within the Kalgoorlie district. There is no doubt that within a very short time, these ventures will all develop and augment the economy of Kalgoorlie.

I believe it to be a political ploy to be gloomy about the future of Kalgoorlie; Kalgoorlie does not deserve to suffer this attitude, and it is not correct to say publicly that this will be so. Quite apart from the goldmining industry, there is an industrial centre in the Kalgoorlie district.

The proposal to change railway sleepers from wood to concrete will provide work in the area.

In addition, there is a tremendous amount of newly generated confidence which will encourage explorers. During my recent trip, I had three inquiries from Japan relating to exploratory work which during the time of the Whitlam Government was impossible because no funds could be transferred to Australia except in the case of companies which held tenements on or before a certain date—I believe it was 1972. Even if such exploration is not successful—and we hope it will be—it will create activity in the area; naturally the companies will be followed by prospectors.

It can be seen that the future of Kalgoorlie is assured. I believe the motion is merely a political ploy; it is illogical in itself, and I trust the House will reject it.

**MR T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie)** [6.04 p.m.]: Sometimes on an occasion like this one responds because one feels obliged to respond; on other occasions, one might respond because one feels it is courteous to do so; however, on this occasion I respond because I want to. I have been waiting for an opportunity such as this. Despite what the Minister for Mines has just uttered, I believe the amendment moved by the member for Clontarf is well framed and very timely.

I should like to touch upon both of these aspects. I refer firstly to the framing of the amendment. It is true that the amendment is a long one, but I understand it was deliberately framed in such a way as to explain all the aspects of the alleged duplicity of the present State Government, and shared by the present Federal Government.

The amendment also seeks to call upon the Premier either to disclaim and condemn the Prime Minister for his statement that no responsible Government would assist the Kalgoorlie Lake View operation or to admit to the people of Western Australia that in making the offer to that company and to the Hill 50 operation at Mt. Magnet, he was playing politics.

**Sir Charles Court:** Did you not agree with what we did?

**Mr T. D. EVANS:** I am not saying the Premier was playing politics, but he cannot have it both ways. Let the Premier declare his attitude. Is he prepared to condemn the Prime Minister and say, "You have pulled the rug right from underneath my feet. I lead the WA State Government, and you say that I do not lead a responsible Government"? The Prime Minister stated that no responsible Government would have a bar of financing such an operation. Yet our Premier leads a Government which advanced to KLV a sum of money in the region of \$441 000

and gave an undertaking to the Hill 50 operation that moneys would be available to that company; in fact, I understand that the Government guarantee extended to the Hill 50 company was exercised to the extent that the State Government is now indebted to an amount in excess of \$200 000. Yet the Prime Minister says, "No responsible Government would have a bar of assisting the goldmining industry."

I am asking the Premier, as this amendment seeks to do: Why, since the full text—not an extract—of the Prime Minister's reply was published in the *Daily News* of the 2nd April, 1976, has he not come out and either dissociated himself from the statement casting reflection on his Government, or publicly criticised the company for making an application, knowing full well that no responsible Government could be party to it?

Prime Minister Fraser has indicted the Western Australian State Government as being irresponsible, because he said that at the time of making its application, the company conceded that it was one which involved high risks. The Prime Minister then went on to say that no responsible Government would have a bar of it. But if the Premier accepts that proposition, and if he admits he was acting under social obligations, not having any belief at all that these moneys would be repaid, why does he not publicly criticise the company in the manner I have just mentioned?

**Mr May:** Double standards!

**Mr T. D. EVANS:** I mentioned that the amendment is well framed; I also believe it is well timed. I have referred to the fact that the Prime Minister's reply was published in full in the *Daily News* of the 2nd April. It was dated the 30th March, and I received it on the 1st April, so members can see that not a great deal of time elapsed between the dating of the letter, my receipt of it, and its publication in the Press.

After allowing reasonable time for this Government to respond to that letter in either of the ways I have mentioned, this represents the first opportunity for me to comment on the matter. But the Government has not responded in the way I would have expected it to respond; as the amendment states, the Government has remained remarkably silent. So, I believe the timing of the amendment is appropriate.

Even now, it is not too late for the Premier and his Government to demonstrate, out of the political arena that existed prior to the 13th December, the sincerity of their purpose, and to analyse the letter from the Prime Minister stating that no responsible Government would go along with such aid and which at the same time made the allegation that the company when making its application

to the Whitlam Government conceded that privately—certainly, it was not admitted publicly—the provision of such finance was fraught with high risk.

I believe it is not too late for the Premier to show how genuine he was in his statements within the political arena at that time by undertaking to make further overtures to the Prime Minister.

Sir Charles Court: I am amazed that you are not singing the praise of the State Government for backing an industry which you are always telling us has a great future.

Mr T. D. EVANS: I believe that perhaps the Premier—and certainly the Minister for Mines—could be excused for not understanding the amendment, for it is a long one. But obviously in the moments that have passed since it was tabled they have not even bothered to read it. That is evident from the Premier's last interjection.

Mr Sodeman: With whom do your sentiments lie?

Mr Barnett: Here is the hurricane lamp again!

Mr Sodeman: You need one to help you see the way.

Mr T. D. EVANS: In my letter to the Prime Minister I made two points in my appeal for a review of his decision to reject the application for aid for the Kalgoorlie Lake View operation and the Hill 50 operation at Mt. Magnet. My letter of the 10th February stated—

I would remind you that in Kalgoorlie on December 4, before the most recent Federal election, your deputy, Mr Lynch, stated that a Liberal Country Party Government would decide before the end of January "what assistance it could give the ailing Goldmining industry".

Mr Lynch said the decision would set out "to inject new life into the mining and energy industries, and restore incentives to prospectors".

I refer now to the promise made by Senator Durack which was contained in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 20th November, 1975. When I have read the article, I ask the Minister for Mines to deny that the words attributed to Senator Durack amount to anything less than a fully-fledged promise to the people of Kalgoorlie. Of course we must understand the circumstances; Senator Durack was electioneering at that time.

*Sitting suspended from 6.14 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr T. D. EVANS: Prior to the tea suspension I was saying that in my view the Minister for Mines had stated categorically that in his belief no assurances or promises had been given by spokesmen of the Liberal Party prior to the 13th December election, that aid would be forthcoming.

Mr Mensaros: Whilst I was there,

Mr T. D. EVANS: The Minister is now qualifying his remarks because I did not hear him make that statement before. If he did, I apologise. However, in the belief that he did not—and that is the belief I had when he made the comment—I said I would indicate one such statement made by Senator Peter Durack who, at that time, was the Liberal spokesman in the Senate on mining matters.

Mr May: Undermining!

Mr T. D. EVANS: I challenge the Minister to say that this is anything less than a fully fledged promise to the people of Kalgoorlie. The following is to be found in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 24th November, 1975—

If a Liberal-National Country Party government is elected on December 13 it can be fully expected that they will give assistance to the Kalgoorlie gold industry, he said.

The "they" should, of course, be "it".

The mover of this amendment indicated that whilst he was present at a meeting of the task force in Kalgoorlie—I was not present, but I believe the member for Clontarf was—Senator Durack, who had left the meeting, returned and said he had been in telephone contact with Mr Anthony who had assured him that such aid would be forthcoming.

Mr May: No; he had been in contact before the meeting.

Mr T. D. EVANS: And Mr Anthony had assured him that aid would be forthcoming. There was no promise to look into and consider aid, but that aid would be forthcoming.

Now we can pass to another statement by a top-ranking Liberal spokesman of the time—indeed, the Treasurer of the day—much closer to the election; that is, the 4th December, 1975. The following was the heading of the article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*—

Lynch says coalition would aim at boosting mining industry

Portion of the article reads—

Mr. Lynch said that the decision would be made well in advance of the time when funds provided by the WA Government to Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd. and Hill 50 Gold Mine NL would have been spent . . .

A Liberal-National Country Party government would give immediate priority after December 13 to study proposals to assist the industry . . .

It would also study practical ways and means of assisting with other facilities which would enable the whole of the goldmining industry in the Eastern Goldfields to function on a more stable basis.

I am not quoting in seriatim. I am merely quoting various portions of the cutting. To continue—

Mr. Lynch said that the coalition parties recognised the peculiar difficulties being experienced in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder region.

He said they acknowledged that it was important for established communities such as Kalgoorlie and Boulder, which had made a great contribution to the nation, to remain viable and not be neglected because of developments which might be taking place in newer decentralised regions.

In my view, the statement by Senator Durack as quoted in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* was a fully fledged promise.

What does the amendment by the member for Clontarf say? It draws His Excellency's official attention to the situation. I was at a civic reception on the 24th February in Kalgoorlie. It was His Excellency's first official visit to Kalgoorlie. It was really a return visit for him, but it was his first official visit. Those present heard how disappointed he was with the rejection of promises made by the present Federal Government.

Therefore the amendment seeks to draw His Excellency's official attention to the state of affairs. It also alleges that there is duplicity on the part of the State Government because of its apparent disregard for the industry since the time the Federal Government rejected the application for assistance and dishonoured its election promises. The amendment does not criticise the Government for the assistance it gave before that time—

Sir Charles Court: Much it doesn't.

Mr T. D. EVANS: —but for its inactivity and later on for what appears to be its abject capitulation to its big brother in Canberra.

The Premier has been to Kalgoorlie since the rejection, but not one public word did I see concerning his referral to the goldmining industry and the state of the industry since the Federal Government rejected it. He spoke about tourism being a goldmine, but not about the diamond mines.

The Minister for Mines has not been there since that time, yet he is the one we would expect to go to Kalgoorlie to again seek to take up the cudgels with the Prime Minister on behalf of the industry. He has been remarkably silent. As the amendment says, the whole Government has been remarkably silent since that time.

I come now to the letter I wrote to the Prime Minister on the 10th February, in which I drew his attention to the statements made by these high-ranking members of the Liberal Party hierarchy before the election. I referred to the plight not

only of Kalgoorlie Lake View, but also of the Hill 50 operation. I drew his attention to the fact that on the very day I wrote it was announced in the newspaper that the superphosphate bounty had been reinstated; and I indicated that in the light of the Government's refusal to assist one industry, and its ever readiness to assist another when it was far from being demonstrated that an overall need existed and in fact it was shown in many cases it was not needed at all and was an extravagant and sinful waste of public money, the people were entitled to be outraged.

When the Prime Minister replied, he completely ignored the plight of the Hill 50 operation and, in fact, its very existence. He referred neither to that operation nor to the undertakings given by senior members of his party. This is what he said about the superphosphate bounty. I assume he is referring to that because I specifically referred to it in my letter. He said—

It is untenable to argue that because the Government has given assistance to other industries it must do likewise in the particular case of another industry. Any government should examine particular cases on their merits and, in the light of the prevailing economic situation, decide what assistance can be given and the best possible type of assistance to give.

In the case of the goldmining industry in Western Australia, despite the promises made, the Government has decided, in the light of those guidelines established by the Prime Minister, that there was no merit in it, and so the type of assistance to be given is nil and the actual assistance given was of the same quality.

I feel I should quote the Prime Minister's letter in full concerning the reason the Government would not assist Kalgoorlie Lake View. This was only one of the operations referred to in my letter. The Prime Minister conveniently forgot to refer to Hill 50, and perhaps the member for Murchison-Eyre might take up this matter because Hill 50 happens to be in the heart of his electorate. I will quote the Prime Minister's reference to Lake View. In his letter of the 30th March, 1976, he states—

Further, in the case of Kalgoorlie Lake View, the company conceded that, in view of costs and prices prevailing at the time its representations were made, investment at Fimiston was at best marginally economic and involved considerable risks.

I interpolate here to make the observation, quite rightly so, that the reference to the time the application was made would refer to the application made to the Whitlam Government. As the member for Clontarf indicated, at a public meeting he, a member for the South-East Province

(Mr Leeson), and I attended in the Boulder Town Hall, a letter was read out by Mr Brodie-Hall from the Premier in which the Premier stated that he was very disappointed that neither he nor the Minister for Mines had received an invitation. It was a public meeting.

Mr Brodie-Hall spent all his time attacking the Whitlam Government for its delay—not its failure to answer, but its delay—in giving a positive answer. He referred to all the efforts made and the workmanship put into the various reports. He assured the people of Kalgoorlie who were present, and the community at large, that there was a moral obligation on the Government of the day to support the industry, yet we have the Prime Minister in this letter saying that—

... at the time its representations were made, investment at Fimiston was at best marginally economic and involved considerable risks.

The Prime Minister was not the author of these words. He has claimed that the company was the author in its application to the Whitlam Government.

There is double dealing on the part of someone and I challenge the Premier to bring his resources and his best offices to bear to determine who is the culprit and who has done the double dealing.

Sir Charles Court: There is no double dealing. That is a statement of fact if that is what the company said. I said that publicly, not once but a dozen times.

Mr T. D. EVANS: Mr Brodie-Hall did not say it; Senator Durack did not say it; Mr Lynch did not say it; and Mr Anthony did not say it before the 13th December election.

Mr Bertram: Who was Mr Brodie-Hall representing at the meeting?

Mr T. D. EVANS: He was Executive Director of Kalgoorlie Lake View.

Sir Charles Court: You know what Connor said. Are you going to tell us that?

Mr May: Who made the decision?

Sir Charles Court: I was referring to—

Mr T. D. EVANS: I remind the Premier that it is my turn to speak. He may have a turn later. I do not mind if he interjects to speak to me, but I object to his interjecting to someone else in my speaking time. I thought the Premier was a great disciple of propriety. I object to his using my speaking time.

Mr Grewar: Get on with it.

Mr T. D. EVANS: The Prime Minister went on to say—

No responsible Government could knowingly make a substantial outlay of public funds when there was a very real possibility that retrenchments

could take place in two or three years' time, leaving nothing to show for assistance to the development program.

I understand that this development programme was the one sponsored, submitted, or in regard to which credit was claimed, by none other than the Premier. He submitted to the Whitlam Government that it should provide \$4.5 million, and we should provide \$1.5 million. He received more than \$1.5 million capital out of it in terms of Press publicity—again prior to the 13th December. This is the programme to which the Prime Minister is referring when he says—

... leaving nothing to show for assistance to the development program.

The Prime Minister refers to "no responsible Government". Is the Premier proposing to sit there and accept this insult levelled at him and the Government by the Prime Minister? It is an indictment. If ever it was a responsible Government, it no longer is. The amendment says he is remaining remarkably silent.

Mr May: Silence is golden.

