

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 23rd August, 1978

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

### MEMBERS FOR MERREDIN AND STIRLING

*Party Designation: Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Thompson): Correspondence has been received by the Clerk of this House from the member for Stirling and the member for Merredin requesting that these members be described in the records of this House as "Country Party".

It has come to my notice that the name "Country Party of Western Australia Inc." is registered with the Companies Auditors Board in the name of the National Country Party of Australia (WA). The two members referred to having resigned from that party—the member for Merredin from the 28th day of this month, and the member for Stirling, I take it, from the date of the letter I have received—I cannot permit the use of a party description which might create confusion in the minds of people using the parliamentary records.

I have therefore issued instructions to the effect that until such time as a formal name is registered with the Companies Auditors Board the records of this House will show the party affiliation of the two members concerned as "Independent".

### QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

### LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Reports: Tabling*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Thompson): I have for tabling the report on the work of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee to the 30th June, 1978.

I also have for tabling the committee's report on the Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park Cemetery by-laws.

### HOUSING: RENTAL

*Flats: Grievance*

**MR MacKINNON** (Murdoch) [5.21 p.m.]: I direct my grievance to the Minister for Housing, and it arises out of a question I directed to him recently with respect to rental, or flat, accommodation provided by the State Housing Commission. The question was No. 1084 and to refresh the mind of the Minister, and the minds of members, I will repeat it as follows—

- (1) How many flats of all types have the State Housing Commission currently available for rental?
- (2) How many of these flats are currently unoccupied?

In answer to my question the Minister stated that 3 088 flat-type units were available, and that 346 of those units were presently vacant. That is, approximately 11 per cent of the overall number of flats in the metropolitan area available for accommodation and are not occupied.

**Mr B. T. Burke**: Some are under maintenance, I presume?

**Mr MacKINNON**: Yes, I presume some are under maintenance. The point which arises from this situation is that there has to be a reason for the large number of vacant flats within the State Housing Commission system. I have noticed in my electorate at Coolbellup that a number of flats are vacant, and I have noticed when I drive around the metropolitan area that others are vacant too.

I think some of the reasons for the vacancies are patently obvious. The Minister gave one reason in reply to my question when he said—

The high vacancy rate in the 2 and 3-bedroom units is due to the increasing selectivity of applicants in relation to the type of accommodation that they want.

I believe the standards of people are increasing, but I do not believe that is the sole reason for the lack of tenants.

The Minister also advised me that 2 589 units are rented on a rebatable basis, which means that the average rent is \$15.75 per week. So, I hardly believe that the current rent charge is causing a lack of demand for State Housing Commission flats; it is more the selectivity of applicants.

I think the reason goes back to the basis that there is little or no incentive for people to settle in this type of accommodation other than the attraction of cheap rental. The State Housing

Commission has endeavoured to make life as attractive as possible for people living in those flats. The commission is progressively installing playground equipment in certain areas, and it is upgrading flats following vacancies. In my opinion the Minister can be complimented on the endeavours of his department to investigate promptly any complaints with regard to anti-social behaviour. Of course, there are quite a number of that type of complaint.

I put to the Minister a suggestion or an idea which I believe would assist in reducing the number of flats that are currently vacant. Hopefully, my suggestion will provide occupants, and provide the commission with further finance with which to develop additional housing badly needed by the community.

The current trend for accommodation within the general community, in the metropolitan area, is for the home unit type. A home unit is an attractive form of accommodation to many people; it enables a family to get into their own accommodation at a much lower cost. It also gives people the pride of ownership which they do not have when they occupy a flat, whether it is provided by the State Housing Commission or privately.

I would like the Minister for Housing, through his department, to investigate the possibility of investing some money in one or two blocks of flats in the metropolitan area, on a trial basis, to upgrade those units and make the accommodation a little more attractive. The blocks of flats could then be strata titled, and then made available cheaply for purchase on a home unit basis. I consider that, firstly, the units could be made available relatively cheaply, and secondly, I believe people would be attracted to that type of accommodation.

