

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 22 June 1993

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Clarko) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

*Questions without Notice, 2.00 pm on Each Sitting Day*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Clarko): Before I proceed to the routine of business, I advise that I will call for questions without notice at 2.00 pm, or shortly thereafter, on each sitting day. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I will call for questions after the House has dealt with the presentation of petitions, giving of notices of motion, tabling of papers and, from tomorrow, if the House adopts the proposed new Standing Order No 118A, after any brief ministerial statements. Questions without notice will then be called for before the House proceeds to any business on the Notice Paper. On Thursdays, questions will be taken at 2.00 pm immediately upon resumption of the House after lunch.

I draw members' attention to Notice of Motion No 22, standing in the name of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, on page 5 of today's Notice Paper. The motion concludes with a paragraph which comprises entirely argument in support of the motion which precedes it. Accordingly, I direct that the motion be amended to exclude the last paragraph.

## QUESTION TIME - COMMENT BY THE MEMBER FOR BELMONT

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont) [2.05 pm]: Mr Speaker, before we move to petitions, I crave your indulgence in allowing me to make a comment about question time in response to the statement which you have just made.

**The SPEAKER:** I received a letter from the member for Belmont a few minutes before 2.00 pm. I have not had the opportunity of considering it, and I would prefer to meet the member in my rooms and to discuss the matter with him rather than discuss that question now.

## MOTION - CONDOLENCE

*Hasluck, Sir Paul*

**MR COURT** (Nedlands - Premier) [2.06 pm]: I move -

That this House record its sincere regret at the death in January this year of Sir Paul Hasluck and tender its deep sympathy to his family.

Sir Paul Hasluck was born at Fremantle on 1 April 1905 and was educated at Perth Modern School and at the University of Western Australia, where he studied journalism. A journalist and diplomat, he joined the Liberal Party, and in 1949 won the Federal seat of Curtin, which he held until 1969. He was appointed to the Ministry in 1951 as Minister for Territories. After a brief period as Minister for Defence in 1963-64, he was appointed Minister for External Affairs and in the following five years played a key role in Papua New Guinea's preparation for independence and in the diplomatic manoeuvrings over Australia's military involvement in Vietnam. Sir Paul was Governor General from 1969 to 1974, having been appointed by the then Prime Minister, Mr Gorton.

It is with regret that I record also the death last Friday of Dame Alexandra Hasluck, at the age of 85. Sir Paul is survived by his son Nicholas, QC. After Sir Paul's retirement from the position of Governor General, he still attended many functions throughout the Curtin electorate. He was a great public speaker and was much sought after to speak at functions in that area. In the 11 years that I have been the member for Nedlands, up until a year before his death, Sir Paul attended all of the local Returned Services League functions and dinners in that area, and he told some wonderful stories. He was a good journalist and a great politician, and I extend to his family our sympathy in its sorrow and loss.

**DR LAWRENCE** (Glendalough - Leader of the Opposition) [2.08 pm]: On behalf of the Opposition, I join with the Government and with members of this House and the people of

Western Australia in expressing our sympathy to the family of Sir Paul Hasluck. I had the good fortune to meet him on a number of occasions and always found him an extremely intelligent and thoughtful man. I did not know him in the full flush of his career, but as an older man interested in the community he was always someone who insisted upon the highest standards and from whom one could always expect and receive a very considered view on the matters to which he addressed himself.

As we have heard, Sir Paul was a Fremantle boy, having been born there on 1 April 1905. He attended Perth Modern School and was one of the sons of that school, and he also attended the University of Western Australia - "the university" as it was then. Not only did he undertake Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees but also he studied journalism. He joined the staff of *The West Australian* in 1922 and became a senior subeditor. He won the Lovekin prize for journalism several times, and also became a lecturer in Australian history at the University of Western Australia.

Sir Paul then undertook a distinguished career in the Department of Foreign Affairs between 1941 and 1946 and led the Australian Mission to the United Nations. He resigned from that department in 1947. Ironically, from the point of view of members on this side of the House, it was Sir Paul's good friend and great Federal Labor leader, John Curtin, who encouraged him to enter public life, and he began that, as we have heard, coincidentally in the newly created seat of Curtin in 1949 for the Liberal Party and held that seat, with great respect from his constituents, for 20 years. In 1951 he became Minister for Territories under Sir Robert Menzies, a post he held until 1963. Sir Paul spent a short time as Minister for Defence, and then Minister for External Affairs.

It is worth recording that following the disappearance of Harold Holt he narrowly, by a handful of votes, missed winning the leadership ballot which was eventually won by John Gorton. Following his defeat Sir Paul retired from Parliament in 1969 and was made Governor General, a post he retained until 1974. Sir Paul was knighted in 1969 and made a Knight Companion of the Order of the Garter in 1979. As we have heard, the sad departure of his wife, Alexandra, has followed hard upon his own death. She had her own distinguished career and supported him considerably in his work, particularly in literature and history.

Sir Paul was a prolific author who wrote his autobiography, *Mucking About*, in 1977, in which he reflected on what he saw as his failure as a human being. That statement prompted many to say that he judged himself too harshly. Like many in this Chamber I attended his funeral, and it was very clear from the eulogy - which was basically a reading from his own work - and from the descriptions of him by prominent people at the time, that he was always a modest man and set himself the highest standards. He has been described as a man of high principles and genuine intellect.

He was indifferent to personal gain or glory and incapable of sly or devious tactics, and I think everyone who knew him in political and public life would say that of him. It was often said that he lacked the ruthlessness for the job of Prime Minister, but it was also said that he never really wanted it and that he put himself forward as a matter of public duty. Whatever the truth of this, Sir Paul was respected and honoured by all sides of politics and all parts of the community. We mourn his passing and particularly send our sympathy to his son, Nicholas, who is one of our prestigious Western Australian writers.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [2.11 pm]: On behalf of the National Party members of the coalition I support the motion moved by the Premier and the remarks made by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I especially endorse the comment that Sir Paul was a man of great principle. He formally left public life the year I entered Parliament but retained his heavy involvement in a number of public matters. Sir Paul was invited by my family to dedicate a memorial to members of the family in York after they had contributed about 50 years of continuous service to that district, and during the course of his speech the principles he espoused and his compassion became quite evident to those family members.

I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in extending sympathy to Sir Paul's family.

Question passed, members standing.

**MOTION - CONDOLENCE***Jackson, Sir Lawrence***MR COURT** (Nedlands - Premier) [2.13 pm]: I move -

That this House record its sincere regret at the death of Sir Lawrence Jackson and tender its deep sympathy to his family.

Sir Lawrence became a Supreme Court judge at the unusually young age of 36 and had been on the Bench for 20 years before he became Chief Justice in 1969. It has been said that Sir Lawrence brought a totally fresh approach to the court in that it became a kinder, courteous place where even accused people were addressed as "Mr". Sir Lawrence had a passion for music and for cricket. He was the patron of Musica Viva and never missed a classical concert, and he was President of the Western Australian Cricket Association for 12 years. He was also the first President of the National Trust in Western Australia, and held that position for six years.

Sir Lawrence leaves a widow, Mary, a son and two daughters. I extend to the Jackson family our sincere sympathy in their sorrow and loss.

**DR LAWRENCE** (Glendalough - Leader of the Opposition) [2.15 pm]: I rise again to speak on this condolence motion on behalf of members of the Opposition and to acknowledge in the gallery the presence of Sir Lawrence Jackson's daughter, Diana Davies, and his grandson, Tom Davies, especially sensitive to the need and indeed our desire to place on the record the very considerable regard in which we all held Sir Lawrence Jackson. As a graduate of the University of Western Australia I was well aware of the contribution that he made during his time as Chancellor. I had the pleasure of meeting him during that time. I also had the pleasure of knowing his daughter and I know the regard in which the family held him, not just as a public figure but as a family man.

Sir Lawrence was a considerable legal leader because he had the extraordinary distinction of becoming a Supreme Court judge at the age of 36 which, in his time, was really beyond measure. He served on the Supreme Court from 1949 to 1977, a very considerable career. He became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1969 and served in that capacity until his retirement. During that time, as well as the very arduous duties he had as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he was Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. There, he was a great defender of the independence of universities and their right to determine their own fate. He probably would have been saddened by some of the moves we have seen in recent times to make universities more answerable to industry in particular. However, he was also a realist and I am sure that he would have seen the need to swing some of the universities' activities toward more practical ends. He was a very practical man but he was also an enthusiast, as we have heard, for music. He was a great devotee of Musica Viva and someone who always promoted not only the performance but also the creation of music in our community. That love of things cultural extended to his devotion to the National Trust, of which he was the first president, serving from 1957 to 1964. He also did what many Australians do and followed cricket with some enthusiasm. For his many services to the community he was knighted in 1964 and made a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1970.

As we have heard, Sir Lawrence leaves a widow, Mary; a son, District Court Judge Alton Jackson, and two daughters, Helen and Diana. During his time as Chief Justice he brought a very fresh approach to the court by making it a kinder, more courteous place, one in which lawyers and litigants alike could get on with the business of the courts, feeling more comfortable in their discussions and litigation and less tied up with formalities, precedents and procedures. He was described as, and I know he was, a very compassionate man and a fair man who ensured that everyone could get a fair hearing.

To his family we say that we are very sorry to have lost such an important member of our community, and that we share in their sorrow.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [2.18 pm]: On behalf of my National Party colleagues I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in this condolence motion. It is somewhat pleasing to learn that some members of Sir Lawrence Jackson's family are present in the gallery to hear the mark of respect that this place makes in a condolence motion. It is appropriate that although the person for whom the condolence

motion is moved is not present to hear it, some members of his family learn of the respect that we have for the services Sir Lawrence provided to the State of Western Australia.

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell) [2.19 pm]: I join in this condolence motion to the family of Sir Lawrence Jackson. It is noteworthy that in the Press coverage during the week, Margot Lang in her obituary wrote -

Former Chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jackson, who transformed the WA Supreme Court from a remote and awesome place to a court where justice was dispensed with kindness and courtesy, died last week aged 79.

Those words were written quite some time after the former Chief Justice's retirement. It is noteworthy also that the Governor, Sir Francis Burt, who sat on the Bench with Sir Lawrence, said -

"He was a very special bloke, unusually special" . . . "He created a new atmosphere in the court. Litigants felt far more comfortable - lawyers, too, and judges. It went right through the system. . . .

"He did the same at the University of WA . . . He was a tremendous chancellor, not just a figurehead. He was very influential and achieved a lot without hitting people over the head.

"I don't know anyone I admire more."

That comment was from one of the greatest living Western Australians, and that is an accolade indeed; it is very much deserved.

I first met Sir Lawrence when I was a student at UWA. I remember as an articled clerk that some judges were very unkind, if not cruel, to articled clerks and newly admitted practitioners. There was a view held by many at that time that the Supreme Court was remote and more concerned with procedure than with dispensing justice. It was therefore refreshing to appear before Sir Lawrence because one knew before one went into court that justice would be dispensed, and that one would have the opportunity to be heard along with every other person in the court. He would go to considerable lengths to elicit the facts of the situation, and then apply the law, of which he had great knowledge. He would always act with a great degree of fairness.

Sir Lawrence was born in South Australia in September 1913; he was first admitted as a practitioner in New South Wales. He came to Western Australia to join the firm of his uncle, H.V. Jackson, QC. Sir Lawrence was one of the first in the east to recognise the opportunities that lay in the west, and from his arrival he made an enormous contribution. At the age of 36 he was appointed Chairman of the Arbitration Court, and by virtue of that office he was appointed a member of the Supreme Court, which at that time comprised four judges. He served a total of 28 years on the Bench in this State and retired at the age of 63, in his words to "spend more time with music and family". It is noteworthy - and I learnt this in the Chief Justice's speech on Sir Lawrence's - that he actually earned his first knight-bachelorhood for services not to justice but to cricket. He was the President of the Western Australian Cricket Association for some 12 years. In the period he held that position - between 1951 and 1963 - the State was admitted as a full and permanent member of the Sheffield Shield competition. In a tribute to him by the WACA in 1963 it was recorded that "the President has been a very regular and keenly interested attender at grade matches and junior and senior Country Weeks. This interest has been very much appreciated by players officials and club supporters who have come to look forward keenly to the judges visits to their home grounds and his attendance at dinners and other social occasions." I recall at that time that he still played the occasional game of cricket, as wicketkeeper on occasions, against the articled clerks and others.

Sir Lawrence's foremost service in many respects was to tertiary education. During his service on the Senate of the University of Western Australia, and as Vice-Chancellor, the university grew fourfold. Sir Lawrence chaired an inquiry into tertiary education in this State which set the framework in which tertiary education was developed. He was also one of the prime people involved in the creation of Murdoch University. Therefore, it came as no surprise that he was honoured with an honorary doctorate from that university during its early stages.

Sir Lawrence served for a period as the President of the National Trust, and he helped organise the Western Australian Commonwealth Games. In many areas his work is probably not recorded.

As a judge Sir Lawrence made a number of very important decisions. For example, *Nicholas v the State of WA*, as reported in the *Western Australian Reports* 1972, page 168, set the delineation between the powers and role of this Parliament and the Supreme Court, and Sir Lawrence found in favour of the Parliament rather than the Supreme Court. That was a landmark judgment. Another case of importance today is *Murphy, Davidson and Ward v Watson* of 1975, as reported in the *Western Australian Reports*, page 23. Three Aboriginal women had been sentenced to six months' prison for disorderly conduct. Sir Lawrence spent some time examining their circumstances and the inappropriateness of the law and the custodial arrangements for women from that background. He considered that the way the court usually applied its censure to white people in similar circumstances was totally inappropriate for these particular Aboriginal women. He saw their plight as deriving from social issues well beyond the control of the court.

In an interview with Athol Thomas on Sir Lawrence's retirement, a number of comments were made which ring a bell for me. He was asked whether he favoured the formal abolition of the death penalty, to which he replied, "Yes. On moral and philosophical grounds it is barbarous to put out another man's life." He was asked how it felt to impose a death penalty, to which he answered, "Terrible. It's a dreadful experience, even after the black cap was dispensed with. Once I sentenced a woman to death. I could hardly get through it." Right through that interview with Athol Thomas, Sir Lawrence expressed his views on the law and related issues which demonstrated the very real compassion and forward thinking that surrounded his life and works. He referred to libel laws and the necessity for the Press to protect its freedoms by not going overboard and not publishing without public interest or substantiation for doing so. He also referred to the need for uniformity in law across Australia regarding libel and general law.

The impression one gains from his judgments and from what other people have written about him is that he was a great Western Australian; he marshalled together those characteristics we all admire. He was a gentleman in the old sense, a man in the traditional sense, and a man of great compassion. He very much understood that he had to be detached from his background and he believed he should listen genuinely to the people giving evidence and making submissions to him. He saw his role as the detached man applying his best judgment to the facts and circumstances but with a great understanding of the impact of the decision on the individuals before him. With the death of Sir Lawrence we have, as the Governor said, truly lost a great Western Australian, and a man I very much admired. I sincerely express my sympathy to his wife and three children.

Question passed, members standing.

## MOTION - CONDOLENCE

*Brady, John Joseph*

**DR LAWRENCE** (Glendalough - Leader of the Opposition) [2.30 pm]: I move -

That this House record its sincere regret at the death of John Joseph Brady, a former member of this House, and tender its deep sympathy to his family on their loss.

During last month Western Australia lost John, known as Jack, Joseph Brady. I never had the pleasure of knowing Mr Brady. The member for Helena has had that pleasure and will be speaking briefly in condolence. When I look through the record of Mr Brady's achievements, I see that it is very typical of many Labor men of the time. He was born into a humble family. He was a union secretary before he came into the Parliament. He was largely self-educated and, indeed, he did extremely well on that front. He did most of his education externally, which must have been very unusual at that time, in economics at the University of Western Australia. In the meantime he worked as a clerk in the railways and made his way up through the organisation. He was a storeman, then a tally clerk. He was the acting manager at the Dongara mill in 1928. From 1929 he was secretary of the Midland Trades Hall and Midland Railway Union. He moved into an honourable career in the union movement. He was continually active in the party, in branches as well as in the union. Until recently he was very much a presence in the Midland area.

He died just a little while before the announcement of the closure of the Midland Workshops, an announcement which I am sure would have saddened him. Because of the work that he undertook in that area and as a result of his self-education he was made a member of the Senate of the University of Western Australia between 1958 and 1961. His membership of this Parliament started with his election at a by-election on 14 March 1938 and he retired in March 1974 - a very long career indeed.

The name of his seat changed from time to time. He started in the Guildford area and maintained his presence there, although the seat changed. He will be well remembered as a member who made a terrific contribution to the local area. He was a genuine local member. He was interested in the workers and in the community, and he continued his community service well after his retirement. He was one of those people who, whether in the union movement, the St Vincent's Hospital Guildford or the Midland Infant Health Centre, was always active. He was a member of the Midland Bowling Club and the St John Ambulance Association, and was a Rotarian. His community service was visible not only when he was a member of Parliament; it preceded his membership of the Parliament and continued after he retired.

It also needs to be recorded that between 1956 and 1959 he was a Minister for Native Welfare and Police. Neither of those portfolios can have been easy at the time. Although at this stage I have not been able to dig up any detailed information on his performance, I am told that he always conducted himself in a humane way and took account of the needs of the people with whom he dealt. His door was always open, and it remained open until his death.

I would like to extend to the family of John Joseph Brady our deep sympathy at their loss and commend to members of Parliament the example of a very fine Labor man.

**MR COURT** (Nedlands - Premier) [2.32 pm]: On behalf of the Government I join with the Leader of the Opposition in supporting this condolence motion. Jack Brady was not known to me, but the Leader of the Opposition has spelt out his tremendous record of service to the community both as a politician and in other areas of community service. If one looked at his record, one would see that it is very much a record of service of what could be called a traditional Labor member of Parliament, a person who - as the Leader of the Opposition stated - was able to educate himself in a rather difficult way. His getting an economics degree at that time would have been quite an unusual circumstance. On behalf of the Government I would like to express our thanks for his service and offer our sympathy to his family.

**MR HILL** (Helena) [2.33 pm]: I join with both the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier in this condolence motion to the late John, better known as Jack, Brady. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated, Jack was elected to Parliament on 13 March 1948. He retired on 30 March 1974. In fact, the Premier and I were elected to this place on the same date as Jack Brady, except for the year. In that, we have something in common. I also have other things in common with Jack Brady: We both represented the State seat of Swan - I represented it for a short time - and we were both Ministers for Police in Labor Governments. I hope that, at the end of my time in Parliament, I have the same sort of regard in the community that has been afforded to Jack Brady.

Jack has been extremely well regarded in the Midland and Guildford communities and throughout that region for a long time. His service to the community goes back well before his election to Parliament and lasted for a long time afterwards. He was very active in the community in a range of organisations. He remained active in the Australian Labor Party. At the 1989 election - he could not help at the last election because of ill health - he was still keen to be at a polling booth handing out how to vote cards. I dare say that had he been at the polling booth at the last election I would have won by a larger majority than I did.

His contribution to the community is well recognised in a range of areas. It is interesting to note that in his first speech in the Parliament Jack Brady referred to a number of social issues facing the community. He was a man of great social conscience. He began his maiden speech by referring to a number of very important industries in his electorate, including the railway workshops situated in the heart of Midland Junction. He discussed at length the Midland railway workshops, the Government abattoirs and the military ordnance stores, which at that time were located next to the Government abattoirs. It is interesting to note that two of those organisations have now closed and the current Government intends to close the third.

In his maiden speech Jack Brady referred to a number of other industries on the boundary of his electorate - brickyards, quarries, bacon factories, superphosphate works, flour mills, confectionery factories, dripping factories, joinery works, chemical works, two or three timber mills and numerous other industries.

Notwithstanding the fact that there was a great deal of commercial business activity within and adjacent to his electorate, the remainder of his maiden speech focused on the social issues that were important to him and to his electorate. In his speech he said -

Despite all the activities of the secondary industries and commercial enterprises, I regret to say that the social amenities of the electorate do not appear to have been looked after as they should have been.

He referred to facilities for education, hospitals, housing and children's health, in particular, to address the threat to the health from stagnant waterways that existed in the area. He referred to the need for amenities blocks at the Government workshops and for proper and improved facilities for Aboriginal people in the area. Jack Brady was certainly a very hard working member. He took his job very seriously.

He was interjected upon on two occasions during his maiden speech, once by a member of his own party in support of what he said and on another occasion by the Deputy Speaker. I dare say that it was not you, Mr Speaker. As members would know, it is unusual for a member in his or her first speech in the Parliament to be interjected upon. In that, Jack Brady and I have something else in common. As a mark of respect and in recognition of his contribution to the Labor movement and the Australian Labor Party, his funeral was well attended by former members and Ministers of previous Governments, including Hon Fred McKenzie, Ron Davies, Don May, John Harman and numerous other members of Parliament.

He was a great local member who will be long remembered for his contribution to the community and to the Parliament. He and his late wife had three children, two sons and a daughter. He is survived by 13 grandchildren and two great grandchildren. His eldest son Peter and Peter's recently deceased wife, June, had six children, four of whom are surviving, John, Angela, Bethwyn and Rod. His second son Gerard and Gerard's wife Delys had five children, Mark, Dean, Megan, Andrew and Kyle. Megan is married with a son, Daniel. His daughter Elaine married Kieran Phillips, and they had four children, Peter, Michael, Annette, and Leonie. Peter is married with one daughter, Darcy Joanne. Jack Brady will long be remembered as an important member of our community and we share with his family in their sorrow.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [2.41 pm]: On behalf of my National Party colleagues I join with other members in this condolence motion and extend our sympathy to the surviving members of Mr Brady's family.

**MR BLAIKIE** (Vasse) [2.42 pm]: I join in this condolence motion to John Joseph Brady - John Joseph as he was irreverently known by some people. I am the only member of Parliament who sat in this place with Jack Brady. We sat on opposite sides of the House, and I am Jack Brady's nephew. I have some comments to make about JJ, as he was known to me. I concur with other members in their comments about JJ. As a parliamentarian he had a deep personal commitment to the institution of Parliament. My memories of JJ go back a lifetime. He set an example of what a member of Parliament should be. I hope that I can emulate the example he set.

JJ was a person of intense loyalty to his beliefs. He was a person of absolute integrity and he had a deep religious conviction. He was a person with an intense and loyal political belief. In all areas he was loyal to his Christian beliefs and to the political party he represented, but at no time could JJ be accused of being a bigot. That was one of the qualities I admired in him. Although we held opposing political views, that is one of the reasons I hold him in such great regard. JJ was totally committed to his electorate.

It is a very sad moment when we acknowledge past members who have given a contribution to the Parliament in earlier years. It is important also that a number of new members will soon make their maiden speeches. It may well be of some value to those members, when reflecting on some of the members who have gone before them, to consider the high regard in which those members are held 10 and 15 years after they leave this place; it is by following a good example that good members of Parliament are made.

JJ was the Minister for Native Welfare and Police. That field was strange to me as a young person, but JJ was committed to try to improve the lot of Aboriginal people at a time when it was not understood and certainly not appreciated. When people visited JJ's home they would understand what he was attempting to do in an electoral sense and in a State sense to try to improve the lot of Aboriginal people. He was a person of integrity trying to improve the lot of his fellow man. They were very difficult times. I extend condolences to his family and acknowledge the contribution of John Joseph Brady to the Parliament and to the citizens of Western Australia.

Question passed, members standing.

**PETITION - DUCK SHOOTING, RECREATIONAL**  
*Reintroduction Legislation Rejection*

**MR MCGINTY** (Fremantle) [2.45 pm]: I present the following petition -

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

We the undersigned residents of Western Australia urge the Parliament to reject legislation which would allow the reintroduction of recreational duck shooting in Western Australia.

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

The petition bears 2 464 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 4.]

**PETITION - ROAD TRAINS**

*Cannington and Beckenham Suburban Roads Disallowance*

**DR WATSON** (Kenwick) [2.47 pm]: I present the following petition -

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

We the undersigned ask the State Government to reverse its decision to allow road trains up to 45 metres (140 feet) long to travel through suburban roads in Cannington and Beckenham (noticeably William St and Nicholson Rd).

These road trains will create traffic hazards, cause excessive noise, damage our roads, and result in property values falling drastically.

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

The petition bears 229 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 5.]

**PETITION - SEWERAGE PROMISE, WILSON**

**DR WATSON** (Kenwick) [2.48 pm]: I present the following petition -

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

We, the undersigned, request that in accordance with the Water Authority's promise of 25th March 1986 that sewerage would be provided to the unsewered parts of Wilson by 1991, that the Water Authority of Western Australia be instructed to honour that promise and to place this area on their priority list for completion within six months.



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

The petition bears 288 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

A similar petition was presented by Dr Gallop (460 signatures).

[See petitions Nos 6 and 7.]

## PETITION - SPORTING AND COMMUNITY CLUBS

### *Poker Machines Installation Approval*

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara) [2.49 pm]: I present the following petition from a number of wonderful members of the Nollamara Sporting and Recreation Club -

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

We, the undersigned are deeply concerned at the lack of recognition by Parliament of the vital role played in the community by sporting and community clubs.

The financial viability of many clubs cannot be improved under the present legal restrictions on revenue raising avenues available.

Therefore with a view to allowing clubs to install poker machines we strongly urge that the agreement between the Government and the Burswood Island Casino be re-negotiated as a matter of urgency.

These machines are now approved for clubs in all other mainland States of Australia and place this State's sporting codes at a serious disadvantage in competitions at a National level.

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

The petition bears 65 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

A similar petition was presented by Mr Trenorden (24 signatures).

[See petitions Nos 8 and 9.]

[Questions without notice taken.]

## MOTION - SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

### *Days and Hours*

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [3.28 pm]: I move -

That unless otherwise ordered, the House shall meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 2.00 pm and on Thursdays at 11.00 am.

It is the intention of the Government that this House should sit on both Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. It is proposed that the House would rise on those evenings at 11.00 pm. It is proposed also that the House would rise at 6.00 pm on Thursdays. I advise members that the normal procedure will be for lunch to be taken between 1.00 and 2.00 pm, and for the dinner adjournment to be taken between 6.00 and 7.30 pm. The Government has decided to have an additional night's sitting of the House, largely because we have an extensive program of legislation to bring forward, and also because we are conscious that while country members of Parliament are in the city, the Parliament might as well be working, otherwise that night is largely wasted for them, so we will from the outset sit on two nights.

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont) [3.29 pm]: The Opposition opposes this motion.

Mr House: You do not have to come!

**Mr RIPPER:** That is nice of the Minister, but I would prefer to be here. The Opposition is disappointed that it has not been consulted about these proposed sitting hours. We heard about these sitting hours through public announcement rather than through the process of consultation and discussion between the parties that occurred in respect of previous changes to the sitting hours. The Opposition believes that the Parliament should meet earlier in the day; in other words, we would prefer to return to the sitting hours that were applicable in 1992.

**Mr Court:** Your Ministers told us last year that they would prefer to sit on Wednesday nights.

**Mr RIPPER:** I am giving the Government the Opposition's view, and I am about to give some of the reasons that the Opposition holds that view. It is important to point out that one of the issues of the 1990s is the need to harmonise work and family responsibilities. Parliament is not as it used to be.

Several members interjected.

**Mr RIPPER:** Members opposite should not laugh. It is not a laughing matter. It is a serious matter. Parliament is not as it used to be. We have younger people in the Parliament, many of whom have young children. We have more men and women in the Parliament who have family responsibilities. It is worth my pointing out that family structures are not necessarily as they used to be. After all, 59 per cent of married couple families with dependants have both partners in the work force, and 21 per cent of those married couple families with dependants have both partners full-time in the work force. Therefore, we cannot assume that if a member of Parliament in this place has children, there will be someone at home full-time to care for those children.

Even if someone is at home to care full-time for those children, we cannot necessarily assume that the families will benefit from the members' being away for two full nights and finishing late for the evening meal on a Thursday.

**Mr Trenorden:** Will you give a copy of this speech to Ed Harken?

**Mr RIPPER:** The education system must take account of the realities as well. We should recognise that very often members of Parliament will have family responsibilities not only in the circumstances to which I have referred but also when members happen to be part of that nine per cent of families that are one-parent families.

I appreciate that this notion may not appeal to the Government because the Government has abolished the work and family unit in the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations. I appreciate also that the point I make about family responsibilities of members of Parliament may not appeal to the Government. Nevertheless, it is a view that should be put strongly because I am sure that members of Parliament on both sides of the House have responsibilities for children, and we should be able to organise ourselves in a modern, progressive way which takes account of family responsibilities.

Another reason why the Parliament should sit earlier in the day is that it should be accountable to the public. These days, accountability to the public is through the media; accountability is not achieved through simple attendance in the Public Gallery. We need only look around; accountability is through the media. We know that the earlier in the day events occur the easier it is for the media to scrutinise them. The later in the day events occur the more difficult it is for the media to scrutinise them and the less possible it is for the public to hold accountable the Parliament and the Executive. For those two reasons, to harmonise family and work responsibilities of members of Parliament in a modern way, as other employers and organisations seek to do, and to ensure better media scrutiny of the operations of Parliament, the Opposition opposes the motion.

**MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [3.33 pm]:** I support the motion. It is improper for the Opposition spokesman for community development to contend that the motion to change the sitting hours does not consider members. The member has put a very selfish point of view which might be convenient for him and some other members representing electorates in the metropolitan area but are not for country members. Our considerations regarding sittings of the House should take the wider view in an attempt to accommodate all members.

**Mr Ripper:** Do you agree that Parliament should accommodate all members' family responsibilities?

**Mr BLAIKIE:** Yes, I do. Changes have been made to the sitting hours in the past. As one member who saw the changes that took place in previous Parliaments I consider that they were an abject failure. While it may be grand for members to knock off on Wednesday evenings and at 4.30 pm on Thursdays - and that suited me because I could return to my electorate earlier - the concentrated workload of members took away the opportunity for members to attend daytime committee meetings. That situation made it virtually impossible for members to arrange committee meetings contiguously. We should consider the number of times in the past three or four years when the House sat with a paucity of members.

It is all very well for the member for Belmont to claim that the previous system was sound. Where was he when the House was sitting in the previous session? He was holding committee meetings around the Parliament. When he was not in the Parliament he was at home. A member's role is to be in Parliament. I strongly urge members to agree to the important proposed changes which have regard to the wider consideration of all members. Although the proposed system, when compared with the previous system, may disadvantage metropolitan members, it will benefit all members.

I give the Government credit for ensuring that Parliament will rise during school holidays as that was not the case during previous conservative Governments. I mention this point now rather than during my Address-in-Reply contribution. As a newly elected member I raised this matter because I had a young family, and I said that Parliament should rise during school holidays. That proposal was rejected. At that time Parliament rose a week after school holidays had concluded, and that was bloody-mindedness at its worst. The Leader of the House has given due consideration to this aspect. Although I can understand the sentiments raised by the member for Belmont, I disagree with him.

The Opposition must understand that the proposed changes to the sitting hours have regard for wider considerations and the convenience of all members. Also, the public must be considered. I support the Leader of the House's motion, and I am sure that in 12 months' time we will again review the proposal.

**DR TURNBULL (Collie)** [3.37 pm]: I support the motion. I endorse the member for Vasse's comments regarding non-metropolitan members, who must be remembered at all times. Many non-metropolitan members must travel long distances. Personally, I spend six hours every time I travel between my home and Perth, and that is a large slice out of my day. The same problems apply to the member for Eyre and those from the far flung regions of the State such as the Pilbara and the Kimberley.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** That is hard on family life. The member for Belmont can go home for tea if he wishes; he is very selfish.

**Dr TURNBULL:** Indeed. Regarding effects on family life, although I do not have young children, my husband is deprived of my presence when I travel to Perth on Monday night, and he knows that I will not be home until Friday morning. He accepts that sacrifice for the sake of Western Australia. This motion has nothing to do with family life; it is to do with the organisation of the business of the Parliament of Western Australia.

**MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell)** [3.39 pm]: Firstly, I put to bed the myth that somehow or other the proposed changes in the hours of sittings of this House impact favourably on country members. Country members know only too well that when we leave home on Monday or Tuesday morning, we have no hope of returning until late Thursday night at the earliest. It does not make one iota of difference whether the sitting hours remain as they were under the previous Government or are changed as proposed by the current Government. If country members want to continue to live in the country - as most of us do - they must be away from their homes from early Tuesday to late Thursday whatever the sitting times are.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** The proposed sitting hours will allow us to do more work in the week, including non-parliamentary work. The difference is that this Government wants to work for the people of Western Australia.

**Mr D.L. SMITH:** It will make a difference later in the session when the Parliament wants to sit later and longer. Under the sitting hours proposed by the Government we will sit every week until 11.00 pm, and therefore towards the end of a session we will very quickly fall into the trap of 3.00, 4.00 and 5.00 am sittings, which are very destructive. Sitting in this place to those hours on Wednesday nights will prevent members from being effective the following

morning. These changes are simply a reversion to the old because of some attachment by the conservatives on the other side to maintaining traditions of old. They have nothing to do with country members and their welfare, but with the fact that because it used to be that way during the time of Sir Charles Court, so it must be now. There is no truth whatever in the suggestion that somehow or other these new sitting hours will be any more helpful to country members than the previous ones.

Question put and passed.

### **MOTION - PRIVATE MEMBERS' DAY AND BUSINESS, WEDNESDAY**

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [3.42 pm]: I move -

That unless otherwise ordered, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and orders of the day on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The effect of this motion is to designate Wednesday as private members' day. I also advise the House that the Government proposes that private members' business be conducted between 4.30 and 6.00 pm on Wednesday and then from 7.30 until 10.00 pm that evening, a total of four hours.

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont) [3.43 pm]: The Opposition does not oppose this motion, but we hold the strong view that private members' business should start earlier than 4.30 pm on Wednesday. This again draws attention to the need to improve the accountability of the Executive and the Parliament to the public. The earlier in the day that private members' business occurs the more able is the media to scrutinise the events which unfold. Private members' business offers the Opposition a particular opportunity to bring forward in Parliament matters which it considers to be of great public importance.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Question time is now two o'clock.

Mr RIPPER: I agree and support the proposition that question time should be at two o'clock; that is a good move. Private members' business should not be pushed off to the dusty corners of Parliament. In discussions with the Government, the Opposition will very strongly put its view that private members' business should start immediately after the formal business on Wednesday.

Question put and passed.

### **MOTION - STANDING ORDER No 118A, BRIEF MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [3.45 pm]: I move -

That the following new standing order be agreed to -

118A. A Minister may make a statement, not exceeding three minutes, before the House proceeds to business on the Notice Paper and no debate shall take place on the statement.

The procedure allowing for brief ministerial statements was put in place last year. All members would agree that it proved to be a successful procedure. The purpose of this motion is to adopt that sessional order as a standing order of the House.