Mr T. D. EVANS: This is the appropriate time to pass onto the next part of the amendment, which says—

Since the publication of the said letter the State Government has remained remarkably silent and has not questioned the veracity of the Prime Minister's gloomy forecast of what could have transpired had National Government assistance been forthcoming—

That is the first criticism of the State Government—not for giving assistance but for remaining remarkably silent, not challenging the Prime Minister, and letting what he said pass. The amendment continues—

—nor has the State Government publicly called upon the said company to agree with or dispute the statement made by the Prime Minister that at the time of making the application to the National Government for assistance—

Namely, the Whitlam Government. It was the same application that was rejected by the Fraser Government. The amendment continues—

—the company conceded—

Did it or did it not? To continue—

—that "investment at Fimiston was at best marginally economic and involved considerable risks."

In these circumstances the State Government is *prima facie* guilty of gambling with public funds for the sake of party politics.

It is open to the Government to defend its stand and I am hoping it will do so. We are inviting the Government to defend its stand. Once again I challenge the

Prime Minister or the company, and let us see who was double dealing before the election. The amendment goes on to say—

Finally and most trenchantly we are aggrieved that the State Government, if only to seek to restore its credibility but, even on a more responsible plane has so far failed to assist another company, North Kalgoorlie Mines Ltd.

The amendment proposes that there is certain evidence to suggest this company, if it was assisted with a development programme, could well be a viable proposition and could involve the employment of an additional 300 men. If this is far from factual, the person one would expect to answer and indicate where it departs from fact is the Minister for Mines, and he failed to do so. He did not mention North Kalgurli.

In a question I asked of the Premier last week I inquired whether an application for assistance in the range of \$250 000 had been made by North Kalgurli Mines Ltd. to the State Government following the rejection of its application. This is a separate application from that of Kalgoorlie Lake View and Hill 50, Mt. Magnet. The answer was that an application had been made by North Kalgurli to both the Federal and State Governments and neither Government had provided the assistance in the range of \$250 000.

Mr May: Peanuts.

Mr T. D. EVANS: I have mentioned that before the itinerant visits of various politicians of more than one political persuasion to Kalgoorlie and its environs prior to the 13th December, 1975, election, statements were made by top-ranking Liberal Party personalities; and I make the point that, those statements having been made—that is, the statement of Senator Durack quoted in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 20th November and that attributed to the present Treasurer (Mr Lynch) in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 4th December—as far as I am aware they remain unrefuted by the personalities concerned and by the Liberal Party as a whole—the caretaker Government, as it then was. Nothing has been said to the effect that the views printed were misrepresentations of what was said. No such refutation was ever made, so we had those clear promises.

Until the catastrophe of the 11th November, Senator Wriedt had been the Minister for Minerals and Energy in the Whitlam Government. He came to Kalgoorlie during the election campaign, as was his right, and what he had to say in relation to North Kalgurli is printed in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 6th December, 1975, under the heading, "Wriedt outlines Lab. aid to gold". The article reads—

A former Labor Minister for Minerals and Energy, Senator Wriedt, said in Kalgoorlie yesterday that a Labor

Government would provide about \$250,000 to the goldmining company, North Kalgurli Mines Ltd., to finance development work at its Fliniston operations.

He said that the money would be made available as a low interest loan.

North Kalgurli Mines which is not producing ore at present has been seeking financial assistance for development work for some time . . .

Senator Wriedt said that he understood there were good prospects for an economically viable operation at North Kalgurli Mines and it was possible that another 300 men could be employed.

If this was the case, then its development should not be impeded by lack of ready finance.

Senator Wriedt said that he would recommend to a Federal Labor Government that assistance also be provided to Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd. to enable the economic viability of the goldmining industry to be maintained.

I make the comparison that the promise he gave with regard to North Kalgurli was more heartening and, I believe, more positive than that which he gave to Kalgoorlie Lake View—I would be the first to make that point—but he was a man who only a fortnight before had been the Minister for Minerals and Energy and he would have had the advantage of the expertise available to him through his departmental officers who would have vetted these operations. He came out and said, "We will assist North Kalgurli."

Why did the Federal Government take another month, after rejecting Kalgoorlie Lake View, to reject this application? Why was the Government so concerned when it had before it an application not for a sum of \$441 000, which it gave to Kalgoorlie Lake View, and not for a sum exceeding \$420 000, which it gave to Hill 50, but for a sum of \$250 000 for a project at North Kalgurli? So the amendment rightly criticises the Government for failing to assist North Kalgurli Mines.

If in defence of these statements the Government should say it cannot assist North Kalgurli and claim that it would be improper to make the reasons public, to attack the credibility of the company, or to challenge the Prime Minister's indictment of his own Government, we say in the amendment, addressing His Excellency the Governor—

Surely Sir, these matters are now of public concern and so is the apparent dismal capitulation by the State Government to continue agitation for assistance to the gold mining industry, including the Hill 50 operation at Mt. Magnet, since the rejection by the Fraser Government of any such aid.

We believe it is not too late for the Government to seek to restore its credibility and to challenge the Prime Minister or the company, but in any event it is not too late for the Government to take up the cudgels of the Western Australian goldmining industry again and renew the fight for further aid.

I was pleased to second the amendment formally, and having spoken to it I hope I have demonstrated my belief that His Excellency should be officially apprised of the contents of the amendment.

**MR COYNE (Murchison-Eyre)** [7.55 p.m.]: I would like to address a few remarks to the amendment moved by the member for Clontarf. I think it is appropriate for me to deal with the situation at Mt. Magnet because I am more conversant with the problems of the Hill 50 Goldmine.

I must say at this stage I have never in my life heard such illogical arguments as those put forward by the previous speakers on the other side of the House. They have not a clue about what is going on in the mining industry today. The member for Clontarf might know something about coal but he demonstrates clearly how little he knows about gold.

I claim to have a working knowledge of the goldmining industry. I am familiar with the production stage. I do not know much about the marketing side, and I do not think anybody else in the world does. It is obvious that a great deal of confusion exists. I have read a number of articles on the subject and all the world authorities on gold seem to be so confused that it is no wonder no-one with any sense of responsibility will undertake to underwrite a goldmine fully in this present uncertain climate.

I will give an illustration of the situation at Mt. Magnet, a town which has been living on hope for the last eight or 10 years. When I first returned to Mt. Magnet in the early 1960s there were something like 220 men working at the Hill 50 goldmine. It was a very buoyant town and a good place in which to live, but over the years it has gradually declined, and when a meeting took place in Mt. Magnet there were only something like 57 miners employed there. This was understandable because the work force which had supported the Hill 50 goldmine were accommodated in the houses which were originally built at Big Bell, and which were dismantled and transported down to Mt. Magnet. Therefore, as the years went by these people became disadvantaged in comparison with the style of living in the more glamorous towns such as Kalgoorlie, Kambalda, and other nickel towns. The hardrock miners who were the key to the industry gradually drifted away to other more attractive areas. This was a big problem with the Hill 50 operation.

As the productivity of the mine decreased and the key men were lost, the whole exercise deteriorated to the stage

where a great injection of money was needed to keep it going. It was not only the underground mining operation that needed support but also the town itself. Every house had to be rebuilt and a better style of living and quality of life created, with more cultural activities and everything else.

Twelve to 18 months ago an overseas company, Hanna Homesake Gold Corporation, was interested in Hill 50 but it was prevented from taking up active participation because of restrictions on overseas equity capital. It hung around for a time to try to break the deadlock with the Federal Government. In the end, Western Mining came to the aid of Hill 50 by injecting something like \$1.4 million into the company about 12 months ago. That sum and the \$300 000 given by the State Government disappeared almost without trace. The Hill 50 proposition was that it be given a loan of \$2.5 million in order to enable it to proceed with the development of the underground ore body which is known to exist.

But that was only the start of the proposition; once the company spent this \$2.5 million on development it would still be faced with the problem of raising capital. It is only reasonable to expect that on a declining gold market overseas there would be little hope of raising that capital in 20 months' time.

A publication entitled "The Silver and Gold Report" has just been published, and it deals with prospects for gold overseas. I would recommend this publication to members. This is the first issue, and in it a monetary expert named John Exter explains why the gold industry is in its present predicament. He believes in the long term the goldmining industry could return, but because of the demonetising effect in respect of gold at the moment there is no likelihood that this could happen for some considerable time.

Therefore, in the Hill 50 episode the State Government was not faced only with the expenditure of \$2.5 million; once it started to provide assistance it could be faced with the need to provide another \$5 or \$6 million. The same situation could occur at Kalgoorlie. So I think the argument in respect of Hill 50 is such that no responsible Government or organisation could have supported that mine, and I am sure everyone in the industry knows that.

I know the managing director of North Kalgurli quite well, and he was not confident that he would receive support, either. One of the best examples of the generosity of the present Premier was when he met the manager of Hill 50 and made the offer; and he went further than that when he "upped the ante" to one-third of the amount required. Mining companies with the expertise of Hanna Homesake and Western Mining were not prepared to take up Hill 50 on that sort of

basis. Surely they are the experts and should know the prospects of the industry at the moment.

I was raised in the atmosphere of gold-mining. I have always supported the Hill 50 operation, and I think it is a disaster that the town has closed down. It is a great blow to decentralisation because since the Wiluna goldmine closed in about 1953 Hill 50 has been the main producer of gold in the area, and I do not like to see its position deteriorate—nor do I think anyone else does.

However, it was not such a big collapse; it was more of a phasing-out operation. I understand the Hill 50 people have conserved their capital and that the company is still strong. They do not intend at this stage to salvage the equipment; it seems they will wait for a couple of years to see if the overseas situation improves and, if it does, they might do something with the mine.

Mr T. D. Evans: What are they doing about the water situation?

Mr COYNE: It will take a couple of years to fill, and there will not be any problems in shifting the water if the company wishes to do so.

With those few remarks, I will conclude my speech. I was anxious to respond to the comments made by the member for Clontarf, and I feel I have done so.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [8.04 p.m.]: I wish to participate in this debate concerning the problems faced by the Government when it tries to give credence to its efforts to deceive the people of Kalgoorlie when the Whitlam Government was experiencing problems in endeavouring to remain in office in a very unkind atmosphere created by the then Opposition. We must consider the fact that in many instances approaches had been made to the Whitlam Government to help this ailing industry, and that Government made it clear that difficulties were associated with such a proposal; and the difficulties were perhaps not unrelated to the remarks made by the member for Murchison-Eyre.

The situation was that the Whitlam Government was considering whether or not it would be able to provide any assistance at all to the goldmining industry. However, political opportunists—the Liberals—saw fit to make extravagant promises to the people on the goldfields. They said the goldfields people could certainly expect something a little better when the Whitlam Government was ousted and the Liberals were put in office. There is no shadow of doubt that was exactly and precisely what the present Liberal Government did at that time when it was trying to oust the Whitlam Government.

Mr Laurance: What about the investment allowance?

Mr SKIDMORE: I will refer to anything the member likes me to, as long as he lets me make my speech.

Mr Laurance: I didn't think you had a speech to make.

Mr SKIDMORE: Members opposite may have thought it was not my intention to speak on this subject, but it was my intention to do so all along. I have an affinity with the goldfields, having worked and lived there for something like 15 years. I was employed as an apprentice with the Yilgarn Road Board, and I worked on the mines at Laverton, Big Bell, and Youanmi.

Mr Coyne: They have all closed, haven't they?

Mr SKIDMORE: I am not unmindful of the problems of the goldmining industry, and whilst members opposite may laugh at the fact that I have been in those places, I would hazard a guess that I have been in places that those who wish to shout me down would know about only if they looked at a map.

Mr Laurance: Did you work underground?

Mr SKIDMORE: Yes. I was an electrician at the time and I was obliged to go underground. If the member for Gascoyne wants to make my speech last for 45 minutes, that is all right; I will accommodate him.

Mr Laurance: I was a boggler!

Mr May: How do you spell that?

Mr SKIDMORE: Getting away from the obvious red herrings that members opposite always delight in drawing across the trail when I am holding them to ransom, I refer again to the statements made by the Fraser supporters who went to the goldfields and promised the electors the world. They said, "We will help you by giving you finance to overcome your difficulty", well knowing that, if elected, they would face the same accountability that the Whitlam Government had the courage to face on the same issue. However, politicking was all Fraser's supporters were interested in; they were interested only in the winning of votes.

Mr Grayden: What else did Whitlam think about, other than the winning of votes?

Mr SKIDMORE: I would like to refer to some of the remarks made by the member for Murchison-Eyre. However, before doing so I would say that it becomes increasingly difficult to present a contribution to this House in respect of this issue if we are to continue to have such inane interruptions from the other side. These make no difference to me, but their sheer idiocy and stupidity is well known, and probably people will note it.

The problems of the mining industry have been with us for a long time. I have been known to state that in respect of

the raising of share capital for the gold-mining industry, it is a well-known fact that shareholders looked at this in the early days as an investment for a given number of years. All the mines opened up in the 1950s were based on the fact that within a given time the mine would cease, and so the plant had an inbuilt obsolescence and was never replaced. The shareholders reaped the benefit of all the profits. In the main the replacement of plant was not a consideration as an item of capital expenditure by most mining companies.

Eventually, the sheer inevitability of the ore cutting out means that mines must close; and even the member for Murchison-Eyre, who says he has knowledge of the district, would recall the number of mines which shut down because the ore ran out. What he said about Hill 50 is correct. He said that suddenly Hill 50 discovered an ore body which should be developed to save the life of the town, but the amount of capital needed to undertake the venture was so great that it was not on.

Hill 50 has been a payer of good dividends during the years of its existence, and I cannot help but suggest to the people concerned that possibly if some of those profits had been returned to provide the necessary capital for plant expenditure today we would not have the member for Murchison-Eyre and other people saying "Goodness gracious me, it is just a fact of life that they cannot get this kind of capital within the industry." I do not subscribe to that at all. I believe the industry has the ability to carry out its own development.

Is it not passing strange that the whole of the blame is said to lie at the feet of someone who will not provide a subsidy for workers on the mine? I say in the first instance that the company is at fault because it failed to realise that eventually it would have to treat the ore which it says it cannot get at because it has not the capital to carry out the necessary development. However, various Governments of the day did nothing about this. One could assume that if the present Government were to assist this industry, that assistance would include all the goldfields and that sooner or later Hill 50 would be considered for assistance.

I wonder whether the dreams of Hill 50 fell quickly to the ground when the company realised it would not get any funds as a result of the decision of the Liberal Government, which was a complete turn-about and a let-down to the industry. I refer to the decision it took when it said to the goldmining companies in Kalgoorlie, "You will not get any money; there is no money available to you for development, because we believe it is a bad investment."