Many people living in flats are on low incomes, as the member for Dianella and the member for Morley would be aware, and a large number of those on low incomes would like to own their own units. I am sure that if that were possible they would take some pride in them, and would accept the responsibility of looking after them. Pride in accommodation is sadly lacking in many State Housing Commission flats today.

Mr Barnett: What sort of deposit would you be calling for?

Mr MacKINNON: It would depend on the price of the unit as to what the deposit would be. That is what I am asking the Minister to investigate. If the market price was \$25 000, a

deposit of 20 per cent would represent \$5 000, and a deposit of 10 per cent would represent \$2 500. That would be up to the Minister and his department to investigate.

I would like the Minister also to investigate the position with regard to rental flat accommodation to see whether people who live in these State Housing Commission areas can be encouraged to take a community pride and a community responsibility in looking after their flats. Perhaps those people could be encouraged to form committees similar to those which are formed in strata titled home unit buildings. If the people in the State Housing Commission flats formed their own committees and jointly looked after the maintenance of their units, and accepted responsibility for the maintenance of those units, perhaps the commission would accept the responsibility for the finance required to keep up the maintenance. Perhaps the commission could provide extra facilities necessary for the maintenance of the flats by the people living in them.

I believe that is the sort of approach to which people would respond. Many of them are single mothers, and have a fair amount of time to devote to this sort of effort in order to improve their own environment and give them some pride and responsibility. Therefore, I ask the Minister to respond to my suggestion with respect to home units. I believe they would find favour in the community.

**MR O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Housing) [5.29 p.m.]: It is indeed pleasing to hear some constructive criticism, even though there may be some difficulty in implementing the system suggested by the honourable member.

The member for Murdoch referred to the number of units available in the metropolitan area, and this has concerned the State Housing Commission to a great degree. We believe there are a number of reasons for the vacancies. The vacancies indicate to the commission, and to members generally, that when there is something like a 60 per cent overall rejection of this type of accommodation the urgency, in many cases, is not as great as many people would believe it to be.

We believe that one of the reasons for the knock-backs is selectivity. A number of people like to live in their own little domain and to have a little land around their place of residence. Certainly most people prefer a single unit rather than a flat unit.

In an effort to overcome this problem, recently we have reduced the rent of the flats for two reasons. Firstly, it appears that people think the rent for the flats is too high as it is close to market value. By reducing it we hope we can encourage people to move into the flats. Secondly, we hope this move will ensure a further return to the commission from units which are at present unoccupied.

The honourable member referred to the rebate system, and certainly this matter is of concern to us. The rebate system applies in respect of a great percentage of the State Housing Commission homes, and it is certainly costing the other tenants a great deal of money in the overall situation. However, I do see some merit in the honourable member's comments.

We are trying to arrange that units offered for sale can be purchased on a 5 per cent deposit. This is a small amount when compared with the total cost of the dwelling and in these times, with a little care, an individual should be able to find this amount of money.

As I say, I see some merit in the remarks of the honourable member, but I also see some difficulties. I am quite happy to suggest that the commission investigates a unit presently unoccupied to see whether something could be arranged along the lines suggested.

## LAND AT CAPE NATURALISTE AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

### *Grievance*

**MR B. T. BURKE** (Balcatta) [5.32 p.m.]: My grievance is really a two-part grievance, but both matters concern the Premier.

The first part of my grievance revolves around the Premier's attitude towards answering a number of questions I asked concerning the development of an area of land at Cape Naturaliste. Without wanting to dwell at great length on the Premier's attitude and his statements, I wish to say that it is very unsatisfactory, from the point of view of the Opposition, that the Premier and his Ministers can choose to answer questions on a certain subject, and then, at some time during the process of a series of questions, they can find reasons not to answer questions.

If the Premier looks at the topic on which the questions were based, and if he then looks at the answers provided by himself and his Ministers, he will find that the Government is answering what

questions it likes when it likes. It has become evident to me that Ministers are suffering from lapses of memory because conflicting statements have been made by different Ministers about this matter.