**MR RIPPER** (Belmont) [3.46 pm]: The Opposition supports this motion and draws attention to the rationale for brief ministerial statements; which is to reduce the use or indeed the abuse of question time for Dorothy Dix questions and long ministerial answers which constitute de facto ministerial statements. We are well aware that senior and esteemed members of Parliament, including yourself, Mr Speaker, have argued against this particular use of question time and we hope to see that abuse of question time minimised under your tenure as Speaker.

Question put and passed.

### **MOTION - STANDING ORDER No 82A, MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE** *Deleted and Substituted*

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [3.46 pm]: I move -

That Standing Order No 82A be deleted and the following standing order substituted -

- 82A. (1) A member may propose to the Speaker that a matter of public interest be submitted to the House for discussion. The member proposing the matter shall present to the Speaker, at least two hours before the time fixed under this Standing Order for consideration of such matters, a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed; and if the Speaker determines that it is in order, he shall read it to the House at the time fixed. The proposed discussion must be supported by five members, including the proposer, rising in their places. The Speaker shall then call upon the member who had proposed the matter to speak.
- (2) Consideration of a matter of public interest may be taken after brief Ministerial Statements, if any, and only one matter under this Standing Order may be discussed in any sitting week.
- (3) If more than one matter is presented for the same day, priority shall be given to the matter which, in the opinion of the Speaker, is the most urgent and important, and no other proposed matter shall be read to the House on that day.
- (4) A member may move a substantive motion under this Standing Order notwithstanding no notice has been given in accordance with Standing Order 211.
- (5) No member shall speak for more than 30 minutes on any matter or question under this Standing Order and the debate may not extend for more than one hour in total.

This motion is almost the same as that which applied last year with respect to matters of public importance. The only change is that the time for an MPI has been brought back to a single hour. In other words, the additional time allowed for Independent members of Parliament is no longer part of the MPI. I am very conscious of concerns expressed to me by the member for Floreat in this regard, and I have some sympathy for the position that an Independent might wish to express on the subject. However, we have a different House from the last session with only one Independent member of Parliament as distinct from four last year. To give a special provision of, say, three minutes, to an individual member of Parliament would in the view of the Government be discriminatory. I am conscious that the member for Floreat is concerned about this matter. Mr Speaker, with your good sense of fairness and judgment in these matters, I am sure the member for Floreat will be given every opportunity to express her view on an MPI even it is only to indicate to the House how she wishes to vote.

**Mr Kobelke:** She always votes with the Liberal Party - will she be given Government time?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The Government may well do that. It does not have a problem with that. Members opposite will find us a most cooperative Government in the House. I seek the indulgence of the member for Floreat to continue with the procedure in this motion and if any difficulties arise the Government will be prepared to examine it. We should continue with this and I am sure with you, Mr Speaker, in the Chair it will be a very fair situation and all members of Parliament will have an opportunity of expressing their opinions.

**DR CONSTABLE (Floreat) [3.48 pm]:** Mr Speaker, I have had occasion, as you probably guessed from his remarks, to discuss the matter with the Leader of the House. I am very disappointed with the response I received today. It was not discriminatory to allocate time to the four Independents in the last Parliament and it would not be discriminatory this time to allow me, as suggested by the Leader of the House, three minutes so it would not encroach upon the time of Government or Opposition parties. I record my disappointment in the response the Leader of the House has made to my request.

**DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough - Leader of the Opposition) [3.49 pm]:** The Opposition supports the point of view expressed by the member for Floreat. Although the member is the only Independent member in the House, she has a particular role to play. Her voters thought so at the election. She had a resounding victory, and would be expected to place her views not just on the record by way of a vote formally noticed by the House, but also by way of argument. It is important that some time be provided not in Government or Opposition time but in her own right as a member to put her point of view.

Mr C.J. Barnett: She has the same opportunity as every other member of Parliament.

Dr LAWRENCE: If the Government is prepared to routinely set aside part of its own time for the member for Floreat that may be solution. However, it is unreasonable to expect the Opposition to set aside time when it is the Government that is moving this very stringent motion.

Question put and passed.

## MOTION - PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE

### *Membership*

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [3.50 pm]: I move -

That for the present Parliament the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee consist of the member for Jandakot, the member for South Perth, the member for Avon, the member for Ashburton and the member for Cockburn.

### *Adjournment of Debate*

MR LEAHY (Northern Rivers) [3.51 pm]: I move -

That the debate be adjourned.

Question put and negatived.

### *Amendment to Motion*

MR RIPPER (Belmont) [3.52 pm]: I move -

That all words after the word "That" be deleted with a view to substituting the following -

this House requests the Premier to reconsider his nominees under Standing Order 410(2) for the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, to ensure that no more than two of them are members of parties supporting the Government.

A key theme of the recommendations of the royal commission was the need for improved scrutiny of the Executive within the Parliament. Problems exist with the political theory of the accountability of the Executive to the Parliament owing to the practical reality of political party discipline and the spirit of partisanship. Those difficulties are further exacerbated in this House owing to the smallness of this Parliament. In this Parliament the Executive, as a proportion of the total number of members, is larger than would be the case in other Parliaments. The culture in this Parliament is that the pinnacle of a career path is seen as service in the Executive. People in this Parliament do not concentrate on making their careers as parliamentarians and being satisfied with and honoured and respected for that; their ambition is service in the Executive. We also do not have the tradition which exists in some other Parliaments where senior parliamentarians who have served in the Executive then continue their work in Parliament on committees following their retirement or removal from the Executive.

In the Westminster Parliament, for example, instead of newer members of Parliament occupying the chairs on important committees, more senior members of Parliament, perhaps members who have served within the Executive, retire to committee work. However, that work is still considered to be important and honourable. Owing to the smallness of this Parliament, the dominance by the Executive and the culture which prevails in this place, the political theory of accountability of the Executive to Parliament does not work as practically as the theorists would expect. When members think about accountability measures they cannot ignore the existence of partisanship. Members should accept that the adversarial system is the best hope for accountability. We should make use of that system to achieve the accountability desired.

It is unrealistic to expect Government members on a committee such as the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee to pursue with vigour, for example, a close analysis of the financial information on the Midland Workshops, which the Government had before it moved to make that regrettable decision. I do not expect Government members could be relied upon to pursue that matter with vigour. Neither do I expect that they will subject the

independence of the McCarrey report on the State's finances to a close analysis. The Opposition is not alone in this view. Prior to the answer given in question time by the Leader of the National Party I had hoped that some degree of consensus might be possible, at least between the Opposition and the National Party, on this matter. In this House last year the Leader of the National Party stated -

One other point that might cause people to cringe a little is that it is appropriate for committees such as the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee to have an Opposition majority, or perhaps it might be better to call it a Government minority. In that way the system will have a greater degree of fairness in approach to matters which are important in the scrutiny of the operations of the Executive Government.

I say to the Leader of the National Party, "Hear, hear." The Opposition supports those remarks and hopes that despite his answer during question time he and his colleagues in the National Party may be moved to support this amendment. The Opposition is not seeking a majority on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. It is asking the Premier to reconsider his nominees with a view to creating a situation where members not supporting the Government - not necessarily those supporting the Opposition - can have a majority on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

The Opposition has placed on notice a motion to alter the standing orders relating to the composition of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee; however, the result the Opposition seeks to achieve does not require the standing order to be altered. The Premier has it within his power under existing standing orders to create the situation which the Leader of the National Party argued for so eloquently in this House last year. Members must recognise that the public's perception of Parliament and the standards required of Parliament and parliamentarians have changed. The context in which members operate has also changed. The royal commission, which cost an enormous amount of money, made recommendations about the way in which Government should be held accountable. A key theme of the royal commission's recommendations is the need for Parliament to attend to improvements in the accountability mechanisms which apply to the Executive. The taxpayers did not spend \$30 million to see the Parliament and Government continue with the same sorts of processes in exactly the same way as has applied in the past. No one inside or outside this House believes that the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee will work properly as an accountability mechanism when it comprises a majority of Government members, ministerial aspirants and people whose most fervent ambition is to join the group which they are supposed to be scrutinising.

I am not criticising the individual members whom the Government has proposed to serve on this committee; I am simply pointing to the realities of politics which all members understand, whatever they may say in the debate. This is a chance for the Government to show that it has listened to the royal commission's recommendations and the public mood, and that it is determined to make the Parliament a place in which the Executive can be held accountable. I urge all members to honour and support the views they have previously expressed and back the Opposition's amendment.

**MR TAYLOR** (Kalgoorlie - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.00 pm]: I fully support the Opposition's amendment. My interest in this issue goes back to my role, both as a member and chairman, on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. When I was chairman of the committee significant changes were made to the committee's role which gave it far greater inquisitive powers and responsibility. Most importantly, those changes were made at a time when the Opposition was in Government and it was prepared to ensure that the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee had those additional powers. While members opposite talk about conversions and the like another important aspect of this debate is the Deputy Premier's position which was outlined today in question time. He said he no longer supported the idea of not necessarily having an Opposition majority on the committee, but most importantly not having a Government majority on the committee.

**Mr Cowan:** That is not right.

**Mr TAYLOR:** Perhaps the Deputy Premier will put me on the right path. The Leader of the Opposition will also speak on this issue, but I point out that the Deputy Premier clearly supported that position in this place last year. It was a very comfortable position for the then

Opposition because all of a sudden the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee had a so-called Independent in Mr Donovan, who on the issue of the University of Notre Dame Australia was inclined to support the then Opposition. As I said, it was a comfortable position for the then Opposition, but it is not so comfortable for it now that it is in Government to have an Independent member perhaps holding the balance of power in the committee's decision making. That is a far less comfortable prospect from the benches of Government. I am sure the Deputy Premier is aware of the situation.

I take the Deputy Premier back to 1978; I am sure he will recall, as will you, Mr Speaker, that the then Premier of Western Australia, Sir Charles Court, sought to dump the now Deputy Premier, the member for Merredin, from the then Public Accounts Committee. In fact, Mr O'Neil, the then Deputy Premier, moved to terminate the appointments of Mr Ray Young, the then member for Scarborough, and the member for Merredin. The reason for the motion was the complete breakdown in the relationship between the then Government and the party that we now know as the National Party which was led at that time by Matt Stephens. Sir Charles Court was not comfortable with the idea that the maverick member for Merredin should be a member of the Public Accounts Committee and perhaps hold the balance of power. It gave the Government cause for concern.

Dr Gallop: It was actually a coalition Government.

Mr TAYLOR: That is correct. The Deputy Premier's mentor, Matt Stephens, had a lot to say about this issue when it was debated in this House in 1978. He said -

I will be disappointed if members of the House allow this procedure to succeed.

That procedure was to dump the member for Merredin. He continued -

Standing Orders clearly say that the Public Accounts Committee is a committee of this House.

More importantly he went on to say -

The member for Merredin is a most experienced member of the Public Accounts Committee and has shown considerable ability. He has shown not only ability but also independence of mind, which would indicate he is quite prepared to make his judgments on the facts and not by direction. I believe it is possible the move that has now been sparked off stems from a fear on the part of the Government that he will make his judgments on the facts and cannot be manipulated or directed.

It was pointed out by the member for Belmont that there is no doubt that the Government members on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee - we know who they will be - will have ministerial ambitions. They will see their appointment to the committee as an opportunity to promote their ambitions and they will certainly not cross the path of people who they hope will be their ministerial colleagues to be in that decision making process. That is what will occur with a Government majority on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

In 1978 Matt Stephens also said -

I remind members that if this Parliament is ever to regain its prestige and standing in the community it will have to earn it. Here is an opportunity for the Parliament to assert itself over attempts at domination by the Executive.

Later on in that debate he said -

I also believe that if the Public Accounts Committee is to be really effective and act as a genuine watchdog over the Government and the way in which it expends public moneys, it must be confident and efficient and a committee which cannot be directed.

The Deputy Premier is aware that Matt Stephens is regarded as one of his important mentors, and deservedly so, and his comments of 1978 are very interesting. In 1978 the now Deputy Premier, when he was faced with the prospect of the Government of the day having his appointment to the committee terminated, said in opposition to the motion -

In doing so, I must remind members of this Parliament that they do not have to follow automatically the dictation of the Executive, and there is a difference between the two bodies. I wonder how many members on this side of the House -



Remember, he was supposedly on the Government side. To continue -

- are prepared to face the type of reprimand they will incur from the Executive and its members if they are prepared, for once in their lives -

He went on to say -

I suggest that if members of this Parliament believe in the autonomy of that committee and its integrity they will, for once in their lives, not submit themselves to the bidding of the Executive, and for once in their lives they will think as members of Parliament rather than as members of a party.

The Deputy Premier now finds himself a member of the Executive. While I am referring to what was said in a debate on the Public Accounts Committee in 1978, I think that the Deputy Premier's comments then, combined with what he has said publicly in recent times, contrasts with his position today on the role and status of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

In supporting the amendment I will pass to the Deputy Premier a copy of the results of the division that was taken in 1978 when he agreed to vote with the then Labor Party Opposition in support of the amendment that had been moved.

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [4.07 pm]: The Government opposes the amendment. The amendment requests the Premier to reconsider his nominees. I inform members opposite that the coalition does not operate in that way - the nominees are the nominees of the coalition parties, not of the Premier.

The member for Avon was right when he interjected and said that the member for Belmont must have been struck by lightning. How self-righteous he is. He comes to this Parliament and comments on the Executive interfering with the Parliament and influencing and overpowering the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. No Executive could interfere and abuse the Parliament as did the previous Labor Government.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT**: No Government in the history of this State abused the Parliament, the people of Western Australia and the finances of Western Australia more than did the Opposition when it was the Government. We now have a Government made up of honest, honourable people.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT**: This Government is prepared to be judged on its performance.

The self-righteous member for Belmont seems to have forgotten that last year the then Government had three of its members on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and it had the majority. The chairman of that committee was the member for Balcatta. I give credit to the member for Balcatta because in spite of the pressure he was under from the previous Executive Government he showed some courage and credibility to stand up to it. I do not need to remind members of the debates in this House about the University of Notre Dame Australia. In those debates the chairman showed that he had the courage to overcome the overwhelming pressure imposed on him by members of the then Executive, of which the self-righteous member for Belmont was a member.

The Government retains its position and will support the three coalition nominees - the member for Avon, the member for South Perth and the member for Jandakot. The Deputy Premier made reference to these three members having ministerial ambitions. That is exactly what we want to see and I am sure they will prove to be fine members of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. From my experience they are not people who will bow to pressure from anyone. They will serve the committee and this Parliament with great distinction and the members of the coalition parties strongly support their nomination.

**DR GALLOP** (Victoria Park) [4.10 pm]: I have long held the view that anyone who wished to analyse the proceedings of the Western Australian Parliament would be better served by employing the services of an anthropologist rather than a political scientist. There are two reasons for that view, and we are seeing another example of it today. Firstly, our Parliament is a very small Parliament when compared with other Westminster-type Parliaments. The number of members in this House - 57 - is certainly larger than in some of

the smaller Pacific Island Parliaments, but it is certainly in the range of smaller Parliaments. Secondly, tribalism dominates the proceedings of the Western Australian Parliament. Indeed, we can see today that this Government has completely reversed the position which it took while in Opposition about the role of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

One of the great challenges that faces us in this decade, regardless of which party we are in, is to restore the importance of Parliament within the system of government; in other words, to give Parliament a larger role in the processes by which government occurs in Western Australia. Obviously the focus in most of the discussion has been on the relationship between the Parliament and the Executive. I believe history will record that the last Leader of the House, the now retired Hon Bob Pearce, made some significant reforms to the way in which Parliament operates. One of those reforms was the establishment of Estimates Committees, which I believe we will see this year play a new and heightened role in the scrutiny of the Executive. Certainly we on this side of the House have every intention of using the Estimates Committees to full effect.

We have also the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, which was established in the 1970s and is a crucial institution in our system. Public accounts committees were first established in 1861 when Gladstone had the belief that Parliament could play a role in improving the efficiency of government and ensuring the frugality of government. Members would know that he was concerned about waste in government expenditure. A tradition was developed in the British Parliament that a member of the Opposition would be the chairperson of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. Indeed, to this day the tradition has been maintained and a member of the Opposition, now the British Labour Party, chairs the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee in Great Britain. A tradition has developed in that large Parliament, as the member for Belmont said, that members regard membership of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee as a career path and choose it as a way in which they can gain fulfilment as part of their parliamentary life. In a smaller and more tribal Parliament like ours, it is much more difficult for members to establish a career path through the use of the committee system.

Another tradition that has developed in the British House of Commons Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is a very bipartisan approach to the issues with which that committee deals. Some of the issues which are dealt with by public accounts committees make it very difficult for bipartisanship because they are issues of the day; they are hot political issues, and they may be issues which impact upon the reputation of a Minister and the Government which that Minister serves. However, a tradition has developed in the House of Commons where those issues are dealt with in a mature way, and the Government must respond to the reports of the committee even in respect of those controversial issues. However, most of the issues which are dealt with by public accounts committees do not deal directly with Ministers and the role that Ministers play but with the administration of government and the finances of government. Many of the reports which have been handed down, even from our small public accounts committee, have assisted in the improvement of government administration in the State. In recent years we can look at the important report on computers that was initiated by and commenced during the time of the member for Mitchell, who preceded me as the Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, and was followed up by me and the member for Belmont. That report has gone into the framing of Government policy in that area.

The New South Wales Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee has established a great tradition of bipartisan scrutiny of public administration, and many of the reports of that committee have gone into the structuring of Government policy. Governments of the day, be they Liberal Governments under Nick Greiner or Labor Governments under Barry Unsworth or Neville Wran, took into account what that committee was saying. There is a tradition of bipartisanship and maturity when it comes to dealing with major political issues.

The real issue here is not whether people have been tribal in this debate, or whether we on this side of the House have reversed our position or whether the Government has reversed its position, but that we as a Parliament now have the opportunity to be creative and disprove the anthropological view about the way our Parliament works, the view which says that despite what any member of the Government said before the election, we know after the

election exactly what they will say, and despite what anyone on this side of the House said before the election, we know after the election what they will say. We now have an opportunity to be creative about the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and to begin a new tradition in Western Australia that there be a non-government majority on that committee. That will confirm and develop further the bipartisan tradition that the committee has developed to some extent but is capable of developing even further.

It is not a question of what may have happened in the past and of what may have been said in the past but of our establishing a new set of procedures which will feed into a new tradition for that important committee. Members of the National Party, who have the tradition of parliamentary independence, and the one Independent whom we have in the Chamber at present, have an opportunity of voting with us on this issue and of establishing a new tradition in the Western Australian Parliament which will go a long way toward restoring the importance of this institution in our government system.

**DR CONSTABLE** (Floreat) [4.17 pm]: I find it a trifle amusing that last year when there was debate on this matter, a motion was moved by the then Leader of the House that Mr Donovan be discharged from the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and that Mr Marlborough be appointed in his place. That motion was eventually withdrawn. It did not get to first base because the numbers were not there. The reason that the numbers were not there was that the present Government was very supportive of Mr Donovan's staying on that committee. I do not know who I am representing today, but I suspect it is the people of Western Australia, because members on the Government side do not know what they are doing. One year they want to do one thing and the next year they want to do something else.

Having said that, I support the amendment moved by the Opposition, not because the people who are named in the original motion would not do a fine job - I think they would - but because it is important, for many of the reasons already stated today, given the royal commission and the need for this Parliament to thoroughly scrutinise the work of government, that on this crucial Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee we have a majority of non-government members. We already have a precedent for this, by accident, when in the last Parliament the then member for Morley resigned from the Australian Labor Party and became an Independent. The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee worked very well for the people of Western Australia under those conditions. Given the views particularly of a number of National Party members, which are already very much in print in *Hansard*, this is an opportunity for this Parliament, in supporting this amendment, to support many of the views expressed by the royal commission. It would take this Parliament and this State in the right direction if we had a majority of non-government members on that committee.

**DR LAWRENCE** (Glendalough - Leader of the Opposition) [4.19 pm]: I can see that the member for Floreat will become the conscience of the House, and I think it is a role she will play extremely well. However, it is important to recognise that things have changed since the debate to which she referred took place in the Parliament last year. The political face of Western Australia has changed.

**A Government member:** You are now in Opposition.

**Dr LAWRENCE:** That too - I do not deny that. I do not deny the evidence of my senses. What changed the political landscape of Western Australia was the second report of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters. It is quite clear that the Government has some problems in embracing both the spirit and the letter of the recommendations of the royal commission. We have seen a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing, by the Premier in particular, about whether the public sector standards group should answer to the Parliament or to him. I think we are in a position now where it will answer to the Parliament, but we will wait and see. That is an example of a lack of enthusiasm of the Government compared to when it was in Opposition; it then had a very different point of view. It is important that members opposite recognise the royal commission's recommendations as being not just for the convenience of the Government of the day when we were the Government, but for the whole of the Parliament and for all the people of Western Australia. The fact that we have reversed our positions in this Parliament is of no significance whatever. The recommendations stand; the lessons of the 1980s stand; in

particular, the royal commission's recommendations stand and they are not about to be set aside by this Opposition simply because we are the Opposition and not the Government.

I draw the attention of members opposite to the document we put out following the second report of the royal commission indicating our intention in relation to every single recommendation. We committed ourselves then, while in Government and with a reasonable expectation of continuing in Government, to make sure that the Parliament, not the Executive, would be paramount - for instance, in relation to the appointment of key people such as the Ombudsman, the Auditor General, and now the Freedom of Information Commissioner and the Public Sector Standards Commissioner. We also committed ourselves to the view that key parliamentary committees, particularly the Legislative Assembly committee which scrutinises public accounts, would not be dominated by Government members. We committed ourselves to that point of view when we were in Government with a very reasonable expectation of continuing in Government. Now we have a very real expectation, in 189 weeks' time, of being on that side of the House, so we do not take this lightly. Although we have had a different point of view in the past we recognise the significance of the royal commission, the events on which it has reported, and its recommendations. Those recommendations are not to be taken lightly or dismissed by members opposite as something that is past, as a period in our history we can now ignore. Those recommendations must form the basis of the behaviour of this Parliament in the next four years and beyond. If the Government is now to take a different point of view than that which it took when in Opposition, members opposite must be prepared to give reasons to the people of Western Australia why they now find it convenient to have the Executive dominate the Parliament - something about which they complained long and loud when in Opposition. The Deputy Premier must explain why he now finds it convenient to overturn his previously held view of the importance of having an independent chair and domination of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee by the non-government party. Members opposite must explain why they believe they can ride roughshod over the Parliament in this matter by simply dismissing the Opposition and the Independent member in this House as having irrelevant views since they control the numbers. This is not a matter of simple tribal politics. It should be about getting it right for this Parliament for the next four years, and making sure that the Government can live with itself and with the statements it has made in the past, and can live with the recommendations of the royal commission.

Therefore, although - as the member for Floreat said - all of us have had different points of view about this in the past, a major event has intervened between the expression of those views and the reassembling, belated as it is, of this Parliament. That major event was the second report of the royal commission. The royal commission involved \$30 million worth of investigation, a great deal of storm and fury from the Government when in Opposition, and a very considerable expenditure by the State and its taxpayers. I am not prepared to sit in this House and be silent when I hear members opposite deny the evidence of their senses, refuse to implement the recommendations of the royal commission and pretend it did not occur, and say that for their convenience and comfort they are prepared to override those recommendations both in spirit and letter. It is not just a question of procedure, it is a question of principle and the Opposition will harass, harangue and harry the Government until it does the right thing.

**MR CATANIA (Balcatta) [4.25 pm]:** As the member who was most recently chairman of the committee we are discussing, I support this amendment which presents us with an opportunity to ensure that accountability of this House, as I heard members opposite say -

**Mr Trenorden:** You all must have been standing under the same tree when the lightning struck.

**Mr D.L. Smith:** It may have been the Royal Commission tree!

**Mr CATANIA:** That is a very good point. Last year I heard members opposite say that accountability was the course which this Chamber and this Parliament should adopt. With this amendment the Government has the opportunity to practice what it preached to us in the last year or two. I was the Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee for the last two and a half years, and in the last one and a half years it consisted of two Government members, two Opposition members, and an Independent. It was quite evident that that was the course that this committee should take. As my colleague, the

member for Victoria Park, has stated, the public accounts committee in the mother of Parliaments at Westminster is chaired by an Opposition member. That is the course which this Government should take.

When we were in Government we resourced the committee although we did not have the numbers on the committee. We increased its resources to enable it to carry out its investigations. We did that unashamedly and in a way which helped the committee at the time.

Mr Bradshaw: Because you knew what a backlash there would be from members of the committee.

Mr CATANIA: That is not true. It was done to help the committee carry out its duties properly. That committee reported perhaps more often than any predecessor in its history. It did that quite well over the last two years when the Government did not have the numbers on the committee. Throughout the time of that committee Government members, who were then in Opposition, stated that this was the way to go. Now we see a quick reversal - a back flip. Why has the Government done a back flip when this committee is the prime tool of accountability for this Chamber? It can ensure that Government departments report properly and on time, the necessity for which we pointed out in one of our reports, which was acclaimed throughout Australia. Why does the Government want to stop or impede that process? Why does the Government want to back flip on what it stated before? Does it intend hiding something? Nothing was hidden during the time that I was chairman of the committee. All reports were produced and, as the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party has stated, they were brought out honestly.

Mr Trenorden: When Frank Donovan became an Independent did he always vote against your point of view?

Mr CATANIA: No, he did not.

Mr Trenorden: There was one each way and one in the middle.

Mr CATANIA: No, I think he voted more with the member for Avon than with us.

This is a prime opportunity while the Government is still only four months into its term of office to show the people of Western Australia that it is fair dinkum about accountability. If the Government opposes our amendment it obviously is not fair dinkum and it will lose the opportunity. Through this committee the Government can prove that it was dinkum about what it said to the people last year. However, now that members opposite are in Government they do not want to follow the course that they proposed last year.

The member for Wellington often said that the chairman should come from the Opposition; the Deputy Premier and the member for Avon said exactly the same thing. It is a matter of one thing when in Opposition, but another when in Government. Obviously, members opposite do not want to be seen to be accountable. They do not want departments which are responsible to Ministers to truthfully and honestly report to this Chamber. If Ministers and departments do not respond to Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee questions and do not provide proper information, the Government is helping agencies to be not accountable to Parliament. I plead that members accept the amendments because the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is the prime avenue by which accountability is shown.

MR BRADSHAW (Wellington) [4.32 pm]: I oppose the amendment. It is incredible how things change when parties change sides in this House. The Opposition's hypocrisy these days is incredible. As already pointed out, when the former member for Morley became an Independent, a notice of motion appeared through the then Leader of the House to replace Mr Donovan on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee with a Labor Party member; however, after a quick tally of members that motion was withdrawn.

Mr Catania: It was withdrawn to ensure accountability.

Mr Bloffwitch: Lack of numbers!

Mr BRADSHAW: That is the correct reason. The Leader of the Opposition has also been hypocritical in the righteous attitude she adopted about the handling of Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition is now applying the yapping dog syndrome of which she accused us -

Dr Lawrence: That is not a pleasant accusation, if you don't mind.

Mr BRADSHAW: The Leader of the Opposition is yapping like a little Jack Russell - it is interesting how things change.

Dr Lawrence: You should not cast such aspersions.

Mr BRADSHAW: The Leader of the Opposition should look in the mirror to see how she has changed her attitudes since assuming Opposition.

Mr Catania: You have changed your attitude!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I have already spoken to the member for Balcatta, and I ask him to refrain from acting as though he were still on his feet.

Mr BRADSHAW: I served on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee for two or three years and found bipartisanship. We were outnumbered -

Dr Gallop: Is the definition of "bipartisan" having the numbers?

Mr BRADSHAW: No. The former member for Morley was an Independent Labor member and did not suddenly join the Liberal or National Party. Therefore, the then Government still had the numbers on the committee. However, when it came to the nitty gritty of the Notre Dame inquiry, the committee produced a report backed up with good reasons for its findings. The committee worked in a positive way. As the former chairman, the member for Balcatta, indicated, the committee produced many reports.

Opposition members on that committee must ensure that matters are pursued properly. Just because the Opposition may not have the numbers on that committee does not mean that they cannot play an effective role. Such members have the forum of Parliament to raise a matter if they are not happy with the committee's deliberations. Under those conditions, the amendment should not be accepted. If the Opposition wants an Independent member on the committee, that member should replace an Opposition member; we would go along with that.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [4.36 pm]: A number of Opposition members have given us a history lesson regarding the function of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. Therefore, it is appropriate to remind members of a comment made by the late Professor Gordon Reid, a former Governor of this State and Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. Significantly, he was also a Clerk of the Senate for a considerable time. Given his experience and his undoubted academic qualifications he was very much in a position to observe politics and the way that Parliaments perform. Although I forget the title of his book - perhaps the member for Victoria Park can remember - he wrote of a clear correlation between successive Governments, irrespective of their parties, and Oppositions, also irrespective of their parties. This debate indicates that to which the late Professor Reid referred.

Mr Taylor: It indicates that you have changed your mind.

Mr COWAN: I was challenged by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to express my view on this matter. He knows as well as anyone that as the Deputy Premier I can no longer afford the luxury of a personal view; the views I express are those of the Government. Therefore, I hope that when I conclude my comments the Government's view is very clearly impressed on this House.

On Public Accounts Committee membership, and with encouragement, I refer to history; I am sure you will be interested in this matter, Mr Speaker, as in my brief time as a member of the committee you were its chairman - and a very good one too. We conducted a number of very good investigations, the reports of which would have been of value to those who took the time to read them. In those days the House had the capacity to determine committee membership as standing orders allowed appointment, although this method was a little different from other committee appointments. I was very disappointed when I was removed from that committee by the will of the House. Members must learn quickly in this place that if they want to survive, they must submit to the will of the House, irrespective of whether they are for or against its decision. Members may bleat in the Press about a decision or make public statements when they do not get their way, but they must accept the decision regardless.

I think it is about time some members opposite remembered how we arrived at the present method of electing the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. Under standing orders - I am quite sure somebody has looked at them -

Dr Lawrence: We are seeking to change them; you may have noticed -

Mr COWAN: The member for Belmont, as the Leader of the Opposition has said by way of interjection, is seeking to change these standing orders. Who introduced them?

Dr Lawrence: That does not matter, it was the Opposition in 1986.

Mr COWAN: It was the Opposition when it was in Government in 1986.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COWAN: You may recall, Mr Speaker, that in 1986 there was a recommendation of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee that changes should be made to standing orders regarding the appointment of members to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. In the record of the Votes and Proceedings - I do not think I need to remind the House that these are the authentic records of the debates that took place in the Parliament, as opposed to *Hansard* - it is recorded that on 24 July 1986 the then member for Scarborough, Mr Burkett, moved the motion that changed Standing Orders 410 to 415. We now find that something that was acceptable to the Opposition when it was in Government for something like eight years, is now unacceptable.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COWAN: When it was in Government and when it had the numbers for eight years.

Mr Taylor interjected.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should stop interjecting.

Mr COWAN: This Opposition had the ability and the numbers to make a change. The only time we have seen any move for change and the only time the utterances I might have made in this House have ever caught the attention of the Opposition is in 1993. Yet the Opposition had something like eight years in which to effect a change. How can we take that approach as giving substance to the words now being uttered by the Opposition?

Mr Taylor interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COWAN: The Opposition had the opportunity and the numbers to make a change for the better part of that time and it never sought to do so.

Mr Taylor interjected.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has a long record of cooperating with the Chair, not to do that again.

Mr COWAN: The point I think I have made very clearly is that this Opposition had the better part of eight years to make a change to the standing orders adopted by this House for appointing members to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. Their moving now to make a change once they have made it to the Opposition benches, when they know they do not have the numbers, indicates a lack of sincerity on the part of members opposite. When the Leader of the Opposition talks about accountability, one can only ask whether this sudden new found accountability was thrust upon the Leader of the Opposition because she lost the election and consequently the numbers; or is it because she has decided that the recommendation of the second report of the royal commission which, I might say, unlike something said by the Leader of the Opposition, was not written by the royal commissioners? The second report was written for them.

Mr Taylor interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COWAN: I accept that the commissioners adopted the recommendations. However, members should remember that the royal commissioners did not write the second report; it was written for them by a number of people.

Mr Ripper: Does that alter its status?

Mr COWAN: In my view it does.

Mr Ripper: It came out under their authority.

Mr COWAN: Of course it did.

Dr Lawrence: With their names attached to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The front bench of the Opposition is interjecting incessantly. I call on members to stop.

Mr COWAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. This new found conscience of the Opposition has manifested itself because it is in Opposition, not for any other reason. The members who have been nominated to represent this House on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee I am sure will do a very capable job. In addition to that, within that particular committee system, the opportunity remains for minority reports to be written. In fact that opportunity has been exercised for quite some time. We have seen a number of minority reports delivered. Inevitably, they fall along party lines. That indicates that the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee still thinks along party lines. Frankly, I do not think the composition of the committee will alter that. The member for Balcatta said we should follow the system that has been applied in the United Kingdom. You would know, Mr Speaker, because of your experience in this place, that the public accounts committee that exists in the Westminster Parliament follows a very simple procedure. The committee consists of no less than 15 members. There is no reference to the membership of any particular party in the United Kingdom public accounts committee. I am not sure that the member for Balcatta is right when he says that it is dominated by the Opposition or that it has an Opposition chairman. It may well be the case.

Dr Gallop: It is the case.

Mr COWAN: I might add it does not expect a great attendance because its quorum is four. Nevertheless, I do not think that is applicable to this situation. It is very clear to me, notwithstanding the Opposition's new found conscience, the Government will not support this amendment. I am quite sure the original motion will be passed by this House and that the elected members of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, as nominated in the original motion, will do a very good job and will represent this House on that committee very well.

MR D.L. SMITH (Mitchell) [4.50 pm]: I will address my remarks to some of the newer members of Parliament. One of the things they will have to come to terms with in their careers as parliamentarians -

Mr Trenorden: I noticed that when you said "newer members", you looked over here.

Mr D.L. SMITH: There are a few over here also. When it comes to their role as parliamentarians, they will be asked to consider the relative importance of their commitment to political parties and their commitment to the Parliament; that is, whether they believe in the Parliament as an institution and whether they believe that Parliament should discharge its proper functions. I recommend that if they really want to understand the role of Parliament and some of the things that can go wrong when there is an imbalance between the role of the Parliament and that of the Executive, they should read the recommendations of the royal commission and they should also go to the Parliamentary Library and educate themselves about the role of the Parliament and therefore parliamentarians. They should start with John S. Mill on representative Government, written as long ago as 1861, the year in which the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee of the House of Commons was established. He said -

Instead of the function of governing, for which it is radically unfit, the proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control the government; to throw the light of publicity on its acts; to compel a full exposition and justification of all of them which any one considers questionable; to censure them if found condemnable . . .