What the Federal Government would prefer to do, instead of providing a subsidy or in some way assisting the company to develop an ore body which it has said is

a goer if it could only get at it, is to say, "Although for political reasons before the election we said we would give you something, we will now not give you anything." When it came to the crunch the Federal Liberal Government found itself facing the same difficulty that was facing the Whitlam Government. The Whitlam Government faced up to the difficulty, but the Liberal Party used it as an opportunity to win votes. Of course, it did win votes, and this was quite evident in the voting trends in goldmining areas.

Mr Laurance: Tell us about the investment allowance.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know very much about the investment allowance to which the member refers. Perhaps he could tell me about it and then I may comment.

Mr Grayden: You wouldn't know much about Hill 50, either.

Mr SKIDMORE: I know more about it than the Minister for Labour and Industry, because the next time he picks up a shovel—as I told him 15 years ago—will be the first time; and his knowledge of what happened at Hill 50 is far removed from what in fact happened.

Mr May: He has a silver spoon in his mouth.

Several members interjected.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have been told that I know nothing about the goldfields, but now I am told by a member opposite that I am an idiot. I do not mind that; I suppose one must accept the fact that such things are said to members of Parliament.

Whether Government members in this place, in their efforts to destroy the concept about which I am talking, have been dishonest in their approach to the gold-mining industry will surely be evidenced by the people who follow me in this debate. The amendment seeks to show that the Government has had no regard for any sort of relief in line with its election promise to aid the goldmining industry. It made a promise; it has failed to keep it.

Mr Bertram: It did not intend to.

Mr SKIDMORE: No doubt goldfields people will have a second look at the situation the next time they record their votes. It may be that they will listen to the kind of honest Government which said to them that there were problems associated with the industry. That Government had not actually wiped them off and was still deliberating on the matter when Kerr's coup took place and the Government found itself on the sidewalk under a caretaker Government which subsequently became the Government of Australia.

Mr Clarko: Who are you fooling when you talk about Kerr's coup? He is one of your mob.

Mr SKIDMORE: I find the problems associated with remarks of Government members in keeping with the attitude they display to the goldfields people—one of irresponsibility.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Swan.

Mr SKIDMORE: The whole problem associated with this exercise is that the people in Government just do not like to hear the truth. They do not like to hear that they have been dishonest. They do not like to hear that they deceived the people of the goldfields. They do not like to hear that because of that deceit they became the Government and when they became the Government they immediately repudiated all the things they had said. They just do not like it.

Mr Grayden: You do not believe that, do you?

Mr SKIDMORE: I not only believe it, but it is also the truth.

Mr Grayden: You are a hypocrite.

Mr SKIDMORE: Whether the Minister likes it or not—

Mr Grayden: I could go beyond that but I will not.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know whether I am a hypocrite, but if telling the Minister the truth makes me a hypocrite, I am a hypocrite.

Sir Charles Court: There is no-one that one trusts less in this place than someone who says he is always telling the truth.

Mr SKIDMORE: I know it is true because when I look at the amendment that has been moved tonight I see that certain promises were made by this Government which are unfulfilled and promises made by the Federal Liberal Government are unfulfilled.

Mr Clarko: And the Labor Party never made any promises in Kalgoorlie, did it?

Mr SKIDMORE: No, it did not make any promises. I ask the member to name one promise on the question of aid to the goldmining industry.

Mr Sodeman: What about in 1972?

Mr SKIDMORE: I wish to conclude by saying that if the amendment is carried by this House it will clearly indicate that its legislators are prepared to accept that Governments should not deceive people, that Governments should not go to the people on the basis of deceit and that they should not become Governments by deceit. The first requirement of all legislators is to be honest in their intentions. If members are honest they will vote for the amendment which says that the Government deceived the people. I commend the amendment to the House.

In conclusion I would merely say that one need only look at the puerile efforts of Government members to destroy what I have had to say tonight to see the amount of effort they have consciously put into being honest in their endeavours for the people of the goldfields.

MR HARTREY (Boulder-Dundas) [8.19 p.m.]: I would be recreant to my duty as a goldfields representative and as a native born son of the golden mile if I did not make some contribution to this debate. I do not stand up to make a speech in support of a speech; after all, the amendment is a speech in itself. I do not know whether members have read it but it is not my intention—I am quite frank about this—to attack the State Government for lack of interest in the goldmining industry. I honestly do not think it is fair, just, or reasonable to do that, but, by heaven, I hope to make some contribution to an attack on the Federal Government—the Liberal Federal Government—for its attitude. I do not wish to tell any lies or talk any nonsense in this House. I have never been in the habit of doing that and I do not propose to do it now.

In 1970 when the McMahon Government was in power there was agitation in Kalgoorlie, in which I played a prominent part, to have the gold bounty increased; and we struck stony silence from the Liberal Government in Canberra. Being a personal friend of the man who was then the Leader of the Labor Party in the Federal Parliament and afterwards Prime Minister, the Hon. Gough Whitlam, I wrote a letter to him, as secretary of a committee which was interested in organising the goldfields for the goldmining industry, begging him to come here or, if not, to send one of his chief lieutenants to the goldfields to rip the tar out of the McMahon Government and to promise the goldfields a fair go from a Federal Government. If it had not been for the goldfields of Western Australia in 1900 we would never have federated. I am not at all convinced that we did the right thing. We can certainly thank the goldfields in this State for the overwhelming decision to join the Federation.

If one reads the preamble to the Federal Constitution one will find that the Queen issued a proclamation in 1900 that certain colonies in Australia should be united, including Western Australia "if Her Majesty was satisfied that the people of Western Australia had agreed thereto". So the goldfields of Western Australia made Western Australia part of the Australian Commonwealth; and from no Commonwealth Government, Liberal or Labor, have we ever received two bob from then to now. I mean that and I can prove it historically or in any other way.

I will say for the Whitlam Government that my friend Gough Whitlam did not reply favourably to my letter. He told me

that he was going to be in Europe for some weeks and could not come; and other members had to attend Parliament and could not come. Like the wedding guests in the scriptures, none of them could come. They all had something else to do and they did not come. I knew from then onwards that we would not get any help from the Labor Party for the golden mile, and we did not. On the 2nd January, 1974, just before the last State election when the Labor Party was still in power here, the Commonwealth Labor Government sent over two gentlemen for whom I do not care tuppence. One was Crean and one was Connor. Both of them were fired subsequently by my old friend Gough Whitlam and I did not shed any tears about that. They sat in the town hall in Kalgoorlie; Crean told us plainly that we would get nothing and Connor went to sleep.

Mr Laurance: His mouth was a grave for his tongue.

Mr HARTREY: And a very suitable one too. All I can say for the Labor Party in the Federal Parliament is that it never lied to me. It did not give us any promises. It never extended the slightest hope that the goldfields, which are the *fons et origo* of the Labor Party in Western Australia, would get tuppence from the Labor Government. It did not lie to us; it did not pretend; it told us the truth, that we were not going to get anything; and we did not. When Fraser was elected to power nine-tenths of Cotter country was deceived by this curious character. He told everyone that his great friend, Fraser, would come to our rescue. I do not think the man was telling an untruth; he was deluded by his political leaders. How many people have been deluded by political leaders!

Much acquainted as I am with the history of Australia and the world, I do not think I could possibly recite how many times people have been deluded by political leaders.

On behalf of my constituency, the goldfields, which I love, where I was born, where I have spent most of my life and to whose interests all my sentiments, however worthless they may be, are entirely devoted, I can say that we got nothing from any Federal Government, and never will. Whether it be Liberal, Labor, or even communist, we in the goldfields will never get anything from the Federal Government. We have supported the Federal Government for 75 years. In 1900 the Federation was constituted. Victoria organised it through Alfred Deakin. It put a tariff network all round the Commonwealth to reap tributes from every other colony. The Western Australian goldfields were the biggest sufferers because we were exporting gold which was sold in those days for £4/4/11½d. per fine ounce.

We had to pay higher wages to the working man on the fields because the prices of food, clothing and everything else were going up because of the tariff. We had to pay higher prices for our stores, our machinery and for everything we got. The goldfields sweated under this tyranny for years and years and cheered and clapped and voted for Federation and supported whatever Federal Government was in power; and the goldfields were bled to death.

When we had just about died of haemorrhage along came a Labor Party which said, "You will get nothing". After them along came the liars who are in Canberra now who said, "You will get something, just vote for Cotter and you will be all right." The people voted for Cotter; and what did they get? They got nothing. We were told in solemn terms by Mr Fraser that no responsible Government could give us two bob. God knows what it is responsible about but I know that it is responsible for the destruction of a great goldmining city. A great English poet, Oliver Goldsmith, wrote these words—

Princes and Lords may flourish, or  
may fade,

A breath can make them as a breath  
has made;

But a bold peasantry, their country's  
pride,

When once destroy'd, can never be  
supplied.

This goldmining town contributed many heroes to the 1914 and 1938 World Wars, including Jack Carroll, Jack Axford, and Tom Starcevic. We were never behind in battle, we were never behind in fighting for Australia, but we have always been behind when it came to getting anything from a Federal Government; Labor or Liberal it makes no difference to me. I will not blame the State Government for what it did or did not do. It did all it could afford to do in the economic circumstances that Federation has created for Western Australia. If the State Government supports the Prime Minister of Australia—the greatest fraud that has ever been put into power by the most dishonest tactics that anybody has used in the history of this country—I will blame it. If it shuts up and says nothing I will not blame it.

There is no necessity for me to say much more. I could continue for quite a long time, but members would be bored to tears. I can assure them that I will not continue much longer. I have said what I believe to be honest and true.

To summarise what I have said, Australia has prospered only because of the hard work done by the producers in the country, and the gold producers have contributed immensely to the progress and prosperity of the nation in every colony and in every original State.

Gold was of tremendous advantage to New South Wales. Gold was the heart and soul of Victoria; and gold was the refuge in Victoria when that State went broke in 1895. My mother came over here on a third-class steerage passage and obtained a job at Bon Marche because there was nothing over there; and my uncle came here the same way. My father came here looking for work, and found it pushing a truck. Finally he had the brains to finish up by qualifying as a chemist and made life a little better for himself. Gold was the refuge for all sinners in the Australian colonies from 1893 onwards.

Western Australia suffered hardship three times. In the depression the gold-mining industry came to our rescue. During all the hard times in the history of Western Australia and Australia we find that the State and the country were saved by goldmining.

Now that the goldmining industry is experiencing difficulties, Canberra has said to it, "Go to hell." The only difference between the previous Federal Government and the present Federal Government is that the previous one said, "You can go to hell, and I make no bones about saying that", whereas the present one said, "Just do as we say. Be good boys. Vote for us, and you will be all right."

We were surprised to find what happened, and we were not happy at all with the result. I suppose we could really resign from the whole controversy, but we have more guts than that. We will fight on, but we will fight a lone battle. Canberra will not do much for us; and the State cannot do much, because it can do only what its economic resources will permit. However, we should certainly get some kind of relief.

Speaking from the bottom of my heart, I say we are facing a very real crisis. In that area there are many men who have reared families, paid for their homes, and are looking to retain their jobs until they can retire on the old age pension. These people are facing ruin. Something must be done to help them, but no assistance will be coming from Mr Fraser's plush Melbourne Club associates. They merely say that no responsible Government can help us. I say that no such "responsible" Government will ever get a vote from me!

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Premier) [8.33 p.m.]: I want to comment on this amendment for a number of reasons. Firstly, I can understand the sentiments of the honourable gentleman who has just resumed his seat. I know his feelings in respect of the goldfields and everything that comes from it. It is not very often that we have in this place members who are prepared to express themselves with such frankness, as the member for Boulder-Dundas has done.

He has traced very accurately the attitude of all Federal Governments towards the goldmining industry, and he expressed even more feelingly than I have ever been able to the fact that Australia, and particularly the capital cities, ride on the backs of the people in the remote areas, whether they be engaged in the production of grain and meat, fisheries, forestry, minerals, or metals.

However, to turn to the amendment I want to say that the member for Clontarf can do better than he did tonight. He has more capacity, more experience, and more sense than he showed tonight, because on reflection he will realise that what he has said was nothing more than whinging, whining, and waffling utterances. This does no credit to a member who has had as long an experience in this Parliament as he has, and has held a ministerial portfolio.

I wish to refer to the first part of the amendment: the reference to duplicity. I reject it completely. The people who are showing duplicity are the ones who framed and moved this amendment, because they are so upset that a Liberal-National Country Party Government in the State went into the goldfields and made a positive contribution to that area—a contribution greater than any that has been made, in terms of actual money.

The member for Clontarf together with his leader was in Kalgoorlie when the Minister for Mines and I went there to discuss this matter with the representatives of the local authority. The main spearhead of their representations was in the form of a working party.

Mr May: A task force.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is correct. The member for Clontarf heard the discussion that took place around the table. No doubt he will recall that I had to retire to discuss the matter with my colleague and the mining people, to see how far we could stretch the finances to make the operation more viable for a longer period and to ensure the maximum amount of employment.

The situation on that day was that the local people through their task force wanted to preserve the total work force. I had to say to them, "We have only a limited amount of money. I have to take the money out of the Budget and provide for an item I have not budgeted for, so I have to get the money from somewhere else. There is only so much that I can risk." I used the word "risk".

Mr May: We did the same in 1971, and we were in a worse situation than this Government is in.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The honourable member had better ask the then Treasurer how the money was spent.

Mr T. D. Evans: That money was paid.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to deal with the meeting at Kalgoorlie. I had to put the position very plainly and I could not have been more honest and frank. I said that I had only so much money which I could squeeze out for KLV, as one method to keep it going until the 31st January. There was no duplicity or waffling about that. I said, "Do you want to keep hundreds of men in employment for a couple of weeks, or a certain number until the 31st January?" There was a reason for the 31st January being selected.

Mr T. D. Evans: That was when the caretaker Government said it would give its decision.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It was not that at all. I fixed the 31st January, and I did that for good, practical reasons. That was all the money we had to pay the work force, if other money was not forthcoming from the Commonwealth or elsewhere. We worked the proposition out on the spot; we estimated we could take a certain number of men through to the 31st January. There was no guess about this; it was based on cold hard facts. I do not hesitate to say that the local committee, with reluctance, accepted the proposal.