It is true to say that the Premier's action in trying to shortcut questions on this subject simply because it does not suit him amounts to a denial of the rights of members of this Chamber. It is true that Ministers, including the Premier, have the right to answer or not to answer as they choose, but it is hardly the proper thing to do to answer questions then choose not to answer them, and then accuse members of witch-hunting or embarking on fishing expeditions. These accusations of witch hunts and fishing expeditions appear to arise only when the Premier and his Ministers have something to hide. It is on those occasions that they refuse to answer questions.

The second matter I want to touch on is a fairly delicate one, but it is one that has concerned me for some time, and it is a matter of concern to other members. I am referring in this instance to the question of Vietnamese refugees. Australia has a moral responsibility to devote some of its efforts to a solution to the problem caused by the Vietnam war. We precipitated the problem by our participation in that war and it is true that the result of the war, in terms of the refugees, was caused partly by Australia's participation. At the same time Australia, and Western Australia as part of the Commonwealth, have the right and responsibility to maintain their own migration policies, and to enforce their own criteria on applicants who seek to come to this country to live. That is not happening at the present time.

The House was told, in answer to a question by the member for Dianella, that there will now come to this State some 1 000 refugees, and that almost half of those refugees are receiving currently Government benefits of one kind or another. The House was told also that citizens of this State have written to this Government expressing concern about what is happening. The House was further told by the appropriate Minister that the Government had chosen not to make representations to the Federal Government seeking action in respect of the problem of Vietnamese refugees.

Let us face facts. If this Government is afraid of being named or branded as racist, and because of that fear it is failing to do something that is its responsibility, then this Government is culpable.

Members of Parliament do not have the doubtful privilege of being able to baulk at difficult decisions simply because some people in the community might choose to label them one way or the other. That is what this Government is doing.

No-one has any objection to the acceptance of genuine refugees, but how many members of this House can say that all the refugees coming here are genuine? Can refugees be defined as being genuine if they have the ability to commandeer a boat to come to this country? What would this Premier and this Government do if a boatload of Italians, claiming to be disaffected by the present Italian Government, arrived off Fremantle Harbour? Of course it would send them back so quickly that they would not have time to take a second breath. However, this Premier avoids his responsibilities by not saying to the Commonwealth Government, "We accept our responsibility to take genuine refugees and accept them into our community when we know they can be properly accommodated and catered for, but certainly it is not our responsibility to take refugees who choose to arrive in boats and in situations where our position is impossible."

It is time the Premier and the Prime Minister co-ordinated a policy on the matter. They should speak to the overseas Governments concerned and warn that refugees who arrive here and who do not meet the criteria that determine genuine refugees will not be allowed to stay.

As far as other migrant groups are concerned, the Premier must realise the unfairness that is imposed on people who have been trying for a long time to bring their families here from places such as India, Burma, England, Greece, Italy, and Yugoslavia. Migrants from those countries are being denied the right to have their families accepted while the Government continues to tolerate the haphazard arrival of people who, in many cases, cannot be termed genuine refugees.

The Premier is very quick to make statements and claims on matters that have political advantage for him or his Government. However, in other areas he lacks the courage to stand up and say, "In order to administer the affairs of this State properly, the national Government must respond to the difficult situation that is being created in Western Australia."

The SPEAKER: I ask the member to resume his seat. A ruling has been given in this House about the subject matter that is proper to be raised on a grievance debate, and it has been

ruled previously that it is not competent for a member to raise an issue that is not within the direct responsibility of a Minister in this place. The member for Balcatta has raised an issue concerning immigration which appears to be within the responsibility of a Minister of the Federal House, and therefore I have no alternative but to ask the member to resume his seat.

#### *Point of Order*

Mr B. T. BURKE: I wish to raise a point of order, Sir. There is, in this place, a State Minister for Immigration, and associated with this problem there are a number of aspects that clearly are within the province of a State Government. I am willing to attempt to confine my remarks to those aspects with your forbearance.

#### *Grievance Resumed*

Mr B. T. BURKE: The final matter I wish to raise concerning this problem is in connection with the Australian Aboriginal population. We have Aborigines living on river banks, under bridges, and on rubbish tips. We cannot house these people, and yet we can house refugees in comparatively comfortable surroundings at Government hostels. Is that acceptable or appropriate? Of course it is not.