John P. Mackintosh, when he was writing on the British Cabinet in 1962, said -

Most of the proposals for alleviating the decay of the House of Commons are met



with the rejoinder: 'will it work?' By this what is usually meant is: 'will it work without in any way altering the present dominance of the Executive?' Reports by Select Committees on Procedure or by academic pamphleteers are pointless until the primary question is decided. How much power should the Executive have and how far is it desirable that either the public or a representative chamber should know about or participate in the processes of government?

The task of the royal commission was to make recommendations which would enhance the role of the Government and enhance the accountability of the Executive to the people the parliamentarians are supposed to represent.

The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is the most powerful committee in this Parliament and certainly in the Legislative Assembly. It has the task of examining the amounts of money spent and whether taxpayers' money is being properly applied or spent. It is a critical role because the control of the public purse is one of the best methods by which this Parliament can watch the Executive. Members should not be deluded by what members opposite have been saying. It is possible to have a conversion on the road to Damascus, for a bolt of lightning to come down and transform one's view and vision about what should occur. I do not think St Paul's letters are in any way lessened in their import and effect by the fact that he was previously committed to the persecution of Christians and to the collection of taxes. Through his conversion he recognised the correct way and sometimes we need royal commissions to tell us the correct way for Parliaments to function. There is no doubt from our own royal commission or from the committees and reports from the House of Commons and from every one of the Commonwealth Parliaments that the real problem in achieving full accountability in Government is the balance between the Executive and the Parliament. Unless there is true accountability by the Executive to the Parliament, this Parliament might as well not exist and we all might as well return to our occupations and allow the Executive to govern in our absence.

Members opposite put forward only one reason for the change of heart of the Deputy Premier and the members for Wellington and Avon. The latter two are important people because they were members of the previous Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and they understand the value and importance of the work it does in examining the functions of the Executive and the expenditure of money. Almost every time this Parliament is concerned about the behaviour of the Executive in the financial arena, it will refer the matter to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee for examination.

A long time ago, the House of Commons decided that the only way the public accounts committee could function effectively was for it to have an Opposition majority and an Opposition chairman. That view is shared by the royal commission, which calls for an effective committee system. It is the only way in which it can operate effectively. The first and foremost reason for the Opposition having a majority on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is that its first task will be to elect a chairperson. The role of the chair is critically important in reviewing public accounts and expenditure because it is the chairperson who liaises with the expert staff who act as consultants and advisers to the committee; it is the chairperson who sets the agenda for meetings; it is the chairperson who has the opportunity to first question all of the witnesses who come before the committee; it is the chairperson who, after other members have concluded their examination of witnesses, has the opportunity to pose further questions; and it is the chairperson who most often, in conjunction with the staff of the committee, writes the draft reports for consideration by the committee. If the committee had to examine some errant expenditure or some errant administration, whether it is due to the Executive or to the people who serve the Executive, it is unlikely that a chairperson who was aspiring to a ministerial position would write reports and do his work in a way that was adverse to the Government.

When I was first elected to the committee and later to the position of chairperson, following my election to the Parliament in 1983, I found that it was incredibly difficult as a member of the Government to perform that role in the fearless way which the public should demand of parliamentary committees. The tradition elsewhere is that a member does not become chairperson until he has been a Minister and gone into Opposition but still wants to perform a role in the Parliament because he has the experience. Traditionally in this State, members are elected to the committee relatively early in their parliamentary careers and, as a result, the chairpersons are relatively new. They are not experienced in administration and they are

not experienced in the relationship between the Parliament and the Executive. They also are not experienced in the way parliamentary committees work, or in how to find the evidence and how to examine witnesses. What we want on these committees is the experience of former Ministers who in many cases will have lost all aspirations to be in future Governments but who have a commitment to public accountability and to the parliamentary process and who want to ensure that it is correctly carried out. There is no area of control of the Government which is more important than the control of the public purse. That is why in the UK Parliament, when any department overspends its budget and seeks an excess from Treasury - in other words, an approval to overspend for that year - that request for excess has to go to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee for review before a decision is made on whether that excess will be granted. That is the kind of proper control that should exist.

The relationship between the Auditor General and the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is also important. In the past, because its membership has always been dominated by the Government, the relationship between the Auditor General and the committee, in my view, has never been what it should be. The Auditor General should be one of the resources of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and the committee should act as a resource of the Auditor General.

How can that relationship exist when the Auditor General knows he is talking to a person who has been nominated to that committee by the Executive he is charged to check and balance, and yet has the responsibility to find the real truth and expose it where it is necessary to do so? The Auditor General would know it was a wasted exercise while the Government had the majority, but if the Opposition had the majority on that committee the Auditor General would know the Opposition members could collaborate with him in a proper way to ensure they were both keeping the Government as honest as it should be.

I direct my concluding remarks to the Leader of the House. The only explanation he could give for the change of heart on that side of the House is that somehow or other this Government is more honest and responsible than was the previous Government. The only way one can test integrity and responsibility is by looking at the record. Let us look at the record of integrity over a period of six months. Let us look at the appointment of the Freedom of Information Commissioner. It is an important new role and one would have expected the Government in its first test of integrity to ensure that the person appointed was free of any political connection, and that not only was there a lack of prejudice but also the public and the applicants for information would see there was no bias or prejudice. The person appointed had a Liberal Party sign in her front yard, and is married to a branch member -

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the member is straying somewhat from the motion and I ask him to address the motion before the Chair.

Mr D.L. SMITH: I bow to your wishes, Mr Speaker. I simply want to dwell on the fact that the Leader of the House in supporting the motion said the reason for maintaining the Government's position is his view that Government members are more honest and credible. The members for Bunbury and Wellington might be interested in that statement bearing in mind the Government's promise to retain the position of Minister for the south west. The Government dishonoured that promise as soon as it took office, as it did the promise in relation to the Midland Workshops. We are told that the reason the Government dishonoured its promise with regard to the Midland Workshops is a report to Cabinet about the finances of Westrail. Who is there to test the credibility of that excuse? The Parliament? How can the Parliament do that? By the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee calling witnesses, examining those witnesses, and producing an unbiased report with some credence that can be relied on. While the Government continues to have a majority of the members and control of that committee, the public can have no trust in it. The Parliament cannot use it and members opposite, as parliamentarians, will be demeaned by the lack of control of the Executive that they will have agreed to in their first real test as new members to say they believe in Parliament, in representative democracy and in accountability. Here is the first real test for Government members as individuals. Will they fail it on the ground of their political affiliation? I challenge members to have the courage to support the institution.

For some of us it has taken a long time. We have needed royal commissions and other

experiences of our own to understand the need for these controls. If Parliament is to survive as an institution and the work of the royal commission is not to be in vain, we must return to full accountability. We can help do that by ensuring an Opposition majority on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, and that the chairman is an Opposition member and not someone preparing for his or her future role as a Minister. I commend the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR BLAIKIE** (Vasse) [5.05 pm]: I oppose the amendment for the very reasons alluded to by the member for Mitchell. Members will note that the member for Mitchell spoke with great authority as a former Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee of the failings of that committee he chaired.

**Mr Trenorden**: He said that in future we should not trust a public accounts committee.

**Mr BLAIKIE**: Yes, and this is a member who was chairman of that committee now giving us some of the more sordid details he obviously covered up as chairman. The member for Mitchell has spoken with some venom and has insisted that at all times the Opposition should have the majority membership of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. I do not support that contention.

I also put on the record of the Parliament that I have been a member of a number of select committees of the Parliament that have handled vexatious issues of great political consequence to the members concerned. On almost every occasion those select committees - some have been joint select committees involving both Houses - have reached unanimous decisions. The two exceptions related to the Midland abattoirs and the Robb Jetty abattoirs. In that case the committee, comprising members of the Liberal, National and Labor parties, recommended that the Government should not operate abattoirs at all. I was one of the members who submitted a minority report recommending that the Government sell the abattoirs. The important point is that notwithstanding the political doctrine of Labor Party members, they believed that the Government should get out and lease those abattoirs. I have been through the mill on a number of occasions and one thing stands alone: If the members of the committee are people of good intent - I have no doubt that the persons to be nominated as members are people of good intent - the facts will clearly establish themselves and be presented for all members to see. I want to completely dissociate myself from the diatribe of the member for Mitchell because his comments detract from the way in which this House should operate.

We have only one standing committee of the Legislative Assembly - the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. It has been my long held view that more standing committees should be established by the Legislative Assembly. I suggest to the newly elected members that if they are to fulfil their purpose in the Parliament, the Parliament must provide them with a role to play; that is, there should be more standing committees of the Parliament in which they can become involved to avoid their becoming social welfare members.

In this connection the Parliament of Victoria has established the following committees of the Parliament: A community development committee, which is a joint committee consisting of 10 or 11 members; a crime prevention committee; an economic development committee; an environment and natural resources committee; a law reform committee; a public accounts and estimates committee; a public bodies review committee; a road safety review committee and a scrutiny of Acts and regulations committee.

All the Parliaments of Australia have a series of standing committees of Parliament, so that while the members of the Executive comprise the Cabinet, those other committees provide a valuable opportunity for backbench members of Parliament on both sides of the House to perform a purposeful role in the Parliament, and that is a matter which we should investigate further. Having said that, I do not have any real hang-ups about the Government's having the majority of members on a committee. However, it is important that there be more standing committees of the Parliament in order to ensure that a greater number of members of Parliament are involved in the workings of the Parliament.

I again dissociate myself from the remarks made by the member for Mitchell. I ask members to look carefully at the record when he was Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. I can understand why he objects to this motion now,

because that committee worked pathetically while he was a member. There is good reason to reject the amendment moved by the Opposition.

**MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [5.11 pm]:** This debate has been like a comedy.

**Mr Ripper:** It is not going to improve!

**Mr TRENORDEN:** The member is dead right. I will point out a few things that have taken place during this debate and will put to members some of the hypocrisy of members opposite. Most members who were in the last Parliament will be aware that I have spent four years on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. I was one of the members who wrote the majority report on the Notre Dame University issue. I well remember the speech made by the present Leader of the Opposition about the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee and about what she thought of that committee at that time. I inform the Leader of the Opposition that that debate occurred after the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters presented its report. Today we are suddenly talking about the alleged view of the royal commission about the need to change the composition of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. However, some months after the tabling of the report of the royal commission, the present Leader of the Opposition went berserk in this Chamber about a finding of the public accounts committee. I asked the Parliamentary Library to search both reports of the royal commission, and do members know that the public accounts committee was mentioned only once in those reports, and that had nothing whatsoever to do with the matter being debated today? Paragraph 3.10.13 of the report refers to the majority report of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee concerning the Auditor General. I am pleased to say that I was one of the members who tabled the minority report. The member for Balcatta was the chairman of the committee at that time. The royal commission caned the majority report presented by the members for Balcatta, Morley and Maylands.

**Dr Lawrence:** That is not correct. Where was it caned?

**Mr TRENORDEN:** The report states -

The Commission believes both Houses of the Parliament should be associated with the appointment, especially in the light of the responsibility of the Auditor General to report to the Parliament as a whole.

The report states that the commission notes the recommendation of the majority report of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee tabled in May 1992.

**Dr Lawrence:** That does not sound to me like a caning.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** It is a caning, because the present Leader of the Opposition said at the time - and she has not changed her opinion, which is sheer hypocrisy - that the Auditor General should be controlled by the Executive; and the royal commission points out in its report that she was wrong.

The royal commission does not mention the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee in any other part of its report, yet member after member opposite has commented upon what the royal commission said about the committee. That indicates how much notice members opposite have taken of the report of the royal commission and how much of it they have read.

**Mr Catania:** Is the royal commission about accountability?

**Mr TRENORDEN:** Yes, of course it is, and so is the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, but nowhere in the report of the royal commission is anything said about the structure of the public accounts committee.

**Mr D.L. Smith:** That is not so.

**Mr TRENORDEN:** Where? The member should go and get it and show me the reference. Go off, boy, and do it!

Earlier this year, I and two other members of this House went to Tasmania to the Biennial Conference of Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committees, and one of the three keynote addresses was given by Padraic McGuinness, who I believe is one of the most respected journalists in Australia.

Mr Kobelke interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: Does the member disagree with that?

Mr Kobelke: Absolutely.

Mr TRENORDEN: There were about 60 to 70 people at that conference, and no-one disagreed with that. I actually read a few weeks ago that Padraic McGuinness is considered the only impartial journalist -

Mr D.L. Smith: The Tasmanian Government controls the public accounts committee.

Mr TRENORDEN: What does that have to do with it?

The address that was given by Padraic McGuinness and the debate that followed for some time afterwards was about the composition of public accounts committees. With the exception of me, not one person from all of the public accounts committees in Australia, including Western Australia's public accounts committee - including the member of the Opposition who attended that conference - and those from New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, agreed. They all believed that the chairperson of that committee should be a member of the Government of the day and that the majority of the members of the committee should comprise members of the Government of the day.

Mr Kobelke: Did you explain that your leader had a different point of view at the time?

Mr TRENORDEN: I gave my point of view. I did not speak about anyone else's point of view.

It is interesting that all those people who sit on public accounts committees had a consistent point of view. Padraic McGuinness' point of view was similar to the view of the member for Mitchell. He believes that the public accounts committee should comprise members who have missed out on a ministerial position and who have a separate role to play in the Parliament. Two of the members nominated by the Government are in that position; namely, the member for South Perth and me. The member for South Perth was at that conference. Am I representing correctly what happened at that conference? The member for Ashburton was also at that conference. Where is his contribution to this debate? It is appalling that a former Minister of the Crown, the member for Mitchell, can tell this Chamber and, therefore, the people of Western Australia, that they should not trust members of Parliament and that they should not trust the members of the public accounts committee. That is an appalling view when we consider that the member for Mitchell served on the public accounts committee, and particularly that for the next four years members of this House will serve in clear conscience on all sorts of committees. I put on record that if I am elected a member of the public accounts committee - and I believe we will win this motion -

Dr Lawrence: Do you expect to be the chairman?

Mr TRENORDEN: No. That is part of the reason that this debate is taking place. I believe I will give an absolute and dedicated commitment to the public accounts committee.

I would be prepared to be removed from the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee were the Opposition able to provide a valid argument for my removal. It is my job as a member of Parliament to be as impartial as I can when serving on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. I can recall only two occasions on which a minority report was produced during the four years I served on that committee. The first occasion involved the report on the independence of the Auditor General. I supported a minority report. The royal commission stated that report was correct and that the Government members' report supported by the then member for Morley was incorrect. The second occasion was the report on Notre Dame. That is now history, and I will not rant and rave about that issue. Members will recall the way the Leader of the Opposition, the then Premier, ranted and raved about the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

Dr Lawrence: I was moderate in my statements.

Mr TRENORDEN: I wonder where the new-found respect for the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee is coming from.

Dr Lawrence: I respect it when it operates well and in a skilled way, but when people misuse Parliament it is a disgrace.

Mr TRENORDEN: I stand by my first statement. You were standing under the same tree that was hit by lightning. This is similar to the Queensland experience with its brand new accountability while standing under a tree in the summertime when a storm struck. The change in the Opposition's point of view is amazing. The point of view of the member for Balcatta is astounding in its reversal in less than six months.

When considering the activities of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, members should examine the minutes and papers of the biennial conference of PACs of Australasia. They have not arrived yet but they will point out how the peers of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee believe those committees should run. Those opinions are in direct contrast to the Opposition's point of view which represents a minority view in Australia. The biennial conferences of the PACs do not consist of only Government members or only Opposition members. The odd Independent member is involved as well. It is important to put this debate into context. Various actions today perhaps show that we have not learnt a great deal from our experiences over the past four years in attempting to honour the principle of accountability.

### *Division*

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

---

Ayes (22)		
Mr M. Barnett	Mr Grill	Mr Riebeling
Mr Brown	Mrs Hallahan	Mr Ripper
Mr Catania	Mrs Henderson	Mr D.L. Smith
Dr Constable	Mr Hill	Mr Taylor
Mr Cunningham	Mr Kobelke	Mr Thomas
Dr Edwards	Dr Lawrence	Mr Leahy ( <i>Teller</i> )
Dr Gallop	Mr Marlborough	
Mr Graham	Mr McGinty	
Noes (28)		
Mr Ainsworth	Mr House	Mr Shave
Mr C.J. Barnett	Mr Johnson	Mr W. Smith
Mr Blaikie	Mr Lewis	Mr Strickland
Mr Board	Mr Marshall	Mr Trenorden
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Minson	Mr Tubby
Mr Court	Mr Nicholls	Dr Turnbull
Mr Cowan	Mr Omodei	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Day	Mr Osborne	Mr Bloffwich ( <i>Teller</i> )
Mrs Edwards	Mr Pandal	
Dr Hames	Mr Prince	
Pairs		
Mr Bridge		Mr Wiese
Dr Watson		Mr McNee
Ms Warnock		Mr Kierath

---

Amendment thus negatived.

### *Motion Resumed*

Question put and passed.

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

### *Appointment*

On motion by Mr C.J. Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That for the present session -

- (1) The Standing Orders and Procedure Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr Prince, Mr M. Barnett and Mr Ripper.

- (2) The Library Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Dr Turnbull and Dr Edwards.
- (3) The House Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Blaikie, Mr Marshall, Mr Cunningham and Mr D. L. Smith.
- (4) The Printing Committee shall consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Day and Mr Kobelke.

#### **BILLS (10) - INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING**

1. Commission on Government Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Dr Lawrence (Leader of the Opposition), and read a first time.
2. Adoption Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Ripper, and read a first time.
3. Chiropractors and Osteopaths Registration Bill.
4. Health Services (Conciliation and Review) Bill.
5. Medical Treatment Bill.  
Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Taylor, and read a first time.
6. Kimberley Development Commission Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Dr Lawrence (Leader of the Opposition), and read a first time.
7. Commercial Tenancy (Retail Shops) Agreement Amendment Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Hill, and read a first time.
8. Transfer of Land Amendment Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Kobelke, and read a first time.
9. Gascoyne Development Commission Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Leahy, and read a first time.
10. Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Amendment Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr McGinty, and read a first time.

#### **STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER - OMBUDSMAN'S LETTER ON FORMAL INVESTIGATION OF JOSEPH BARTLETT DETHRIDGE, TABLING**

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Clarko): I have received a letter from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, dated 21 June 1993, relating to the formal investigation of Mr Joseph Bartlett Dethridge. I table that letter.

[See paper No 149.]

#### **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

##### *Motion*

Debate resumed from 17 June.

**MS WARNOCK** (Perth) [5.40 pm]: Mr Speaker, it is with considerable pleasure that I rise in this House to make my maiden speech, although I would prefer it not to be 20 minutes before the dinner break. I begin by offering you, Mr Speaker, my congratulations on your elevation to your high and honourable post. I wish you well in your task, and know that we can look forward to your fair and just handling of the business of this House. My congratulations also go to my fellow debutante, the member for Morley, whose long and distinguished history in the trade union movement tells us that he will work tirelessly for his constituents. It is with special pleasure that I welcome and congratulate my colleague, the member for Armadale, who dared and won, and who put her career at risk and succeeded in making it here to the proper House, the right House, and the home - as I am reliably informed - of real politics.

I wish there were more like the member for Armadale. Indeed, throwing aside modesty, I wish there were more like us. Politics will truly represent the citizens of this State only when more women are members of this House and the other House. Women comprise 51 per cent of the population and I believe that in the best interests of all Western Australians all parties must strive for more equal representation. In many ways Western Australia has been in the lead in the matter of women's representation. When Edith Cowan entered the Western Australian Legislative Assembly in 1921 representing the seat of West Perth she was the first woman in any Parliament in our nation. However, since that time women have made very slow progress. Indeed, in the first 40 years after women obtained the Federal franchise not one woman was elected to Federal Parliament. Having led the world in granting political rights to women, Australia fell behind, and has stayed behind many other countries in giving them a proper share of power.

The previous Western Australian Labor Government was distinguished in having the most women Ministers in Australian political history. Our leader, Dr Carmen Lawrence, was the first woman Premier in our nation, and no-one could be a better role model for other women. However, we still have a long way to go. If some built-in bias exists in the selection process, it must be changed. Reform is called for. Evidence is available that affirmative action strategies in internal party processes can accelerate this much overdue reform. In Federal Government, although only eight per cent of the House of Representatives are women, 21 per cent of senators are women. That may reflect the more representative selection processes that occur for that House. Of the 841 representatives in all Australian Parliaments, only 122, or 14.5 per cent, are women. In lower Houses, where the major decisions are made, the figures are even poorer. Of 504 lower House seats in all Parliaments in all States, only 73 seats or 12.08 per cent of the total are held by women. Various cultural and historical reasons account for this, but in these enlightened and better informed times fewer and fewer excuses can be found for this gross gender imbalance. I do not claim that women are more virtuous than men in politics. I simply believe that since we comprise half of the human race the community will be advantaged when we are able to bring our special perspective to every issue.

Similarly to all of my colleagues on this side of the House, I regard it as an honour and a privilege to be chosen by the people to represent their interests in this place. Therefore, my first thanks are to the people of Perth who have given me their support and their trust, as well as sufficient votes. I will at all times give all I have to maintaining that trust and to deserving the confidence they have placed in me. I shall strive with all my might to keep the only election promise that I made to the people of Perth; that is, to work immensely hard on my constituents' behalf. I will not let them down.

As every member in this House well knows, no-one can succeed in politics - no-one can arrive here - without having leaned heavily on the shoulders of others. In my case it was a very large team of volunteers. Scores of people of all ages and from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds worked tirelessly on my campaign for more than a year. Among them were old friends and many new friends whom I met only recently; Labor Party members and many with no political allegiance at all. They ranged from unionists and university students to professionals and business people. I thank them all for their faith and support. Most importantly, I thank those closest to me and, in particular, my husband Bill. Anyone whose life has been invaded by politics will know how completely that can overwhelm a normal household. An election campaign is a brutal, tough and wearying business and I am grateful to Bill for his unceasing and staunch support. He is a rock of Gibraltar. I am sorry that his mother, the late Mae Warnock, cannot be here today. She would have enjoyed this occasion immensely. She was a strong, bright Glaswegian, a stalwart member of the Labor Party in her time, and one who would never accept an unfair judgment without a protest. She was an inspiration to me. I must also thank my mother, Muriel Robinson, a political conservative who, despite that, always encouraged my independence. She gave me the freedom to choose, and, as it has fallen out, I chose the other side of politics. However, she never wavered; she spurred me on. She is a woman of character. I salute her.

When the Australian Labor Party did me the honour of asking me to run for the seat of Perth I accepted the challenge because, after being involved in a wide variety of issues in the Western Australian community, I felt it was time to try this hardest of all tasks - to help make



the important decisions that affect the lives of all our people. Thus, Mr Speaker, I have come to this place with a clear sense of purpose. During the next four years my goal is to work to improve the quality of life in economic, social and cultural terms, for all the people of the Perth electorate. People who do not know me very well have asked me: Why Labor? Why am I on this side of politics? Why am I, who grew up in a politically conservative family, here now, representing the Australian Labor Party? As a result of life experiences and not a little study of political history and political philosophy, in the end I came down on the side of the Australian Labor Party because of its clear principles. It became my conviction that it was the only political party that had demonstrated a sustained and effective commitment to social justice and to reform.

Graham Freudenburg, one of Australia's most celebrated speech writers and a political historian, puts it very plainly. For him, there are no half measures. He firmly believes that the Australian Labor Party remains the most authentic political expression of the Australian character. He says it represents a deep source of understanding about not only the nature of Australian politics but also the character of the Australian people. Freudenburg goes further: He says that Labor is Australia's most enduring political and social force. Labor's survival for more than 100 years is a tribute to the strength of its ideas and principles. From any reading of Australian political history, it is clear that this remarkable democracy of ours, with its capacity to remain egalitarian and to keep everyone in the boat is, to a great extent, the result of Labor Party policies either in Government or in Opposition. It has been from the Labor side of politics that came pressure for pensions and social benefits, decent wages and conditions, a fair health system, universal education and the equal status of women - the very things that all thinking Australians value most highly in this great country of ours. It was because of these dreams and ideas and, more importantly, the actions and policies that resulted from them, that I found myself enlisting as a candidate for Australia's oldest political party, the Australian Labor Party. Quite simply, as someone who is interested in progressive ideas in reform and social equity, there was no other choice. If one was appalled, as I was, by the idea of the death penalty in a supposedly civilised society, it had to be the ALP.

If, as I was, one was angered by the lack of equal opportunity of women, it had to be the Australian Labor Party. If, as I was, one was troubled by archaic laws on rape, abortion and homosexuality, it had to be the ALP. If, as I was, one was disgusted by the death of young Australians, sent by ballot to die in Vietnam, it had to be the ALP. If, as I do, one supported some just form of land rights for the Aboriginal people, it had to be the ALP. Being on the Labor side of politics means, of course, a strong belief in the role of governments - if there is to be a just and equitable society.

Former Conservative British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her soul mate, Ronald Reagan, represent the antithesis of that point of view. Thatcher's free-market philosophy ignored the common good, the reality of community and glorified individualism. She was in love with the market, that market which, in theory, allocates resources efficiently, but does not concern itself with a just distribution of income, or of human values. One cannot call a society just if there develops an ever-increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots. The human and social havoc caused by Thatcher's morally reprehensible conservative policies did untold damage to the social fabric of the United Kingdom and, ironically, it failed economically. Orthodox economics is devoid of social responsibility but, as the people's representatives, we cannot afford to ignore the effect of our decisions on the community.

Hidden costs must be considered when managing the assets of our people. It is not all about money: It must be about the social costs and it must be about the distress of families whose wage earners are thrown out of work in some single-minded drive for efficiency at any cost. Above all, it must be about putting people first. I submit that, in difficult times, Government has a moral responsibility to intervene on behalf of those who need help. No Australian Government should too savagely apply the ice-cold compress of economic rationalism. In a compassionate society the devil-take-the-hindmost philosophies which reduce people to statistics must be resisted.

In advancing the case for Government intervention, I note that the more enlightened of the opposite Liberal persuasion also support it. In a recent interview on SBS, the Deputy Leader of the Federal Liberal Party, Dr Michael Wooldridge, admitted that the public debate had

been too much focused on economics in recent years. He said, "I think there are a number of things that are deeply ingrained in the Australian psyche - and one of these is the notion of the fair go." The fair go is indeed deeply ingrained in the Australian psyche, Mr Speaker, and policy makers and politicians in this place will forget that at their peril.

Government should always be concerned when there are grave signs of rising discord and division, and fear and anger in a community. When clear, cold signals that people come a very poor second are handed down by those who pride themselves on making the so-called hard decisions, then such a Government should be wary. Australians, generally, and Western Australians, particularly, will not cop being treated like pawns.

Tolerance, like compassion, is another virtue we must take care to embrace in our society. In our racially diverse community - Mr Speaker, Perth, the area that I represent, is particularly multiracial - we cannot afford to ignore the forces of evil like the Australian Nationalist Movement and others who plaster racist graffiti on synagogues and Asian restaurants. We must use the law to ensure that such people cannot disrupt and poison the lives of others merely because they are different. In Western Australia in the 1980s the Labor Government enacted laws - controversial at the time - which made it illegal to vilify people because of their race. I happen to believe that enshrined in our law should be the right of groups to take action when they are slandered and maligned, just as individuals can. It is not good enough to misuse the freedom of speech argument to deny the right to mount such class actions.

Quite apart from the ugliness of racism, there is a practical cost to it. Dr Eric Tan, a respected surgeon and community leader, made an important point in a speech he gave at last year's City Challenge conference. He said that a few years ago when the ANM was conducting its vile, racist campaign we, as a community, remained silent and did too little, too late. As a result of this, there grew a perception that Western Australians were racist. In his view, because of our inaction this State lost a great deal of goodwill and possibly untold dollars in Asian investment. Since our economic hopes for the future lie increasingly in the Asian region, it makes sense for us to resolve that this must never be allowed to happen again. We, in this House, must lead by example. We must show people that we mean to give moral leadership in this area and to represent the interests of all Western Australians. Racism is an evil and it must be countered by whatever lawful means we can devise. Western Australia must seek to become a State free of this scourge.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to my electorate, the city seat of Perth. Perth has existed as a parliamentary seat since 1890, except for a brief period between 1950 and 1962, when it was abolished. I have the honour to be the first woman to hold the seat. Stan "Popsie" Heal, the great West Perth and State footballer, was probably the best-remembered incumbent, though the list includes a Premier, a senator, a Perth Lord Mayor, a detective, an Agent General, a member of the House of Commons and a judge of the Arbitration Court. Around 22 000 people live in the electorate of Perth. Socially, economically and ethnically diverse, it is home to people from more than 100 countries.

Perth is no ordinary electorate. For a start, it is the seat of Government in that it contains Parliament House, Government House and the Supreme Court. I am well aware that the State's most important decisions, on all matters, have always been taken here, in what is now my electorate.

Perth is also the electorate that employs the State's biggest work force. The greatest assets of the community, in terms of the value of the land and the public facilities, fall within its boundaries. It is the hub of the State's transport and communications systems and the place where we find the major cultural, civic, social, religious and economic facilities of the Western Australian community. It is little wonder that I am excited by, even somewhat in awe of, the task of representing it. I count myself extremely fortunate, and not a little proud, to be its representative in this place.

I have lived in the electorate of Perth for 30 years. Brought up near the old goldfields mining town of Kookynie, I came to the city as a young journalist in 1963 and went to live right in its centre. I moved into a street where my grandparents had lived in the 1940s, and into a city that had about 16 000 inner city residents. A functioning brewery was in the street and the city's thriving markets were nearby. Within a few blocks there were half-a-dozen fine inner city hotels.

In St George's Terrace, there were restaurants, coffee shops, blocks of flats and many beautiful buildings, most now sadly gone. Now that city - and here I refer to the inner city, or central business district - has fewer than 2 000 residents, an attrition rate that is as sad as it is commercially disastrous. That is something I intend to be involved in changing.

The entire seat of Perth includes far more than the underpopulated inner city. Twenty-six square kilometres in area, it stretches from Riverside Drive in the south to Dog Swamp in the north; from busy Charles Street in the west, to the charming riverside street, Joel Terrace, in East Perth. It contains the suburbs of Inglewood, Menora, Coolbinia, Mt Lawley, North Perth, Highgate, West Perth and East Perth. As well as a plethora of Government offices, in Perth one finds the Northbridge restaurant and entertainment belt, refuges for the homeless, light industry, six private and seven Government schools, sporting facilities such as the historic Perth Football ground, the WACA, Gloucester Park, the King's Park Tennis Club, and the Mt Lawley Golf Club. There are museums, art galleries, a concert hall and some of the State's most significant heritage assets such as the old East Perth Cemetery, the Treasury building, the Town Hall and the old Observatory. I cannot imagine a more interesting or vibrant electorate or one so challenging as Perth.

*Sitting suspended from 5.59 to 7.30 pm*

Ms WARNOCK: Having in a previous occupation been accustomed to being interrupted by the Wyong races, I am pleased to begin my speech again after the suspension. Before the dinner bell rang I had begun to look at the qualities which distinguish the electorate of Perth. I cannot imagine a more interesting and vibrant electorate, nor one so challenging as Perth. The issues that concern the residents of Perth in 1993 are, of course, as diverse as the city itself. We have the problem of neighbourhood crime in Mt Lawley, Inglewood and Highgate. We need to ensure the refurbishment of the old inner city schools in Mt Lawley, Inglewood and North Perth. We are concerned about the control of traffic throughout the electorate. There is the problem of car caused pollution, and no electorate is more affected by this than mine. In Northbridge both residents and traders are concerned about the parking problems and about the activities of late night revellers and the presence of the young homeless.

In general, anyone who has an interest in Northbridge is opposed to the proposed - and long debated - northern bypass. This problem has been around for 30 years under a succession of Governments and it must be solved with sensitivity. During my campaign I made it a personal and public commitment to fight against any road solution that had a deleterious effect on the vitally important and unique character of Northbridge and the residential areas to the immediate north of the city. Apart from any other considerations, it is time we released whatever parts of the resumed land that may not be required for traffic purposes. So much of it could be far more constructively used for inner city residential development and other productive purposes.

As well as the problems, there are reasons for optimism in the City of Perth. I am pleased that Homeswest residential developments in Wellington Street, Perth, Colin Street, West Perth and East Perth will go ahead. Homeswest has set new high standards of architecture in the public sector and its contribution to the quality of city life has been outstanding. I urge the Government to encourage further Homeswest activities in the inner city.

There is the imaginative plan for the redevelopment of East Perth - an initiative of the Labor Government. The Perth City Council has given the go ahead to the much needed refurbishment of the Beatty Park aquatic centre in North Perth. In spite of the withdrawal of Government support, this project is going forward thanks to the active involvement of the residents and the councillors who have determined that Beatty Park is a worthwhile asset for all city residents.

I certainly support the council and the Federal Government in their determination to restore and revive Russell Square in Northbridge, the King Street heritage precinct and the Western Australian Rowing Club boat shed on Riverside Drive. I am much in favour of the idea of giving over the historic Swan Barracks in Northbridge for use as a cultural facility. Shoppers, retailers and residents alike are looking forward to the imaginative upgrading of the Mt Lawley shopping precinct, a joint project of the Perth and Stirling City Councils.

One of the reasons that representing the Perth electorate is so challenging and so interesting

is that it contains within its boundaries the State's capital city precinct. The issues of the capital city part of my electorate are different in scale and complexity from the more domestic concerns. However, the success of our capital impinges very directly on the lives of Perth electors, especially in terms of jobs. Jobs are the fundamental issue that concerns all of us who live in the Perth electorate. Nothing is presently as important as this. All members of this House will agree that improving productivity is vital for the future success of our State; but, as productive assets go, the City of Perth is presently a very poor performer with empty office buildings, empty streets, poor retail sales and vacant land. In no way does our capital city perform well in economic terms. In no way does it realise its productive potential.

Throughout the western world more and more Governments are realising that investment in the asset of a capital city can be the engine room of economic recovery and job growth. In my view the development of Perth as a fully functioning capital city is one certain way by which we can create jobs and wealth for the whole community. I urge the new Government to follow the lead of the Lawrence Government in recognising the need to make the economic importance of Perth a key part of its investment strategy, and in making a priority of both public and private investment in our capital. Good cities do not just happen. Their development has to be an act of collective will. There has to be a complete understanding of the unique role of a capital city; there have to be policies, visions and plans and, above all, there must be a political commitment. The Lawrence Government began the process of making Perth fully productive not only in serving the State, but also by recognising its strategic role as a city of economic and cultural significance in the Indian Ocean and South Asian regions. Labor's creative initiatives were based on the concept that each investment in the capital was an investment in job creation and wealth creation.