The Leader of the Opposition said, "Can't you do something better?" or words to that effect. The position was laid on the line. Everyone present in the room accepted the fact that the State Government was being generous, in view of the fact that it was trying to achieve a balanced Budget and attempting to retain the men until the 31st January, thus involving \$500 000 which could be money down the drain.

Mr T. D. Evans: This amendment does not criticise you for doing that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: What is the Opposition criticising us for? The honourable member should not be so stupid.

Mr T. D. Evans: Criticising you for dropping the fight. You have put your tail between your legs, and run.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Quite obviously the honourable member is not in tune with what the people of the goldfields are thinking at the present time. Those people might feel angry with the Commonwealth Government—and that was what they made clear to me the other day—but they are not angry with us. They realise that with a very tight Budget and limited finances we adopted a very generous attitude. I expressed the situation in those terms in the Governor's Speech indicating that we were disappointed. We told the Commonwealth Government that we were disappointed.

Mr May: You did not tell the public.

Sir CHARLES COURT: How much more public can the position be made than by announcing it in the Governor's Speech?

Mr May: Since the letter came from the Prime Minister you have not told the public.

Sir CHARLES COURT: One wonders how mean-minded some people can be. We have two problems—one concerning KLV at Fimiston, and the other concerning Hill 50 at Mt. Magnet.

Dealing with the Fimiston operation for the moment, we said we would put up one-quarter of what we understood was a \$6 million project. There was no doubt in my mind that the words contained in the Prime Minister's letter, which the member for Kalgoorlie kept on emphasising as representing an expression of opinion by the company, are correct. Of course, it was a risky proposition. All goldmining is risky; indeed all mining is risky; a mine is a "wasting" asset; and that is why we have a different type of accounting approach to cope with mining, as compared with primary industry and secondary industry.

At the meeting at which the member for Clontarf was present I made the point that by ordinary, commercial standards, this project would not justify the commitment, but we had faith in the area and I still have. Long after we have departed the goldfields will continue as a great centre for a great mining region. There may not be a great deal of gold produced then, but it will remain as a great mining region. I do have some faith in the area, even if members occupying the front bench opposite do not.

Mr Hartrey: I also have great faith in the area.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I think the honourable member has, but not his colleagues. They are trying to paint a picture of gloom and despair. One thing that impressed me the other day was that the people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder said, "Of course we have taken a bit of buffeting, but we will make it." There was a record attendance at the Kalgoorlie-Boulder community fair. That is not the sort of reaction from people who are depressed and without hope.

Mr May: What about making a speech?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am giving the honourable member the story of Kalgoorlie.

Mr May: At the task force meeting you did not mention the comments of Senator Durack.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Let us turn to the question of whether we have practised duplicity. I repeat that members sitting opposite are the ones who have practised duplicity. They are sore to think that a Liberal-National Country Party Government, without the prospect of political gain in the State scene, was prepared to accept the budgetary problems of giving real hard cash assistance and holding the position until the 31st January. There were two good reasons for nominating the 31st January. The first was that was the date when the money would run out; and the other was that it would allow reasonable time

after the 13th December for the Government elected on that day to have a look at the situation and then make a decision.

We have heard about the visit of Senator Wriedt to this State in the middle of the election campaign. The greatest mistake he made was to say, "If we are returned we will do this and that". He had been the Federal Minister for Minerals and Energy, and Mr R. F. X. Connor before him. Why had they not done something? I want to refer to the \$250 000 which the member for Kalgoorlie said would be made available to the North Kalgurli mine.

Mr T. D. Evans: Why have you not said anything about the North Kalgurli mine?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I shall tell the honourable member. This person was a Minister, and the previous Minister (Mr Connor) had held that portfolio for a long time. Representations were made by person after person, and group after group. What did they get? They got just what the member for Boulder-Dundas told us they got—nothing. Members opposite could have used their party machine to put the flames under those Ministers, and I bet they did that behind the scenes, but I cannot recall an angry word from anyone over there when Whitlam, Connor, and others did not give what was wanted.

Mr T. D. Evans: They never said they would.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Members opposite stalled, and stalled, and stalled; it was always being looked into. The fact is that the previous Government did not get anything done at all; in fact, it received a cold rebuff.

Mr T. D. Evans: I made a speech in this Parliament one or two days before the 10th November last year.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Before I go on to Hill 50, I want to make passing reference to North Kalgurli. It is true it asked us for some money and it is true we did not give it to that company. The member for Clontarf and the member for Kalgoorlie must know, surely—unless they are fooling this House—that the request for that money was not to develop an existing mine, and preserve an existing mine, but it was for exploration. That is an entirely different matter altogether. I was striving with the little money available to keep in existence mines which had some capacity for survival.

The money made available to Fimiston was to enable development over a period of three years so that the ore reserves would eventually be processed in a modern plant. Whether or not members opposite know that I do not know, but that is the cold hard fact. That is why we said there would be no interest payable for a period of three years because, in fact, there would be no income from Fimiston for a period

of three years. It was as simple as that. Of course, it was not an attractive economic proposition. The policy was to pave the way for a development programme and have ore ready to be processed through a plant which would be very modern. That was the proposition with regard to Fimiston. We were taking a gamble. I made it mighty clear that we were taking a calculated risk, and we based it on our belief in gold. I still believe that by the time the ore is taken out the price of gold will have doubled.

Mr May: We supported that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: One would not think so from what has been said by the honourable member. Why move this amendment—this long tirade?

Having made the position clear with regard to North Kalgurli let us move to Hill 50 which is part of goldmining. Hill 50 is an entirely different proposition from Fimiston. It is my belief that when we agreed to "up the ante" from 25 per cent to 33 per cent of the \$6 million for KLV at Fimiston, and the 25 per cent of the \$2.5 million in Hill 50 to one-third, it should have been possible for Hill 50 to raise the additional capital. That is one of the reasons which prompted me to increase the amount when the deputation about which the member for Clontarf now complains, called on me. I believe there would have been just enough to get the company to raise the money privately and get the mine going again, regardless of the Commonwealth Government. The member for Clontarf well knows that I made that clear to the company representatives at that deputation. The offer still stands today.

Mr May: But you said there would be no further support.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It was clear to the company and clear to the public, and apparently clear to everybody except the member for Clontarf that the offer by the Government still stood. When the deputation came to me I said we would make it one-third, to encourage the company to try to find some support. We would have had to find the money, admittedly over a two or three-year period, because if somebody else came in we would expect him to take up the "slack" in view of the part which we had already played. The Treasury, after consultation with me, believed that we would be able to do it, and we are still prepared to do it. There is no suggestion that others should not carry a little of the burden, as I believe they should in a project like this, whether it is the Commonwealth Government or the private sector.

I still believe that Hill 50 had a better prospect in terms of Government assistance than Fimiston. I was quite prepared to back both ventures because I believed in my heart that if we provided further assistance for Fimiston we would mine ore

after a period of three years when a very modern plant would be available for the combined Western Mining-Homestake exercise where the ore could be processed economically at Mt. Charlotte. It was a gamble—and it is always a gamble when talking about the price of gold—that the price of gold would have been sufficiently high to make it a payable proposition and service the debt.

It has to be remembered there was to be a moratorium on the debt for a period of three years and I ask: What more generous proposition could be offered? So, it ill becomes members opposite to berate the Government and talk about letting down a viable industry and not fighting. We did the fighting at the right time. We put the money in—some \$440 000—so that the mine could be retained until people had a chance to have another look on a sensible basis.

Mr T. D. Evans: That failed.

Sir CHARLES COURT: We put up the money in respect of Hill 50. I do not know the final figure, but certainly not less than \$200 000 and that is a lot of money in our State Budget.

Mr T. D. Evans: We acknowledge that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That amount had not been budgeted for. So I suggest that for those members representing the goldfields—apart from our friend the member for Boulder-Dundas—and the member for Clontarf who has been a Minister for Mines and who is the Opposition spokesman on these matters, to seek to move a motion as pathetic as this one, berating the Government, is to have done the wrong thing for the workers on the goldfields.

Mr T. D. Evans: We did not say that.

Mr May: Have another read of the amendment.

Sir CHARLES COURT: There is only one way to interpret the amendment, and I will make sure that many people in the goldfields receive a copy.

Mr T. D. Evans: They already know its contents.

Mr May: They helped to form it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have news for members opposite; their constituents are not going to be very pleased with them.

Mr T. D. Evans: They can read.

Mr May: They will not be very pleased with the Premier.

Mr T. D. Evans: I have no fears. I will continue to fight, which you failed to do.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The people of the goldfields at this moment would refer to me as a much better fighter for the goldfields than the member for Kalgoorlie.

Mr T. D. Evans: Who has been kidding you?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I think the member for Kalgoorlie should buy some dark glasses, and wear whiskers, and walk around his electorate to hear what the people think of his efforts, compared with the efforts of the State Government, bearing in mind that we have no great political profit in getting into Kalgoorlie. I believe that we as the Government—and particularly I as Premier—should govern for the whole of the State. I defy any member opposite to say that I do not spend a fair share of my time on matters relating to the whole of the State in all areas regardless of political support.

Mr T. D. Evans: That is not in the amendment.

Sir CHARLES COURT: So, it is about time members opposite realised they are not doing themselves much good.

Mr May: It is about time you sat down.

Mr O'Connor: The Premier is killing you with the truth, that is why.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It ill becomes the member for Clontarf to say that, when he brings forward such a puerile amendment in this House.

Mr May: It has got you up on your feet.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Somebody had to because it is just about time members opposite were reminded of the way they governed. The amendment now before us does not do the Opposition much good—not that that should worry me—but it is not doing the Parliament any good either.

Mr O'Connor: It is the weakest amendment we have had for years.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind members opposite that whatever faults the Fraser Government might have, the State Government was prepared to accept the dislocation of its budget so that it could provide assistance. I even included that information in the Governor's Speech. Whatever the Fraser Government might have done, the real deceit to the people of the goldfields came from the Whitlam Government, by its stringing the people on.

Mr Hartrey: No, it did not.

Sir CHARLES COURT: In spite of what my friend the member for Boulder-Dundas says about the Crean-Connor visit the public was not told the truth. Members opposite might have been told privately, but everyone was left full of joy. It was stated that within a few weeks, "everything would be all right, mate". What was said to the Labor Party privately might have been an entirely different story from what was said to the public, in spite of what members opposite have said.

Mr T. D. Evans: Tell us what Senator Durack said.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He made it clear he personally was supporting this to the hilt.

Mr T. D. Evans: He said that if the present Government was returned it could be fully effective.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Senator Durack was one constant friend, in the Federal sphere, of the people of the goldfields. I have never known him to be anything but a supporter of the goldfields. I do not know the reason for that attachment, but perhaps the reason he has been so constant is to be found in his background. I know the simple fact is he has always been a very strong supporter of the goldfields.

Mr T. D. Evans: Why has he been so silent ever since?

Sir CHARLES COURT: For members opposite to talk about duplicity, and to have the hide to bring this matter forward, is beyond me because the State Government has performed well. It has performed well, frankly, and quickly at the time it should have performed, and I reject the amendment to the motion.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [8.55 p.m.]: The Premier, in his usual fashion, has attempted to move the debate completely away from the amendment before the House. There was no criticism of the State Government in the amendment and if he can point out where there is any criticism of the contribution by the State Government I would like to hear where it is. It is not in the amendment. I would like the Premier to point it out to me because I cannot find it.

Sir Charles Court: The whole amendment is a condemnation of the work of the Government. Otherwise, why move the amendment?

Mr T. H. JONES: The Government has found itself in trouble tonight. We heard a short address from the Minister for Mines lasting approximately a quarter of an hour, and he is in charge of the portfolio under discussion. The member for Murchison-Eyre, who had a lot to say when sitting down while the member for Clontarf was introducing his amendment, spoke for about 10 minutes. The Premier has had to come to the aid of members opposite and, as I said, I think the contribution by the Minister for Mines was very weak to say the least because of his involvement in the portfolio under discussion.

The Premier might be able to fool some people, but he certainly did not fool us on this side of the House. The crux of the amendment to the Address-in-Reply, which was so ably presented this afternoon by the member for Clontarf—and supported by the member for Swan, and the member for Boulder-Dundas—was not brought out by the Premier in his address this evening. On page 2 of the amendment it is stated—

A letter from the Prime Minister of date 30/3/76 addressed to the member for Kalgoorlie in the Legislative Assembly and published in the *Daily*

*News* newspaper of April 2, 1976, referring to the said development programme for Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd., states that "No responsible Government could knowingly make a substantial outlay of public funds . . .

The next paragraph in the amendment is most important. It begins—

Since the publication of the said letter the State Government has remained remarkably silent . . .

No member from the other side of the House has referred to any Press release or announcement by the Government relating to the Federal Government's rejection of assistance for the Kalgoorlie goldmining industry. That is the crux of the problem. I ask: Can any member opposite tell me where a Minister or Government member has criticised the decision by the Federal Government? I have failed to observe any such statement.

Mr Jamieson: We have not heard from Brodie-Hall either.

Mr T. H. JONES: That is a fact; that is right. The Premier waffled on. He did not refer to the main points of the amendment; all he wanted to talk about was the assistance his Government had already given.

Sir Charles Court: That is what the amendment is all about.

Mr May: Cheap criticism!

Sir Charles Court: That is what the amendment complains of.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Collie.

Mr T. H. JONES: Government members are again sitting in their seats making speeches. Let us see the manly approach. Perhaps they could stand up to speak, rather than make speeches sitting down. I will get on with my speech standing up.

Mr Sodeman: Don't you ever interject?

Mr T. H. JONES: The Government cannot get off the hook. On the 3rd December, the Treasurer-elect, and the present Federal Treasurer, visited Kalgoorlie—the eve of the Federal election. He said, "If we become the Government, we will do several things." The Federal Government did not meet the commitment it made to the goldfields. It is no good members on the other side saying it did not happen, because no-one will deny the report which appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 4th December. Mr Lynch made a statement, and members on this side of the House can well imagine that if a Minister of the Whitlam Government had made such a statement, we would not be able to keep Government members in this Chamber in their seats. They would be up one after another.

Mr May: Hear, hear!

Mr T. H. JONES: This is what the Treasurer said when he visited Kalgoorlie on the 4th December last year, just prior to the Federal election, as reported in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* under the heading, "Lynch says coalition would aim at boosting mining industry"—

... it would set out to inject new life into the mining and energy industries and restore incentives to prospectors.