We have a responsibility that we are failing to fulfil by not providing appropriate and adequate accommodation for people who have claims that go back many centuries.

The Premier must feel compelled to make urgent representations to introduce some order into the situation, and to allow action to be taken with respect to applicants already seeking to have their families accepted here, and other applicants for services provided by the Government such as social security benefits, community welfare services, and housing services. It is a very urgent matter; it is a problem that will not go away and it demands the Premier's attention.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [5.40 p.m.]: I will deal firstly with the honourable member's grievance relating to the English-Wake partnership. I invite his attention and that of other members of the House to questions 1308 and 1310. Part (1) of question 1308 asked—

Did he receive a letter from the English-Wake syndicate dated 5th July, 1976 indicating that a meeting had been held at which the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning was in attendance and

which discussed a proposal to develop a landholding at Cape Naturaliste?

Those of us who have been here a fair time know that the classic question to ask is one to which one already has the answer. I feel we are entitled to assume that, if the informant of the honourable member was able to give him the date of the letter and the subject matter of it as the basis of the question, it would not be a bad idea for the honourable member to go back to that person to obtain the information he requires direct.

The only assumption we could make was that the honourable member wanted to have something recorded in *Hansard* as part of a case he was building up, either as a witch-hunt or as part of a fishing expedition. This is not a new experience or a new technique around here.

Looking at the questions that appeared on the notice paper, it was quite obvious what was happening. When I looked at those two questions, prior to preparing the answers, in all sincerity I said: If the honourable member has obtained so much information from the person who has asked him to take an interest in this matter, why does not that person show him the letters and be done with it?

Mr B. T. Burke: Do you use that as an excuse not to answer any other questions?

Sir CHARLES COURT: In question 1310 the member for Balcatta asked—

Did he, under date 15th November, 1976, or at any other time in 1976, say or imply to the English-Wake syndicate that they had misrepresented the Government's position and had embarrassed the Government?

Again it was quite clear that whoever was asking the honourable member to take an interest in this matter was in fact in possession of certain information.

Mr B. T. Burke: He may not have been certain.

Sir CHARLES COURT: As I suggested in my answer, it may not be a bad idea for the honourable member to go back to the source of his material and solicit the information he now seeks. I must admit that when I prepared the answer I was not informed of the situation that pertained in regard to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning. If the Minister has this matter under appeal, naturally it is only right and proper that he should decline to answer questions of the type he was confronted with.

I will deal very briefly with the matter of the Vietnamese refugees raised by the honourable

member. There would not be a person in Australia who is not concerned about the situation that has developed in respect of these refugees. There would be very few people in Australia who would be unsympathetic to their plight, although there would be some. Some people have made themselves publicly very vocal on this question, but the great majority of Australian, while upset and annoyed—call it what one likes—about the way these refugees are coming to Australia, are very understanding and humanitarian in their attitude. In fact, the attitude throughout Australia in connection with that side of the deal has been quite commendable, and it is a great credit to the Australian people. However, that does not alter the concern of the public generally, and of State Governments as well as the Federal Government about the fact that some people have been entering this country in substantial numbers via these boats. Their actions bring a number of problems. First of all, they bypass the system, and they bring with them health hazards, not only in respect of humans, but also in respect of plants and animals.

It also creates a great degree of irritation, where we have people from other countries who have been trying to come to Australia for some time but have not been permitted to do so because of the present economic conditions or the current rules which prevail in respect of immigration.

The inference of the honourable member was that the Federal Government had been inactive in the matter. The Federal Government, whilst showing a commendable humanitarianism in the matter, in fact has been very active. To the best of my knowledge, not once but twice, if not more, Ministers of the Federal Government went into the area to see if they could stop this flow of immigration in order to get them back into the system.

If we are going to accept certain levels of immigration, let us accept them on a properly co-ordinated basis, so that we can conduct proper health checks and other matters which are important when we are bringing people into the country. To the best of my knowledge, a lot of these people have come in via that route and, to a large extent, the authorities have stemmed the tide of this never-ending stream of boats of every size and description which appeared to be coming to our shores from this area.