Mr Speaker, there are three major priorities for our capital city. The first is the return of inner city residents. Various short-sighted policies have driven most of the population from areas in, and close to, the city. It is obvious with the present vacancy rate that few, if any, office buildings will be put up in the central business district for the next seven to 10 years, at least. For the present then, the opportunity for private sector development must lie principally with the building up of housing stock. With its inner city housing task force study the previous Government identified this issue and the opportunities that accrue from it. It immediately began to introduce incentives, such as land tax reductions for the private sector, and it had planned for more - reductions in headworks charges and water rates, together with a determination to sweep away the petty regulations that make recycling inner city buildings near impossible. I urge the new Government to go forward with those incentives to encourage the private sector to invest in close to city residential accommodation.

The second priority is city management. Perth has long been burdened by a city management system that simply does not work and cannot work. The present and curious structure of the Perth City Council - an accident of history - has failed us. The Mant report, commissioned by the Labor Government, clearly showed the fundamental economic weaknesses in the present system. There is no way that Perth can realise its potential as a true capital city unless a major change is made. The previous Government began questioning the structure of our city council in terms of its capacity to fund city improvements. I urge the new Government to continue to pursue this line of inquiry.

The third priority is planning. The Government must become directly active in the planning of the capital. The present system, with half the responsibility devolving on the city and the other half on the Department of Planning and Urban Development, has proved to be a conspicuous failure. There must be a capital city planning authority. Without such a body - which must be given the single objective of coordinated long term planning, and must be carried out by dedicated planning specialists - there cannot be a visionary plan for Perth. No successful city has ever been achieved without one. We need such bold changes if we are to release Perth's potential to create jobs and wealth for our people.

I have a goal for Perth and for the people who live in it. It is one I have had ever since I began to live here.

My objective, as we approach the third millennium, is that we all recognise that Perth has the potential to be one of the most successful, most liveable and civilised cities in the world. We

have an extraordinary opportunity. Our city is the capital of a State that is greatly endowed by nature's gifts. We are democratic, we have a superb climate, and our people are vigorous, well educated and talented. Our artists are in the forefront of creative talent in this nation. For all the people of our region, Perth is the nearest window to our complex western culture and to our unique indigenous culture. We should make it our collective ambition to see that our capital city contributes, in a positive way, to the lives of its citizens and to all the people of Western Australia. Right now, in the public domain, there are enough creative ideas about our city to ensure that we can realise this potential. I urge the new Government to keep the impetus going. It should not talk itself into the belief that the economic sky is falling to the extent that it is frightened to have high ambitions for our capital city. Let us see some action.

Mr Speaker, it is the obligation and task of a responsible Opposition to support Government policies and actions when warranted; to criticise and expose the Government's failings when warranted; and to ensure the Government is accountable to the people of Western Australia. We can promise the members opposite a watchful and active Opposition - they can count on us for that!

In accepting that some criticisms of the previous Government are justified, it is equally important to remember that many important social gains were made during the last decade. We established the Office of Seniors; the Seniors' Card; the Equal Opportunity Commission; the Office of Women's Interests; the Women's Advisory Council; and community policing. The list goes on and such gains must neither be forgotten nor set aside. As a result of 10 years of Labor Government reforms, Western Australia has become a better and fairer place, and a more just and egalitarian society.

This Opposition, of which I am proud to be part, will not stand idly by and see people coming a poor second to ideology. There must be no retreat and no backsliding on important social reforms. Those of us who have spent many years of our lives working for the rights of working people, women, minorities and the environment will be watching and working to defend the rights already won. Also, we will be working to expand them if we can. For example, some want to see adoption policy settled; some want to see legislation affecting de facto relationships passed; some are concerned to see proper attention to the rights of the mentally ill; and some want to see the rights of homosexuals expanded - for example, to have an age of consent uniform with that for heterosexuals. Those of us who support a woman's right to choose abortion will continue to pursue this issue confident that majority support for choice has been longstanding.

We will not stand idly by and see such nonsense as secession treated seriously. Such shabby talk separates us in the worst possible way from the mainstream of Australian life. We must think bigger than that, Mr Speaker. Western Australia is a proud, powerfully contributing and unique part of Australia. Our great State must not be portrayed as though it were some grasping, small minded settlement anchored off the coast of the country. Rather than secede from Australia, we should lead Australia, not only economically, but also with enlightened and visionary ideas.

In conclusion, having spent the majority of my working life as a journalist interacting with people of every kind, I am well accustomed to being in a profession that is held in low regard. Although I make no comment on whether my former journalistic colleagues are properly held in such low esteem - please do not think that fear of appearing on page 2 of *The West Australian* plays any part in my uncharacteristic discretion - it is a great pity that the profession of parliamentarian is apparently so much despised. I will make it a part of my business here to play a role in trying to reverse that general conviction. I have long held the view that politicians are immensely hard working and genuinely want to serve their community. It is an honourable thing to represent the people in this place.

Former Labor Premier John Tonkin gave me some good advice recently. He said that it is best in public life to admit your mistakes, and to move on. I trust that I shall make no more mistakes than most. Mr Tonkin also said he believed that it was the duty of a parliamentarian to render useful service and to look after the interests of those unable to protect themselves; that will be my guiding principle.

I come to this place with a sense of purpose. My goals for the next four years are: First, to work to improve the quality of life for the people of Perth in economic, social and cultural terms; second, to work for the success of our capital city; third, to endeavour to represent

every person in my electorate, not just those who voted for me; fourth, to promote the values of a cohesive and harmonious society; and fifth, to ensure, as much as I am able from the Opposition benches, that no backsliding on important social reforms occurs.

I conclude by thanking members for their patience and courtesy in hearing me out, and by thanking again all those electors who put their confidence in me, and all those staunch supporters who gave so much of their time to bring me to this place. I promise that while I am their member for Perth, they will have my total commitment.

*Amendment to Motion*

Ms WARNOCK: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

But we regret to advise Your Excellency that this House does not support the Government's announced intention of encouraging exploration and mining activity in the Ningaloo Marine Park and other places of high conservation value, and further views with concern the Government's mismanagement of the environment since taking office.

[Applause.]

MR MCGINTY (Fremantle) [7.45 pm]: It is with a sense of considerable sadness that I second this motion. In the last four and a half months what has occurred with regard to environmental protection in this State is nothing short of a disgrace. We have seen from the Minister for the Environment an unprincipled attack on our environmental system; we have seen savage attacks on individuals by the Minister which, with respect, are unbecoming of the office he holds; we have seen a looseness with the truth which does no credit to the Minister responsible for protecting our environment; and we have seen events unprecedented in the history of this State. We have never seen a Minister responsible for the environment do so much to destroy the environmental protection system in this State, and, at the same time, destroy public confidence in that system.

*Point of Order*

Mr MINSON: I distinctly heard the amendment moved to the Address-in-Reply. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to direct the member to speak to that amendment rather than completely ignoring it.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Minister for his comments. However, the member has just completed the first minute of his speech and it is appropriate that he has time to develop his argument. If he has strayed from the amendment - I am not sure that he has - he will be directed to return to the matter of the amendment.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr MCGINTY: I draw the Minister's attention to the amendment before the Chair. At its conclusion it reads as follows, "and further views with concern the Government's mismanagement of the environment since taking office." With great respect to the Minister, that is exactly the point I am addressing.

The Minister for the Environment has had a hopeless start with this portfolios. He has been quoted in the Press as saying that he confided in some of his friends that over the past 10 years issues have been driven in Western Australia by "greens, blacks and people in wheelchairs". The Minister is responsible for protecting the environment, promoting Aboriginal interests and catering to the needs of people with disabilities, yet he puts these people down in a way that is quite unbecoming to the Minister.

The Minister has a responsibility to be an advocate for those groups and issues in our community. It is a responsibility he has sadly neglected. The issue which sparked most controversy in our community was the press release issued by the Minister for the Environment on 23 April. In essence, it dropped two bombshells. The first was that, notwithstanding the Minister's earlier comment that he saw no reason to split the roles of the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority, he announced that the Government was proceeding to do just that. That is objectionable. One needs to look at the reasons and justification for that split. It is of interest that the independent review of the Environmental Protection Act which was conducted in the course

of last year recommended that the position should not be split at this time. Professor Richard Harding, an eminent Western Australian commissioned to scrutinise the public comments in response to the public release of the independent review of the Environmental Protection Act, came out very strongly and said that the question should not be reconsidered for the next five years. The Conservation Council, the peak body representing the community conservation movement in Western Australia, came out solidly in support of the independent review's position and opposed the move announced by the Minister for the Environment. Most significantly, Professor Bert Main who was appointed chairman of a split Environmental Protection Authority under the previous coalition Government in the early 1980s, came out very strongly and said that it did not work, that a split in the positions was a recipe for rendering ineffective the system of environmental protection in Western Australia. He said that if the Government went ahead with this split it would jeopardise the environment in Western Australia. He said the question concerned the leadership in the EPA, and that leadership would be weakened by splitting the positions and would jeopardise the environmental watchdog in Western Australia. Professor Main was an appointee of the previous coalition Government in Western Australia and he condemned what the Minister for the Environment was saying. To the best of my knowledge hardly anyone in the community has said this is a sound decision.

The second announcement contained in the press release of 23 April was that the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority did not have a valid contract and as such his term of office would expire on 31 July this year. It said that the contract which was signed in good faith last year would have no effect. The Minister on this occasion started what became a litany of untruths, to which the old saying of what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive would apply. The Minister has misled the public in this State in one of the most shameful episodes in our environmental history. The Minister said in his press release that the splitting of the two positions of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the EPA was recommended by an independent review of the Environmental Protection Act in 1992. That is untrue. The Minister would have known that if he were in any sense diligently discharging his duties. The recommendation of the independent review of the Environmental Protection Act was not to split the position.

Dr Lawrence: On television one night the Premier stated that he did not know there had been a review - he had to be told.

Mr McGINTY: That would not surprise me.

The second reason that the Minister for the Environment gave for regarding the contract of the Chairman of the EPA as void was that no formal contract had been signed. Again, that is untrue. It has since been revealed that copies of the contract which were signed by me as the Minister for the Environment and the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority exist - that is notwithstanding that the Minister sought to tell the public that no formal contract had been signed. The third untruth in the Minister's press release was that only one EPA member had a valid contract. We have seen the high farce that has been reached on the question of the validation of the contracts of the members of the Environmental Protection Authority over the past two months. It is of no credit to the Minister for the Environment that the question has reached such a diabolical stage. The Minister is now saying, notwithstanding his earlier comments, that there was no evidence of invalidity; that he will now validate them in case there was any invalidity. The Minister has made a joke of the system and he stands to be condemned for that action.

The shabbiest action on 23 April was that the person who was on the receiving end of that press release found out about his effective dismissal from the Environmental Protection Authority from the media and by press release. That is no way to treat any human being, let alone a distinguished, eminent and very hard working servant of this State who has served people of this State and the environmental protection system of this State well over the past eight years. For the Government to treat Mr Carbon in that way does the Minister no credit at all.

It is clear that the question of splitting the Environmental Protection Authority has been properly identified by Professor Bert Main, the former chairman of the authority and Liberal Government appointee. The real issue is the strength and effectiveness of the Environmental Protection Authority. Everyone who has been involved in studying the proposal, whether it

be Professor Richard Harding, the independent review of the Environmental Protection Act or other commentators has said that the splitting of the positions will lead to a weakening of the environmental protection system in this State and a rendering of it to be ineffective. One can only conclude, in the light of that common objection to what is being proposed here, that that is the real objective - to get rid of Barry Carbon along the way will also be a blow to the effectiveness of the environmental protection system in this State. Having made that announcement and seeing the public reaction which occurred, the Minister went into damage control mode. He thought that some smearing of the EPA chairman would be a good way to go. We now have that filthy, vile piece of defamation which came from the Minister when he stood up and said that Mr Carbon was receiving a salary package of \$202 000 a year. He said that was twice as much as a Minister and even more than the Premier received. That was designed to denigrate the individual concerned in a malicious and false way. That does no credit to the Minister.

Mr Kierath: Is it not true?

Mr McGINTY: It has already been publicly demonstrated through the columns of *The West Australian* and elsewhere that the Minister receives more by way of salary and conditions than does the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority. The Minister for Labour Relations should read those columns, because Mr Minson's statement is absolutely untrue. In trying to control the mess that he created we had the ludicrous proposition that the Minister, on 26 April, stated that he had received Crown Law advice that the State could be liable for the financial consequences of decisions made by an improperly appointed board. Of course, that has since been revealed to be rubbish. It also reveals that the Minister did not have Crown Law advice in the first place, because no competent lawyer would have overlooked section 57 of the Interpretation Act which validates any decision of any Government board where there has been an irregularity in its appointment.

Dr Lawrence: Do you think he knew or will ever admit that?

Mr McGINTY: It would be interesting to hear the Minister admit he was wrong on any one of these nine points where he has misled the public of Western Australia.

Mr Kierath: You know he is right.

Mr McGINTY: If the member for Riverton thinks he is right, he is an intellectual cripple. It is clear that there was no legal advice. The subsequent validation of the contracts was notwithstanding the fact that no invalidity could be found. The Minister was shooting from the hip and he got it wrong. The Minister then went on to try to cover his tracks by saying that only two Government agencies existed which had a combined chairman and chief executive - the EPA and RAFCOR. He was wrong again. He should not make comments which are factually incorrect. The RAFCOR person has gone as well. A number of Government agencies include combined positions. That is something which any competent Minister of the Crown should have known.

By 28 April the Minister was in a defensive mode. He refused to release Crown Law advice or comment further on the matter because "the matter was sub judice because there might be legal action taken". What a joke! If that was an honest statement of his understanding of the law, with due respect, he is not fit to be a Minister of the Crown. No legal action was being taken; no question of sub judice could possibly have arisen. It was either an attempt to deceive or at best a question of bumbling incompetence. The now member for South Perth, the former environment spokesman for the coalition, then entered into the debate with what I believe were some quite prophetic comments.

It is important to bear in mind that in Opposition, the now member for South Perth had promised Barry Carbon that when the position was split he could have whichever of the two jobs he wanted. It would be his choice and there was no controversy surrounding the matter as far as he was concerned. We can add to the blatantly broken election promises of this Government that it failed to honour the personal undertaking given to Barry Carbon by the coalition's spokesman on the environment prior to the election as to what would happen as a result of the splitting of the position of chairman of the EPA. The Minister has offered him nothing; his real agenda is to get rid of him because he has been an effective advocate for the environment in this State.

The Government should honour its election promises. The member opposite, whose prophecy



has come true, went on to say that it would be a tragedy if the Liberals squandered the goodwill he had built up with the greens of this State. Full credit to him. He built up an enormous rapport with and respect from the environmental movement of this State. He obtained a great deal of credibility for the coalition which assisted it greatly in the recent election. He then went on to say what would be the consequences of that squandering. He said that if the greens lost faith in the Liberals and felt conned the coalition would never be respected again. Never has a truer word been spoken. The Government has lost the confidence of not only the environmental movement of this State but also the community. I believe it is a great tragedy for Western Australia that that is the case.

Since then an organisation known as People for Environmental Protection has been formed. This organisation arose out of the community in response to this unprecedented attack on environmental protection in Western Australia. It comprises concerned members of the community who formed this organisation in response to what the Minister was doing to the Environmental Protection Authority. The Conservation Council, the peak body in Western Australia which pulls together all the community conservation bodies, carried an unprecedented motion of no confidence in the Minister's handling of the portfolio. It did not do that lightly; it has never done it before. However, it saw fit to condemn the Minister and to call on the Premier to remove him from office because of his incompetent handling of this portfolio. The Civil Service Association accused the Minister of destabilising the Environmental Protection Authority and demoralising its staff. Even the Deputy Premier had to intervene and tell him to fix the matter because it was politically damaging and it was time he got it off the agenda. He failed in that; he got rolled in Cabinet. The Minister for the Environment does not have a friend in the world because his actions have been a disaster for environmental protection in this State.

What did he do? He blamed the Crown Law Department. He thought he would abuse those public servants who had not given him the advice he wanted. I referred in question time earlier today to the advice he did not want from the Public Service Commission. The Minister did not like that advice because the commission told him the cold hard facts of life; that is, that the appointments were valid. He sought to blame Brendon Nicholson. He personally attacked him in quite a savage, defamatory way. He even sought to blame me of all people.

Several members interjected.

Mr McGINTY: It really was pathetic of him, and did him no credit, to have said in the media that I knew only where the drinks cabinet and the toilets were in my office when I was the Environment Minister. I raise that point because it is a sign that somebody has lost his marbles when he personally rubbishes someone who has raised points of view with which the Minister does not agree. The Minister will have to learn that he must listen to many people and many different points of view. He has shown no capacity to do that to date.

The Minister's biggest mistake was identified by the member for South Perth; that was, the appointment of Dr Tim Meagher as his environmental consultant. As the member for South Perth said, Tim Meagher's appointment was inappropriate.

Mr C. J. Barnett interjected.

Mr McGINTY: I am quoting the member for South Perth. Listen to what the Government's own back bencher says - someone who was not good enough to be in Cabinet, even though he delivered the environment vote in the last election. He said it was a mistake and that it was inappropriate.

#### *Point of Order*

Mr BLAIKIE: Having very carefully read the amendment before the House and noting that it says in part "and further views with concern the Government's mismanagement of the environment", I ask that the speaker's attention be drawn to how Dr Meagher happens to enter into this part of the debate.

Mr KOBELKE: I draw your attention to the final part of the amendment; that is, its concern at "the Government's mismanagement of the environment since taking office". The Government in that sense takes into account not only the responsible Minister but also all departments of Government and all officers who may be working for the Government on a contract or are in any way involved with the Government. Given that broad interpretation,

the fact is that the member is keeping within the form of the amendment and should be able to continue with his contribution to the debate.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the members for those observations. In view of the fact that the member who is speaking has only one minute left he will not have much time to transgress. Therefore, I will allow him to continue in the vein in which he is speaking.

### *Debate Resumed*

**Mr McGINTY:** The reason Dr Meagher features so prominently in this is that he was employed by the Minister. He has been saying around town he would get Barry Carbon. He has said to anyone who would listen to him that he would settle a personal vendetta against Barry Carbon over what Barry Carbon did to him concerning the Knightsbridge development where Barry Carbon criticised his work as being unprofessional, incompetent and hopeless. That is the man the Minister employed to advise him on these matters. It is interesting that the Minister squirmed and would not explain during question time the role played by Dr Meagher. What he has said publicly is that Dr Meagher had no involvement in the EPA contracts issue. He did not say that today. Now we have an enormous inconsistency. I think he is telling the truth to the Parliament; it was not what was said in the media earlier. This amendment should be supported by the House.

**DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [8.09 pm]:** This amendment relates to a very important issue the State is facing. I will concentrate on two main aspects of it: The first is the independence of the EPA; the second is the question of resolving conflict - something which has not been done well in this case. I start with a quote from a member of this Chamber. Although the quote was made in the context of an election campaign I believe it is spot on. It reads -

Any political party which does not take full account of the need to protect the environment is bound to fail.

Our Premier said that. If I go back over what happened in the past four and a half months, I see that a really drastic picture of the environment has been painted. An editorial by the Conservation Council six months ago stated that it seemed improbable that Western Australia would lurch back into an era of environmental irresponsibility if the conservative Government won the election. It pointed out that the member for South Perth and the Premier were polishing their greenie images and reassuring voters that a coalition Government would bring more jobs and better management. Unfortunately, they were very wrong. At the end of last year, we were feeling pretty comfortable about the environment. That is not so now. The Government is failing to pick up the public's concerns about the environment. In the 1970s, the environment was seen as something belonging to the looney left and the trendy greenies. However, in the 1980s, it became a middle class issue and in the 1990s, it is an issue for children, the future and all of us. In 1971, Western Australia was the first State to put in place an Environmental Protection Act and an Environmental Protection Authority. Obviously, over time, our concept of the environment has changed and as our concerns for the environment have changed, the EPA has changed. A major review of the EPA occurred in 1986 at the end of which its objectives were reaffirmed. They were what one would expect; that is, to protect the environment and to prevent, control and debate pollution.

In all of this time, the authority has acted as the guardian of the public's interest. We should all acknowledge that what it sees as its interests in respect of environmental issues has changed and evolved over that time. That is one of the sources of conflict. Throughout all of this, there has been one fundamental thread running through the debate; that is, the EPA should be independent. It is our most powerful watchdog over the environment. It can have the necessary power and strength only if it is independent. How is it independent? It is independent because it is not subject to direction by the Minister. That is not as draconian as it seems because it is tethered by its being limited. It can only report, recommend or give general advice to the Government. That may be the basis for the Government's decision. Ultimately, the Government does not have to accept what it says and it can make the decision. We all know that recommendations do not come into force unless ministerial conditions validate them.

Part of the evolution and the regard for the independence of the EPA was the decision in 1986 to combine the two roles of chief executive officer and chairperson. That has been

reasonably supported since that time. In February, a champion of the EPA said that he could see no reason for splitting the roles of the EPA chairman and CEO. That was said by the man who, exactly two months later, on 23 April, decided to split the roles and to purge the authority. I wonder what changed his mind.

Why is the independence of the EPA important? It is important because it allows the public to know what is going on and it gives the public -

Mr Kierath: Your logic is distorted and convoluted, for heaven's sake.

Dr EDWARDS: That is not true. It is the member's hearing, not my logic. The independence of the EPA is now threatened by that split. We should all have a sense of *deja vu* because a Court Government has done this before. In 1980, in its wisdom, it split the position of the head of the authority. The member for Fremantle referred to Professor Bert Main becoming the chairman of the EPA and Colin Porter became the CEO. As Professor Main said at one time and again recently in this debacle, that arrangement was unsatisfactory. He recommended to Government that the position be again combined. That came from the horse's mouth.

Mr Minson: Have you heard Colin Porter's side of the story?

Dr EDWARDS: I have heard a lot of sides of the story, but I guess I have made up my own mind.

Mr Minson: Are you going to quote his side?

Dr EDWARDS: Not at this stage.

Mr Kierath: It does not fit into the story.

Dr EDWARDS: Let me tell members opposite something that does fit into the story. On 23 April, when the announcement was made and the person involved in the announcement heard about it through the media, there was also an announcement of oil exploration in the Ningaloo Marine Park and a threat of a five per cent cut to the budget of the Environmental Protection Authority. That is the real story; it is one of getting at the environment, demolishing the environment and turning the clock back. How far will the Court Government mark II go in turning the clock back? It is obviously taking a lot of steps out of the book of the Court Government mark I.

Why was the Government so keen to split the role? I believe it sees it as a way of avoiding conflict. Apparently developers are in conflict with the EPA. The Government sees the developers in one corner and the greenies in the other and the way to solve the conflict is to split the role. However, there is no point in running from conflict to conflict. All of our decisions on the environment will be becoming increasingly constrained by economic and ecological considerations and it will become more difficult to balance the issues. I believe that the better way to solve conflict is to stand and address the conflict and work through ways of solving it by bringing people together rather than putting them in separate corners. Boxing it out is not the way to go. People should be brought together to get consensus and resolution. I remind members of an old Chinese proverb which says that, in all problems there is an opportunity and that it is the opportunity one needs to look for, not the problem.

Over the past five to 10 years, conflicts on the environment have been managed and improvements have been extremely successful. One of the major projects has been the land care movement. Initially, there were two classic sparring partners in separate corners: The farmers who needed to make a livelihood out of their land by doing what they thought was the right thing at that time as did farmers for four generations before me, including ring barking and clearing land; and the environmentalists who could see the degradation to our land as the major issue that we must face. However, we have had excellent results by getting farmers to recognise that their livelihood was threatened and could be improved by land care arrangements. Farmers are now committed to environmental forces and that is a good outcome for all of us. In the urban area, integrated catchment management has been put in place.

Mr Nicholls: Who imposed the clearing ban when it was recognised that it needed to be preserved?

Dr EDWARDS: The member's Government did.

**Mr Nicholls:** It is something that was recognised by Governments. The changes in lifestyle appreciation do not reside in one political ideology; they go right across the community.

**Dr EDWARDS:** I guess that is the point of what I am saying. This is an issue about which we all have concerns and we all need to work together to solve it. However, the way the Government has gone about that in the past four and a half months has done nothing for the issue. I come from a farming background and know all about those problems. My father kept bush in the middle of the farm into which he would put the sheep after they had been shorn so that they did not die from the elements. He was also one of those very rare farmers who did not believe in duck shooting. He would not want to be associated with this side of the House; he would be more comfortable with the other side.

**Mr Blaikie:** I agree that he had certain qualities, but did he have any ducks on the farm to shoot?

**Dr EDWARDS:** Yes, he did. He had quite a lot. They all migrated there. Do not ask me what sort of a shot I am; I have never shot ducks. Who would eat them?

In respect of integrated catchment management, to which I know the Minister has a commitment, in urban areas this is far less successful because there is no conflict. There is no tension about people's livelihoods being threatened. I speak as the chairperson of the first urban integrated catchment management in this State. In our catchment - and I know that the member for Dianella is involved in this also - people's livelihoods are not threatened, and although people are concerned about pollution, sometimes we need that extra tension in order to be able to achieve a solution. In fact, there is no need to run away from conflict and tension because sometimes if we get in there with it we can achieve what we are trying to achieve. I am disappointed to note that the Government has cut the Green Grants conservation grants. That is a great pity because that will deny small groups of volunteers the opportunity of solving local environmental problems. It is of even greater concern that, on the day the grants were axed, \$500 000 was given to Southern Processors.

The recent threats to the Environmental Protection Authority have brought about unprecedented conflict. One example is the motion of no confidence in the current Minister for the Environment by the Conservation Council of Western Australia. The Conservation Council has never done that before, and I believe it did that after a lot of consideration. The Conservation Council has cited a number of reasons why it thought that was necessary. It was concerned about the current Minister's failure to act in accordance with the policy that it believed in; about the attack on the EPA and upon its chairman and members; about a lack of consultation; and about what it perceived as the inability of the Minister to work cooperatively with the EPA. At the moment the more traditional greenies are annoyed about the situation, and the public and, more recently, industry are concerned about the situation. Industry is now saying that the environment looks like coming back onto the agenda as a big issue for it, and that is not a step forward but a step backwards.

Members from all sides have said here tonight that we are all committed to the environment. I guess that reflects the view of the community at large. A recent survey of advertising for newspapers found that 82 per cent of people nominated the environment and environmental issues as the one thing about which they wanted to read, so it is really a pervading concern throughout the community. However, we must recognise that conflicts are an opportunity, and that although they are usually put up as obstacles, when we look at what is really behind them and take that away there are solutions. We must acknowledge competing demands but try to work our way through them. An article in a recent issue of *Impact* spells out very well how this can be done. However, again I am disappointed that the unit which put out that good article has also had its funding cut.

I conclude where I started by saying that any political party which does not take full account of the need to protect the environment is bound to fail. We are about to see that happen.

**MR TAYLOR (Kalgoorlie) [8.22 pm]:** In addressing this amendment to the Address-in-Reply, I believe the Government has taken advantage of what I consider to be the relative good nature of the Minister for the Environment. There is no doubt in my mind that the Premier and those who advise him about various issues in this State decided some time ago that a person of the calibre of Barry Carbon would get in their way. There is no doubt in my mind that it was the Premier and those who surround him who decided that the best way to

keep track and to get on top of these issues was to ensure that a person of the nature of Mr Meagher was put into the Minister for the Environment's office. There is also no doubt in my mind that the Minister for the Environment was told that if he were to be part of the ministry and to take on the Environment portfolio, one of the first things he would have to do was get rid of Barry Carbon and restructure the Environmental Protection Authority so that it was more attuned to the way they believed Western Australia should be developed. I have no doubt that in bringing that about, the Minister for the Environment was used by those people and has borne the brunt of the public's dissatisfaction about this issue.

I turn now to the comments made by the Minister for the Environment in February when he told *The West Australian* that - and I am sure that at that time he did not realise what was going to be asked of him -

"Let me say that the EPA stays" . . . You have got to have an authority to review things in an independent way and I think its chairman has to be someone who cannot be directed.

The Minister said also that he could see no reason to split the roles of chairman and chief executive. Why would he say that then and a couple of months later be faced with the decision of doing away with the job of Barry Carbon and, if at all possible, ensuring that the EPA as an authority was restructured with people who would fit into this Government's view of how the environment should be run? I feel sorry for this Minister because I believe he has been set up by some of his colleagues in a way which is most unbecoming to those who should be in the business of supporting him.

Mr Kobelke: We have not seen much support so far!

Mr TAYLOR: There has been very little support so far. I am the third speaker from this side and it is most unusual in an Address-in-Reply debate to get to the third speaker and to not have a comment from the Government.

I do not know a lot about Mr Meagher, except to say that even the member for South Perth - about whom I will not say a lot because he has not had the opportunity of making his first speech in this place - felt most unhappy about the fact that that person had been put into that position. I am sure that he is also quite unhappy about the fact that that person is now influencing environmental policy in Western Australia. He can see that all of the work which he did to try to ensure that the environment was an issue which the Liberal Party could at least neutralise during the course of an election campaign is fading away quickly to become a negative for this Government rather than a neutral issue. The confusion surrounding the position of Barry Carbon and the EPA is not good for this State, and despite the supposed pro-development line of this Government, it has added significantly to the confusion that surrounds environmental matters. One of the reasons that has happened is that people in the mining and development industry used to say to us time and time again when we were in Government that they need a stable approach. They need to know where they stand. We have here a situation in which those people do not know where they stand. They do not know what will happen to the EPA. They do not know what the outcome will be. They are still uncertain.

Mr Lewis: Who are those people?

Mr TAYLOR: I will tell the member in a minute. They are still uncertain about where they stand in respect of the legality of the EPA. That is not good for Western Australia, nor for the Government's so-called slogan of "More jobs, better management". It is exactly the opposite to more jobs and better management.

I will give an example of the role of Mr Carbon and how I found him in this case. As the member for Kalgoorlie, I know that one of the crucial issues facing us a few years ago was what would be done about the location of the gold roasters alongside the town which were resulting in sulphur dioxide pollution of the environment at Kalgoorlie. The first move by the Environmental Protection Authority was to say that the roasters should be closed down and moved out of town. At that time the industry was not strong and without doubt the roasters would have been closed; indeed, a good deal of the Golden Mile would have closed. On his own initiative, Barry Carbon sat down with the leaders of the mining industry in the goldfields and me and worked out a solution so that the roasters are now well north of the town. That is of immense environmental benefit to the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Just as

importantly, it will benefit the gold mining industry in that it has been allowed time to plan how to attack the issues and the costs involved. That result was obtained only because Barry Carbon was prepared to grasp the nettle and find a solution.

The Minister for the Environment asked earlier who are these people; they are the sort of people who run mining companies and who have been able to sit down with Barry Carbon who possesses the knowledge, experience and determination to resolve the issue. In most cases that involves compromise on both sides and benefits everyone involved. That is the reason it is so important that the Environmental Protection Authority retain some stability. We need look back no further than a year ago to find another agenda. The Chamber of Mines at that time made a personal and vitriolic attack on Barry Carbon as chairman and director of the EPA. That attack lasted a couple of days. Very quickly, those who led the charge received the message from a range of mining executives throughout Western Australia to go easy on Barry Carbon. The message was that a person of such quality should be in charge of the EPA.

If the Government succeeds in moving aside Barry Carbon, it will be a grave disservice not only to environmental management in Western Australia but also to industry because his knowledge and ability to deal with the issues will be lost.

Mr Kierath: If that happens it will be as a result of your actions, not because of anything we have done.

Mr TAYLOR: What does the Minister mean? What actions by Mr Carbon have brought about this sort of approach?

Mr Kierath: It has been his making and your making.

Mr TAYLOR: How has it been his making?

Mr Kierath: He is the one who paraded in the public arena, attacking the Government. Do not forget your role!

Mr TAYLOR: What was the role of Mr Carbon?

Mr Kierath: The member for Kalgoorlie had a role to play as well.

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: All Mr Carbon has done is respond to an attack made on him in the first place - just as the Minister would do in that situation.

Another interesting aspect of this episode is the role of the Premier, the Deputy Premier and other Ministers. I refer firstly to the role of the Deputy Premier who commented that some Ministers in the Court Government were cavalier in their approach. I understand he made the comment without the Premier's knowledge. I am sure the Government found the comments very embarrassing. The Premier responded quickly. He knew who was in charge in this State. He said that his team would do better; he knew that when it came to the crunch if he was to be rolled, he would be rolled by the Deputy Premier as a result of his public performance. Just as importantly, the Deputy Premier has a tough approach to life. He decided the best way to handle the matter was to call in the Minister for the Environment to sort him out. I am sure the Minister did not enjoy being called in in such a public way and sorted out over the handling of the matter. The Deputy Premier was put in his place very quickly by the majority of Liberal members in the coalition Cabinet.

The outcome of the Cabinet meeting was a press release. My experience in Government allows me to read between the lines of that press release, and it must have been a vitriolic Cabinet meeting because the Cabinet unanimously endorsed the Minister for the Environment's propriety in handling the issue. At the time the Deputy Premier said that the Cabinet supported the Minister for the Environment. He said that he must support the Minister because that is part of Cabinet solidarity. We need only look around at the faces of a few Ministers in Cabinet at the time to realise that the Cabinet meeting would hardly have represented a debate. The Minister for Planning and a few of his comrades would have been right into the Deputy Premier over his attack on a Liberal Minister. Therefore, Cabinet issued that press release very quickly.

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: I have had some experience reading between the lines of press releases. I have no doubt that it must have been a very difficult Cabinet meeting to say the least.

Mr House: Are you still a member of the left?

Mr TAYLOR: No, I am not.

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: The Deputy Premier is back. He can respond to the issue adequately. The Deputy Premier must have been surprised when he rolled up to the Cabinet meeting on the Monday. He was lined up so that he would make certain that the Press release was issued stating that, despite the Deputy Premier's carpeting of the Minister for the Environment, the Cabinet unanimously endorsed the Minister's position.

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: Those comments do not assist the Government at all with this issue. It is surprising, to say the least, to find a Minister in a situation where Cabinet says that if he cannot sort out the issue it will be given to the Attorney General to resolve. Then the Minister said that he was delighted that the Attorney General had been asked to sort things out. He should not be delighted; he should be angry that another Minister was given the matter to sort out. She has not been able to sort it out.

Several members interjected.

Mr TAYLOR: It is not a matter of researching the legalities. It is a matter of sorting out the issue. Even though the Minister was told to take action, in the end he must finish it off himself one way or another. To have the Attorney General do it and to hear the Minister say that he is delighted, surprises me. Surely, under the Act it is the Minister's responsibility to sort out the situation; it is not the Attorney General's job.

Mr Minson: She is assisting.

Mr TAYLOR: It is not a matter of her assisting the Minister.