Mr Lynch did not say the Government would consider it, he said they would give assistance. There was no misunderstanding about it. He said that when his party became the Government, it would take positive action. That is what the amendment before the House directly complains of—the promise to the goldfields people has not been kept. The article continues—

A Liberal-National Country Party government would give immediate priority after December 13 to study proposals to assist the industry with the WA Government, the companies and local authorities.

It would also study practical ways and means of assisting with other facilities which would enable the whole of the goldmining industry in the Eastern Goldfields to function on a more stable basis.

And a final paragraph reads—

Mr Lynch said that the coalition parties recognised the peculiar difficulties being experienced in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder region.

Mr Lynch did not say he would put this matter up to his party, he said, "When we become the Government we will take some positive action to relieve the problems associated with the goldmining industry in Western Australia." Surely it is not good enough for Federal Liberal Party members to make these statements and then get off the hook when their party takes over the Treasury benches in the Federal Government. This is what Mr Lynch has done.

Where does Senator Durack fit into it? Before the Federal election on the 13th December, he said—

If a Liberal-National Country Party government is elected on December 13, it can be fully expected they will give assistance to the Kalgoorlie gold industry . . .

Mr May: Famous words!

Mr T. H. JONES: There has been no investigation whatever in regard to assistance. The only failure with the proposition is that these words were spoken on the 4th December, 1975—some nine days prior to the Federal election.

Mr May: All we got was economics.

Mr T. H. JONES: Is it any wonder that the member for Clontarf framed his amendment in the manner in which he

did? I am asking the present Government what it is doing about the situation. Has it approached its Federal counterpart to ask why the Commonwealth Government is not meeting the situation as it promised the goldmining industry it would? As numerous speakers have said, the State Government has remained very silent about these matters.

The question of subsidies generally has been raised. I am not completely in opposition to the reintroduction of the superphosphate bounty, but I am in opposition to subsidising the St. George's Terrace farmers. I cannot deny that subsidies are needed for the rural sector. The farmer who is struggling to survive or the one on a newly developed area should be assisted by the Federal Government. I am not opposed completely to a blanket clause on superphosphate, and I am sure other members on this side of the House agree with me. However, we say that priorities should have been considered before the decision was made and the new policy introduced by the Federal Government.

In his Speech the Governor referred to the plight of the goldmining industry and the representation that the State Government made on its behalf. The Governor said—

Representations by the State Government for Commonwealth financial assistance for the goldmining industry were unsuccessful. The Government regrets that such assistance is not forthcoming.

That did not set the world on fire! The Government did not go to great lengths to try to bring back some stability to this industry and to alleviate the stress that is so obviously plain in the goldfields today. My concern is about what the Government has done to rehabilitate the unfortunate workers who have been retrenched. Has it offered them any assistance? When I was secretary of the miners' union in Collie, I was in the unfortunate position of seeing 600 people thrown out of work overnight. Twelve deep mines closed and it is an experience that will live with me for the rest of my life.

Mr May: What Government was in power then?

Mr T. H. JONES: I wonder whether the Government considered it had—

Mr Grayden: Do you know what happened with the Hill 50 mine? The following morning we placed 50 workers in other jobs.

Mr T. H. JONES: What did the Government do? Keep going.

Mr Grayden: We absorbed 50 workers.

Mr T. H. JONES: That is the sum total of Government assistance.

Mr Grayden: Aeroplanes flew into Mt. Magnet looking for workers, but none could be found.

Mr T. H. JONES: That was a great effort on the part of the Government! What a great effort, coming from the Minister for Labour and Industry! The Government should be ashamed of itself. It found jobs for 50 workers at a much lower rate of pay.

Sir Charles Court: Don't be silly!

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister can scoff if he wants to—

Sir Charles Court: You do not know what you are talking about—these people went to better jobs in most cases.

Mr Grayden: In much better conditions too, goodness gracious, at Eneabba.

Mr T. H. JONES: Eneabba!

Mr Grayden: What is wrong with Eneabba? It is closer to Perth.

Mr T. H. JONES: What is right with Eneabba?

Mr Grayden: An idyllic situation.

Mr Jamieson: Cut it out now.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Collie.

Mr May: If you stop still in Eneabba the flies carry you away.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Collie.

Mr T. H. JONES: Many members on the Government side are prepared to make their speeches sitting down. Rather than interjecting, they should do as members on this side of the House do; make some direct contribution to the debates of the House. All they ever do is make their speeches sitting down. I was about to ask what assistance had been given to the redundant workers, when the Minister for Labour and Industry said that the Government had found jobs for 50 people.

Mr Grayden: Anyone who wanted a job got it, and within two days. What else are you complaining about?

Mr T. H. JONES: What about long service leave benefits?

Mr Grayden: Goodness gracious me!

Mr Sibson: Ha!

Mr T. H. JONES: The knowledge of the member for Bunbury is very scanty. Surely he remembers the Collie agreement, or has his memory deteriorated since he shifted from Collie? Surely he can remember the trouble in Collie. The honourable member purports to know what happened in Collie, but his memory must have slipped, and I will enlighten him. After the Collie fiasco, the Government of the day provided many benefits. Allowances were made for the expenses involved in shifting families—can the honourable member recall that? He is very quiet now. Pension agreements were negotiated, as well as benefits for long service leave and many other allowances for the workers affected.

I believe the town of Mt. Magnet had a population of 600 prior to the shut down of the mine, and it now has a population of 300. What about the ability of the workers to cope with their hire-purchase commitments on lower wages? The Minister would know what I am referring to.

Mr Grayden: What do you mean by lower wages?

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Government felt there was no alternative to this maximum retrenchment, the responsible thing would have been for the Minister for Mines or another Minister to go to this area and say—

Mr Grayden: The Minister for Labour and Industry went there the following morning doing precisely that.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister for Labour and Industry told me that the only thing the Government could do was to offer jobs.

Mr Grayden: The following morning—not two days later.

Mr T. H. JONES: Did the Government assist the retrenched workers in regard to transportation?

Sir Charles Court: Some were assisted with that. The community welfare people went to the area to look after the people who had problems, including shifting their chattels to another town.

Mr T. H. JONES: Were any assisted?

Sir Charles Court: Some were assisted.

Mr T. H. JONES: How many?

Sir Charles Court: I do not know off-hand. Those who had to be assisted were assisted. There is a set routine for it.

Mr Grayden: We gave all the assistance necessary. You tell us who was not assisted.

Mr T. H. JONES: I will tell the Minister for Labour and Industry—

Mr Grayden: Tell us who was not assisted.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister told us that 50 people were offered jobs. I asked how many retrenched workers were assisted with transportation costs, and the Premier said a few.

Sir Charles Court: Those who needed it.

Mr T. H. JONES: I do not know whether that was two, three, or four.

Sir Charles Court: Tell us who needed assistance and who was not assisted.

Mr T. H. JONES: Perhaps the Premier can tell us how many were assisted.

Mr May: This is the man who has the money.

Mr Sodeman: You are making the accusation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir Charles Court: I think the member for Collie is getting rattled.

Mr T. H. JONES: I said a moment ago that members opposite should make their speeches in the manly way. If they had any guts, they would get to their feet to speak. All speeches from the other side have been made sitting down. I am as impassioned about this issue as is the member for Boulder-Dundas.

Mr Grayden: You have absolutely no facts to justify your accusations.

Mr T. H. JONES: I know the plight of workers in these circumstances. I appeal to the Government: it is not too late yet to hold an investigation into this matter. We would like to know firstly, has alternative work been found for the retrenched workers; secondly, have they been assisted in regard to transportation costs; and thirdly, have they been assisted financially, if there was no alternative to sacking them? That is all I am asking. Such an investigation was carried out after the fiasco in Collie in the 1960s. I know what the people there went through. I know that many could not meet their hire-purchase commitments, and I am aware of the effect of the retrenchments on the wives and children of the workers.

Mr May: And the business people.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is all right for members on the Government side of the House to snigger—one has to be associated with these problems to know how it will affect the people in the goldfields today.

Mr Sibson: You have never personally lived through it.

Mr T. H. JONES: The honourable member could not even remember what happened in Collie; that is how good his memory is.

Mr Grayden: People were flying into Mt. Magnet for days afterwards looking for employees, and they could not get them.

Mr May: In 707s and 727s.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister for Labour and Industry has been most vocal sitting down, as has the member for Bunbury. In their usual manner, their speeches have been made sitting down.

Mr Grayden: And the member for Collie has been talking through his hat!

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister can say what he likes—fortunately I am not answerable to him, I am answerable to other people.

Mr Grayden: I would like to see you put the same argument up to the individuals in Collie. Goodness gracious me—what would they say about an argument like that without a single fact to substantiate it?

Mr T. H. JONES: The people of Collie know the score and the record of this State Government. The individuals of Collie know how much interest the Government

has in Collie because the Minister for Mines has not visited the Collie coalfield since the Court Government came to power.

Mr May: Shame! Is that true?

Mr T. H. JONES: Collie has the most important fuel in Western Australia for power generation, and the Minister for Mines—after the Court Government has been in office for two years—would not know the difference between an open cut or a deep mine because he has not been to see them.

Mr May: He has been around the world twice! He does not know where Collie is.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr T. H. JONES: The point I wanted to make, and I believe I have made it clearly and loudly, is that the Premier tried to take us away from the amendment before the Chair. We are not complaining about what the Government did, but what we are complaining about is the State Government's inaction since the Federal Government made its decision, especially in view of the promises made by Mr Lynch, the present Federal Treasurer, and also those made by Senator Durack.

I think it is a sham, to say the least. It is all very fine for the Premier to criticise the member for Clontarf and other members on this side. But we on this side of the House have a responsibility to focus attention on these matters and to draw them to the notice of the Government. I hope the Government will initiate an investigation into the conditions suffered by workers and their families with a view to giving them a better deal. I support the amendment.

MR J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [9.15 p.m.]: Surely the question at issue in this debate is whether or not a cruel deception was practised on the people of the goldfields. The situation was well known to me because I went up there when the Premier, Mr Brodie Hall, and representatives of the then Federal Opposition were there. The situation was a serious one because the mines were threatened with closure by people who knew what they were talking about.

Naturally enough, the people on the goldfields who had homes there and who remembered what occurred years before, when there was a downturn in the mining industry and they had to sacrifice their dwellings, were wondering what was going to happen to them.

It was in that atmosphere that definite promises were made on behalf of the then Opposition that all that was necessary was to change the Government; that the Whitlam Government was not prepared to assist the goldfields in its serious situation, but if the Government were changed, succour would be at hand. There is no

gainsaying that was the situation that was exploited by the representatives of the then Opposition.

I will say that to the credit of the Premier he indicated he was prepared to provide quite substantial financial assistance. He also created the impression that he believed assistance would be forthcoming from the Federal Government if it were changed. So, although he did not come out himself and promise on behalf of the then Opposition in the Federal Parliament that assistance would be provided by a new Federal Government, he certainly gave me the impression he believed that if there were a change of Government, the money required on the goldfields would be provided by that new Government in Canberra, and by the State Government here.

It is no good talking about what was done by the Minister for Labour and Industry in providing jobs for 50 men. The situation, quite definitely, is this: The people on the goldfields were quite rightly apprehensive about what was going to happen to them and their properties; they did not know whether they would have employment, and the business people of the town were concerned as to their future.

In that atmosphere, the members of the Liberal Party and the Country Party exploited the situation to the full and went out of their way to create the impression that if the Whitlam Government were turned out of office, all would be well for them and they would get the assistance for which they were looking.

Our complaint is that when it was not forthcoming and Fraser announced there would be no assistance, this Government remained quiescent. I put this to you, Mr Speaker: Supposing the boot had been on the other foot? Supposing it had been Labor members up there promising this assistance if a Labor Government were put into office in the Federal Parliament? We would have been hearing about this matter in this House every day of sitting; members opposite would be reminding us that promises had been made, and had been broken.

But there is not a word from this Government condemning the Fraser Government and those who represented it when in Opposition for exploiting a situation and putting over what must be regarded as a wicked and cruel deception, because it was known at the time by those who were making these promises that the situation was a very dire one and, at most, the company was not likely to succeed even if the money were forthcoming.

That is our complaint—not what actually happened up there with regard to finding jobs for men or making an offer of some money from the State Government. Our complaint is that the situation was fully exploited for political purposes, and this Government has accepted

it without protest, when it should have been just as loud in its protest about this deception as it would have been if it had been perpetrated by Labor representatives in Kalgoorlie.

So, I would say this amendment to the Address-in-Reply is fully justified. For the Minister for Labour and Industry to say that the case was made on this side without a single fact is nonsense.

Mr Grayden: We are talking about withdrawing redundant miners and placing them elsewhere.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is not what we are talking about at all.

Mr Grayden: We placed every one who wanted a job.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: What we are talking about is that promises were made, and it was a cruel deception. This Government, which would have been very vocal if the deception had been practised by members on my side, has been silent and has not uttered a word of criticism. The Minister for Labour and Industry says that not a single fact was used to back our argument. Although I do not expect to receive an answer—I may be surprised—I ask the Minister for Labour and Industry whether or not he believes that definite promises were made.

Mr Grayden: I am going to tell you one thing: Your Government dealt the greatest blow to goldmining Western Australia has ever had. I will not even begin to mention it; I would not do it to you. But it is a skeleton in your cupboard.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: Mr Speaker, you are a fairly good judge of relativity, and whether answers to questions are fair answers. I ask you: Was the answer which the Minister for Labour and Industry gave to my question a fair answer?

Mr Grayden: The Federal Government would have a very good reason for not providing aid to the goldmining industry, and it would be on economic grounds. It would have looked at the economics of the situation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think it might be better if the Leader of the Opposition did not seek an answer to his question.

Mr Grayden: What about talking about Newman? That is a goldmining area.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It might be better for the Minister if I did not persist in trying to obtain an answer to my question. But I think he owes it to this House to indicate whether or not he believes that representatives of the present Federal Government in fact did make promises to succour the goldmining industry. Will the Minister answer "Yes" or "No"?