I feel that the good nature of the Minister for the Environment has been used up by some of his more senior colleagues in setting him up to say, "Get rid of Carbon. Reorganise the EPA so that we can go on and do some of the things that concern people such as the member for Northern Rivers and myself, in areas like Ningaloo" where, undoubtedly, the efforts of the Government will be to try to ensure that the petroleum industry can go about its work in a way that, if the Government is in any way serious about changing the boundaries of the national park, will create an absolute furore in Western Australia. The Carbon issue will be nothing compared to how Western Australians will feel about Ningaloo. While I see that the Minister for Mines has backed off somewhat on that issue, there is an absolute requirement on the part of the Premier to say to this House that as far as he is concerned it is not a matter that will be pursued any further by this Government and that the Ningaloo issue is well and truly dead.

Mr Acting Speaker, let me conclude by saying that the amendment deserves the support of this House. Quite clearly it shows up the real divisions that exist in the coalition Cabinet on issues that become difficult. It also quite clearly demonstrates how the Court Government will continue to handle environmental matters in this State in the next three years or so.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [8.41 pm]: Mr Acting Speaker, I think Robbie Burns once said, "I once was a maid, but I cannot remember when." That certainly applies to me because, politically, I was a maiden 13 years ago. I do not think that, technically, qualifies me to make a maiden speech; therefore, I am happy to waive any of the privileges that go with delivering a maiden speech.

Whatever the conservation movement might or might not think about the new Government, you can bet your last dollar, Mr Acting Speaker, that it feels similar sentiments to the now Opposition and to the members who sit opposite us in this House. Members opposite should not delude themselves that the current Government's difficulties on environmental matters have somehow miraculously won back for the Australian Labor Party the support and the respect of the conservation movement in Western Australia. It is no secret that the Australian Labor Party went into the most recent State election with an awful lot of electoral baggage which did not just impinge on the matters connected with WA Inc.

Those opposite were carrying an enormous amount of that baggage and I suggest they will continue to carry that for another decade. They have made no fundamental shift in their attitudes and their failure to do that will keep them in Opposition for another decade at least. The transparent way in which members opposite speak to an amendment to the motion on the Address-in-Reply is evidence of that. They went into the election not just with baggage on WA Inc issues but also on the environment. They had an appalling record in relation to school maintenance. That baggage touched on their credibility and the Medicare deals where members opposite were prepared to give away another \$50m. With all of that, why did the conservation movement, leading up to the State election, not trust the Labor Party?

Mr D.L. Smith: They were conned by a silver haired former journalist.

Mr PENDAL: Let me tell members why those opposite did not have the respect of the conservation movement. Nothing that has happened in the meantime has added to the level of trust the conservation movement has for them. The reason that the Labor Party lost all respect within the conservation movement was that the Labor Party could not be trusted to stick to any of the substantial environmental promises that it made throughout the 1980s.

Mr D.L. Smith: How do you think the present Minister is performing?

Mr PENDAL: Mr Acting Speaker, let me tell you what that is.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.L. Smith): Order! I do not require to be directed from the benches as to when to call order. I realise that the member said he would forfeit his rights for his maiden speech in this Chamber, but it would be desirable if the interjections could be kept to an absolute minimum, given that it is his first speech in this House and I, for one, would like to hear what he has to say.

Mr PENDAL: My point is that whatever perceived or real criticisms are being directed towards the present Government by the conservation movement, the conservation movement still mistrusts the Labor Party.

Let us look at the record of the Labor Party. Let us look at what caused the fracture in the relationship between the conservation movement and members opposite. First of all, the Australian Labor Party said of one of the major environmental issues in Australian politics, "There shall be no mining of uranium in Australia, except the three mines that we say it is okay to mine." That was a great example of political principle: To mine uranium was immoral in the mind of every member of the Australian Labor Party; but it was only immoral in all of those mines that were not exempt under the Labor Party's rules.

What was the next reason for the environmental movement losing faith in these people opposite? It was their record in national parks. The environmental movement took those in the Labor Party to be meaning what they had said; that is, there shall be no mining in national parks. Members opposite implemented their policy except in the three national parks that they chose to mine in. The conservation movement fell about laughing and said, "We can no longer trust the Australian Labor Party." That was another setback in the 1980s in that long haul by the Labor Party to claw back the environmental vote over which it knew it was losing its grip. On two of the most fundamental issues of all the Labor Party scabbed on its friends.

Mr McGinty interjected.

Mr PENDAL: The member for Fremantle has just implied that the record of coalition Governments on national parks in past years is something of which to be ashamed.

Mr Thomas: Why are you telling us?

Mr PENDAL: I will tell members opposite what they lost sight of and why they are on that side of the House now. At the end of 1983 the coalition Government had created a record number of national parks, the like of which the Australian Labor Party could only envy.

Mr Thomas: The coalition had an absolutely abysmal record.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PENDAL: I will remind members opposite what the Government of Sir Charles Court did, not what it said. Between 1974 and 1983, the period of the last coalition Government, the area of Western Australia which was classified under national parks was doubled.



Mr Thomas: It was all in one national park.

Mr PENDAL: No, it was not.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Ainsworth): Order! I have warned members a couple of times already. I do not want to wave a very heavy stick on my first opportunity to chair this House; however, I repeat my request for members to desist from persistent interjections, especially when they have been called to order.

Mr PENDAL: When the last coalition left office an increase had occurred in the national park estate.

Dr Gallop: You have pushed the wrong button. This is a Government of development; why are you popping up?

Mr PENDAL: The member for Victoria Park should contain his hysteria for five minutes longer. Members opposite do not like to be told that, notwithstanding the record of pro-development, the coalition previously performed in a way which made the efforts of members opposite look miserly.

Several members interjected.

Mr PENDAL: When the coalition left office in 1983 -

Several members interjected.

Mr McGinty: Why don't you talk about the 1990s.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PENDAL: I do not want to talk about that. Members opposite did nothing in that nine year period. Not only did they squander every piece of financial estate in Western Australia, but also -

Dr Gallop interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I do not need advice, thank you. I am asking my local member to desist from the level of interjections. I would like the member for South Perth to be heard in silence, and I ask members to bear that in mind.

Mr PENDAL: In its dying days, the Labor Government lost the respect and support of the environmental movement, for the reasons I have mentioned together with a few others. Members opposite are like the Bourbons of old; they have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. The Labor Party failed to grab the big picture. Its great contribution to the environmental debate of the late 1980s and early 1990s was duck shooting.

Mr Thomas: What do you think about duck shooting?

Mr PENDAL: The member for Cockburn knows what I think about duck shooting. However, I am saying to the members opposite that it was a case of Nero fiddling while Rome burnt. The former Government could not be bothered tackling major environmental issues but created a few diversions, such as duck shooting, which did not amount to a row of beans when it all came down to the serious environmental issues which were confronting the State. That is why many sensible environmentalists reached the conclusion that the Labor Party had lost the plot. What did the Government do in all those years about the most serious problem confronting not only the environment but also Australia today; that is, land vandalism? What did the Labor Party contribute in the big picture?

Dr Lawrence: A great deal.

Mr PENDAL: It did not. Madam ex-Premier did what she did so well; as an ex-public relations man I am the first to admit that. The Government produced a bundle of glossy brochures.

Dr Lawrence interjected.

Mr PENDAL: The Leader of the Opposition does not seem to be following her own advice about parliamentary conduct. What did the predecessor of the member for Fremantle ever contribute in this State to arguably the second most potent serious environmental issue which Western Australia faces; that is, the problem of dieback? He was too busy banning duck

shooting and producing glossy brochures. That is why members opposite have lost the respect of the environmental movement.

My fear now is that if both sides of politics destroy the faith of sensible environmentalists -

Dr Lawrence: As you have done.

Mr PENDAL: - as the former Government certainly did, once again the environmental debate will be marginalised. The issue will be sent back to the streets, where it does not belong, and the currency of what should be a very important issue will be devalued. That is not only the price the coalition Government could pay if it does not do the right thing, but also the price the previous Government did pay for having failed.

Mr McGinty: There are not many promising signs about reversing that trend from your side either.

Mr PENDAL: I repeat that the Labor Party has nothing about which to be proud.

Mr McGinty: Tell us about the other environmental issues.

Mr PENDAL: I do not need to tell the member opposite about mining in national parks because his Government did it in three national parks.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PENDAL: The splitting of the role of chairman and chief executive officer has absolutely nothing to do with the environmental side of the debate.

Mr Thomas: The sacking of Barry Carbon had a fair bit to do with it.

Mr PENDAL: The splitting of the roles had nothing to do with it because it occurred 18 months before Mr Carbon became involved in it. The reality is that the coalition embraces the spirit of those two roles being separated because it believes it is a bad management principle to have someone as both the chairman and chief executive officer of an organisation.

If members want to know the background, I advise them that I was previously the Opposition spokesman on tourism and the same argument applying to the Environmental Protection Authority applies to the Tourism Commission. In the lead up to the 1989 election I said that if the Liberal Party were elected to Government it would do the same thing to the role of the Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Commission. It was underpinned by the belief that it was managerially wrong to have two roles occupied by one person, especially when it would always be difficult to have anything other than a Caesar to Caesar arrangement within that organisation.

Mr McGinty: If you are not out to get Barry Carbon, offer him a job like you promised.

Mr PENDAL: The member for Fremantle has reported what Barry Carbon said to me. I presume the member for Fremantle heard what he said. Therefore, he does not need me to repeat it. Mr Carbon knew the position. The serious underpinning of all of this is the discredited Opposition - this motley mob - who come into the Parliament after losing an election; and one of the reasons it lost it was that it had lost the faith of these people -

Mr Ripper: And then they were betrayed by your successor.

Mr PENDAL: The public had 10 years to judge the now Opposition. This Government is entitled to be judged at the conclusion of its four year term in office.

Several members interjected.

Mr PENDAL: I advise members opposite who think that being in Opposition is a passing phase that I used to think that also. When we went into Opposition we thought that we would be there for a quarter of an hour and the public would see reason and recall us to the Government benches. Frankly, that will not happen in the case of this Opposition.

The amendment which has been moved - three or four members have done their best to substantiate it, but they have been unsuccessful - is an attempt by the Opposition to show the environmentalists what it could not show them in the time it was in office. It did not know what it believed. It was similar to the position which confronted Senator Richardson. Someone put an idea forward by painting it green and making it look good and in 1987 Senator Richardson did what Mr Pearce was later given the job to do in this State. All the

decent people in the environmental movement feel let down by the performance of the former Government for those reasons and others which I do not have time to give tonight. I appeal to the House not to marginalise the debate so that the environmentalists will not trust politicians and will believe that both sides are as bad as each other, but to have a sensible debate.

**DR CONSTABLE (Floreat) [9.03 pm]:** I will address both parts of the amendment to the Address-in-Reply motion. Firstly, I refer to the question of the Ningaloo Marine Park. A couple of weeks ago I actually took the time to visit the Ningaloo Marine Park and I wonder how many members taking part in this debate have done that. I spent a couple of days there and I visited Cape Range National Park and I spent almost a day speaking with the officers from the Department of Conservation and Land Management. I also spoke to the manager of the marine park, to people involved in the fishing industry, to people in other industries such as the charter boat industry, to members of the Gascoyne Shire Council, to representatives from the Gascoyne Development Commission and to representatives from the local tourist bureau. In two days I was given a very good briefing on the views of the people of Exmouth and the surrounding area on the Ningaloo reef and other aspects of life in that area. I was quite surprised at the responses I received from most of the people to whom I spoke, including the Department of Conservation and Land Management officers, about the prospect of further exploration and mining in that area.

**Dr Gallop:** I wonder what they think about the new regulations concerning the Public Service.

**Dr CONSTABLE:** I will discuss that another time.

I was surprised that the people were not concerned about further exploration because we all know that exploration is already taking place in the Ningaloo Marine Park. Leases have been granted and mining from the shore into the marine park is already occurring. The local people are concerned about the possibility of a tanker spilling petroleum products onto the marine park or destroying the prawn fishing industry in the gulf. I expected a response along the lines that they did not want any more exploration.

Not far from the area I am talking about is Barrow Island and other areas in which mining has been taking place for some time. The local people were very concerned about the possibility of a major disaster that might affect the Western Australian coastline, particularly around the Ningaloo Marine Park. I ask the Government to address their concerns and consider the problems with which it might be faced if a major disaster occurs. The consequences of petroleum spillage from a tanker would be disastrous and it would ruin the fishing industry, do irreparable damage to the tourism industry, affect most people in Exmouth and the surrounding area and damage the environment in a most horrible way.

I cared enough about the area to visit it and I encourage as many members as possible to visit this wonderful part of Western Australia and to be briefed by the local people to allow them to form an opinion on issues similar to the one we are debating tonight. I have been able to form an opinion after visiting the area and listening to the local people. The mention of the Ningaloo Marine Park in the amendment suggests to me that I should not support it. I give notice to the Government that I will certainly be following its actions concerning exploration and mining and their effect on the environment in this area.

The second part of the amendment is so broad that it is meaningless. By way of an example I address the actions of the Minister for the Environment by referring to a matter which is of great concern to many people in my electorate; that is, a remnant of urban bushland between the Churchlands Senior High School and Newman College. I am sure the Minister is fully aware of this matter, given his response to my question last week.

**Mr Minson:** In fact I was so impressed that I bought a house nearby.

**Dr CONSTABLE:** The best people live in my electorate.

**Mr Minson:** I expect my local member to perform.

**Dr CONSTABLE:** I will certainly look after the Minister and if he has any problems he should visit my electorate office.

When one addresses an environmental issue it is interesting to listen to the community's response. Scores of people have contacted me about this piece of bushland and only one out

of 150 people said that the trees should be cut down and the land developed. The reason given was that the land is situated between two schools and one never knows what school children will get up to in the bush. It was suggested the trees should be cut down so that the children could not smoke there or get into other mischief.

Some members may recall the question I addressed to the Minister last week about the urban bushland policy promised in the coalition's general environment policy. I was pleased with the Minister's response and I understand that within the next five or six weeks we will see evidence of that promise. The coalition's policy suggests that the development of this area is a matter of urgency and if it occurs within four or five months of the Government's coming into office it will be addressed very quickly. I hope he will fulfil his promise that all interested parties in the community and conservation groups will be part of that policy making process.

The last part of my question to him last week concerned a moratorium or backing off from any development of remnant urban bushland until that policy is in place. Once again, I thank the Minister for his response to that question. He said that scientific evidence and evidence of the natural heritage value of the bushland would be reasons for not proceeding with the development until the policy is in place. There is mounting evidence from a number of groups, such as the Gould League, the Western Australian Wildflower Society, the Urban Bushland Council and the National Trust, with regard to this small piece of land to which I refer. In some places the land is denuded but it can be restored to its original state, and there is evidence of its value on recreational, educational, environmental, scientific and heritage grounds. Given the Minister's response to an environmental matter I sought to learn a lot about, I cannot support the second part of the amendment. As I said earlier, it is so broad that it is meaningless. However, I will continue to watch very closely this Government's performance in relation to the environment and if at any time I think the performance of the Government is not up to scratch, I will say so.

**MR BLAIKIE** (Vasse) [9.11 pm]: I indicate my opposition to this amendment. The member for Floreat has properly recognised the real import of this amendment; that is, it is so broad that it is meaningless. In those few words she has quickly summed up the situation.

I want to place on the record of this House how much I despise an Opposition that allows a new member to be set up in the way the Opposition has set up the member for Perth in asking her to present an amendment such as this. I counsel new members to have a very close look at what the member for Perth has done, probably in good faith and without realising the import of it. All members have been distributed with a copy of the amendment which comes from a memorandum signed by Antoinette which was sent to the office of Carmen Lawrence from the member for Fremantle, Mr McGinty, on 17 June 1993. The memorandum states -

I faxed a handwritten notice to you on Monday, 14th June 1993, as our printer was inoperable.

I do not know whether the member for Perth's name is Antoinette and I do not know what Antoinette is doing signing notes and faxing them to Mr McGinty's office. It is highly improper and irregular and I caution new members not to follow that example. I believe the member for Perth has acted in good faith but she has been set up by her colleagues. The memo also states -

#### **SPEAKERS**

Jim McGinty

Dr Carmen Lawrence

Mike Barnett (in the unlikely event he does not remain Speaker)

We have not yet heard from the Leader of the Opposition, but the last line is an interesting one. If that is an indication of the Opposition, perhaps we should blame Antoinette for how the Opposition performed when in Government. A handwritten note was circulated on 14 June indicating that Mike Barnett probably would not remain Speaker. The matter was predetermined. I wonder whether the member for Rockingham had been given the sad news. The other person on the list of speakers is Bill Thomas with the word "possibly" in brackets after his name. Bill Thomas is always "possibly" and possibly later tonight.

When members, particularly new members, move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply or

move a substantive motion, it is quite appropriate that it be properly presented, but they should for goodness' sake give it the dignity and respect it deserves. Any such amendment should be on a single piece of paper and be signed and dated. The member for Perth has not dated or signed the amendment. I give new members this good advice because otherwise the whole system becomes a sham and, as the member for Floreat said, this amendment is so broad as to be meaningless.

I now comment on my opposition to the amendment. It is a fascinating set of circumstances. This Opposition will go down in history as the greatest economic vandals ever in the history of Western Australia, and on the second day of the parliamentary session with a new Government the Opposition is trying to show how good it will be in Opposition. Its record in Government indicates economic vandalism of the worst order. The royal commission reports will be around for a long time and they will be quoted to members opposite from time to time in case they forget. In environmental matters the former Government's economic vandalism was disgraceful and its performance was pathetic. The first Government to move into the environmental protection field was the Brand Government in 1970.

Mr Thomas: When in 1970? It was in December 1970, three or four weeks before it lost office, after being in Government for 12 years.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Brand-Court Government was the first Government in Australia to introduce environmental legislation, notwithstanding the arguments put forward by the member for Cockburn. The motion is attacking the Minister quite unfairly.

Mr Minson: It does not attack me.

Mr BLAIKIE: The speeches have attacked the Minister but the motion does not. The Minister has been in office for only four months and surely he should be given a fair go. That has not happened to date.

I want to talk now about some of the environmental measures taken and the track record of the former Government. Prior to the last election three new national parks were created, including Peron and Kennedy. The Government thought that the creation of those parks would win it some votes. However, it did not provide any resources for the management of those parks. It merely wanted to capture the votes without providing resources.

The environmental movement did not forget members opposite for that, and this Government is picking up the tab for this wider area of management which the previous Government created to grab votes.

The previous Government had a policy of upgrading all State C and B class parks to an A class category, and the associated, much vaunted protection. This policy won support in the environmental movement; it was rather fuzzy stuff which left everyone with a warm feeling. However, I was involved with the Dunsborough-Meelup reserve, which the group of environmental vandals opposite, when in Government, wanted to flog off to the lowest bidder. I would love to have been in Cabinet when that decision was made, and I would love to see the documentation if it has not already been shredded!

Mr C.J. Barnett: The champions of the environment have gone quiet!

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes, these champions of the environment were about to flog off this land, but no-one was told how it was to be done. We now know what the previous Government did with land in order to buy favours. The Dunsborough-Meelup C class reserve finally became the subject of a local referendum, but not before the Shire of Busselton wrote to every member of Parliament, including the then Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for South West. The current member for Mitchell became the shire's champion and indicated the member for Vasse was an evil fellow. The shire also wrote to then Opposition members, and I was not too happy with some of the replies I received! Nevertheless, the referendum was held and 91 per cent of the community voted to retain the park.

Following that decision - with a little public support - the then Minister for South West, Lands and Local Government agreed that the area should become an A class reserve. I belatedly gave the Minister some credit, but he would have done better to stick to his party's policy in the first place. I am referring to matters affecting my electorate, and if I were a Legislative Councillor I would need an extension of time to cover all the issues which arose in the region during the time of the previous Government in relation to the environment!

The ALP policy regarding mineral transport on the south coast is to encourage rail use. Nevertheless, the environmental vandals opposite ensured that the rail option would not be used on the Beenup line. This had something to do with the trade union movement, and the rail option was not assessed at all but road transport only was to be used. I am pleased that the current Ministers for Transport and Resource Development have visited the area and the Government is considering ordering an assessment of the rail option. Contrary to ALP policy, members opposite rejected this option.

Also, a State Energy Commission powerline was to be constructed to service the Beenup mine. On this matter the previous Government not only inflicted environmental vandalism, but also told untruths of the worst kind! It made a decision based on so-called environmental grounds: As the area through which the line was to be erected was an interim Australian Heritage Commission listed area, the Government would not proceed. Therefore, I was fascinated when I met people from the Australian Heritage Commission at a meeting at Capel at which they said that the line had never been referred to them at all.

Dr Lawrence: You had better raise that matter with the SEC.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Leader of the Opposition should discuss the matter with the Australian Heritage Commission. The members of this commission also said that if the matter had been referred to them, they probably would not have opposed it under the circumstances.

Therefore, the previous Government had a poor record with not only environmental statements, but also environmental misstatements! It stands condemned. However, on the first proper sitting day of this Parliament, the pious group in Opposition has tried to create a sham regarding the environmental management of this State. This Government has been in operation for five minutes.

Several members interjected.

Mr BLAIKIE: Members opposite should give the Government a go. I certainly support this Government and the Minister.

Several members interjected.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am keen to remind members opposite of their track record.

Mr Kobelke: You are the first member to support the Minister.

Mr BLAIKIE: I support the Minister and the Government, and I caution the Opposition: It should give the new Government a go because the Opposition's record in Government should make members opposite hang their heads in shame.

MR LEAHY (Northern Rivers) [9.27 pm]: Mr Speaker -

Mr Kierath: It is the member's maiden speech!

Mr LEAHY: We have heard a great deal from the Minister, not much of which makes sense.

The member for South Perth touched on the environmental record of the previous Labor Government during the past five years. In those years the previous Government gazetted as national parks areas within my electorate; namely, Mt Augustus, the Kennedy Range and the Francois Peron National Parks.

Mr Omodei: What about the amendment?

Mr LEAHY: These matters were touched on by Government members. Another area mentioned was the Ningaloo Marine Park. Also, the conservative Government, when in Opposition, strongly argued against Shark Bay receiving World Heritage listing. However, nobody now argues against that proposal, and some members opposite even try to claim credit for that listing! I notice that Conservatives in Exmouth are asking for the Ningaloo Marine Park to be listed so that this Government will keep its hands off the area - it is the only way to protect it from this Government.

The Ningaloo Marine Park is the most important marine park in Western Australia and probably in Australia, apart from the Great Barrier Reef. This is the only fringing reef on the west coast of any continent in the world, and it is well known worldwide. The marine park covers 4.5 thousand square kilometres and must be sacrosanct; no mining or exploration should take place. No wishy washy promises will be accepted as we must not allow any damage to this reef or the surrounding environmentally sensitive areas.

The whole area, reef and buffer zone, is a marine park and the people of Exmouth have said categorically that they do not want drilling. The boundaries of the marine park were gazetted after four years of careful consultation with industry, including the oil and gas industries. The Government wants to prostitute that process and change the boundaries to suit its own needs. The people of Western Australia will not let the Government do that. The boundaries of the marine park must remain as they are.

This Government's most vocal critics are the people of Exmouth - the people who voted resoundingly for the Government at the last election. They mistakenly thought that the Government would protect the environment. The member for South Perth did a very good job on the Government's behalf in convincing the environmental movement and the people of Exmouth that the Government would protect the marine park. The people of the area know that the Ningaloo Marine Park is the area's greatest asset. They received a kick in the teeth with the closure of the US naval base and they now rely on tourism and fishing for their future.

Tourism has a number of things going for it in the area, but the jewel in the crown is the Ningaloo Marine Park. Fishermen in the area, including George Kailis, have said they do not want to see exploration in the park. The area about which the Government is talking is a very important nursery to the prawn and wet line fishing industries in the Exmouth area. The fishermen want the area left as it is. They are right, and the Government must listen to them. George Kailis said on a number of occasions in the press that nobody in the fishing industry had been consulted, and David Pont, the spokesperson for the wet line fishery, has said the same. The shire president, Doug Bathgate, said that nobody from the shire had been consulted. There was no consultation with the people of Exmouth. Hon Phil Lockyer, a Liberal upper House member, is reported as saying -

... ministerial inexperience and a lack of consultation had turned the issue into a bad public relations exercise for the Court Government.

There was not enough detail in the original ministerial announcement and Exmouth residents and the local shire were angry at the lack of consultation.

It is a wonder the Government spoke to representatives of the oil and gas industry before announcing they could drill! There was no consultation with the fishery or tourism industries upon which Exmouth now relies. Exmouth's economy receives very little benefit from the exploration industry. The rigs and workers come from outside. Nobody from Exmouth is employed in the exploration industry, yet this is what the Government says will be Exmouth's saviour. Exmouth's saviour will be the Ningaloo Marine Park.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Exmouth community is keen to see some servicing of the exploration industry from its jetty on the north point.

Mr LEAHY: That is to service areas out from Onslow, not within the marine park. The Minister for Resources Development and everyone else knows that.

Hon Phil Lockyer also said, "I have heard from nearly everyone in Exmouth and they are furious about the Government's plan." The one good thing the Government has done by its announcement is that it has maximised my vote. There will be very few votes in Exmouth for the coalition at the next general election. The people know that the coalition cannot be trusted.

The member for Vasse touched on the Francois Peron and the Kennedy Range National Parks. He said they were gazetted for political reasons to enhance my vote in Northern Rivers. He cannot have done his homework. If he had, he would have noticed that the Kennedy Range National Park is at Gascoyne Junction. I attracted two votes out of 36 from that area at the last election! That is five per cent of the vote at Gascoyne Junction. The member for Vasse also said that the Labor Government had created the Francois Peron National Park for political purposes to maximise my vote; we lost votes in that area. The decisions on those two national parks were correctly made by the then Minister for the Environment, Jim McGinty. The people in that area and the environment movement in Western Australia had called for the creation of those national parks for more than eight years.

Mr Bloffwitch: You ought to make sure the mines stay in your electorate or you won't be re-elected.

Mr LEAHY: Out of the 16 towns in my electorate, 11 voted for me. It was not just Newman.

Mr Bloffwitch: How did you go in Carnarvon?

Mr LEAHY: I received the same vote as the Liberal Party candidate.

*Point of Order*

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to Standing Order No 133 and suggest that the member for Northern Rivers confine himself to the subject matter in the motion.

Mr LEAHY: I am answering an interjection. The Leader of the House should control his backbench.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has a point of view.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr LEAHY: There are many more members on this side and probably on the other side who want to speak on this issue.

Dr Gallop: We have not heard too much from the other side.

Mr LEAHY: The people of my electorate and of Western Australia say "Hands off the Ningaloo Marine Park." I urge members - just on that single issue - to vote for the amendment.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [9.38 pm]: This is a very interesting debate for two quite different reasons. Members on this side of the House have addressed the issues contained in the amendment; that is, the potential mining of the Ningaloo Marine Park by this Government and the Government's mismanagement of the environment since taking office. The speakers on this side of the House have raised matters in support of this amendment. In contrast, we find that no-one from the other side of the House has addressed the matters contained in the amendment. It has been fascinating to see how this debate has brought out the lack of commitment by the Government on those matters and the tension that obviously exists between the various players on the other side. The member for Vasse, who last spoke for the Government side, referred to the procedures involved in bringing the amendment forward and about Meelup and Beenup, which were projects in the life of the Lawrence Government. In no way did he address any of the substantive issues in this amendment. One interesting comment was elicited from the Minister for the Environment by interjection during the debate. The Minister indicated that the wording of the amendment did not relate to an attack on him, which was what he perceived was coming from some of the speakers on this side of the House. That is a very interesting interpretation by the Minister. The amendment refers to "concern for the Government's mismanagement of the environment since taking office." It is most interesting that the Minister for the Environment perceives that an attack on the Government's environmental management has nothing to do with him. This is absolutely extraordinary. When the Minister found that it was getting a bit hot for him because he had said a whole lot of things that did not stack up, and everybody except blind Freddy knew that he was trying to mislead the people, he shoved it across to the Attorney General. He said, "This is too hot for me. I am Minister for the Environment, but do not ask me to look after the environment; let the Attorney General do that." The Minister for the Environment is saying that Government environmental policy is not his responsibility. He calls himself the Minister for the Environment and collects his pay, I assume.

The interjection made by the Minister is quite astounding. I refer to the would-be Minister for the Environment, the member for South Perth, who I think made a most interesting contribution to the debate. He indicated that he was an ex-public relations man. However, he is certainly not an ex-PR man - he is still a PR man. Nonetheless I heard some interjections which suggested that he had been elevated to the level of con man. He certainly did a good job at the last election.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

Mr NICHOLLS: I find that comment offensive to the member for South Perth and, as the member will agree, it was not called for. I suggest the member for Nollamara voluntarily withdraw the remark.



The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Nollamara to withdraw.

Mr KOBELKE: I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr KOBELKE: When the member for South Perth rose to his feet applause came from this side of the House, but I did not hear a great deal of applause from the other side. I am not sure whether that was because members on the other side were not anticipating that he was rising to speak or whether they were a bit worried that the would-be Minister for the Environment intended to speak on this issue. Interjections first occurred from his side of the House. I did not interject on the member for South Perth because I was most interested to hear what he had to say, even though most of it was quite irrelevant to the amendment. I refer to some matters he mentioned which show that the Government does not wish to defend this amendment. It obviously has a problem with the amendment, probably because there is too much truth in it. In the last five minutes of his speech he mentioned a couple of matters which might have been relevant. Prior to that he spoke about the Australian Labor Party's uranium policy. That is really relevant to this amendment! He then referred to a loose collection of facts about a range of matters which occurred during the last Government. Nothing in this amendment relates to the previous Government. He was using attack as the best means of defence because he knew that his Government had no defence against the substance of the amendment. That is why, so far, not one of the front bench members has defended their Minister. They have left it to the would-be Minister for the Environment to give some support and to the member for Vasse who is usually pretty good on his feet. He can take up a fair amount of time without making a contribution to the facts. He did that quite well. In his speech, the member for South Perth referred to the period 1974 to 1983. The Government does not want to debate the facts in the amendment; that is, this Government's mismanagement of the environment. Those facts have been so clear to the people of this State and clearly argued by members on this side that the Government cannot answer them.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What element of the environment has been mismanaged? Give me an example.

Mr KOBELKE: I am coming to that. A number of members have outlined that quite clearly, which the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party would have heard had he been paying attention. Not only the Minister for the Environment, but also the Minister for Planning have made a number of loose suggestions which would throw into utter chaos the present system for managing the environment and planning in this State. We have a good system, although it is not perfect; there is a long way to go and the Opposition hopes the Government will address the need to improve the system. The State does not need the approaches being taken by Government Ministers who have been shooting off their mouths with loose ideas which do not fit into a proper environmental and planning system. The present procedures must inspire confidence in the people of the State. They should involve public consultation which keeps the confidence of the people and involves them. In that way they will acknowledge that we all have a part to play in preserving our environment and helping with orderly planning.

I refer to a loose statement made by the Minister for Planning - other speakers have mentioned those made by the Minister for the Environment. A couple of months ago the Minister for Planning mentioned that this Government would move to ease restrictions on coastal development. As the member for Scarborough, Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be well aware of the environmental sensitivities of coastal development. We are left guessing whether the Minister for Planning's statement on this highly sensitive environmental matter was an ill-considered response to something which took place at the time or whether there was a clear intention to allow a much higher level of development on our coastal zones. If that were the case, that must be very seriously considered.

Mr Bradshaw interjected.

Mr KOBELKE: I will get to that. The point I want to make is that coastal development requires a very careful balance between the ability of residents to gain access to pristine areas and the need to ensure that the environment is preserved. The State must confront decisions of this nature. To date that has been done through the investigation of local areas. This

needs to be expanded to an overall coastal plan. As a result of a visit a few months ago to New South Wales I am aware that that State has a highly developed process for coastal planning. I hope both the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Planning will ensure that Western Australia has improved policies to better manage our coastal areas.

With our pristine beaches in Western Australia we can be the envy of many parts of the world. It is very difficult to manage our vast coastline; to put in place resources and to ensure that our management process works. As a speaker from this side of the House mentioned, the sparkling waters are open to all forms of tourism. The development of marine national parks is one part of that. The environmental and planning process, through public consultation, must ensure that good care is taken of the balance between access and use and the long term preservation of these resources.

One example of a development in the Perth metropolitan area is the marina at Hillarys, which a number of prominent members on the Government side vehemently opposed. People recognise now that that facility has proved to be a most attractive and popular resort for people not only in the northern suburbs but also the whole of Perth.

An Opposition member: You can have development on the coast.

Mr KOBELKE: That is what I just said. However, with a proper planning process involving consultation with people and ensuring that environmental safeguards are in place, coastal developments will serve the interests of the people of Western Australia while preserving the environment for future generations. Although prominent members of the Government were utterly opposed to the Hillarys marina, the Minister for Planning is recommending we become gung ho and create more coastal development. The danger of that is -

Mr Minson: When did I say that?

Mr KOBELKE: I am referring to the Minister for Planning. At the other end of the scale the Observation City development is an ugly monolith dominating the coastline. It is completely out of scale with the surrounding buildings and coastline.

Mr Bradshaw: Who put it there?

Mr KOBELKE: Some members who are interjecting perhaps do not realise that at the time you, Mr Deputy Speaker, were the Mayor of the City of Stirling, I was involved with the ratepayers in opposing that development. I therefore am familiar with it. What the interjectors from the Government side perhaps do not realise and, therefore, do not comprehend the stupidity of their remarks, is that that special coastal development zone was in place during the term of a previous Liberal Government.

It had been there since the 1970s. It had no height restriction. There was no height restriction in the planning scheme for that special coastal development zone. The Labor Government was not in a position to make any changes to approvals given prior to 1983; however, it was able to put in place during the time of the Labor Government a height restriction in that zone. The planning approvals for Observation City went through prior to the Government being able to place a height restriction in the scheme. As the Deputy Speaker knows because he was the mayor at the time, the height restriction was placed in the new town planning scheme which was being implemented by the City of Stirling.

The third and final example that I will give of the importance of making sure that our coastline is preserved is Cockburn Sound and the Kwinana industrial developments. The Kwinana development was and is very important to the economy of this State.

Mr Lewis: Which one are you talking about? The one that John Tonkin built?

Mr KOBELKE: I am talking about the developments in Kwinana generally. At that time, environmental safeguards were not put in place and the area from Garden Island to the coast was degraded to the extent that it has been very difficult to regenerate it.

Mr Lewis interjected.

Mr KOBELKE: The Minister keeps interjecting because he can see issues only in party political terms; he cannot face up to the real issues that make planning so important and if we are going to plan the environment, we must consult. The issues must be put on the table and the Government must go and talk to people with the proper procedures in place.

Obviously, the developments at Kwinana were allowed to occur when environmental issues were of no account to people, much to the detriment of us all. It was not a party political thing; people did not have the ecological awareness that they have today! Therefore, this State has suffered. The last Government took steps to put in place proper management in that area so that the environment could be regenerated. However, it will be a long process. The processes are important and that is the problem that we are experiencing with this Government. It is not establishing clear processes in which the people of this State can have confidence to ensure that there is proper and orderly management of the environment and planning, because the two must go together to provide the economic growth that we need. Whilst "sustainable development" is a much used phrase, unless we can bring together proper planning processes and processes to safeguard our environment, we will not have sustainable economic development in this State. I know that the member for Swan Hills referred to that important point in her maiden speech. I hope that she will have some influence on the Government so that it will get its act together because, clearly, it does not have it together.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred earlier to adverse comments on the front pages of the newspapers every day about this Government. The Deputy Premier, when acting as Premier in the absence of the Premier, gave the Minister for the Environment an out. He said to him, "Come to Cabinet in a few days and have this matter resolved." If that had happened, it would be over. But what happened? There was a bit of a bunfight when it got into Cabinet and one party in the coalition jacked up on the other and said, "We are not having this minor party giving our Minister any directions." Instead of considering whether it might have been a good direction and getting him out of a bind, they said, "To hell with it" and dug a bigger hole and dropped him in. What are we to make of this? Is the Minister for the Environment a sacrificial offering set up by this Government to take the rap while it pulls apart the environmental controls in this State, or is it another bungle by the Government for which it is becoming so well known? There is no way we will get more jobs in this State if one bungle after another continues to occur. If the environment is not being bungled, planning issues are. The Minister for Planning issued a Press release today relating to more land becoming available. However, he promised that on radio two months ago and said that the Premier would make a statement in a couple of weeks.

**Mr Taylor:** A jungle of bungles!

**Mr KOBELKE:** That is right. This amendment should be carried to indicate our concern that the mismanagement of the environment since the Government took office is a threat to the creation of jobs and to the maintenance of the environment in this State.

**MR MINSON** (Greenough - Minister for the Environment) [9.56 pm]: According to the list that I have, a number of other members are listed to speak. I imagine that the Leader of the Opposition will come charging in and want to speak when I finish. The former Speaker might also want to speak because we know that he is not in the Chair.

We have heard a heap of rubbish this evening. If Peter Dowding or Bob Pearce had been sitting on the opposite side, I would be really worried.

**Dr Gallop:** Why? Do you have something to hide?

**Mr MINSON:** No, because they were good debaters. What we have heard tonight has been the tamest, most pathetic debate that I have heard since I came into this House. It was a real yawn. To sum up the debate, it was absolutely boring. Quite frankly, if that is the best members opposite can do, I look forward to the next few years because I do not think we will have to do too much research for our debates.

A number of things have been covered in the amendment. I assume from what people have been saying that it is some sort of attack on me as Minister for the Environment. I will address a few of the myths that have been thrown around tonight and then I will place on record a few comments about the Environmental Protection Authority board. I will then refer to the issue of the Chairman of the EPA.

**Mr Ripper:** Do not mislead the House, will you?

**Mr MINSON:** No, I can assure the member that I will not mislead the House.

I will deal one by one with the nonsense myths that we have heard in the last five months from the Opposition. We have heard a few of them tonight. The first myth related to duck

shooting. There is no proposal before the Government by me or by anyone in the Government to change the law relating to duck shooting. Duck shooting is not a conservation issue; it is a question of whether society wants to allow a blood sport. The Government accepts that society does not want duck shooting as a blood sport. It is not a conservation issue and as far as I know, nobody -

Mr Kobelke: Let's get on with it. No-one referred to duck shooting.

Mr MINSON: The member was not listening to his own colleagues' speeches! As far as I am concerned, no-one on the Government benches has raised that matter.

The second myth to which I wish to refer is that relating to exploration and drilling in the Ningaloo Marine Park. There is no proposal before me to do anything in that park.

Mr Ripper: What about the four other Ministers?

Mr MINSON: The Minister for Mines referred to the Ningaloo Marine Park in an after dinner speech. That was the entire reference to mining, drilling or exploration in the park. I inform this House and the public of Western Australia that there is no proposal before the Government to explore or drill in the Ningaloo Marine Park. We heard next about Mt Lesueur. I remember Mt Lesueur because Hon Ian Taylor was the Minister responsible for the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and just after I came into the Parliament I became the Opposition spokesman for that portfolio. Mt Lesueur is just outside the southern boundary of my electorate, so I know that area pretty well. I watched in some amazement the activities of the Government at that time, when it allowed the company which owned the lease at Mt Lesueur to spend in excess of \$20m doing environmental review and management programs and trying to prove up its reserves and to satisfy the Environmental Protection Authority's requirements. This Opposition when in Government used Mt Lesueur as a tool to play off against the coal miners in Collie, knowing all the time that it had absolutely no intention of allowing anything to happen to that area; it always intended to turn that area into a national park. That is one of the most shameful acts I have seen committed against a company since I came into this place.

Several Opposition members interjected.

Mr MINSON: I will not respond to the interjections because I do not have the time. Had members opposite made this a proper motion and given me a bit of time, I would have been able to take the interjections.

I inform the House and the people of Western Australia that the Rudall River exclusion zone was never about conservation. It was an Aboriginal affairs issue. It was put in place, as I was told by the current Commissioner for Aboriginal Affairs, in Dowding's day because the then Government did not know what to do. It was all too hard.

Dr Gallop: We want to talk about Minson's Carbon attacks.

Mr MINSON: I did not attack Mr Carbon. I just told him when his appointment expired.

The Opposition when in Government did not tell the people that Rudall River was about conservation. It was always about Aboriginal affairs. The then Government did not know what to do with the problem that it had created. When we got into Government we did what members opposite should have done a couple of years ago; namely, lift that exclusion zone. The then Government tried to make out that it was protecting the interests of Aboriginal people. That was absolute nonsense.

Fitzgerald River National Park has also been mentioned tonight. I will spend some time on the Fitzgerald River National Park because that illustrates an interesting point. I am sorry to have to go through this so laboriously for the Opposition but apparently it does not understand that there is a due process in place for exploring and mining in national parks. Members opposite supported that process when they were in Government and we supported that process when we were in Opposition, and we still do. It is a very good process. For the sake of completeness and in order to let people know, because members opposite do not seem to understand it, a person who wants to explore in a national park must receive permission from the Minister for Mines and from the Minister for the Environment. Once a person has obtained that permission, he must go to the EPA and have conditions set so that he can go ahead and explore. Once a person has done that and has presumably found something, if he then wishes to mine, to drill or in some way to exploit that which he has

found, he must have permission from both Houses of Parliament - something which we support and something which members opposite support; that remains unchanged. Further, once that permission has been obtained, he must then abide by the conditions set down by the EPA.

That due process is being followed in this case. The Minister for Mines has received from a citizen of this State an application to explore in the Fitzgerald River National Park. If we wanted to make a political decision, we would throw our hands up in the air and say, "Run away", but that citizen is entitled to have that due process followed; namely, that the Minister for Mines will make his decision. I received a letter from the Minister for Mines, requesting my permission and my opinion. I requested advice from the Department of Conservation and Land Management, which is the proper place from which I can receive technical and scientific advice about this area. I received that advice this morning and I am considering that advice. I will then inform the Minister for Mines, and the Minister for Mines will then inform -

Mr Taylor: What did CALM tell you?

Mr MINSON: The member will find out when the announcement is made. When that decision is made, the Minister for Mines will, quite properly, tell the proponent first, and will then make an announcement to the public.

That question of due process is particularly important because I now wish to refer to some of the more outrageous and outlandish things that have been said by the Opposition spokesman for the environment, who to his shame should have known better because he was the previous Minister for the Environment. When I got into the office of Minister for the Environment, it was suggested by the Premier to all Ministers that they check the validity of appointments and the proper constitution of all boards, statutory authorities, and so on. I did that, and I have several under my control. I put on record that the Board of the Authority for the Intellectually Handicapped - and it is interesting that the Leader of the House for the Opposition is no longer here - had passed its use-by date by about a year, and he knew about it but did nothing about it. I want to know why he did not do anything about that. The board cooperated and told us the whole story, and I moved, quite properly, to have it appointed, and that deficiency has now been corrected. I then contacted the EPA -

Dr Gallop: Did you contact it or did someone else?

Mr MINSON: My office contacted the EPA.

Dr Gallop: Which part of your office?

Mr MINSON: That has nothing to do with it. Anyone within my office who acts under my instructions is acting on my behalf. That is why I say I do it, because the buck stops here. Ministerial responsibility is something about which members opposite have to learn because they did not understand it when they were in Government. I contacted the EPA, and asked it to provide all of the information about appointments and so on. What I received back were copies of letters of appointment. Let me tell members something about the Environmental Protection Act. That Act is very specific about the appointment of members. It is not like a lot of other Acts which say members can be appointed by the Minister or, in some cases, by the Governor. The Environmental Protection Act states that members must be appointed by the Minister, and lays down some conditions. The information which I received from the EPA was indeterminate. It was therefore obvious that the Act had not been followed properly. I did the proper thing and sought advice, as a new Minister, from Cabinet Services. I asked it to advise me about this problem. It said it had no information about this matter, and it referred me to the Public Service Commissioner. Several letters went to and fro, and I know that the former Minister waxed eloquent about one letter on a certain date, but there were several letters between us.

It was clear that the Act had not been complied with. It was suggested that we contact the Crown Solicitor for advice, which we did. I would love to table his advice, but the Crown Solicitor said that the EPA board was indeterminate as to whether it was validly appointed because the proper documentation he would expect to be there was not there. I am aware now that the Interpretation Act covers me, as the Minister, and that board up to the time that I became aware that there may well be a deficiency in the way the board was appointed.

Mr McGinty interjected.

Mr MINSON: I am a new Minister, and it was pointed out that in all probability I have a board which has not been properly constituted. I followed it through as far as I could. I took the matter to Cabinet. Cabinet suggested that I solicit the help of the Attorney General. The Attorney General has reported back to me and confirmed all the advice I received.

Mr McGinty: She is not too happy; you had better get it right.

Mr MINSON: The Attorney General is telling me that I cannot release the Crown Solicitor's advice, but I already knew that. I received advice from the Attorney General that supported the advice I had received previously, and to make sure there was no further problem, and that all decisions of the EPA were valid, and that it was properly constituted, I appointed the three members who were indeterminate for periods of time that coincided with the amount of time they would have had left to serve had they been properly appointed in the first place.

I turn now to the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority. This is an interesting matter. This gentleman was first of all a Burke appointee. No expressions of interest were ever called to my knowledge.

Dr Gallop: Here it comes. Let's get into it; denigrate the person!

Mr MINSON: He was a direct appointee. Secondly, how many months before the 1988 election was he appointed?

Mr Court: It was the 1989 election.

Mr MINSON: He was reappointed in 1988. How many months early? He was reappointed extremely early. I do not know how many months early it was.

Mr Court: Members opposite should be ashamed of appointing him just before an election. It was improper and members opposite know it.

Mr McGinty: It was Public Service Commission advice that the Government is refusing to make available. If you do not undertake to table that correspondence you should sit there and be quiet.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MINSON: Prior to the last election, on Christmas Eve, the previous Minister reappointed this man seven and a half months early. It was the second time he had been reappointed extremely early for no good reason.

Mr McGinty: Have you read the Public Service Commission advice that I received?

Mr MINSON: Yes, I have read it. The former Minister knew our policy was to separate the two positions and he knew he had no chance of winning the election.

Several members interjected.

Mr MINSON: I want to tell members about this Mr Carbon fellow. I am sorry to have to tell the House and the people of Western Australia this, but he walked out of my office and said that he had been informed by a press release regarding his appointment.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr MINSON: During my first meeting with Mr Carbon, after I became Minister, he said he wanted to talk about his early appointment. He said that the reason he wanted to be reappointed was to have some certainty in his life. In other words, he wanted notice. As soon as I found out for sure that problems existed with his appointment, I contacted him. I rang around the State and found him somewhere in the south west; I do not recall where. I spoke to him by telephone at about 8.30 am. I said that some irregularities existed with his appointment and that he should know that the advice I had received was that he was appointed only until 31 July 1993. He said that he wanted to see me, and quite reasonably so. He travelled back to Perth and joined with two other people from the EPA who had an appointment to see me at 1.30 pm to discuss budgetary matters. At that time, three gentlemen - Mr Carbon and two others - came to my office. My principal private secretary and I had already discussed the budget at length and the direction we wished to take. I told the chairman of the EPA that I felt it would be appropriate under the circumstances for him to come with me to discuss a personal matter. He agreed. He agreed also that the two officers with him would go with my principal private secretary to discuss budgetary matters because my principal private secretary had been well briefed. From 1.30 pm until just after

2.00 pm we discussed in detail what I had found out. He was informed about the advice I had received.

Dr Lawrence: Did you say that you intended to act on it?

Mr MINSON: I informed him of his situation, and that I had been informed by the Crown Solicitor that Mr Carbon had a valid appointment until 31 July 1993. This is the part that I am very disappointed about: The chairman of the EPA went straight out of my office into the arms of the waiting Press. I do not know what they were doing there, but Mr Carbon told a deliberate untruth when he said he had been informed by a press release -

Dr Lawrence: You were duded by your leader; that is how Mr Carbon approached the media.

Mr MINSON: I want to tell this House and the people of Western Australia that the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Environmental Protection Authority deliberately misled the people of this State as to the way in which he was informed. He said that he was informed by press release. That was a deliberate untruth.

Mr D.L. Smith: Say it outside the House.

Mr MINSON: I have said it outside the House, and I am happy to repeat it outside the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed quite a lot of interjections but they are at a level where the Minister cannot be clearly heard. I ask members to cease interjecting and allow the Minister to get on with his speech.

Mr. MINSON: Let me also inform the House of something else about the reappointment of the Chairman and CEO of the EPA. On 24 December offices have Christmas parties. The erstwhile Minister for the Environment was in an absolute temper because he had been positioned by this man. I understand that Mr Carbon brought his own letter of appointment, which the Minister signed. The previous Minister has forgotten that all the people left behind in his office are still there. They have told me what happened, that he went around the office in a temper all day because he had been forced into reappointing Barry Carbon.

Mr McGinty: That is a barefaced lie and you should retract it because you know it is not true.

Mr MINSON: It is not. That is exactly the case. Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order.

Mr D.L. Smith: There is only one thing worse than a hand wringer; it is a sanctimonious hand wringer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Can I perhaps ask the Minister to inform the House of the details of the way in which this matter is before the courts and what actions may be under consideration. I have some concern that we are crossing the bounds of the matters that may be before the courts. If it is possible could the Minister give an indication so that we will not transgress this line.

#### *Withdrawal of Remark*

Mr MINSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, the previous Minister has said that it is a barefaced lie and I ask you to ask him to withdraw that remark.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Fremantle to withdraw.

Mr McGinty: I withdraw. It was a barefaced untruth.

Mr Court: That is not a withdrawal.

#### *Debate Resumed*

Mr MINSON: I think I have made the point.

Mr McGinty: You know that is not true and there is no truth whatsoever in your suggestion.

Mr MINSON: I beg the member's pardon. That is the story in my office and a number of people have told me the same thing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

*Points of Order*

Mrs EDWARDES: Mr Deputy Speaker, as a point of clarification of the matter that you raised with the Minister, I advise that the matter concerning the contracts with Mr Carbon is before the courts. A listing date has been given and, as such, the matter of the determination of the contract and surrounding matters would be regarded as sub judice under clause 2 of the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr RIPPER: Mr Deputy Speaker, this House has an interest in having the widest possible chance of debating matters of public importance. Insofar as this matter is to be heard, it is to be heard by a judge, not by a jury. Therefore, the limitations which normally apply to a matter as a result of its being sub judice because it is before a court are less in this case than they would be were the matter to be heard before a jury.

Mr KOBELKE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I might be able to help on this point and draw to your attention to the fact that it is not a matter of sub judice as has been clearly reflected in debate and in tomorrow's *The West Australian*. It is a matter of contention between two members of the Government who are having a dogfight over it. It is not a matter of sub judice which should hold up debate in this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I believe you have expressed a point of view, not a point of order and, in fact, I do have some concern. I have not read tomorrow's newspaper, but it really is irrelevant. I am concerned that we are crossing the line of matters before the court. It is the practice of this House to avoid those problems. I ask the Minister to continue.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr MINSON: I would like to move on to the splitting of the two roles. Before I do, the word around town that keeps coming back to me and privately from a number of members in the Australian Labor Party is that the champagne corks have not stopped popping since I have chosen to follow a path to split the roles of the CEO and the board. I have heard so much rubbish about the weakening of the Environmental Protection Authority and, in some way, watering down of environmental law in this State, but I have not heard one cogent argument to back up that position.

Mr Thomas: Why did you argue for it a month before?

Mr MINSON: I did not see a particular need for it then. Three weeks later, having had people filing through my office telling me of the problems, I made up my mind. I do so without apology. It was made very clear to me that this is an absolutely necessary move to make. The CEO and the chairman in a combined position represent an exceptionally powerful position. It is one where nobody has an avenue of appeal or redress - not the staff, not the users of the EPA, nobody. I cannot stand by and let this Caesar unto Caesar situation continue. I am not prepared to let that happen. Since there has been an attack on the Government's handling of environmental matters, let me inform the House and the people of Western Australia what we intend to do with respect to the environmental protection legislation and also to some other areas of the environment.

We intend to visit the Environmental Protection Authority Act on two separate occasions: The first will be very soon and it will be to split the role of the chief executive officer and the chairman of the board; secondly, we will move to establish a formal and independent appeal mechanism, something which I think should have been done a long time ago. It is interesting that since this Act came into being only two appeal committees have been put in place.

Mr D.L. Smith: When do you expect the second change?

Mr MINSON: There are two parts to the first stage. We will do two things: Split the role of the CEO and the chairman and put in place an appeal mechanism.

The second part will be implemented towards the end of this year or the early part of next year if the parliamentary agenda allows. The Bill will be based on the statutory report which has been conducted on the Environmental Protection Authority and public consultation following that report.

The Government will undertake a number of initiatives over the next few months. It will step up research into the biological control of exotic animal species which are devastating native fauna in our national parks and wetlands. In particular, there is considerable



advancement in the area of fox, cat and rabbit control. Shortly, I will be announcing a major initiative in dieback research. As mentioned by the member for Floreat, over the next couple of months I will be announcing an urban bushland strategy. Already 30 000 hectares of tree plantations have been approved in the south west. As everybody who has an interest will know, I have put in place an expert forest review committee that will thoroughly review, in a way that has never been done in Western Australia to my knowledge, the yields from the forest. Based on that I will determine in a very short time the sustainable yields that can be taken from our forests. I assure this House and the people of Western Australia that coalition environment policies will be implemented. Our policy was welcomed, quite rightly, by the conservation movement. They will see at the end of our time in Government that we will have implemented that policy. I reject any notion that environmental law will be weakened in this State. I assure members that it will not. The independence of the Environmental Protection Authority is written into the Act. The Government has no intention of altering that section of the Act. Splitting the roles of the chairman and the chief executive officer of the authority will not weaken the power of the EPA; that claim is without foundation. I have not heard an argument that can support that claim.

I am very disappointed that the time of this House has been wasted tonight. I have sat in this place for years listening to rubbish. The time of this House was wasted by the previous Government. It did nothing about the parlous state of this State's economy. On the first real day of this Parliament's business the Opposition has chosen to waste parliamentary time on a stupid amendment to the Address-in-Reply which has no foundation at all. For a couple of hours now I have had to sit here and listen to nonsense trotted out by members opposite. It would be better if members opposite took some of their own advice - given when they were in Government - and come forward with a few positive initiatives. All we have seen so far from the Opposition is a pathetic amendment to the Address-in-Reply and the introduction of some Bills that were on the Notice Paper last year. It is a pretty terrible start to the parliamentary session. I urge this House to reject completely the ridiculous amendment to the Address-in-Reply that is before it.

**MR THOMAS (Cockburn) [10.34 pm]:** The complete mismanagement of the environment in this State is probably the major issue that has arisen in State politics since the election. The Minister has made a pathetic attempt at defending himself after he has been under attack from three or four speakers from this side of the House. He raised three or four issues which were completely irrelevant to the amendment before the House and when he did address the substantive issues he did not provide any real defence. The Minister brought duck shooting into his argument even though it was raised not by members on this side of the House but by the member for South Perth. The Minister referred to the Ningaloo Marine Park, which is in the motion. He said there was no proposal before him for mining or exploring in the Ningaloo Marine Park. In an article in *The West Australian* of 24 April the Minister for Mines, Hon George Cash, said that he would present a proposal to Cabinet to allow exploration in parts of the marine park. It may be that he has not presented his proposal to Cabinet as yet, and it may be that the Minister for the Environment does not read *The West Australian* so he is not aware of the proposal. The Environmental Protection Act imposes an obligation on people who become aware of proposals that may affect the environment to refer them to the EPA. The Minister should have contacted the Minister for Mines to see whether he was contemplating such a move. Even if there is no formal application before the Minister for the Environment one would have thought that given the public interest, he would be able to inform the House what he is going to do and when he will be announcing his position.

The Minister for the Environment discussed his relationship with the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority, Mr Carbon. He made some factual errors which indicated his underlying bias and prejudice. I suspect that is what underlies his position on this matter. For example, he said Mr Carbon was a Burke appointee and that no-one else had been considered for the position. It is wrong to describe Mr Carbon as a Burke appointee. He came to that position with a very credible record in the private sector working for a major mining company which has won a United Nations prize for its environmental record. That prize was largely a result of programs put in place while Mr Carbon was the company's environmental manager. In addition, prior to that Mr Carbon was a research scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Other people were

considered for Mr Carbon's position, including eminent people such as the former director of the WA Museum, Dr David Ride. Mr Carbon was selected from a field of very eminent people. The only opposition to his appointment - I was one of the people opposed to his appointment - came from people who were concerned that, coming from a position with Alcoa of Australia Ltd, he would not present the environmental point of view as strongly as a person holding the position of Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority would be expected to.

In addition to not understanding the circumstances of how Mr Carbon came to occupy that position, the Minister has mismanaged the environmental protection system. Contradictory statements have been made by the Minister on the hottest issue concerning environmental management in this State. The hottest question which arises concerning the structures used for the environmental protection of this State is whether the positions of chief executive officer and the chairman should be within the one role. That was the issue when Barry Carbon was first appointed and when the Act was reviewed last year. In the space of one month, the Minister released two statements directly contradictory to each other. He said that he thought better of the matter because he had spoken to a few people who had a different idea. However, I wonder whether he listened to other people such as the independent review conducted by Professor Harding and the former chairman of a split EPA, Professor Main. Did he even read the report? At one stage he said that the independent review supported splitting the position. He got that wrong and I suspect he did not read the review conducted by Professor Harding.

He then put out incorrect statements about the salary of the Chairman of the EPA. It was calculated to bring a person into disrepute. That is an abominable way for a Minister to behave. If he is to make a statement about officers who work within his responsibilities one expects him to at least have the information correct. It is very hard to think of circumstances in which he should be making such statements, especially ones calculated to bring that person into disrepute. The chairman was then effectively sacked and he learnt of that sacking by rumours that circulated on the day. The conservation movement knew about it before the Chairman of the EPA was told of it by the Minister. The information was certainly abroad. I found out about it and other people knew of it before the chairman was formally notified. That sequence of events was a very tardy way to behave towards a chief executive officer of a very important authority; an officer who is highly regarded in his field in Australia.

I feel very sad that the matter has reached this position. Here we are on the first full day that the House is sitting and debating a deplorable piece of mismanagement by a Government which was elected on a policy of more jobs and better management. I feel particularly sad over the case of this Minister. I was approached a week or so after the election by some friends who are active in the environmental movement who rued the fact that the member for South Perth had not been appointed to that position. They were aware of the policies that he had used to sell the Liberal Party to the environment movement. I comforted them and said that I did not know the member for Greenough very well but that he had a reputation for virtue and seemed to be a very approachable person. I said I felt that he did not have a very strong background in the environmental movement but that I was sure that people could make approaches to him. Instead, almost exactly the opposite has happened. He has taken office with apparently preconceived prejudices, or has been very susceptible to the prejudices of others.

Why has he got himself into the position? Why has the Government, in handling such an important aspect of public administration of this State, made a complete stuff-up of it? There was no need for the Government to do that. Good legislation was in place; good personnel were in the authority and, due to the efforts of the member for South Perth, the Government had some pretty good policies. Although in a number of respects the Opposition would differ with those policies, there was no reason why the Government should have got itself into such a parlous state. The member for Fremantle outlined the manner in which the Minister misled the public. In a number of areas farcical situations have arisen which can probably be characterised by the way they have been described by some of the journalists in this town as the Court agenda being "back to the future or forward to the 1960s". There now exists an adversarial relationship between the State Government and the environmental movement which is worse than any of which I am aware that have existed in this State.

previously. Very good legislation is in place on which the Government could act; it is not necessary for the Government to create new legislation. It also had its policies as it went into the election. Yet in this House the Minister has described the chief executive officer of his department as "this fellow Carbon". The situation is almost as bad as that which existed in the 1970s when a former Premier described the environmental movement as fifth columnists.

During his contribution to this debate, the member for South Perth tried to compare the record of the last Liberal Government with that of the Labor Government. He said that a very substantial area of national park had been created which was greater than any subsequently created by the Labor Government. There are probably a number of reasons for that; the most obvious is that the Liberal Government of the 1970s created the Rudall River National Park, the largest national park in Australia. That area was not subject to any land use conflicts or opportunity costs and was consequently a very "cheap" although a very important park.

That very same Government about which the member for South Perth boasted over the creation of the Rudall River National Park would not create one national park in the karri forests. The member for Warren will be very much aware of that. It became a very hot issue during the mid and late 1970s and into the early 1980s. It was a hot issue in my party and in the community at large. The then Premier of the day described a group who supported the creation of substantial national parks in the karri forests as fifth columnists. That was the sort of term used during the 1950s to describe members of the Communist Party and other such groups during the McCarthyist period. We are now back to a situation precisely the same as the 1970s in relation to the environment. The attitude evinced by the way in which the Minister for the Environment spoke is very similar to that expressed by the Liberal Government in the 1970s.

Dr Gallop: Karl Marx used to say history always repeats itself; first time as tragedy, second time as farce.

Mr THOMAS: It is farce this time, but the script will be somewhat different. Legislation is in place - I was horrified when the Minister said that he was planning two visits to the environmental protection legislation. The thought of this Minister having his hands on the Environmental Protection Act is quite frightening. With the present legislation the State has some of the best environmental legislation in Australia. It is a credit to the former Minister for the Environment, Barry Hodge, who steered it through this Parliament and who, I might add, showed better environmental judgment than later political judgment. That legislation contains provision for environmental protection policies which did not exist with a legislative basis prior to this Act being passed in 1986.

In her speech, the member for Floreat said that she did not feel a need to vote for the amendment because some bushland about which she is concerned will be the subject of an environmental protection policy. I ask her to be a bit careful before she makes that decision on how to vote.

Part 3 of the Act provides for environmental protection policies. Part 4 makes statutory provision for environmental impact statements. Prior to this legislation which was enacted by the Labor Government, there was no statutory provision in this State for environmental impact assessment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I draw members' attention to several conversations going on in this Chamber. The noise has risen a little too high and is making it difficult for people to hear.

Mr THOMAS: Prior to this legislation which the Minister is going to visit twice, there was no provision for environmental impact assessments in this State. Now there is a right for anyone who feels concerned about a development or an action to refer it to the EPA to have it assessed. Finally, there is provision for enforcement. Previously, there was no legislative provision for enforcement. All of that work - parts 3, 4 and 5 of the Environmental Protection Act - requires part 2 - that is, the Environmental Protection Authority - to carry out its function. The Environmental Protection Authority has been frozen effectively in its actions since 6 February. For the past four and a half months, the members of the Environmental Protection Authority have been encumbered by having to worry about their contracts and attempt to sort out their legal status. Now we have an almost unprecedented

situation in this State where the chief executive officer of a department that has such an enormously important responsibility is forced to sue his Minister to try to clarify the situation under which he works. Such a situation is unprecedented, certainly to the best of my knowledge.

As the member for Maylands pointed out in her contribution to this debate, such a conflict is unproductive. By the implementation of decent environmental protection legislation and by the passing of decent Executive Acts such as the creation of national parks and so on throughout the 1980s, the conflict which surrounded the environment issue from the 1970s was largely dissipated. It had become a fairly routine action whereby people could resolve differences through mechanisms in the legislation. That is now gone. The Conservation Council's magazine of May 1993 carries an article headed "Council declares no confidence in Minister". The Council's vice president, Professor Jennings - Phil Jennings as he is known to most people - is no friend of the Labor Party and no particular friend of the former Government, and most of its Environment Ministers -

Mr Kierath: Did you say he was not a friend of the Labor Party?

Mr THOMAS: Yes.

Mr Kierath: He stood for preselection against John Dawkins in Fremantle.

Mr THOMAS: He lost and later resigned from the party. Professor Jennings is a friend and constituent of mine and I would accurately describe him, as I am sure he would like to be described, as being no particular friend of the Labor Party. Anyway he said -

The decision by the Council was not taken lightly. Never before have we had such a strong reaction to the behaviour of a Minister.

Professor Jennings has been in this field for almost 20 years and in his 20 years of involvement in the environment movement, he said he has never seen a Minister as bad as the one sitting opposite us right now. I can assure members that Professor Jennings will have seen some pretty horrific Ministers. He was involved in the voluntary environment movement in the days when we were being described as fifth columnists. Therefore, he has seen a few.

I am suggesting that it is early days for the Minister. He has been in the position for only four and a half months. I suggest he should now step back. It is not too late.

Mr Minson: Did you listen to my speech?

Mr THOMAS: I listened to all of it and I thought, "Is this the Minister defending himself?" He should step back because it is not too late to take action to correct any defects which he believes exist in the documentation and admit that he was wrong. If he does he will be regarded as a hero by the environmental movement and the standing of his Government will lift enormously. If he does not, he will be damned because he will be seen to be setting about deliberately dismantling a very adequate structure of environmental management in this State.

**MR D.L. SMITH** (Mitchell) [10.56 pm]: I am sure that members opposite are pleased that it is the first day and that I have only 20 minutes to speak. I want to address my remarks mainly to the concluding part of the motion which says that the House "further views with concern the Government's mismanagement of the environment since taking office". By "mismanagement of the environment", the Opposition means mismanagement of matters concerning the environment and the Government's policies on the environment. If one wanted to protect the community's aspirations on the environment, the first and foremost thing one would do would be to set up an independent watchdog which has the confidence and courage to give its opinions on a scientific basis after careful assessment.

We really need to understand what has been wrong primarily with the handling of environmental issues and the Environmental Protection Authority and its chairman by the Minister for the Environment. I suspect that he was just a beginner who made a fairly innocent mistake, and that he was instructed as he said to seek a review of the validity of the appointments of members of the board and other positions under his control and he went about doing that. I suspect that the advice he received on the EPA was in the nature of a report from one of his staff about a conversation with an officer of the Crown Law Department. He really could have done a number of things at that stage. The first and

foremost cautionary thing he should have done was to ask for that Crown Law advice in writing and make sure that it actually said what the member of staff said it said and ensure that it was substantiated by a reasoned legal argument and opinion on its validity. After receiving that advice, he should have made the decision about how he handled it. I think he should have handled it by seeking to rectify the situation without going public. However, I suspect that his new position got the better of him and that he thought to himself, "Here is an opportunity to make political capital"; and rather than wait, he went to the media straight away seeking to make that political capital. He did not realise what he had done. What he did was to make public some doubt about the validity of the appointments and he did so on the basis of oral advice, probably second-hand.

What does that do to the people who are expected to discharge their independent role? They were told that their future positions in the authority were at issue because the Government had advice that their appointments may be invalid. What did the Government do with the chairman? If it wants to make him feel insecure and not so confident about his independence, it makes him feel insecure about his future position.

They were the things that the Minister started to do. He started to go out publicly and erode the independence of the people concerned by making them feel insecure about their future. He went out into the public and created an image of possible invalidity of the authority's past decisions which could only invite some legal challenges in the future and make uncertain some decisions which had been made in the past. To do that on the basis of oral advice, not yet confirmed and probably only hearsay, was a mistake. He simply did not understand the extent of what he was doing.

I confess I have always had a high opinion of the Minister for the Environment, the member for Greenough. I know he is a man of strong religious convictions and has high ethical standards. I believe he has always tried to serve this Parliament and his electorate to the best of his ability. Unfortunately, one of the problems of being a Minister is that if he or she has weaknesses they do appear. As soon as the Minister for the Environment realised the magnitude of his mistake he did not advise the media accordingly and ask it to give him a new start. Instead the Minister started to dissemble the advice he had received by using second-hand information to attack the Chairman of the EPA and by responding to media queries about the integrity of his responses.

The great test for a Minister when he knows he has made a mistake is whether he owns up or starts to dissemble information and attack those people responsible for his being placed in the position where his integrity is challenged by the media. I advise the Minister for the Environment that he must address some of the weaknesses he has revealed. One of his failings which his problems have highlighted is his double standards. Members would have heard him in question time today, or earlier in this debate, questioning whether people's integrity should be attacked in this place. He was specifically referring to Dr Meagher. However, he had no hesitation in his response tonight in advising the House that the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority, the person about whom he is about to go to court, told a lie to the media. The Minister knows very well that that statement could be published by the media tomorrow and that would involve us in a sub judice issue; that is, the Minister's comments about him might affect the outcome of the forthcoming trial.

It was interesting to watch the relationship between the Minister and the Attorney General - it certainly is an interesting and novel approach. When the Minister had to dissemble whether he had Crown Law advice he went shopping for advice from whatever source he could find. The only way Cabinet could resolve it so he could obtain the advice he wanted was to say to him, "Minister, you really cannot handle the issue yourself. We think you should place it in the hands of the Attorney and she can provide you with the advice that you so desperately need that there is some question about the invalidity of the appointments." It is interesting to note the contradiction which has been picked up in tomorrow's newspaper in response to a question I asked the Minister by way of interjection today; that is, whether he will publish the advice that has been received. The Minister said that he only wishes the Attorney General would agree that the advice could be published. The Attorney is saying that it will not be published. If the advice that was shopped for is to be accepted as good advice, we should see it. There is no issue in principle and there is nothing to prejudice the case that is about to be heard. Why should not the advice be tabled so we can assess it?

It is also interesting that tonight it was the Attorney who chose to intervene after the Deputy Speaker's question about whether this issue might be sub judice had already been answered and put to bed. She stood up and sought to go back to the point and advise the Chair on that issue. One really gets the impression that the Attorney wants to make sure that the advice is not released and that as far as possible debate on the issue of these appointments is kept out of the House of accountability by being subjected to the sub judice rule. I wonder why that is and why it took so much shopping around? Why was it the Attorney who eventually had to provide the advice which has led us to the stage we are at? It comes down to the fact that the Minister dissembled information in a desperate attempt to restore his credibility. That is the second inscription on the tombstone of environment in this State. Firstly, the chairman and members of the EPA have been made to feel insecure, and have been challenged publicly and forced into the courts. There is much more to it. Previous minutes have been asked for and certain investigations have been undertaken and questions asked. Everything has been done to try to build up a situation where surely the chairman and members of the EPA felt they were under siege and are still feeling under siege. How can they expect to feel independent in that environment? How can anyone who succeeds them expect to feel independent?