Mr Grayden: Every member of the Liberal and Country Parties in the Federal Parliament would be anxious to help the

goldmining industry. However, if they look at the individual circumstances of the various companies and find that under no circumstances would a responsible Government provide assistance, what other course could they take but to decline to assist? That is my answer.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is the kind of answer I expected. The Minister is very vocal. All he had to say was, "Yes" or "No", but of course he had to launch out into a lot of words which, when added up, amounted to nothing. I will tell the Minister this, which he might keep in his mind for future occasions: Sympathy without relief is like giving a man mustard without beef.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

## Ayes—18

Mr Barnett	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bertram	Mr Jameson
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr May
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr A. R. Tonkin
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr J. T. Tonkin
Mr Fletcher	Mr Moller

(Teller)

## Noes—24

Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Neill
Mr Cowan	Mr Ridge
Dr Dadour	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Shalders
Mr Grewar	Mr Sibson
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Sodeman
Mr Laurence	Mr Stephens
Mr McPharlin	Mr Thompson
Mr Mensaros	Mr Tubby
Mr Nanovich	Mr Watt
Mr O'Connor	Mr Young
Mr Old	Mr Clarko

(Teller)

## Pairs

## Ayes

## Noes

Mr Harman	Mr Crane
Mr Bryce	Mrs Craig
Mr Bateman	Mr Blaikie
Mr McIver	Mr Coyne

Amendment thus negated.

*Debate (on motion) Resumed*

MR CARR (Geraldton) [9.28 p.m.]: I should like to take up the time of the House this evening by dealing with a few local matters in the electorate of Geraldton. I intend to concentrate on two ministerial areas; namely, housing and education.

I refer firstly to the matter of housing. The situation in Geraldton has reached a serious point, with tremendously long waiting lists for State Housing Commission accommodation. Not only do we have a great number of people on the waiting lists but also the lists have grown enormously over the last 1½ years or so.

To support this contention, I intend to compare two sets of figures provided to me by two Ministers for Housing. The first list, provided by a previous Minister, relates to the situation as at the 13th November, 1974, and the second provided to me only today by the Minister for

Housing relates to the present period. I apologise to the Minister for re-asking this question on tomorrow's notice paper and thank him for the answer he provided today in correspondence.

On the 13th November, 1974, a total of 235 people were awaiting State Housing Commission accommodation in Geraldton. In approximately 18 months, this list has grown to 373, an increase of 138 people. If we break up the figures, we find they are even more enlightening. Eighteen months ago, 34 people were on the waiting list for two-bedroomed houses; however, only 18 months later we find that 15 Aborigines and 101 Caucasians, a total of 116 people are on the waiting list for similar accommodation.

Turning to three-bedroomed accommodation, 85 were waiting 18 months ago whereas now 23 Aborigines and 119 Caucasians are waiting, making a total of 142 compared with 85, 18 months ago.

The waiting list for four-bedroomed accommodation has grown from 11 to 17. I have not included pensioner accommodation because it has been handled well in Geraldton. A new unit opened recently catering for 36 pensioners, and I am pleased to say that in that particular area the situation is nowhere near as bad as it was. However, a serious position exists regarding family units. It is a situation which is appreciated by the SHC and, in fact, one of its senior men was recently quoted as saying that Geraldton is in the second worst situation in the State after Port Hedland in regard to SHC accommodation. Those large numbers are waiting.

To further illustrate the situation, I will quote the length of time some people have been waiting. Again I will compare the figures for November, 1974, with those for April, 1976.

In November, 1974, there was a waiting period of 12 months for two-bedroomed accommodation. In the case of Aboriginal people the waiting period is now 41 months and for Caucasians is 24 months, a deterioration of 12 months or more.

With regard to three-bedroomed accommodation, in November, 1974, there was a five-month waiting period whereas now the waiting period is 43 months for Aboriginal people and 17 for Caucasians.

The third figure I will quote concerns four-bedroomed accommodation for which in November, 1974, the waiting period was seven months. This has now been extended to 16 months for Aborigines and 22 months for Caucasians.

The Minister is aware of the seriousness of the problem of accommodation, but it cannot be hammered home too hard. The programme embarked upon, while bigger and better in Geraldton than for the last two or three years, is still nowhere near adequate to meet the demands.

Members will recall that I mentioned a figure of 373 as being the number of people on the waiting list at the moment. The SHC has two projects of about 40 units each in the not-too-distant future. I appreciate the improvement, but I appeal to the Minister to provide even more.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you telling us about the influencing factor on the demand?

Mr CARR: The Minister is referring to the expansion of the three major industries which have been established—the two mineral sands industries, and the meat-works which have just reopened. I am not suggesting that this problem is something which is the result of any particular Government's neglect, or anything like that. The situation is that the demand is far greater than it was.

Mr P. V. Jones: I did indicate in an answer to a question of yours the other day that we are talking to the town council now about further land development.

Mr CARR: That proposal is the point to which I was about to make reference. The question mentioned by the Minister was No. 49 on the 1st April and it dealt with the fact that the SHC is considering plans to open up some of the land it has in the Rangeway area in Geraldton. The most important part of the question I asked—the part concerning me at the moment—was—

- (4) What provision is provided for discussion before implementation with local interest groups in general and the Geraldton community forum in particular?

To which the answer was—

- (4) It is assumed by the commission that in relation to planning matters, the relevant local authorities do reflect and represent the views of local interest groups.

Let me say at this point that I do not for a moment dispute the fact that local authorities are representative of the views of people in the local community, but I do argue that in addition to local authorities there are other groups in the community which represent certain views and could provide valuable assistance in this type of discussion.

To explain to the House what is occurring, I would indicate that it is proposed that a large area of land south of Rangeway will become a fairly large housing development. Rangeway is already an SHC development and it is proposed to extend the development considerably.

Mr P. V. Jones: Private builders will be involved also, not only the SHC.

Mr CARR: The point I wish to make is that there is concern in the minds of many people that this SHC area may become just another mass of SHC houses, as has been the case in the past. These areas are obviously SHC areas.

Mr P. V. Jones: It will not be.

Mr CARR: There is a degree of disappointment in the minds of people that this area will look an obvious SHC area.

I suggest that while the council does represent the views of the people in general terms it does not always do so in specific terms because councillors are busy people and must spend a great deal of time on many projects. They must become involved in many aspects including health inspection work, finance, town planning work, and community recreation. A wide range of subjects concerns local councillors.

Many people in the community do not have time to contribute to the council work with its wide front, but they have specific interest areas. The Geraldton community forum is a very good example. I know a number of other towns have these voluntary meeting groups. Last year the member for Bunbury referred to a similar group in his town.

The group in Geraldton comprises people from Government departments, voluntary groups in the community, and church people. They meet on a weekly basis and are principally concerned with welfare matters. The Department of Social Security, the Department for Community Welfare, the Community Health Services, the Public Health Department, and the Community Recreation Council are a few of the Government instrumentalities involved. Private groups include the Red Cross, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the AWA and several church groups.

These people are obviously not irresponsible. They have a degree of expertise in the field of planning a type of community in which the people would like to live. I suggest to the Minister that this is a responsible group which could and would be able to provide valuable advice to the committee which is planning developments in the area, and I would ask him to again study the answer he gave to that question and give consideration to his committee in Geraldton meeting with this community forum.

Mr P. V. Jones: Yes.

Mr CARR: I thank the Minister.

Turning to educational problems in Geraldton, the first matter with which I wish to deal is the concern at the John Willcock High School that it may not proceed immediately to a senior high school.

To put the school in perspective for the House, the first stage last year went to year eight. This year it went to year nine. It will proceed to year 10 in 1977, but there is doubt as to whether it will then stay as a three-year high school for some years or whether it will proceed immediately to fourth year by 1978 and fifth year in 1979.

The concern which is felt in this matter was heightened recently when the school was given the opportunity to view the plans for the projected stage 2 to be built

later this year for operation next year. The plan sent to the school varied considerably from the original concept of the development the school would make, and this raised fears in many minds including those of PCA members, staff members, and students, that the school may remain a three-year high school.

Therefore I asked the Minister a question last week and the answer was that no decision has been made and that the matter would be considered during 1977. That answer of course further increased the fears of those involved with the school.

For a number of reasons it is very important that the school proceeds immediately to fifth year. Although it is a new school, it is developing a good school spirit and community of interest. However, this has been threatened because it is feared that students will be less enthusiastic about the school if they know they must move to another school after spending only three years there. The school has established its own identity and it would be a pity to spoil it by moving children on to another school.

The second problem which will arise if the high school is not upgraded to a five-year high school immediately concerns the overcrowding at Geraldton Senior High School which experienced a problem before the building of the second high school.

In respect of Geraldton Senior High School, it is still used to capacity as is the temporary accommodation which was provided in the 1950s. It is not in the interests of that school to add to the number of students it already has.

The third reason for John Willcock High School to be upgraded immediately to a five-year high school concerns the problem of turnover of staff. Most people would be aware that promotional positions—such as those to principal, deputy principal, and senior master—in three-year high schools are junior to similar positions in senior high schools.

Many teachers do not like to be sent to the country to teach, and it is difficult to get the teaching staff to remain in country centres for any length of time. In the case of a junior promotional position the teaching staff know that they have to spend only one or two years in such a position before they can return to the metropolitan area and be appointed to other promotional positions. Where the vacant positions are the lower positions the teaching staff will go to the country centres, remain there for as short a period as possible, and move back to the metropolitan area. There is a big turnover in the teaching staff and that is not in the interests of the children being educated.

I turn now to the pre-primary centre which I believe should be built at the Bluff Point Primary School in readiness

for next year. To support my suggestion that such a pre-primary centre should be built I have taken out certain figures given by the Minister in answer to questions, in order to determine how many pre-school children are catered for.

The best way for me to do that is to take the number of children in year 1 in all schools in the Geraldton area this year. In his answer the Minister said there were 524 children enrolled in year 1 in schools in the Geraldton area. I am assuming that the number will be similar to the number of children in their fifth year, and ready for kindergarten.

The next part of my question was—

How many pre-school places are presently available in Geraldton?

The number given by the Minister was 334. So, we have the situation where there are 200 more children in their fifth year than there are places in pre-school centres.

The situation at the Bluff Point Primary School is particularly bad. It is developing quickly but it does not have a pre-school centre.

Mr Sibson: Have the people there made a request for one?

Mr CARR: The people there are keen to have some form of pre-school education. I shall not enter into an argument as to what form it should take. At a recent meeting a committee was formed to look at various ways to establish some form of pre-primary education, such as the use of a local hall for a year or so to accommodate the children, until something more permanent is provided.

Mr Sibson: Have you raised this question with the Minister?

Mr CARR: I have raised it in the House by way of questions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the member for Geraldton to address the Chair. By doing that the *Hansard* reporter will be able to hear him.

Mr CARR: The people there may or may not have contacted the Minister directly. As their representative in Parliament I have raised the matter with the Minister in the House. I asked questions about this last year, and again on the 1st April. In my question on the 1st April I asked the Minister—

Has the Government given further consideration to building a pre-primary centre at the Bluff Point School in readiness for the 1977 school year?

The answer given by the Minister was "No".

Mr Sibson: There is a correct procedure to do this; that is, for the people to request that consideration be given to the matter.

Mr CARR: Whilst that might be a correct procedure, I suggest to the member for Bunbury that it is also correct for their

representative in the State Parliament to raise the matter in the House. I then asked the Minister—

If (3) is "Yes" will the Minister indicate the conclusions of such consideration, and if "No" will he give urgent consideration to meeting this serious need?

The Minister's reply was as follows—

The Government's policy is to utilise the available funds to provide pre-primary centres at new schools. If any surplus funds become available pre-primary centres will be provided at existing schools.

From that I gained the impression that the only schools being provided with pre-primary centres were new schools being built.

I asked the Minister a further question as to where the pre-primary centres were being built. In his reply the Minister said that 22 pre-primary centres had been constructed, and that another eight were under construction, making a total of 30.

I asked the Minister how many of these were built in conjunction with new schools. In his reply the Minister indicated that seven of the 30 I have mentioned were built in conjunction with new schools. In the second part of his reply the Minister said—

All the rest were built subsequent to the opening of the primary school.

This meant that 23 primary schools had pre-primary centres added at a later stage.

The only really important point that arises is that at least 23 examples in this State correspond with the situation at Bluff Point Primary school. The Bluff Point area desperately needs some form of pre-primary education. I would emphasise that there are 23 examples of where pre-primary centres have been added to existing schools. I would implore the Minister for Education to have a close look at the Bluff Point Primary School with a view to providing it with a pre-primary centre in readiness for the 1977 school year.

Mr Sibson: I suggest that a body such as the P & C should make an approach to the Minister.

Mr CARR: Certainly there are other channels available, and I thank the honourable member for his advice.

The last point on the subject of education which I want to deal with concerns the problem of guidance officers. It is true to say that we have no guidance officer at Geraldton, and there is much concern about this. Last year a guidance officer was located at Geraldton Senior High School, but he has since taken a promotional position in Manjimup.

In this respect I must refer to an answer given by the Minister to a question I asked, because it is a good example of the way in which some people play with words. I asked the Minister—

Is it a fact that the guidance officer who was transferred from the Geraldton area at the end of 1975 has not been replaced?

The reply of the Minister was—

The guidance officer was not transferred but applied for an advertised vacancy to which he was entitled. This vacancy was in a country district where there was no guidance officer.

If that is not a way in which to say a teacher was transferred without actually saying he was transferred, then I do not know of any.

Mr Shalders: It is not fair to say that.

Mr CARR: The teacher who was there was in the employ of the Education Department, and now he is somewhere else still in the employ of the Education Department, but he has not been replaced. While it is not technically correct to say that teacher has been transferred, it does not make the position any better for the children who had a guidance officer available last year but none this year.

Mr Barnett: He was probably transferred to a Liberal electorate!

Mr CARR: I turn now to the question of how many guidance officers are employed in the Education Department system. I found some enlightening figures in the answers given by the Minister. There are 132 guidance officers employed by the department, but only 16 are located in country areas. A lot has been said about the discrimination against country areas, and this is one of the worst examples I have seen.

Mr Shalders: I sympathise with what you say, but the weakness is that the Education Department cannot transfer these people. They have to apply for a position.

Mr CARR: I thank the honourable member for his contribution. I asked the Minister where the 16 guidance officers in the country were located. I was told that two were located in Geraldton and the Midlands area. That seems to conflict with the answer I received a little earlier that there was none in Geraldton. I asked the Minister to clarify the inconsistency.

The Minister replied—

There is in fact no inconsistency between the two answers referred to.

The reply to question 27 was that two officers served the whole Geraldton and Midlands area.

I was mystified by that reply. I was reminded of a serial I used to listen to on the radio many years ago, called "The Scarlet Pimpernel". It always commenced—

They seek him here, they seek him there, they cannot find him anywhere.