Members must remember that this is the Government which four months into its term of office has found it necessary to promulgate Public Service regulations that will now prevent local government councillors who happen to be public servants commenting on State Government issues affecting their councils because it might be seen to be critical of the Government. How does frustrating councillors in the discharge of their duties support democracy? How will it support accountability to this Parliament when every time a public servant talks in public to members of the Opposition he or she will be cross-examined over what he or she reveals? God help them if they happen to be married to a member of Parliament. What the Government has done to the environment is destroy any idea of credence or independence not only of the Public Service, but more critically of the watchdog that is supposed to assess environmental issues.

The second thing the Government has done is to destroy the standing of the Minister for the Environment. Rightly or wrongly - we must be honest about it - the Minister who has the worst reputation in the Government is the Minister for the Environment. How can one say that it is helpful to have a Minister in that situation? How can it be helpful to the protection of the environment? The worry is that the Minister has not learnt his lesson. He told the House tonight that there will be no drilling within the Ningaloo Marine Park.

Mr Minson: I did not say that at all. I said there were no proposals before us.

Mr Ripper: There could be drilling.

Mr Minson: Of course there could be drilling.

Mr D.L. SMITH: I ask members to read *Hansard* tomorrow to read what the Minister actually said. What he said was meant to give comfort. What he did not say was that there may be proposals in the future which may not involve actually drilling on the park, but may involve positioning the drill out of the park so that it drills under the park.

Mr Minson: I did not say that.

Mr D.L. SMITH: I am not saying the Minister did say that. What I am saying is that the Minister was trying to instil in us a confidence that the Ningaloo Marine Park would be protected. However, in his mind he was really reserving his comments and was not saying that he cannot assure members that it will not happen in the future or that there will be no proposal for drilling somewhere outside the reef which will go under the reef to try to capture the resource that might, in some people's view, be there.

He knows all the time that the member for Floreat is correct in saying that one of the major concerns for the health of the reef is, of course, the risk of pollution occurring from a spillage from a tanker in a loading operation or through some other mishap. It may not necessarily come from the drilling itself; it may come from the consequences of a find by whatever means is used, and that find being tapped and the oil being extracted and shipped away. Can anyone say that the experience of the Minister, his treatment of the Environmental Protection Authority and now his own reputation have left us with a confidence that the environment of this State is being well managed under this Government?

Mr Blaikie: I can.

Mr D.L. SMITH: If that is the view of the member for Vasse, his political judgment is waning with the years. The view of the public, the media, independent arbiters and the conservation movement is that the environment of this State has never been in greater jeopardy. One has only to look at the proposals by the Minister for Energy, the Minister for Mines and other development Ministers in Government to know that this is just the beginning. We have had the charade in which the member for South Perth was given the role of persuading the green movement and working on the disaffection of a couple of people in the movement to conjure up support for the coalition's environmental policy and write it in a way which would be acceptable. It is no different from the Midland Workshops, the Collie power station and the ministry for the south west. Not one of those promises contained within the policy written by the member for South Perth is worth the paper it is written on. They are in jeopardy from this pro-development Government which is dictated to from Circe Circle. Let us remember that the member for South Perth tried to tell us about some of the problems the former Labor Government had with the environment. I remind members about a former Premier, Sir Charles Court. When he was Minister for Industrial Development what was his position with regard to Laporte Australia Ltd at Bunbury? He said that the company should establish a factory and not worry about pollution because the Government would fix it. How the Government fixed it! The beaches north of Bunbury were ruined and the Leschenault Inlet was threatened. It cost the Burke, Dowding and Lawrence Governments \$20m to redress the harm. That is the sort of protection people were used to from the man who now lives in Circe Circle who is still dictating the pro-development policies of this Government. That is the nightmare the member for South Perth has created for the green movement. In their slumber they listened to the disaffected and decided not to direct preferences. They decided to offer support to the conservative parties and to trust them. Where did they trust them? In the south west with regard to protection of the forests. The member for South Perth may talk about dieback, the AIDS of our forests, but he knows that commitments given by him to the Green movement about protection, resource security legislation and the like have been totally dishonoured. Not one person in the green movement endorses his speech. They all feel betrayed, including Beth Shultz. They all feel they were politically naive not to direct their preferences to the ALP. In any event it did not matter because most of us got the preferences of the green candidate voters even though the party did not direct its preferences, because they know which party looks after the environment and which party endangers the environment. Their worst nightmare has been to wake up and find Sir Charles still directing things and the policy of the Government in line with his ideas. The son of Sir Charles Court and his blood brother usually sitting alongside him will make sure that pro-development, anti-environment, anti-people, anti-accountability and anti-openness will be the hallmarks of this Government as they were the hallmarks of the former Court Government.

DR LAWRENCE (Glendalough - Leader of the Opposition) [11.17 pm]: The Opposition has concentrated on this issue because it so important to Western Australia. I am amazed that the Premier has not seen fit to make any observation on this matter. I feel very sad for the Minister for the Environment who has been left to hang out to dry. I have been a member of this Parliament since 1986 and I have never before on a serious matter such as this - it is no triviality - seen a Minister forced to defend himself -

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Minister for the Environment wishes to interject, which is highly disorderly, I ask him to move to his own seat.

Dr LAWRENCE: I was expressing my sympathy for the Minister for the Environment because I have not seen a Minister treated so shamefully in this place since I came here in 1986. What does the Government do to defend one of its senior Ministers in one of its most important portfolios? It rolls out the member for South Perth, who is a disappointed candidate for the job, and the member for Vasse, who might also be disappointed by the arrangements entered into by his leader, together with the Minister. These are the outsiders, the people rejected by this Government, who are forced to stand up today and this evening and defend themselves. Furthermore, in mounting that defence not only were they not assisted by the Court faction within this Government, but also they were actively hindered by the Attorney General. I have never seen anything quite so remarkable as the Attorney General sending notes backwards and forwards trying to shut up the Minister for the

Environment. Eventually, when she did not succeed by that means she sat beside him in a patronising fashion and forced him to kowtow to her position. When that did not succeed she raised a point of order seeking clarification. After the Opposition had generously offered to extend the time of the Minister to allow him to explain his position, the Attorney General gagged him. I have never seen anything like it in my life. In the first place the Government hung him out to dry. The whole episode in relation to the mismanagement of Mr Carbon's appointment and the EPA members was a set up from day one. Anybody who is anybody in this community in the environment movement, industry and Government clearly knows that Mr Minson, the Minister for the Environment, has been sacrificed. The Office of the Premier and the Premier himself, who is not willing to speak for his Minister, set him up. They gave the orders to undo these contracts and when it did not seem to be happening quite as they wished, and the Minister started to adopt a reasonable line on the joint position of the chairman and chief executive officer of the EPA, the Government dropped the press release that sees the demise of Mr Carbon. The Minister was set up by his leader and he was not assisted with his difficulties as a new Minister. He is an inexperienced Minister - as are all the Government Ministers - with an inexperienced Premier and very few staff because the Government has dumped all those people who might have helped it in the transition to government. Mr Greiner was right in saying it was clear that the Opposition, as it then was, had no plan for transition to Government.

Mr Court: Mr Greiner never said that.

Dr LAWRENCE: I know he did because he said it to me. I was not a secondary source on that question. Mr Greiner is very clear about his opinion of this Government.

Mrs Edwardes: Did he say it to you?

Dr LAWRENCE: Yes, indeed he did. He said the Government is ill prepared and it has no transition plan for the movement into government.

Mr Kierath: Do you know what he said about you?

Dr LAWRENCE: I do not care what he said about me, I am repeating what he said about the Government.

Worse than that, when a Minister gets into trouble it has no plan to assist that Minister to get out of trouble. In fact, the Premier is going out of his way to lay minefields in his path because, after all, the Minister for the Environment is not one of the favoured sons of the Court Government and this is not one of the favoured areas of activity. Not only did the Minister for the Environment support the wrong person in the leadership change last year, but also he represents an area of Government that the pro-development lobby within Government is not able to stomach. Therefore, the Government is doing in the Minister for the Environment and is using the Attorney General, by the way, as one of its weapons. It keeps using the Attorney General so that when the poor man stands up here to defend himself, she gags him. It is most extraordinary. Firstly, the Government sets him up. The Government has no idea what it wants to do in the environment area, although it knows that the member for South Perth, when in Opposition, promised a lot of things that it never intended to deliver, and if he did promise those things, he was naive. He will not have the opportunity of doing it anyway because members opposite have put on a man who spent his apprenticeship looking at the health area and has suddenly been lobbed into the environment area, an area about which he knows nothing, with no support, with a hostile Premier, and with staff who are not prepared to back him up in the Premier's Office. In fact, they are lobbing hand grenades at him all the time.

I have a lot of sympathy for the Minister for the Environment because he has not enjoyed the support of his leader and his ministerial colleagues that he should have enjoyed. It was only the Deputy Premier, and not even a member of his own party, who attempted to assist in resolving the problem, because lesson number one, if members opposite have not learnt it yet, is that they cannot afford to have one of their own Ministers out there bleeding in the community. They cannot afford to have front page criticism day after day. They cannot afford to have editorials written about them at this stage - not one, not two, but three editorials written about the bungles that have been made on this issue, not just by the Minister for the Environment but also by the whole of the Government and the Ministry. The Premier particularly must bear responsibility for this. It is not good enough for him to



duck and to say, "I did not do it. It was not my fault. It was the Minister for the Environment." The Minister for the Environment is a senior Minister in the Court Government and he is the Minister responsible for an area that should enjoy priority with this Government and not be something which the Government regards as expendable.

What we have seen by this Government is not just the catastrophe associated with the Minister for the Environment and the disloyalty of other Ministers and the Premier toward him but also a series of blunders. The Minister for the Environment is not the only Minister who has had his foot in his mouth, and I welcome the Minister for Agriculture's Bill coming into this place because it might eradicate some of the nonsense we get from Ministers. We have seen Ministers contradict themselves on key issues. We have seen some wonderful timing. On the same day that the Minister for the Environment was busy sacking the head of the Environmental Protection Authority, the body which is designed to protect the environment of Western Australia, the Minister for Mines announced that Ningaloo was up for grabs. That is an extraordinary proposition. The Government is sacking the person who has to protect the environment in Western Australia - because we do not expect that the Government will play any role in that - and is announcing simultaneously that Ningaloo will be open for petroleum exploration. As the member for that area has indicated clearly, the people there are most unimpressed with that proposition, and although there has been a certain amount of backing down and ducking and weaving, it is clear even from today's interjections and observations from the Minister that the Government has not yet understood that the people of Western Australia will not tolerate changes to the boundaries of that marine park, or exploration or mining or anything of that kind in that park. The sooner the Government realises that the better, because otherwise we will have the sort of division in the community that we have not seen generated for a long time, the same sort of division that we are seeing also in the business community and between developers and others - the divide and rule mentality. It is most unpleasant to witness and the community is now beginning to rebel against it. We have some more recent examples from the Premier in the Mabo case, which I intend to address during the Address-in-Reply.

We have had a string of blunders on the environmental question, a string of broken promises, and we have had also less than 100 per cent commitment by this Government to the environment and to its Minister; and all of the people who were conned, as they were conned, during the election will visit their wrath on the Government one hundredfold because of that. There is no anger like that of someone who has been cheated. The member for Perth may say that there are people who are less than happy with the Labor Government, but they are absolutely furious with the conservatives because they led them to believe that they had adopted a reasonable line on the environment and made specific promises which one by one have been tossed aside as if they were confetti.

Mr Minson: Which ones?

Dr LAWRENCE: I will go through them tomorrow one by one. In regard to mining in Ningaloo Marine Park -

Mr Bradshaw: We have not done anything there.

Dr LAWRENCE: Not yet. The Government is up to two a week by now. We will go through them one by one until the Government cannot bear to hear any more. If the Government thinks that there is no concern in the environmental movement, I quote from an editorial in "The Greener Times", which is one of the organs of the environmental movement, headed "Deja Vu", which states, "Do the actions of the Court Government seem vaguely familiar? Do they bring back half forgotten memories of a dismal chapter in the State's history? Those of you who experienced the environmental vandalism of the 1970s will recognise the ominous signs which are beginning to emerge."

Several Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections from the right are grossly excessive. I call upon members to cease interjecting in this debate.

Dr LAWRENCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That is only one of many editorials and comments in the environmental journals around the State, and each of them is well aware of how much the Government has backed down on its commitments. It is not just the environmental movement, which might be seen to be more particular in its attention to this

issue and perhaps in some people's eyes even more extreme in its point of view. As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, it has excited widespread community comment because it has been such a cynical exercise in broken promises, such an obvious incompetence on the part of this Government, and such a clear refusal to get it right - week after week, month after month; it goes on and on. Again today we saw the spectacle of the Minister apparently wanting to give the Crown Law advice on which some of his decisions were said to have been based and the Attorney General's refusing to do so. That results in a fairly public row. On three separate occasions now *The West Australian* has editorialised on this question.

Mrs Edwardes: How many opinions did you table as leader?

Dr LAWRENCE: I will deal with the Attorney General briefly. When in Opposition she wanted to say that every piece of advice that the Government received should be tabled. This is another case of new found purity. The Attorney General should read some recent law reports in which it is very clear that Governments which claim more than confidentiality for Cabinet discussions are probably claiming too much. The law may well have moved under her feet, and we will be pursuing that matter because it is quite clear that the claim which the Attorney General is making for confidentiality of legal advice may well now not have the same legal foundation as it did previously. In refusing to even characterise the advice that the Government was given, to describe it if not in the terms in which it was precisely given but at least in general terms, the Government is leaving the Minister in a totally vulnerable position. What prevented the Attorney General today from standing up in this place and paraphrasing or in some way characterising the legal advice that she was given in order to support the claims being made by the Minister for the Environment? Instead, we see the Attorney General apply the gag. Not only does the Attorney General not want to contribute to the support of the Minister, but also she actively undermines it. Therefore, the question of tabling or not tabling the legal advice is somewhat peripheral when the Attorney General does not support the Minister, has at no stage publicly supported him, has provided no argument in support of his position, and has only been prepared to apply the gag to prevent him from explaining his position. That is an extraordinary circumstance and is an extraordinarily disloyal approach by the Attorney General, who clearly regards herself as an up and coming member of the Cabinet and the Minister for the Environment as someone who is slowly sliding out the back door. That is the sort of reality members opposite can expect from their ministerial colleagues.

Dr Gallop: That is the important distinction between the facts and the actual facts.

Dr LAWRENCE: I understand the member for Victoria Park is keeping score of the number of times the phrase is used.

Dr Gallop: It is six times so far today.

Dr LAWRENCE: That is a low number in comparison to what we have heard in the past. The community is alarmed about not only the attack on the Environmental Protection Authority but also the attack on national parks. I have mentioned Ningaloo, but we have again a cavalier attitude characterised by the deputy leader of the Government, by the Government, to other national parks. First, we are told that Rudall River is up for grabs again. In the case of Rudall River, we are told that we will have a uranium mining industry in Western Australia. There are strong movements by people opposite to allow uranium mining.

Mr Court: Do you support it?

Dr LAWRENCE: No, I never have. The Federal Government will not change its three mines policy so I am pleased that the people of Western Australia will not be subjected to that. This is a case where the Premier thinks that he can repeat the mantras of the 1960s and 1970s, the same ones that his father chanted about development. This is not 1960 or 1970. It is 1993 and I, as the Leader of the Opposition, must put up with people approaching me in shops and supermarkets and asking whether I heard what the Premier said today. A woman in a chemist shop stopped everyone dead. She stopped about 50 people on a Saturday morning while she libelled the Premier because of his stand on uranium mining. The people of Western Australia do not want uranium mining, and certainly they do not want it in a national park.

Mr Court: Your deputy leader wants it.

**Dr LAWRENCE:** In a national park? I doubt it. The deputy leader always subsumes his view to that of the majority of Western Australians, whose views he listens to. It is not only Rudall River. What about Mt Lesueur? The Government will excise the coal deposits whereas everyone, including the mining industry with whom I discussed the matter recently, disagrees. Those representatives said that they recognise we cannot excise the deposits without destroying the park. They recognise that, and they are usually the people who push for it. Why cannot the Minister for Resources Development and the Minister for Mines recognise it? It will be Ningaloo, Rudall River, Mt Lesueur and probably D'Entrecasteaux when they get around to it. What is happening to the Fitzgerald River National Park? Why did not the Premier stand up on day one and say that this would not occur? Why did he not say that in this most sensitive of national parks people should not even bother to come to the Government to put in an application? The Government is in a position to make statements as clearly as that. The Government should not wring its hands and say that it must assess and examine the situation. The area has been assessed and examined and everyone has agreed, including the mining industry which was embarrassed by this application, that it is a most sensitive area where even the slightest level of exploration is likely to be extremely damaging to the ecosystem. However, the Government says that it cannot make a decision about that; it is not sure that it is an area to protect. The clear indication we have had from the Government is that on the environment it is not to be trusted. It will pursue its Minister into the grave. I do not know who will replace him but I doubt it will be the member for South Perth. The Government is killing off one Minister because it does not think this area is important enough. The Government has cut a wholesale swathe across national parks. In other key areas as well, where the Minister for the Environment should be a strong voice in Cabinet, clearly nothing is happening.

What about the Government's public transport policy? It does not have one. It is more trucks, more cars and more smog. The Government has a limp-wristed response to the lead question but we have more and more cars on the road. Where is the Minister for the Environment saying that there is actually some virtue in public transport and perhaps we should be developing less reliance on the motor car and more on public transport?

On planning issues, the Minister for Planning says we should let the urban area sprawl; let it grow as large as it likes. That has strong environmental consequences too, not only on our air, but also on our land and waterways. Where is the Minister for the Environment on this question? Is he having a say about policies? Is he having a say, for instance, about knocking down sand dunes? That is another terrific idea from the Minister for Planning. He plans to build resorts, hotels and high rises up and down the coast. Where is the Minister for the Environment? Where is his objection to that action? No wonder the environmentalists in the community are saying that this Government cannot be taken seriously on the environment. The Government does not take the Minister seriously. It does not support him. It does not take its own promises seriously, and on issues of current importance, public policy, planning, and transport, the Minister for the Environment is silent because he is trodden on by his ministerial colleagues. We witnessed a visible example of that today. The Attorney General and the Premier, among others, said publicly we should do what we like to the Minister for the Environment. "Hang him, draw him, and quarter him! Here are the weapons; we will help." That is the attitude members opposite have towards their Minister. That is the Government's attitude to the environment and that is its attitude to the people of Western Australia. The Government has lied to the people of Western Australia. It has destroyed its own Minister, and it does that for special interest groups in the community.

**MR C.J. BARNETT** (Cottesloe - Minister for Resources Development) [11.36 pm]: It is as though members opposite have been waiting 10 years to be in Opposition. The leash is off and they behave in a rabid way. Their conduct and their argument today have shown that they have returned to their natural level.

**Dr Gallop:** Defend the Minister!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I will speak to the amendment. The amendment is that the Government encourages exploration and mining activity in the Ningaloo Reef National Park. The Minister for the Environment explained clearly the policy that we understood had bipartisan support; that we could explore within a national park with the approval of the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Mines subject to conditions laid down by the Environmental Protection Authority, and that we could mine a national park, as did the

previous Government, with the approval of both Houses of Parliament again subject to the conditions of the EPA; that is, very stringent, very public, very open, accountable measures. The fact that one party happens to have the numbers in either House does not make that a fait accompli. It is a most open, accountable, public process.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Fremantle, as I asked the Minister for the Environment, not to interject when out of his seat.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Belmont said that we must be accountable to the media; that was the criterion. What could be more accountable than having to bring a proposal to mine a national park through both Houses of Parliament over six to eight weeks in full view of the media? That is total public accountability. No Government of either political persuasion will do that unless the mining is absolutely justified, unless the community is satisfied that the benefits outweigh the risks, or that there be no risks. No Government of either political persuasion will be irresponsible on exploration or mining in national parks. The Premier has made it clear that there will be no mining on the Ningaloo reef and no drilling of the Ningaloo reef. That is clear. What have we been talking about for the last five hours? Ningaloo reef will not be drilled.

Dr Gallop: What about in the marine park? Say it!

The SPEAKER: Order! I can accept the member for the area interjecting even in a fairly strident way, but he does not need to be supported by the member for Victoria Park, who has been interjecting excessively all day. I ask members to take care.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members opposite get upset when I say that the Ningaloo reef will not be drilled or mined. Why do they get upset? It is because they have promoted that confusion in the community. They have set out to confuse the community by stating that any drilling or exploration activity in the vicinity is the reef itself. The reef will not be touched. Subject to strict controls, some exploration may be undertaken within the park. However, it must go through the procedure which was supported by the previous Government. If members opposite do not support that procedure, they must change their policy and make it public; they cannot have it both ways. The previous Government's policy was the same as that of the current Government; nothing has changed the procedure.

The Leader of the Opposition showed a passion for the environment and an almost touching concern for the Minister for the Environment. The Minister defended and explained his actions perfectly well. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition was sensitive because it was not long ago when, as Premier, she tried to defend herself regarding the Western Women issue. However, when she turned around not a single member of the then Government was in the Chamber; not one member opposite stood behind the then Premier! I can understand why she feels concern for the Minister for the Environment. However, the difference is that members on this side stayed in the Chamber as the Minister defended himself - we support him. Government members have sat here all afternoon listening to the drivel from members opposite. Western Australian national parks are unique. This State is a vast area of 2.5 million square kilometres with national parks covering tens of thousands of square kilometres. However, a national park involves more than drawing a line on a map. National parks have variable qualities. Some areas of national park are of such environmental value that they will never be touched by any political party of any persuasion.

Mr Taylor: Is Ningaloo one of them?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Ningaloo reef will never be touched. National park boundaries are sometimes arbitrary.

Dr Gallop: They are not!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Indeed they are, and the member knows it. When a vast area is declared as a national park, and the lines are drawn, public attention is immediately drawn to the area.

Mr Leahy: But tomorrow the lines can be changed again!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member should be sensitive about Shark Bay. When that area became known, people went through the area in four wheel drive vehicles and motor bikes

and damaged the dunes. If national parks are created, they must be resourced and managed. Roads and fences must be provided along with rangers. Wildlife and feral animals must be controlled, and all these aspects require resources and people on the ground.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Victoria Park will cease interjecting.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It may well be that if we are to have national parks of national and international significance to be preserved into the future, we must resource them. We have a problem in this State in that national parks are vast which makes them vulnerable and difficult to police; we all concede that. It may well be that limited development, whether it be for tourists or other purposes, within the arbitrary boundaries of national parks may mean that people in the national parks will value the parks. These people will take an interest and derive an income from the park and may do an excellent job of preserving and enhancing that park. We would be foolish as a Parliament if our approach to national parks was to draw lines on a map and to then walk away. We could then say that we have done a great thing, but a national park requires management and resources.

Dr Lawrence interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: In a simplistically crass way the Opposition criticised the Minister for Planning in a similar vein. We have 13 000 kilometres of coastline in Western Australia and he suggested certain types of development that people may wish to see in some areas. People who go to the beach do not necessarily want to lie out in the sun these days. Many people want restaurants and family facilities for children. More people want to use coastal areas and enjoy the pleasures of our coast than those who simply sit on isolated, unmanaged beaches.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: My electorate has a beach which needs to be managed. If the Leader of the Opposition spoke to the Cottesloe Town Council, she would discover that beach management is expensive. The situation at these beaches has deteriorated since the opening of the northern suburbs railway as more people come to Cottesloe and cause problems on the beach. Beaches are a difficult asset to manage. The Opposition has an extremely limited view of what people want to do with their leisure time. In their blinkered view members opposite do not appreciate that people's preferences and tastes change. Some people in the community want to enjoy the beach but do not want to lie in the sun all day. Why not provide tasteful and aesthetically pleasing developments by the ocean?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Maybe I was excessively generous when I gave the member for Northern Rivers the opportunity to interject on matters close to his heart. I ask him to go into some form of repose. Too many interjections are occurring, and if they continue I will take action.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I urge members to look broadly at the issue of national parks and beaches. Members should not be simplistic. We cannot proclaim the preservation of a resource and then step away from it and do nothing. Let us have facilities which suit national parks and beaches. Let us provide facilities for the community we purport to represent.

The second part of the amendment refers to the mismanagement of the environment; however, during the hours of this debate I have challenged various speakers on this point and no examples have been provided. Members opposite have referred ad nauseam to the Chief Executive Officer of the Environmental Protection Authority. However, members opposite have not given a single example of environmental mismanagement.

Dr Lawrence: What about Shenton Park? We have the green strip across one area.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: What about Hepburn Heights?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Minister for the Environment and the Government will be happy to be judged on our environmental record by the people of Western Australia in four years. As the member for South Perth said, we have shown a preparedness to tackle the real issues of

the environment. The Minister for Water Resources has dealt with the issue of deep sewerage in Perth. No votes can be found in deep sewerage - in fact, votes can be lost by raising the issue - yet it is an important environmental issue.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We are happy to be judged. The previous Government had a policy which was all over the place; it had an opportunistic policy which was totally inconsistent. When the Leader of the Opposition became Premier she made the pledge of no mining in Mt Lesueur, no uranium mining and no pulp mills. However, I seem to remember she developed an interest in pulp mills.

Dr Lawrence: I said using native forests.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition was a little inconsistent.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I regret to do this. The Leader of the Opposition has been excessively interjecting all day and I ask her to cooperate. She is on the public record calling for improvements in parliamentary standards and I ask her to consider that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Government does not support this amendment. Indeed, I was most disappointed with the way in which the amendment was moved. I have spoken separately to the member for Belmont about that. The Government will be judged on its record and Opposition members will need to do far better.

Mr Taylor: You have got seven minutes to go and you still have not said a word in support of your Minister for the Environment.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We support him. I have spoken as have the members for Vasse and South Perth. "Antoinette" put up this motion talking about our encouraging exploration and mining in Ningaloo Park. That is not the case. The second part of the motion says that we mismanaged the environment. Members opposite have not been able to give one example of where the environment has been mismanaged. Then they say we have not defended the Minister. This has been the most wimpish effort. Frankly we were quite looking forward to coming back to Parliament. We thought members opposite would have a few shots to fire, but if this is the best that they can do, Parliament will be very dull. Members opposite can only get better from here on in.

Mr Kobelke interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! When I call for order I ask the member for Nollamara not to continue to interject. It is against the rules and practice of the House and I ask him to desist.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I repeat that the Minister for the Environment and the Government are very prepared to be judged on their record. The people of Western Australia will have that opportunity as they have judged those opposite on their performance as a Government on a range of issues. They were discredited and thrown out by the electorate. We have been in Government for four months. We came in with a pledge of more jobs and better management. We will be judged on that. As the member for South Perth pointed out, the coalition Government created many of the national parks in this State. It will be a coalition Government that manages those national parks properly for the benefit of this and future generations.

#### *Division*

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

---

#### Ayes (21)

Mr M. Barnett  
Mr Brown  
Mr Cunningham  
Dr Edwards  
Dr Gallop  
Mr Graham  
Mr Grill

Mrs Hallahan  
Mrs Henderson  
Mr Hill  
Mr Kobelke  
Dr Lawrence  
Mr Marlborough  
Mr McGinty

Mr Riebeling  
Mr Ripper  
Mr D.L. Smith  
Mr Taylor  
Mr Thomas  
Dr Watson  
Mr Leahy (Teller)

Noes (29)

Mr Ainsworth  
Mr C.J. Barnett  
Mr Blaikie  
Mr Board  
Mr Bradshaw  
Dr Constable  
Mr Court  
Mr Cowan  
Mr Day  
Mrs Edwardes

Dr Hames  
Mr House  
Mr Johnson  
Mr Kierath  
Mr Lewis  
Mr Marshall  
Mr Minson  
Mr Nicholls  
Mr Omodei  
Mr Osborne

Mr Pandal  
Mr Prince  
Mr W. Smith  
Mr Strickland  
Mr Trenorden  
Mr Tubby  
Dr Turnbull  
Mrs van de Klashorst  
Mr Bloffwitch (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr Bridge  
Mr Catania  
Ms Warnock

Mr McNee  
Mr Shave  
Mr Wiese

Amendment thus negatived.

*Motion Resumed*

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Pandal.

*House adjourned at 11.57 pm*

# QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## HEALTH SERVICES - COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSES *Career Structure, Implementation Status*

8. Mr TAYLOR to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What are the details of the current status of the implementation of a career structure for community health nurses in Western Australia?
- (2) When is it expected that this career structure will be put in place?

Mr MINSON replied:

The Minister for Health has provided the following reply -

- (1) The career structure for community health nurses in Western Australia has been in the process of implementation throughout 1992 and 1993. All Health Department regions were required to submit implementation plans for approval prior to implementation. Most implementation plans were approved toward the end of 1992. There are 10 Health Department regions and one branch required to implement a career structure. All regions have had their implementation plans approved. The disease control branch is currently submitting an implementation plan.
- (2) Implementation of the career structure has been achieved in the following regions -  
     Central wheatbelt  
     East metropolitan  
     Goldfields  
     Great southern  
     Mid west Gascoyne  
     Pilbara

Implementation plans have been approved for the following regions -  
     South west  
     Kimberley  
     North metropolitan  
     South metropolitan

Implementation is progressing satisfactorily. However, these four regions have been delayed for various reasons including -  
     appeals relating to appointment of persons to some of the positions  
     appointment of new staff  
     organisational review.

Completion of the implementation process is expected before the end of 1993.

The disease control branch has been delayed due to an internal review and is expected to submit an implementation plan by 1 July 1993. Implementation will proceed as quickly as possible in accordance with the process agreed with the Australian Nursing Federation and should be completed before the end of 1993.

## HOSPITALS - EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENDOSCOPIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL SURGERY *Establishment Plans*

13. Mr TAYLOR to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Government plan to accept the advice of the advisory board set up to oversee the establishment of a short-stay surgery unit to establish an educational institute of endoscopic and developmental surgery in Western Australia?



(2) If not, why not?

Mr MINSON replied:

The Minister for Health has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.

**EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - DEVOLUTION DOCUMENT**

28. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Was the document on devolution widely circulated within the Ministry of Education before its public release?
- (2) Does the document have the Minister's endorsement?
- (3) Is the document Government policy?
- (4) Did the Minister or any of the Minister's staff request the document be prepared?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) No.
- (2) No. The Minister endorsed the release of the document as a starting point for discussion.
- (3)-(4) No.

**RAILWAY HOTEL, KALGOORLIE - GOVERNMENT CONTROL**  
*Heritage Council Of WA Recommendation*

31. Mr TAYLOR to the Minister for Heritage:

- (1) In November 1991 did the Heritage Commission recommend that the Government take control of the Railway Hotel in Kalgoorlie?
- (2) If so -
  - (a) has the Government sought to take control of the hotel and, if not, why not;
  - (b) what action has the Minister taken to resolve the issue, and
  - (c) what advice has the Minister received from the Heritage Commission on this issue following the Commission's more recent visit to the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder?

Mr LEWIS replied:

It is assumed that the member is referring to the Heritage Council of Western Australia, not the Australian Heritage Commission.

- (1) The Heritage Council of WA resolved at that time to consider acquisition under the provisions of the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990.
- (2)
  - (a) An offer to purchase was made. The owner did not respond to it despite several attempts by the Heritage Council of Western Australia to elicit a response.
  - (b) Meetings have been held with the Kalgoorlie-Boulder City Council, the owner - Ms N. Hall - and with the Heritage Council of Western Australia.
  - (c) None. There has been no further formal advice from the Heritage Council of Western Australia following its resolution

of 18 December 1992 that the place was considered to have cultural heritage significance.

**POLICE - OFFICER TRAINING PROGRAM**  
*Dealing with Juveniles; Promoting Police-Youth Relations*

33. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Does the police officer training program include training in how to deal with juveniles and how to promote good police/youth relations?
- (2) If so, how much time is devoted to this training?
- (3) If not, are there any plans to introduce such training?
- (4) Do police officers receive any ongoing training in how to deal with juvenile offenders?
- (5) If so -
  - (a) is the training compulsory; and
  - (b) how much time is devoted to this training?

Mr WIESE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Nine hours and 40 minutes.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Yes, at probationary constable level.
- (5) (a) Yes.  
 (b) No specified time as it is an external studies unit - correspondence.

**TINGAY, ALAN & ASSOCIATES - RESERVE 41989, LAND DISTRICT SWAN,  
 LOCATION 11567, SOUTH OF LEMNOS STREET, SHENTON PARK**  
*Consultancy Fees For Environmental Assessment*

34. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

What was the total cost of consultancy fees paid to Alan Tingay and Associates for the environmental assessment of reserve 41989, Land District Swan, Location No 11567, located south of Lemnos Street, Shenton Park?

Mr LEWIS replied:

The Minister for Lands has provided the following reply -  
 \$1 197.

**LAND - LOTS 489, 490 TUSCANY WAY, DOLOMITE WAY, CHURCHLANDS**  
*Consultancy Fees - Mitchell McCotter & Associates; Tingay, Alan & Associates*

35. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

In relation to Lots 489 and 490 Tuscan Way and Dolomite Way, Churchlands, being considered for residential subdivision -

- (a) how much are the fees being charged by consultants Mitchell McCotter;
- (b) how much has been charged by Alan Tingay and Associates for environmental assessment; and
- (c) What is the estimated total cost of consultancy fees?

Mr LEWIS replied:

The Minister for Lands has provided the following reply -

- (1) An estimate of fees to be charged by Mitchell McCotter is \$3 970; however this is dependent on the amount of time involved. To date \$2 856.20 has been spent.

- (b) A budget of \$4 200 has been set for work to be done by Alan Tingay and Associates. To date a total of \$2 166.15 has been expended.
- (c) Estimated consultancy fees are \$120 000 which includes the above plus planning, survey and engineering fees have been budgeted.

**STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE - EMPLOYER INDEMNITY  
INSURANCE POLICIES  
*Standard Policy Terms***

37. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Finance:

- (1) Are standard policy terms available for employer indemnity insurance policies with the State Government Insurance Office?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr COURT replied:

The Minister for Finance has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes.
  - (a) The cover provided under an employers' indemnity policy in Western Australia is a standard industry wording which covers employers under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and at common law.
  - (b) Recommended rates for employers' indemnity insurance are set by a statutory committee known as the premium rates committee. Approved insurers are able to load the recommended rate by up to 50 per cent or discount the rate by any amount according to the experience of the individual employer.
- (2) In view of the answer to question (1) no response is required for question (2).