That seemed to be the situation so far as our guidance officers were concerned. I went a little further today and asked where the two guidance officers were located, and the schools to which they were attached. I found that the area of Geraldton and the Midlands also includes Carnarvon, and that the two people are stationed in Carnarvon. I might say that I was aware that two people were in Carnarvon, and I am also aware that one person is there for one term only and that the other, a Mr Sharpe, is the acting guidance officer for the whole north-west. He will shortly be moving to Karratha so he will not be very useful to the people of Geraldton during this year.

Mr Laurance: He will work in the areas south of that town.

Mr CARR: To further emphasise the seriousness of the situation I will mention some other figures. I will also mention the number of students involved in the area covered by the guidance officer stationed in Geraldton last year. In answer to a question asked by me I was told that there are 8 351 Government school children and 2 441 non-Government school children, making a total of 10 792. They are catered for by two guidance officers presently in Carnarvon and it appears that those two officers will not be in the area for the whole of the year. There is not much chance for individual attention for children who live in Geraldton.

I want to make the point and allay the belief which some people have that I am talking only about vocational guidance officers. I am talking about something much more serious than that—people who are trained in psychology and who provide advice to children who have any sort of learning difficulty at all.

The problems may be behavioural, with some psychological background. The guidance officers deal particularly with remedial problems—such as reading—and they are also of general use to the school. If some guidance is provided to a child with a problem it is very likely the child will be stopped from disrupting his class to the benefit of the class and the school.

I would like to comment on the more general problem of guidance officers and assistants. The member for Murray mentioned earlier that there were not enough promotional positions. A certain number of positions are advertised but there are not enough people applying for those positions. The least attractive vacancies, in the country areas, are not filled.

The problem goes much deeper because we have a system where counselling assistants work under guidance officers. The counselling assistants graduate to guidance officers. They usually attend a university or a college and then spend two years under a guidance officer in the profession. However, because we do not have

enough district guidance officers, enough counselling assistants cannot be appointed. As a result, we do not have enough qualified people ready to move to the position of guidance officer and in turn the position is further complicated because we cannot appoint additional counselling assistants to work under the guidance officers. That is a "catch 22" situation. We cannot add to the number of guidance officers or counselling assistants to the extent that is required.

I suggest that something needs to be done by the Minister in order somehow to break that nexus which appears to exist so that we can have more guidance officers to fill all the positions available. The problem needs to be well and truly examined by the Government in order to break the nexus. I thank members for their indulgence.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balga) [9.55 p.m.]: I rise to make one or two brief comments on a number of subjects, some of which concern my electorate and some of which are, I believe, of concern to the people of Western Australia as a whole.

The first matter I wish to raise revolves around the subject of a question I asked of the Minister for Consumer Affairs in this House on Wednesday, the 7th April. The question concerned a major problem that is causing a great deal of concern and a great deal of anguish to many Western Australians who had set their hearts on shifting into new homes only to find that the plaster work on the walls of those homes was proving to be defective.

Let no-one be under any misapprehension about the magnitude of the problem that is confronting the State when we talk about defective plaster work in new homes.

It is conservatively estimated that to strip down and replace entirely the defective plaster work which has so far been evidenced in homes throughout the State would cost in the region of \$8 million. It is also conceded that the amount of money involved in applying the unproved formula recommended by the Consumer Protection Bureau in association with scientific advice—and which is supposed to be the solution to the problem—will run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

It is not a small problem, but it is one which I believe this Government has neglected to act upon, and it is a problem for which this Government has neglected to provide proper and adequate advice and guidance.

The question I asked in this House on Wednesday, the 7th April, was in 23 parts and it was a genuine attempt on my part to obtain information about a very serious problem. The answer which the Minister gave to my question evaded my attempt to obtain information and in my opinion treated frivolously a situation which is of great concern.

There are many interesting questions that need to be answered about this situation, not the least of which is the allegation that at the time when the defective plaster was becoming apparent supplies were still being used on homes under construction, and supplies of plaster were being provided to tradesmen about to embark on the construction of new homes. That is a very serious allegation and one which should be thoroughly investigated; it is one which should be quickly acted upon if, in fact, it is true.

There has been a dismal lack of information about the effectiveness of the treatment that this Government, through the Consumer Protection Bureau, is advising should be applied to walls where the plaster is defective. People are in a quandary as to the best method to be followed in trying to remedy the problem which is caused through no fault of their own.

The Master Plasterers Association is at variance with the advice being offered by the Consumer Protection Bureau, and as yet the bureau has no definitive results of the tests or the treatment that it has recommended people to undertake.

That is the situation in which the Government has abdicated its responsibility. It is a very serious problem. The Government, by its lack of action, has shown that it has failed to grasp the significance of the defect.

I wish also to raise the question of the Tresillian Hostel which it will be remembered was the subject of a motion in this House of recent months. When one looks upon the developments involving the Tresillian Hostel, at this time, one wonders just what all the confusion and trauma were about. One wonders why it was necessary for the Government to buy the Kareeba Nursing Home in Belmont only to find that it could not be used to house the profoundly retarded the Government wanted to shift from the Tresillian Hostel. Why were those old people from the Kareeba Nursing Home turned out from the home which had grown to be theirs, for no reason at all? That was an ill-considered move by this Government; a move which subsequent events have proved to be unnecessary and to be intemperate.

The Government failed to consider all the options that were available to it and quite heartlessly determined that the profoundly retarded should be turned out of Tresillian and the aged people should be turned out of Kareeba, only to discover after the event that Kareeba could not be used to house the profoundly retarded. There was an obligation upon the Government to investigate the situation properly prior to determining that Kareeba should be bought.

It is also interesting to note that the Premier in answer to a question in this House said he had been informed by the

Nedlands City Council that no application had been made for Federal Government funds with which to facilitate the purchase of the Tresillian Hostel from the State Government. It is quite clearly shown in the minutes of the Nedlands City Council that the council's town clerk had outlined to councillors that the financial structure of the deal in which Tresillian would be bought depended very heavily on assistance from both the State and Australian Governments. We now find the council says no application has been made. The council says its ratepayers will be forced to foot the entire bill, not because the Australian Government has said "No", but because the Australian Government has not been asked.

Tresillian has been a chapter of tragedies from start to finish. This Government has been culpable. This Government has been heartless and has made very serious mistakes which could have been avoided to lessen the heartbreak and concern of so many people.

I am very anxious, for the benefit of the people I represent, to impress upon the Minister for Housing that the proposed Mirrabooka town centre is very eagerly awaited. The Minister probably has some knowledge of my electorate which is one of the biggest State Housing Commission estates in the metropolitan area; and he will know the shopping facilities at present serving my electorate and surrounding suburbs are very limited. The Mirrabooka town centre which has been planned for many years is eagerly awaited and is essential to ensure there is proper provision of shopping facilities for people in my electorate and surrounding areas.

Mr P. V. Jones: It is coming.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I thank the Minister for that indication.

I would also like to refer very briefly—because I do not think this debate is the time when these matters should be raised at length—to certain policies of the State Housing Commission; firstly, transfers. There is no doubt that the State Housing Commission is unable to provide all those people who require transfers with the transfers they seek. In other words, the State Housing Commission is not able precisely to match people's wants or expectations with the commission's capacity to provide. At the same time, it seems to me the commission when faced with difficult situations is quite apt to opt for the easiest way out and for the way out which very quickly places a roof over the head of a family in need but which surely, though not as quickly, creates problems for the State Housing Commission.

There needs to be available more expert and specialised advice to those who decide where people shall be housed and amongst whom they shall be housed. It is very easy to relieve a family's worry temporarily by

placing them in an environment—perhaps a flat or a town house—in a short space of time; but in doing that it is just as easy to create a situation which is deplorable in the long run and which perpetuates itself in trouble as the months go by. People have short memories and when present worries are relieved the mind turns to those which persist. By not practising a policy of balanced and intelligent placement of people seeking rental assistance, the State Housing Commission is creating problems for itself.

Another matter I want to raise concerning the State Housing Commission, whose presence is so vivid in my electorate, is that of maintenance. It has been my experience through working in an electorate which comprises State Housing Commission homes that the commission is rather less than efficient in making allowance for the maintenance items which are necessary on the homes rented by the commission.

Mr P. V. Jones: What does that mean?

Mr B. T. BURKE: It means the State Housing Commission quite often opts for temporary relief in the face of a very obvious permanent need. I have had many experiences where the State Housing Commission's maintenance men have returned to the same problem on four or five occasions. On the fifth or perhaps the sixth occasion the problem has been remedied, and my constituent has told me the problem which was remedied was the one to which the commission's attention was originally drawn. It may not happen in the Minister's electorate but it certainly happens in mine and I understand it is the experience of other members on this side of the House. It is nothing that cannot be put right—and this Government, after all, was the master of putting things right—in a very short space of time.

I also want to raise a matter concerning the Minister for Local Government and Urban Development and Town Planning, who unfortunately is not here tonight; but it is a very interesting matter. I will cast the minds of members back to the time I raised the problem I saw involving the uniform building by-laws and the inadequate provision for fire safety regulations.

The Minister, shooting from the hip loudly and frequently, decried the need to consider the uniform building by-laws, and every time he did so there was a major fire. Every time he said it was not necessary to undertake a revision of those building by-laws pertaining to fire prevention we had a blaze which cost thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I am glad the Minister has finally reached the point where he now says the amendments proposed or being considered to the uniform building by-laws with regard to fire safety are necessary. It would have been much simpler and much less

painful had the Minister decided to adopt the sensible course from the start. However, I suppose we should be thankful for small mercies and for a situation which appears as though it might soon be righted.

The last matter I want to touch on is the general nonperformance of the Court Government. When I meet people who tell me they are Liberal supporters I ask them to list for me the things the Court Government has achieved. There are many things the Court Government has done. It has blamed the Whitlam Government very often and very loudly; but that is not achieving anything for the people of Western Australia; that is just escaping responsibility.

Another thing the Court Government has done is to speak very loudly about things that do not exist, have not existed, and probably will not exist in the future. We hear all about the development pipeline but the only development has been the development of the development pipeline. There have been no developments; there are unlikely to be any developments at the hands of an inept Government; and all we hear about these developments is words, words, words.

In the case of the underprivileged, I am hopeful they are satisfied with words, and that they find those words nourishing, because they have received precious little else from this Government.

The Government was very keen to set up committees of inquiry which would look into and define the problems of the aged. I am sure that the aged are comforted to know that the Government now knows of the problem that the aged have known of for so many years. However, I am even more sure that the aged would be more comforted if they thought that this Government would actually do something to relieve the difficulties and problems they are now facing. But of course, this Government will not—it will merely talk. It is very good at talking, but it is not very good at doing.

We have heard also about the promises that this Government has fulfilled. When we consider that one of the promises it set itself was to restore Liberal Government in Western Australia, we find that the promises themselves are not very substantial, are they? But of course, the less substantial the promises, the easier they are to fulfil. We have heard also about the Government's promises with respect to unemployment and with respect to inflation. Without qualification, when he was the Leader of the Opposition, the now Premier said that he would solve the problem of inflation. Of course he did not. He spoke about it; he spoke loudly about it, and he spoke very often about it. The only thing he forgot to do was to do anything about it. But then, that is his trademark, and that is his peculiarity.

He spoke also about unemployment; he was going to solve the problem of unemployment, and he was going to put people back to work. The Premier's latest excuse amounts to unemployment being a vicious rumour started by people who cannot find jobs. The situation remains not the same, but worse than it was when the Government assumed power.

It is very easy to talk about doing things; it is harder actually to achieve them. This Government has talked, and talked very well. This Government has acted on precious few occasions, and on the few occasions that it has acted, it has done very little. The people I meet who profess to be Liberal supporters are unable to list for me any substantial achievements of the Court Government, and the exercise is a little unfair to them because the Government has no substantial achievements. If they were to list any, they would be telling lies.

The final point I want to mention is one of the unfortunate byproducts of the election of a Government that holds the philosophy that is held by the present Government in this State. When we elect a Government that professes, in airy-fairy terms, to favour free enterprise and to allow people to earn according to their own ability in an unfettered and free way, we usually find that that philosophy filters down through the bureaucracy. I have received complaints from many people who say that the Consumer Affairs Bureau now exhibits a much less willing attitude towards the problems drawn to its attention. I hope this is not true, but I am very much afraid that it is.

In one recent case the person who approached the Consumer Affairs Bureau was told that nothing could be done. I advised that person to lodge a claim before the Small Claims Tribunal, and within a few days of the hearing being set down to consider the case, the company involved paid the full amount of the repair which was the topic at issue. It seems to me that it would have been much easier for the Consumer Affairs Bureau not to write back to my constituent to say nothing could be done, but to write to the company asking whether something could be done.

I am disturbed also at what appears to be a less than adequate amount of publicity dedicated by this Government to the Small Claims Tribunal. I believe that this tribunal is an admirable institution. It is not one for which this Government can claim credit, of course, because the legislation was drawn up before the Tonkin Labor Government left office. Nevertheless, it is to this Government's credit that the legislation was proceeded with, but it is not to this Government's credit that the results of the consideration and passage of that legislation are not publicised adequately.

I would like to see a much more comprehensive publicity campaign launched to ensure that the Small Claims Tribunal

fulfils adequately the promise it showed in its early stages, and the role that was mapped out for it by those who envisaged its implementation.

There are many more things I wish to say, particularly in the area of housing and land prices, but they will be reserved for a later date. It is sufficient to say that this Government will aptly be remembered under the title of "Promises, Promises", "Talk not Action" or "Non-performance rather than Performance". It blamed the Whitlam Government while that Government was in office; it is now loath to blame the Fraser Government, but the time is approaching rapidly when this Government will have to either put up or shut up.

**MR MOILER (Mundaring) [10.16 p.m.]**: I have some comments I wish to make this evening. The first issue I wish to raise is the hypocrisy of this Government in its attitude to private enterprise within Western Australia. A constituent of mine received a very poor response from the Government when he endeavoured to enlarge his business undertaking. He has a tourist travel service, and he initiated within Western Australia pensioner group travel and also what is termed safari travel.

This man has developed a business in the tourist sector of the State whereby he has arranged for safari-type tours for some thousands of school children. He has provided a service also for tours by pensioner groups. He proposed to develop his tours for pensioners further to provide motel-hotel-type accommodation for groups. However, true to the attitude of this Liberal Government, when he attempted to obtain a licence from the Transport Commission to enlarge his business—and he had proved he was quite capable of doing this—the commission flatly refused to entertain the idea.

This gentleman is operating a fully Western Australian company. I am trying to find the letter my constituent received from the Transport Commission setting out the reasons for refusing permission to conduct these tours.

**Mr O'Connor**: I think it was because of existing services.

**Mr MOILER**: The commission claimed that possibly the venture would not be viable because of these other operators.

The other operators in this field are Parlorcars Tours and Pioneer Tourist Coaches, which operate throughout Australia and are not Western Australian companies. Here we have a Western Australian company which is quite capable of providing a high standard of service in this field, and yet it is refused the opportunity to try to establish itself merely because it is claimed the position of the other operators would not be viable.

When we consider that reason we find that all the other operators need to do in order to continue to receive Government protection is to increase their fleets of vehicles as the industry enlarges and more people take coach tours; and then they will be in a position such as they are in now, and this Government will continue to provide protection for this monopoly.

Mr O'Connor: Have you read the Transport Commission Act?

Mr MOILER: No, I have not, but that does not alter the fact that here is a person who is quite capable of providing a service comparable with that provided by the two major companies, and yet the Transport Commission, maintained by this Government, is able to refuse him the opportunity to go into this venture.

Mr O'Connor: Has he not been granted a licence?

Mr MOILER: Yes, but under strict conditions which he accepts and with which he will comply.

Mr O'Connor: That is what he asked for, isn't it?

Mr MOILER: No, he wishes to enter the field of pensioner group tours.

Mr O'Connor: That has been agreed to.

Mr MOILER: Yes, but on a limited arrangement. Whereas the major companies are licensed for a period of 12 months, this man must front up and obtain agreement for him to conduct each tour.

Mr O'Connor: The reason I asked had you read the Transport Commission Act is that it sets down rigid conditions which must be complied with.

Mr MOILER: Yes. Whereas I have not read the Transport Commission Act, I have read the policy speech given by the Premier, and it is quite clear that the Premier claimed he would help small businesses and that he wanted to protect Western Australian industry; and yet here is a golden opportunity for him to do this but no action is taken.

Mr O'Connor: That is a rather silly argument. If someone wanted to open a hotel next to another hotel, should we allow that?

Mr MOILER: If the community is happy to have another hotel I do not think it should be the concern of the Government. It should be the concern of the community to ascertain whether or not one hotel is adequate. Without any consultation with this applicant, the Transport Commission and the Minister in his letter assumed that he has not the resources, and possibly not the capability to conduct the tours.

Mr O'Connor: Did I say he didn't have the resources?

Mr MOILER: It was assumed that he did not have the financial resources, and this assumption was made without any

reference to the person concerned to check whether it was right. I can assure the Minister he has the financial resources and that if he were granted a 12-month licence as the other two companies are granted he would be able to operate quite successfully.

Mr O'Connor: Did you say I said he didn't have the financial resources?

Mr MOILER: Yes. The Minister assumed that.

Mr O'Connor: Would you read that sentence in my letter?

Mr MOILER: I apologise to the Minister and to the House for not having a copy of the letter with me. However, I have in front of me one of the replies from the Commissioner of Transport.

Mr O'Connor: That is not from the Minister.

Mr MOILER: No, but the Minister's implication was much the same as that of the commissioner—that it was felt this person would not have the financial resources to develop the industry. It would be fair enough to make such an assumption if some check had been made, but although this person made approaches he was never given the opportunity to explain his financial position and what he wanted to do. He was flatly refused the opportunity further to explain his proposition.

Mr O'Connor: That is not so.

Mr MOILER: It is so; it was not till I took up the case on his behalf that he received any reasonable response.

Mr O'Connor: I am sorry, I thought you were referring to me.

Mr MOILER: No. It was only after I took up the matter with the Minister that this gentleman was given some slight concession. The point I am making is that the concession he has been given is too small. He is not allowed to accommodate his passengers in motel accommodation but must accommodate them in hotels or boarding houses. For some reason which avoids me the commission has seen fit to restrict him from using motel accommodation even if it is readily available.

As I see it, the whole situation is completely contrary to the policy the Premier advocated of aid for the smaller industry, even to the point of providing financial assistance. Even if it were correct—and it is not—that this person's resources were such that he could not reasonably enter upon this project, here would be the golden opportunity for the Government, which said it would give financial aid to small industry, to assist this gentleman, because the Minister now admits that the gentleman has the capability and is quite reliable and could develop this industry.

The Minister has seen fit to give him a limited licence, and I would hope that on further study of his case the Minister will

agree to the provision of an annual licence and conditions similar to those which apply to Parlorcars Tours and Pioneer Tourist Coaches.

Another matter I would like to raise while the Minister for Transport is in the House is in respect of a question I asked him in this place today. The question concerns the shocking event of the last race meeting held at Toodyay during the last season. A gravel road runs from Toodyay Road to the racecourse. Probably many members would know this road, having possibly visited the racecourse on one or two occasions.

An infrequently used railway line crosses this road. I suppose that some hundreds of cars would have travelled from the metropolitan area to Toodyay for that race meeting. When travelling from Perth, I did not see one Road Traffic Authority vehicle or officer until I reached this small stretch of gravel road, where I saw two or three of these vehicles: RTA officers were stopping and apprehending people for failing to stop at the rail crossing.

These people could not have been travelling fast when they crossed the line because the line of traffic would have precluded them from doing so; they were merely crawling across the line at two or three miles an hour, but were apprehended. Obviously, no educational advantage would be derived from the exercise, and I could only come to the conclusion that the Road Traffic Authority officers were indulging in nothing more than revenue raising.

Mr Nanovich: Why did you not raise the matter when it occurred?

Mr MOILER: Did the member for Toodyay?

Mr Nanovich: Yes, the next day. That was some eight months ago, and the member for Mundaring would have done well to have looked into the matter instead of coming in here and blowing his bags.

Mr MOILER: Did the member raise the matter on behalf of the Toodyay Race Club or the local shire, and if he did so, did he advise them of the decision?

Mr Nanovich: Yes, I advised the president of the race club.

Mr MOILER: What was the advice the member gave him?

Mr Nanovich: I advised him of what had occurred.

Mr MOILER: We know what occurred; that was the problem!

Mr Nanovich: The president of the race club said he was satisfied with the reply and I have heard no more about it.

Mr MOILER: I would say that as the result of the activities of the RTA, a great number of people will never return to that race club. Before they even started the

day, they were down, and for no good purpose. It makes the Government and the RTA look ridiculous.

The patrolmen could have been out on the roads, where we see gross traffic infringements occurring; they could have been protecting the lives of the people using the roads. However, they waited in a stupid position and indulged in a bit of revenue raising for this Government. My question today asked the Minister whether he would take steps to ensure that such a shocking thing did not occur again by appointing a flagman at this crossing to direct people across.

Mr O'Connor: Do you want me to place a flagman at each level crossing throughout the State?

Mr MOILER: Of course I do not.

Mr O'Connor: Why did not the race club arrange it?

Mr Hartrey: They do not control traffic, do they?

Mr MOILER: It is a railway crossing and I would expect that the appropriate authority to authorise a flagman would be the Railways Department. I accept that it is not reasonable for just any individual to position himself at the crossing and start beckoning people across.

Mr Watt: Has the race club made such a request?

Mr O'Connor: No.

Mr MOILER: I understood from the Minister's answer that a request had been made.

Mr O'Connor: Yes, from the member for Toodyay.

Mr MOILER: My question asked as follows—

(1) Has the Toodyay Race Club or the Toodyay Shire Council requested the installation of lights at the rail crossing on the approach road to the Toodyay race course?

(2) Has a request been made to position a flag man or person to control the traffic generated by the race club patrons over the rail crossing on the occasion of the club's meetings this coming season?

Mr O'Connor: They may have made a request, but not directly to me.

Mr Taylor: That was very quick thinking!

Mr MOILER: I believe the Minister has conceded my point and I certainly hope he will arrange for my request to be carried out and that the officers of the RTA will not be so stupid in the future as to position themselves in this ridiculous manner.

Mr O'Connor: The men will be very pleased to hear you say that.

Mr MOILER: It was stupid; there is no other word for it.

Mr Watt: You do not think that perhaps the people who were apprehended may be more careful at level crossings in the future?

Mr MOILER: Some of the people who were apprehended will not attend race meetings at Toodyay in the future, and it will be the race club which misses out.

Mr O'Connor: That is nonsense! People who go to race meetings will go whether or not they are apprehended for a traffic infringement on the way.

Mr MOILER: I hope the Minister will ensure that the officers of the RTA show a little more common sense in the way they operate when race meetings are conducted in the coming season.

Another point I should like to raise relates to the practice of lending institutions, banks and building societies stipulating to people borrowing money for the purpose of home purchases that they should insure their premises with certain insurance companies. I believe this is quite wrong. It has been brought to my attention regularly by people signing up for home loans that the agreement contains small print to the effect that they must insure with a particular company; yet it is possible for these people to obtain a better insurance cover at a cheaper premium elsewhere.

These lending institutions, generally, have a monopoly, and naturally a person who is trying to borrow money from, say, the Perth Building Society, will not be prepared to argue the matter for fear that he may jeopardise the granting of the loan.

Mr Hartrey: This applies to hire purchase, too.

Mr MOILER: I can only assume that during the term of office of the Labor Government, we corrected the position.

Mr Hartrey: You would be wrong.

Mr P. V. Jones: Action is already being taken in this respect, because the matter currently is before the Trade Practices Tribunal. It has not brought down a decision, but the case is being heard at the moment.

Mr MOILER: Is the Government putting forward a submission in respect of the abolition of this practice?

Mr P. V. Jones: Why would the Government want to do that?

Mr MOILER: I would suggest that people should not be compelled by lending institutions to insure their dwellings with a particular insurance company, and that it would be appropriate for the Government to put forward a submission along those lines.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is what the tribunal is considering at the moment—the whole question of building societies and others directing borrowers to specific insurance companies.

Mr MOILER: But the Government could make a submission. I think it would be quite fitting for the Government to put forward a decision if it believes it is the right thing to do. Does the Government believe that these companies should be able to direct with which insurance company a person must insure?

Mr P. V. Jones: Firstly, I indicate that the matter is being considered and is before the Trade Practices Tribunal. Secondly, the situation is not quite as you suggest because it varies from company to company and from financial institution to financial institution.

Mr MOILER: I thank the Minister for that information. I certainly hope that it will result in an improvement in this position in which people are compelled to insure with particular companies in accordance with the directions from the lending institutions with which they raise their finance.

The final matter I wish to draw to the attention of the Government is the overcrowding of school buses which is occurring in a number of areas, particularly in the outer metropolitan areas, including the area which contributes to the Eastern Hills High School and Mt. Helena Primary School. There are nine buses which conduct children to the Eastern Hills High School and the Primary School. Five of those are Metropolitan Transport Trust buses and four are privately conducted. Each of these buses is filled to capacity. Under the provisions of the Transport Act and the Education Department requirements those buses may carry the number of persons for whom there is seating plus 50 per cent. One can imagine how full a bus is when that number of people is being carried. Almost every bus is carrying within one or two of the number which it can legally carry under the requirements. Whilst the legal requirements are complied with, it is quite unreasonable that so many children should be crammed into a bus. In country areas the seating accommodation of the bus plus 20 per cent is allowed to be carried, which is a more reasonable arrangement. I believe it is possible for this condition to apply also to the metropolitan area, particularly the outer metropolitan area. The children in the outer metropolitan areas do not travel the same distances as country children but they still cover many kilometres per day and it is unreasonable that they should be crowded into the school buses.

Whilst I appreciate that the Minister for Education is not in this Chamber, I raise the matter because I believe additional buses should be introduced so that the cramped conditions of the children going to the Eastern Hills High School, which is a developing high school with an increasing enrolment each year, can be alleviated.

Those are the four issues which I wished to raise in this evening's debate. I hope that the Government looks at the points

I have raised. I know the Minister is fully aware of the position of my constituents in connection with tourist coach travel. I appreciate that there has been an improvement in the attitude which the commissioner proposed initially, which was a flat refusal. But the protection which is still being given to these two major companies is quite unreasonable. When a Western Australian company demonstrates that it is capable of entering the Tourist Trade business I believe it should be given every opportunity and encouragement.

It is pleasing to note that the Minister for Housing advises that the captured market of insurance companies with regard to the insurance of housing is being looked into by the Trade Practices Tribunal. I hope that this position is corrected.

I hope that the Minister for Traffic sees fit to ensure that the Road Traffic Authority does not carry on the same practice which it so stupidly carried on on the occasion of the last race meeting at Toodyay. I am very pleased to hear that the member for Toodyay claims to have done something about that matter.

I hope that the overcrowding of school buses to the Eastern Hills High School is corrected in the near future.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Sodeman.

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Premier) [10.46 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.15 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.47 p.m.*

# Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 14th April, 1976

The **PRESIDENT** (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE ASSEMBLY

*Retirement: Luncheon*

**THE PRESIDENT** (the Hon. A. F. Griffith): Before we proceed with the business of the day I have a short announcement to make. Tomorrow, commencing at about 1.00 p.m., the Joint House Committee will tender a buffet luncheon in order to honour the Hon. John Tonkin, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, upon his retirement as Leader of the Labor Party. Members of this Chamber are invited to attend that luncheon in his honour.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### *Postponement*

**THE HON. N. McNEILL** (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [2.34 p.m.]: I ask that questions on notice be deferred to a later stage of the sitting.

The **PRESIDENT**: Questions deferred.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by the Hon. V. J. Ferry, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings of the House granted to the Hon. C. R. Abbey (West) on the ground of ill-health.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: NINTH DAY

### *Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 13th April, on the following motion by the Hon. M. McAleer—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

May it please Your Excellency:

We, the Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

**THE HON. LYLA ELLIOTT** (North-East Metropolitan) [2.39 p.m.]: I would like to commence my remarks today by paying a tribute to the Hon. Ron Thompson for the very fine leadership he provided for Labor Party members of the Legislative Council during his term of office, and to thank him for the ready assistance he has always given—when it was sought—on any problem that might arise.

I would also like to congratulate the Hon. Des Dans on his elevation to the position of Leader of the Opposition in this House, and the Hon. Roy Cloughton who has been elected as our party's Whip. I am sure both of them will carry out their duties admirably.

I would like to deal in some detail with the Speech delivered by the Governor on behalf of the State Government. First of all, we see under the heading "State Finances"—

Indications are that the Budget introduced in State Parliament in October will achieve a balance in 1975/76—

That is not very surprising. As I said in my speech on the Appropriation Bill in November of last year, the State Government will be able to achieve a balance firstly because of the very generous assistance it received from the former Federal Labor Government. For this current financial year it received an increase in untied grants of 34 per cent over the