**STATE GOVERNMENT - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
*Agreements Review***

39. Dr CONSTABLE to the Premier:

- (1) With reference to the Premier's announcement reported in *The West Australian* in February this year that all agreements between the State Government or its instrumentalities and the Federal Government were to be reviewed, which agreements have been reviewed?
- (2) Does the Government intend to honour those agreements?
- (3) If not, which agreements will not be honoured and why?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) All agreements in force at 6 February 1993 were listed and summarised to inform the incoming Government.
- (2) The Government will honour all legally binding agreements.
- (3) Not applicable.

**LAND - LOT 30, ANKETELL ROAD, ANKETELL  
*Government Purchase***

40. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Has the State Government purchased Lot 30, Anketell Road, Anketell?
- (2) If so -
  - (a) when was it purchased;
  - (b) how much was paid for the land;

- (c) what is the size of the lot purchased;
- (d) for what purpose was the land purchased;
- (e) who was the previous owner of the land;
- (f) which Government department or agency purchased the land; and
- (g) does the Government intend to purchase more land in the vicinity of Lot 30, Anketell Road, Anketell?

Mr LEWIS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) 4 December 1992.
- (b) \$800 000.
- (c) 51.9961 ha.
- (d) Planning control area No 23 - Jandakot Botanical Gardens.
- (e) G. and T. and R. and T. Pintaudi.
- (f) State Planning Commission.
- (g) Yes, in accordance with the planning control area No 23 - Jandakot Botanical Gardens.

#### DRIVERS' LICENCES - OVERSEAS STUDENTS, CONDITIONS

46. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Are overseas students temporarily resident in Western Australia entitled to obtain a driver's licence?
- (2) If so, on what conditions?

Mr WIESE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No special conditions apply.

#### EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - PREPRIMARY PROGRAMS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS *Places 1993, 1994*

48. Dr CONSTABLE to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many places are available for four year olds in preprimary programs this year?
- (2) How many places are expected to be available for four year olds in preprimary programs in 1994?
- (3) What is the cost of providing places in preprimary programs for four year olds?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) As at 19 February 1993 the number of preprimary enrolments were as follows -

	Aged less than four years	Four year olds	Total
Government schools	31	3 882	3 913
Community preschools	102	3 714	3 816
Total	133	7 596	7 729

Data is obtained from the first semester census 1993. Further four year old places are made available after this time. Second semester data will be available in August.

- (2) The existing number of places for four year olds is expected to be maintained in 1994.
- (3) Costs associated with the provision of preprimary education average about \$1 300 per student. A separate cost for four year olds is not available as expenditure is not aggregated by age group.

**EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - FULL-TIME PRE-PRIMARY PROGRAM FOR  
FIVE YEAR OLDS  
*Places, 1994, 1995***

49. Dr CONSTABLE to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

How many places will be available in the full time preprimary program for five year olds in:

- (a) 1994; and
- (b) 1995?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

(a)-(b)

A ministerial task force is currently reviewing the rate of implementation of the full time preprimary program. Until this review has been completed the number of places available in 1994 and 1995 will not be known.

**EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - FULL TIME AND PART TIME PREPRIMARY  
PROGRAM FOR FIVE YEAR OLDS  
*Places, 1993***

50. Dr CONSTABLE to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

How many places are available in 1993 in:

- (a) the full-time preprimary program for five year olds; and
- (b) the part-time preprimary program for five year olds?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

As at 19 February 1993 the number of preprimary enrolments were as follows -

(a)	Full time	Five year olds	Greater than five year olds
	Government schools	2 796	92
	Community preschools	-	-
	Total	2 796	92
(b)	Part time	Five year olds	Greater than five year olds
	Government schools	15 770	425
	Community preschools	1 635	40
	Total	17 405	465

Data is obtained from the first semester census 1993. Several schools were

progressively moving to a full time five year old program during the year. The second semester data will be available in August.

#### MABO - GOVERNMENT ADVISORY GROUP

53. Dr CONSTABLE to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Government set up a group to advise it on the Mabo issue?
- (2) If so, which persons are members of that group?
- (3) What are the qualifications of each member?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Senior officers of departments and agencies reporting to Ministers with Mabo-related responsibilities.
- (3) The group comprises engineers, anthropologists, economists, persons with general arts degrees and others with no tertiary qualifications.

#### MINERAL EXPORTS - \$20 BILLION FIGURE

*Increases, 1993-96*

54. Dr CONSTABLE to the Premier:

With reference to the media statement issued by the Premier on 6 May 1993 in which he stated that Western Australia will double its mineral exports in real terms to more than \$20 billion a year during the next 10 years:

- (a) how was the \$20 billion figure calculated;
- (b) how will that increase in mineral exports come about;
- (c) what increase in mineral exports is expected in -
  - (i) 1993;
  - (ii) 1994;
  - (iii) 1995;
  - (iv) 1996?

Mr COURT replied:

- (a) 1992 Western Australian exports totalled \$14 billion, of this 80 per cent was minerals and petroleum, which are expected to grow by at least seven per cent a year. This will lead to a more than doubling in 10 years. Therefore the \$20 billion figure is conservative.
- (b) Known projects plus continuing high exploration levels.
- (c) All years - at least seven per cent per annum.

#### STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - CANNINGTON TERMINAL AND SWITCHYARD

*Land Reduction for Cannington Regional Centre Development, City of Canning  
Approach*

61. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Has the Minister been approached by the City of Canning to have the amount of land associated with the State Energy Commission of Western Australia's Cannington terminal and switchyard reduced in order to facilitate the proposed Canning regional centre development?
- (2) If so, what commitments, if any, were given to the City of Canning?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No commitments have been given to the City of Canning.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - COGENERATION  
*Discussions With Firms*

62. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

How many firms have written to or met with the State Energy Commission of Western Australia to discuss cogeneration possibilities since 1 January 1991?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

Approximately 10 firms.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ENERGY BOARD  
OF REVIEW

*New Base Load Cogeneration Capacity, South West, Basis of Conclusion*

63. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

On what basis did the Energy Board of Review conclude that there could be up to 200MW of new base load cogeneration capacity available in the South West?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

It is understood that this conclusion was based on information from written submissions made to the board, together with discussions held with companies. In its report, the board specifically notes that Australian Paper Manufacturers, BP Australia, Westralian Sands and Western Mining Corporation had all begun studies into the feasibility of cogeneration. The board stated that its estimate of up to 200MW of new base load generation capacity being available in the south west did not include the compact steel project.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ENERGY BOARD  
OF REVIEW

*Electricity Consumers in Isolated Towns Recommendation, Government's Acceptance*

64. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

Does the Government accept the Energy Board of Review's recommendations that electricity consumers in isolated towns ought to be "exposed to the cost of supply" and only rebated for "a reasonable level of consumption"?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

The Government has not, as yet, formally considered any of the recommendations of the Energy Board of Review.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ENERGY BOARD  
OF REVIEW

*Report, Government Consideration*

65. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Has the Government considered the report of the Energy Board of Review?
- (2) If not, when can a considered response be expected?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Sir Roderick Carnegie briefed Cabinet on Monday, 19 April on the findings of the Energy Board of Review prior to the report being made public. Sir Roderick will be briefing Government on Wednesday, 30 June. An invitation has also been extended to Opposition members. A number of submissions have been received from industry organisations commenting on the various issues raised in the Energy Board of Review's report. Both the Energy Board of Review's recommendations together with the issues raised by the interested organisations will be considered by the Government in the near future.
- (2) Not applicable.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - GAS BUSINESS**  
*Accumulated Loss*

66. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

With reference to the report in the State Energy Commission of Western Australia's 1992 annual report that it lost \$83 million on its gas business in 1991-92, what is the accumulated loss from the gas business since 1984?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

SECWA included segmented results of the electricity and gas businesses for the first time in its 1991-92 financial statements. For comparative purposes SECWA also included segmented results of the two businesses for the 1990-91 financial year. However, SECWA has not prepared segmented results in years prior to the 1990-91 financial year and, therefore, does not have available the accumulated loss from the gas business since 1984.

**FUEL - EMERGENCY STOCKS**

*Government Agency Provisions - Emergency Oil Reserves, Increase Decision*

68. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of a decision of Energy Ministers from the main industrialised countries to urge their Governments to increase emergency oil reserves above the 90-day level and to strengthen demand restraint measures as reported in the *Australian Financial Review* of 7 June 1993?
- (2) Does the Government still maintain a coordinated approach to the provision of emergency fuel stocks?
- (3) If not, what provision do individual Government agencies make for emergencies?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The member may recall that, on his recommendation, the previous Government made a decision in October 1992 to abolish the centralised Government emergency fuel stocks and to instruct agencies to develop contingency plans in line with their individual assessments of risk.
- (3) It is now for individual agencies to make appropriate management decisions.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - POWER**  
**PURCHASE SCHEME**  
*Expressions of Interest*

69. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) How many expressions of interest have been received from private firms and Government agencies to sell power to the State Energy Commission of Western Australia under the power purchase scheme announced in December 1991?
- (2) Have any contracts been entered into?
- (3) If so, how many and how much power is involved in each contract?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Five.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) One for about two megawatts.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - RENEWABLE**  
**ENERGY PURCHASE SCHEME**  
*Expressions of Interest*

70. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) How many expressions of interest have been made to the State Energy



Commission of Western Australia in relation to the renewable energy purchase scheme announced in April 1992?

- (2) Have any contracts been entered into?
- (3) If so, how many and how much power is involved in each contract?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Approximately 50 ranging from verbal expressions of interest to detailed written proposals.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Two contracts, one of 30kW, one of 2 000kW.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - GAS BUSINESS**  
*Special Contract Customers, Industrial and Commercial*

73. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) How many industrial and commercial customers does the State Energy Commission of Western Australia's gas business have on special contract?
- (2) What is the total revenue received by SECWA from those contracts?
- (3) What is the total amount of gas bought through those contracts?
- (4) To what extent, if any, are special contract customers subsidised by other customers?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) 235.
- (2) For 1991-92 approximately \$412m.
- (3) The total amount of gas bought by gas contract customers for 1991-92 was approximately 105 617 terajoules.
- (4) I am advised that special contract customers are not subsidised by other gas customers. Currently, all gas customers are subsidised by electricity customers as SECWA's gas business ran at a loss of \$83m in 1991-92.

**STATE ENERGY COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - SECURITY DEPOSITS FOR BUSINESSES**  
*Abolition Proposal*

74. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) Does the Government propose to abolish the State Energy Commission of Western Australia's security deposit system?
- (2) If so, when?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) The Government's stated policy position both currently and in Opposition is to abolish SECWA's security deposit scheme for businesses with the only exceptions being those businesses with a proven record of tardy or non-payment.
- (2) In keeping with this commitment, SECWA has been requested to review the operation of security deposits. This review is currently under way.

**SOLAR ENERGY - INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR APPLICATIONS OF SOLAR ENERGY**

*Western Australia's Bid, Government Support*

75. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Energy:

- (1) What steps have been taken by the Government to support Western Australia's bid for the International Centre for Applications of Solar Energy?
- (2) Will the Government provide financial support for the project?
- (3) If so, how much and under what conditions?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Funding and staff resources were provided to ensure that the case for the centre was properly articulated and communicated to those having influence over the prospective United Nations decision. This included necessary overseas delegations and the production of an explanatory brochure.

(2)-(3)

A similar level of support is envisaged to that announced by the previous Government. Detailed arrangements are still to be determined.

**STATE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT - RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT; COMMERCE AND TRADE DEPARTMENT**

*Staff Levels*

76. Dr GALLOP to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) What was the staff level at the Department of State Development on 1 February 1993?
- (2) What were staff levels at the Department of Resources Development and Department of Commerce and Trade on 1 June 1993?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1) Staff level at the Department of State Development on 1 February 1993 was 290.56 full time equivalents - FTEs.
- (2) On 1 June 1993 -

Department of Resources Development	84.77 FTEs
Department of Commerce and Trade	182.97 FTEs
Total	267.74 FTEs

**WOMEN - REGISTER FOR APPOINTMENT TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

*Maintenance And Update Plans*

78. Dr WATSON to the Minister for Women's Interests:

- (1) What are the Government's plans in regard to keeping, maintaining and updating a -
- (a) register of women for appointment to boards and committees;
- (b) register of interested persons including Aborigines and those from a non-English speaking background and for those with disabilities for appointment to boards and committees?
- (2) (a) Will the Government continue to work towards a target of 40 per cent representation of women on all boards and committees by 1996;
- (b) if not, why not?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) (a) The register of women for appointment to boards and committees is being maintained in the Office of Women's Interests. An updated registration form and leaflet are being designed, and under the new Office of Women's Interests structure an officer is designated to manage the register.
- (b) The member should refer this part of the question to the appropriate Minister.
- (2) The Government is committed to increased representation of women on Government boards and committees.

**COTTESLOE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB - RECONSTRUCTION**

*Exemption from Provision Of Disabled Persons' Access*

86. Dr WATSON to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Will the Minister exempt the Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club from the

provision of legally required access for people with disabilities when the Club rebuilds its facilities?

- (2) On what grounds would any exemption be provided?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) On the grounds that the social hall remain at its present capacity of accommodating not more than 228 persons.

**SCHOOLS - PRIMARY**

*Cannington, Maddington, Wattle Grove, Orange Grove - No Closures Confirmation*

87. Dr WATSON to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister confirm that the following primary schools will not be closed -

- (a) Cannington;
- (b) Maddington;
- (c) Wattle Grove;
- (d) Orange Grove?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

The Ministry of Education undertakes regular reviews of its properties with special attention to schools which are under pressure from enrolment growth or which have substantial underutilised capacity. Any rationalisation of schooling resulting from such reviews is undertaken on the basis of efficient use of the Ministry's asset base and the quality of the service provided to students at the school concerned. There are no plans at this stage for the closure of any of the four schools named.

**WESTERN WOMEN FINANCIAL SERVICES PTY LTD - INVESTORS  
COMPENSATION OFFER**

*Acceptances and Rejections; Eligibility Criteria*

88. Dr WATSON to the Minister for Women's Interests:

- (1) How many investors of the Western Women Group have indicated that they will -
  - (a) accept, and
  - (b) reject, the recent offer of compensation?
- (2) What proportion of those who have so far accepted are -
  - (a) private investors;
  - (b) small business investors?
- (3) What proportion of those who have so far rejected are -
  - (a) private investors;
  - (b) small business investors?
- (4) What criteria were used to assess eligibility to claim?
- (5) How many investors inquired at the Legal Aid Commission as to their eligibility to claim?
- (6) How many were not considered eligible?
- (7) What evidence did investors have to provide that they were induced to invest in the Western Women Group in the belief that its operations had the imprimatur of Government?

- (8) Did the Edith Cowan University Student Guild make a claim and, if so, was it judged eligible for compensation?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) (a) 510.  
 (b) Nil.
- (2) (a) All except two acceptances have been from private investors. The two exceptions are community related groups.  
 (b) Nil.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) That the investor invested with Western Women.
- (5) 577.
- (6) Four.
- (7) Statements were obtained from each investor.
- (8) No.

#### EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - PARENT ADVOCATE, APPOINTMENT DATE

89. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

When will the position of parent advocate in the Ministry of Education be filled?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -  
 It has been decided not to proceed with this position.

#### SCHOOLS - GOVERNMENT *\$400m Expenditure Claim, Details Tabling*

92. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister table documents substantiating the Minister's claim that there is a need for \$400m to be spent on Government schools in Western Australia?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

The Ministry of Education has provided the following breakdown of the amount of \$400m -

	\$m
Maintenance	50
Covered assembly areas	40
Library/resource centres	50
Administration upgrades	50
Sports halls	15
Performing arts centres	55
Replacement of temporary classrooms	90
General upgrading	50
TOTAL	400

#### EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - VICKERY REVIEW OF MINISTER'S PORTFOLIO *Costs*

93. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the cost to date of the Vickery Review of the Minister's portfolio and what are the projected final costs of the consultancy contract.

- (2) Of the total cost what amount constitutes -
  - (a) consultancy fees;
  - (b) travel expenditure;
  - (c) cost of support staff;
  - (d) other costs?
- (3) What terms of reference were given to the consultant?
- (4) Who formulated the terms of reference to the consultant?
- (5) What are the names of the people carrying out the review?
- (6) When does the Minister expect to receive a report on the progress or outcome of the review?
- (7) When does the Minister expect the review to conclude?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) The cost to date of the Vickery review is \$17 772 and is projected to cost up to a total of \$56 000.
- (2)
  - (a) \$30 000;
  - (b) \$1 000;
  - (c) The support staffing for the review has been provided by the Office of Education and Training;
  - (d) Up to \$25 000, depending on report printing and distribution costs.
- (3) The terms of reference for the review of education, employment and training are to review and advise the Minister on the outcomes of the chief executive officers' workshop; implementing a portfolio structure to secure a better quality service for students, parents, industry and the community by improving the delivery of support to education, employment and training in Western Australia which -
  - provides a strong and cost effective focus on the quality of teaching and learning;
  - eliminates unnecessary duplication and inappropriate competition;
  - ensures that decisions are made as close as possible to where they are carried out;
  - enables the decision makers to have control over the resources required to implement decisions and to be accountable for what they implement and achieve;
  - ensures that Western Australia's interests, rights and responsibilities for schools, TAFE and higher education are properly protected and represented in the emerging trends of national control over education and training;
  - ensures that activities and structures are open to scrutiny and reviewed on an ongoing basis;
  - simplifies the existing system and makes it more cost effective and productive; and
  - is implemented in a manner which minimises disruption and uncertainty for schools, TAFE colleges, students, teachers, parents, industry and the community;

and the review of the operation of the State Employment and Skills Development Authority as required by section 43 of the State Employment and Skills Development Authority Act 1990.

- (4) The Minister for Education, and Employment and Training.
- (5) The members of the review are Dr Robert Vickery, Professor Gordon Stanley and Mr Ian Williams.
- (6) Within the next fortnight.
- (7) The review is expected to be concluded during the week ending 9 July 1993.

**TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE - TECHNOLOGY PARK, BENTLEY**  
*Establishment Situation*

96. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

What is the current situation with the establishment of the Technology School of the Future at Technology Park, Bentley?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

The Government recognises the potential contribution of this proposal and would like to proceed with its establishment. However, for the next two financial years, priority in capital works funding is for maintenance of, and new, primary and secondary schools and classrooms. Other financial options are being explored to determine whether the technology school of the future can be built at an earlier date.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS THE - FUNDING  
REDUCTION PROPOSAL**

97. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Government proposing to reduce funding to the Western Australian Academy for the Performing Arts?
- (2) If so, to what extent?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

(1)-(2)

Details of the 1993-94 Budget are still being formulated and final allocations for all agencies are still under review.

**EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - GOVERNMENT TASK FORCE ON THE  
EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIFIC LEARNING  
DISABILITIES**  
*Work Completion*

98. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the work of the Government Task Force on the Education of Students with Disabilities and Specific Learning Disabilities been completed?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, when will the final report be available?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The chairperson of the taskforce on the education of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties, Dr Ruth Sheen, is

scheduled to present the report of the task force to the Minister for Education on 24 June 1993.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS -  
FUNDING, ACCOMMODATION, SUPPORT, CHANGES PROPOSAL**

99. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

Does the Government propose any changes to the funding, accommodation and support arrangements for the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

The Government has proposed no changes to the funding accommodation and support arrangements for WACSSO. However, along with all other Ministry of Education expenditures, funding for WACSSO will be reviewed in the light of the forthcoming Budget.

**SCHOOLS - TRUANCY TRACKING SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION**

101. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Which schools are implementing the Truancy Tracking System initiated by the Lawrence Labor Government in 1992?
- (2) Is the system being fully implemented and are parents notified of their student's absences from school?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

- (1) The truancy tracking system - ie, the MAZE computerised absentee program - is being implemented in all Western Australian Government senior high, high and district high schools.
- (2) It is anticipated that the program will be fully implemented in all Western Australian Government senior high, high and district high schools by semester 2, 1993. All schools are obliged to notify parents of student absences in accord with Education Act regulation 11(2).

**EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF - NEW SCHOOLS BUILDING PROGRAM,  
SCRAPPING OF**

103. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Education:

Has the Minister scrapped the Ministry of Education's program for building new schools?

Mr TUBBY replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following reply -

No.

**THEATRE INDUSTRY - REVIEW  
*Cost; Funding Source***

108. Mrs HALLAHAN to the Minister representing the Minister for the Arts:

What is the cost of the review of the Theatre industry and the source of the funds?

Mr NICHOLLS replied:

The Minister for the Arts has provided the following reply -

The cost of the theatre review is budgeted for \$50 000. The source of funds is the grant that would otherwise have been provided to the State Theatre Company.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### PREMIER - TAIWAN "PRIVATE" PROMOTIONAL TOUR

#### *Benefits*

6. Dr LAWRENCE to the Premier:

I suggest the Premier pay close attention to the wording of this question; it is not accidental. With reference to his taxpayer funded "private" promotional tour of Taiwan, which was criticised by the Foreign Affairs Department: Is the Premier in a position to benefit directly or indirectly, or contingently by any means, including blind, discretionary, or other forms of trust, from any commercial entity which might benefit directly or indirectly from his promotional activities?

Mr COURT replied:

No.

### MIDLAND WORKSHOPS - LOSSES ESTIMATE

7. Mr STRICKLAND to the Premier:

Will the Premier provide the House with an estimate of the losses incurred by Westrail's Midland Workshops which led to the decision to close them?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. During the past three years the Midland Workshops had accumulated losses in excess of \$60m. By the end of this financial year, in a couple of weeks, the accumulated losses since 1989-90 will be in excess of \$80m. It was as a result of those continuing high levels of losses that it was decided to close the workshops. That decision has been attacked by the Opposition; however, Opposition members wanted to tackle the problem themselves when in Government, but did not.

### STATE FINANCE - McCARREY AUDIT INQUIRY

#### *Companies and Consultants Assisting, Signing of Undertaking*

8. Mr TAYLOR to the Treasurer:

- (1) Is it correct that the companies and consultants assisting the McCarrey audit inquiry have been required to sign an undertaking that they will not use to their advantage, or benefit from, the privileged information they obtain from the various Government bodies into which they are inquiring?
- (2) If yes, will the Treasurer table in the House an example of the type of document signed?
- (3) Will the Treasurer provide the House with details of all companies and consultants assisting in the process?

Mr COURT replied:

(1)-(2)

I cannot give the member an answer to these questions now, but I will find out.

- (3) I will provide the member with a list of the people who are working on the inquiry.

### JUVENILE OFFENDERS - MOBILE TELEPHONE, PART OF REHABILITATION PROGRAM

9. Mr TUBBY to the Attorney General:

Will the Attorney General inform the House whether there is any truth to claims that a juvenile offender detained for a serious crime was given a mobile telephone as part of his rehabilitation program?



Mrs EDWARDES replied:

I thank the member for his question. It is true that earlier this year I was forced to cancel a juvenile offender's day release program in the best interests of the public and the juvenile concerned. Such steps were necessary when it was brought to my attention that the juvenile - then serving a custodial sentence for a number of offences, including unlawful killing - was involved in a program to develop his artistic talents which allowed him to travel to Perth by train, unescorted, be given unsupervised lunch breaks, and be provided with a mobile telephone so that those involved in the program could check that he was still there. Although the intent of the program may have had merit, its implementation was a recipe for disaster.

It is a credit to the youth that he did not attempt to abscond during the time he participated in the program; however, it is clear that appropriate controls were not in place to guarantee his continued custody. The juvenile was under enormous pressure owing to the excessive freedom that he was receiving during the day, followed by strict security at night. If he had been tempted to abscond at that time, the former Lawrence Labor Government would have been responsible.

Several members interjected.

Mrs EDWARDES: He would have been sentenced to an extended period in custody. To this day that youth has been released within the proper guidelines and has received support and has not reoffended.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs EDWARDES: However, the incident raised serious questions about the decision to place the youth in an open day release program. The previous Minister for Community Development, the member for Belmont, approved the program the day before the State election, despite having received the submission on Christmas Eve. The program commenced after the new Minister, my colleague, was sworn in; however, he was not informed at the time.

The incident is outrageous and is symptomatic of the haphazard way the Lawrence Government treated the issue of juvenile justice in this State.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY - APPOINTMENTS OF PART-TIME MEMBERS, VALID CONTRACTS *Public Service Commission's Advice*

10. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Did the Minister receive advice from the Public Service Commission around 18 May 1993 confirming the validity of Environmental Protection Authority appointments in the following terms: "... the attached documents show the three person part time members of the Environmental Protection Authority were appointed through a well used, established process"?
- (2) If so, why did the Minister persist with public statements that he had no evidence or advice that the contracts were valid?

Mr MINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

I am not sure of the dates I received advice. I received advice from not only the Public Service Commissioner, but also a number of other people regarding the appointments that were made to the EPA and a number of other authorities. I have received advice about part time members which has subsequently been investigated and verified by the Attorney General.

Mr D.L. Smith: Has the report been tabled?

Mr MINSON: No, definitely not, but the member can ask the Attorney General. I

have received advice which verifies that due process was not followed and the Act was not complied with. I am also pleased to tell the House -

Mr McGinty: Did you receive the advice which I just quoted?

Mr MINSON: I have just told the member that I received advice. If the member puts the question on notice I will check my files and inform him whether I received that advice.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MINSON: I received much advice on that matter and was a little puzzled at some of the replies I received. I was puzzled that the Act was specifically not complied with. I could not believe that so many Ministers for so long had not followed due process or the Act.

It is interesting that this goes to further appointments -

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The number of interjections is excessive. I have accepted several of them, but I think members should now refrain from interjecting further.

Mr MINSON: I am prepared to check the dates of the letters that I have received and confirm with the member whether I received that particular one. However, I am a little puzzled about why he would ask this question because if I were he, I would be a little embarrassed about the mess made in appointing members to the EPA - I am talking about one appointment in particular. It is sub judice and therefore I will not go on about it. However, the former Minister made such an incredible mess that if I were he I would not have asked that question at all.

I would like the member to move a motion so that we can discuss this matter fully because there is an interesting story behind it. It would uncover and display the trail of incompetence left by not only the former Minister, but also the Minister prior to him and even the Minister before that. I am more than happy for that debate to take place and I am a little surprised that notice of that debate was not given before today's sitting. I thought that the first thing the member would have done following all his huffing and puffing a couple of months ago when this matter was being discussed in the media would be to move a motion about this matter. Strangely, that has not been done. As I said, I would be delighted to have that debate because the House should be informed about a number of things.

In respect of the Crown Law advice that the member continues to harp on about -

Mr D.L. Smith: Table all of the advice.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask members on my left to come to order and I advise the Minister to bring his answer to a conclusion.

Mr MINSON: I will take your counsel, Mr Speaker. I would be delighted if members opposite can talk the Attorney General into tabling the Crown Solicitor's advice.

#### AUSTRALASIAN MEAT INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES UNION - FEDERAL LOG OF CLAIMS

11. Mr McNEE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

- (1) Has the Minister seen the Federal log of claims lodged on 30 April 1993 by the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union?
- (2) Is he aware of some of the more spectacular demands made in that log of claims?
- (3) What has been the reaction to the claims by the Australian Industrial Relations

Commission, the Western Australian Trades and Labor Council and the Opposition?

Mr KIERATH replied:

(1)-(3)

It is interesting that this is the same union that the Opposition has been out there defending. It is interesting also that it lodged a claim to try to escape the State jurisdiction by transferring to the Federal jurisdiction. I ask members to be patient and listen to the details. Members will be surprised to know that the claim is for amounts up to \$9 500 per week with a minimum of one hour's work per week.

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not accept this level of interjection. It is far too high and does not give the Minister an opportunity to reply in such a way that he can be heard. I do not wish to take strong action, certainly not this early in the session. However, there are too many interjections and they are too loud and I will have to take action if they continue.

Mr KIERATH: I will try to be brief. Some of the other spectacular demands included no dismissals, two years' notice of redundancies, and a maximum of 15 hours' work per week done at the employees' choice.

Dr Lawrence interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will desist from interjecting.

Mr KIERATH: It is amazing what happens when the boot is on the other foot.

Even the Australian Industrial Relations Commission has distanced itself from these types of claim and said they were fanciful and outrageous. I point out that in the past 12 months this union has been involved in four breaches of orders issued by the Industrial Relations Commission. The same union also sent out a notice to its members saying that it is all right to poison their boss as long as they do it slowly. This is the union which is defended by the Opposition. The Government will always ensure that people in this community, whether trade unionists or members of the general public, behave properly.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY - MEAGHER, DR TIM *No Involvement in Contracts or Restructuring Dispute*

12. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the Environmental Protection Authority and the Minister's statement reported in *The West Australian* in May that the Minister's environmental consultant, Dr Tim Meagher, was not in any way involved in the dispute over the contracts of the EPA's Chairman and members or with any restructuring of the EPA. I ask the Minister to confirm to this House that Dr Meagher has had no involvement in these matters and further to explain to this House the limit of Dr Meagher's role in the Minister's office and for the Government.

Mr MINSON replied:

I am delighted to answer the question and I thank the member for it. Dr Meagher, a biologist of some note in this State, fulfils the role in my office of providing technical and scientific advice. As far as I know he has not been involved in restructuring, as the member put it, the EPA. Under my instructions he has certainly been in contact with the EPA from time to time. As chairman of the expert committee that I was obliged to set up following the previous Government's administration to conduct a forest review, he has had to deal with both the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the EPA. In all cases he has done so as an officer of my department and, therefore, under my instructions.

### COLLIE COAL FIRED POWER STATION PROPOSAL - PROGRESS

13. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for the Energy:

In the face of the potential for the employment of up to 1 000 people on the construction of a new coal fired power station and long term jobs, along with a boost to the Western Australian economy which will occur with such a project, will the Minister report on the progress of the proposed Collie coal fired power station?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for her question. I can well understand the member's anxiety about this project.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: After all, the proposed project goes back to April 1989.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Since the previous Government announced this project 1 500 days have elapsed. I will accept the blame for the last 100 days, if there is any blame attached, but it does leave 1 400 days of delay.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I assure the member for Collie that the Government will make a decision on the proposed Collie coal fired power station some time in July. I have made public comments and there will be no broken promises.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections are out of order and I ask the member for Victoria Park and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to take note that I will take firm action if these disorderly interjections continue. I am not the sort of person who will stop an occasional interjection, but we cannot have a situation where we cannot hear the Minister who is trying to answer the question posed to him by a member of this House.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I advise the member for Collie that Cabinet will receive the proposals on the Collie coal fired power station in the next couple of weeks which will show alternatives relative to the size and the timing of the power station and it will look at the options for its ownership. We have considered all the possibilities and they will be examined by Cabinet in due course. I notice the Leader of the Opposition is making great play on this subject. Prior to the last election she visited Collie and promised a 600 MW power station. I wonder whether she is now willing to say she is dedicated to a 600 MW coal fired power station at Collie. I understand that if the Leader of the Opposition had been re-elected as Premier she would have abandoned the project.

### WOMEN'S INTERESTS, OFFICE OF - REVIEW

#### *Role Changes*

14. Mr STRICKLAND to the Minister for Women's Interests:

In light of the review of the Government's women's interests program, what, if any, changes will there be in the role of the Office of Women's Interests?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

I am pleased to be able to answer that question. The review of the Office of Women's Interests was conducted over six weeks and a report has been produced. The report has been discussed with the staff and with the Civil Service Association and its recommendations are now being implemented.

The Office of Women's Interests will have a much stronger policy formulation and coordinating role. The operational structure of the office will be much more clearly defined and will be based on a strategic policy unit and a community consultation and development section. We will ensure that the Office of Women's Interests will be able to monitor and review women's

interests as a whole of government program, and we believe it is absolutely essential that women's issues are dealt with in their proper context and become part of strategic planning in all Government departments.

Under the review we shall also extend the Western Australian Women's Advisory Council to provide for increased community participation and representation. There will be a greater opportunity for participation by women living in country areas through regionally based representative bodies. Access to information will be refined through a central telephone service. The walk-in service will be phased out in favour of monitoring access to information provided by other services. It is interesting to note that on average only five inquiries a week are received by the walk-in service, whereas a far greater number of telephone calls are received each week.

There will be an increased community education program to foster greater self-help and community participation. The Women's Advisory Council and the Women's Information Service -

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kenwick will cease her repeated interjections.

Mrs EDWARDES: - will be interfaced with issues and interests of women in the community and will contribute to the policy development process. The Women's Advisory Council and the Women's Information Service will effectively become part of the whole policy development process through an integration model and with the whole of government, and will become a much stronger policy formulating body and have a much greater coordinating role than has been the case to date.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY - MEAGHER, DR TIM**  
*Role in Contracts; Duties*

15. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for the Environment:

In light of the refusal by the Minister for the Environment to answer my previous question, I ask the following supplementary questions.

- (1) Will the Minister detail to this House the role played by his environmental consultant, Dr Tim Meagher, in matters related to the Environmental Protection Authority contracts and their validity and renewal?
- (2) Will the Minister explain to the House the scope of Dr Meagher's duties, performed both in respect of his office and for the Government?

Mr MINSON replied:

- (1) I have already answered the first question, but the member appears not to be able to understand it.

Mr Kierath: They were not listening the first time.

Mr MINSON: There is a fair chance they will not listen the second time either. With regard to Dr Meagher's role in the Environmental Protection Authority appointments and the checking thereof, any contact Dr Meagher had with the EPA was as a member of my staff and under my instruction. It is not possible for me to say now exactly which telephone calls and letters were involved. If the member would like me to provide further information, he should put the question on notice.

- (2) I have already answered the question about the precise role of Dr Meagher: He is there to provide me with scientific and technical advice, which he does very well. He is not - as the member is trying to make out - giving me political or philosophical advice.

Mr Marlborough: That would be a waste of time!

Mr MINSON: I have got all day. One of the things which has concerned me since I

have come into this place is the way in which people outside this place are besmirched and pilloried. That has always concerned me, and I have seen it a number of times, particularly from the member for Peel, who has come in with some disgraceful comments at times about various people.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MINSON: It was not Wilson, I might point out; it was his son. I find it despicable that the Parliament is used for those purposes. Dr Meagher is a member of my staff -

Dr Gallop: He was put in there to shaft Carbon. Admit the truth!

Mr MINSON: He was not. I am disgusted that any member of this House would try to pillory a member of the public who has no opportunity in this House to defend himself.

Mr McGinty interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Fremantle, come to order. You cannot keep asking questions. You have asked one question.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE - NON-  
GOVERNMENT MEMBERS POLICY**  
*National Party, Acting on Leader's Stated Policy*

16. Mr RIPPER to the Deputy Premier:

Will the National Party act on its leader's stated policy that non-government members should comprise the majority on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee in the interests of accountable Government?

Mr COWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The answer is no.

---