There has been some indecision about where these people are coming from. There appeared to

be a degree of collaboration at certain places along the route from their country of origin. However, I think the Minister concerned has been very active in the matter and has enlisted international support to try to get this matter regularised so that at least these people can come through the system and so that if Australia is going to accept a quota—which I understand it has—it will accept it on proper conditions.

I also understand Australia has been a party to international discussions to try to make sure that other countries which have a capacity to absorb the legitimate refugees absorb their quota. These days, no country wants to absorb refugees due to their own economic conditions and internal problems. However, some countries have accepted their obligations and commitments; I understand the Americans have taken large numbers into their country as part of their moral commitment towards these refugees.

To sum up, the Government has not been indifferent to the matter; nor do I think the Australian citizens have been indifferent. As I pointed out initially, most Australians would be resentful of the way these people by-passed the system in coming to Australia, thereby creating dangers to health, animals, humans and plants. It is also true that an influx of migrants can create economic dislocation and racial tensions unnecessarily. Also, these people have jumped the queue of legitimate migrants who want to come to Australia and who are prepared to take their turn and follow the established system.

On the other hand, I believe there exists a very high degree of humanitarianism among the Australian people; they have been prepared to tolerate this situation. At the same time, however, they have been very vocal; no doubt the member for Balcatta has received the same representations I have received, asking us to use our influence to persuade the Commonwealth Government to intensify its efforts to cut off the stream of *ad hoc* arrivals of the so-called boat people, and return to the system whereby we have authorised refugees coming to Australia as refugees. The people are prepared to accept a commitment as a deliberate Government policy, but they do not wish to see refugees arriving in this clandestine manner. I reject the suggestion that the Commonwealth Government has been indifferent. I know it has been worried about the situation.

Mr B. T. Burke: I did not say "indifferent"; that is your word, not mine.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The distinct impression I gained from the honourable member's remarks was that he was castigating both the State and Federal Governments and asking us to do more to stop this flow of illegal migrants.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is true.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have tried to explain that neither the State nor the Federal Government has been prepared to tolerate this situation, but that they are both confronted with a situation where humanitarian considerations arise. In this regard, I believe the attitude of the Australian citizens, as well as the Federal Government, has been commendable.

### BEEKEEPING

#### *Honey Import and European Foul Brood: Grievance*

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [5.50 p.m.]: I enter this grievance debate to deliver a stinging attack against the beekeeping section of the Farmers' Union. I am concerned at the apparent indifference of the executive members of that union to the importation of honey from other Australian States, in the light of the current threat of disease in those States. European foul brood has been identified in some States and represents a major threat to the Australian honey industry. The disease is not known in Western Australia.

Mr Skidmore: It has been in the past.

Mr BLAIKIE: For the edification of the member for Swan, the only foul brood type ever found in Western Australia was American foul brood, which is not to be confused with European foul brood; it is completely dissimilar, and does not have the long-term harmful effects of the European disease.

The possibility of the disease being introduced in Western Australia is a matter of real concern, because it represents a grave threat to the beekeepers and the honey industry of Western Australia. The disease affects hives by killing the young before they are hatched.

One of the difficulties which currently is causing great concern is that it is not known how the disease is transmitted. It is possible it is transmitted by infected bees drinking water and passing on infection to other bees. One theory is that spores are transmitted by bees which in turn infect pollen. Be that as it may, the disease spreads at a rapid rate and is causing grave concern.

The only known cure is to burn all affected hives. When there are colonies in an affected area, which themselves are not affected, it is necessary to treat all these hives with terramycin. This in itself causes further problems. It has been indicated that certain health food shops in the Eastern States have reported a downturn in sales because of concern that honey sprayed with terramycin and bought by consumers may have a deleterious effect on their health.

The disease is not known in Western Australia. This year we have had a further problem because of the very severe drought which has greatly affected the apiarists. The drought has had a profound effect on the hives, the bees, and their ability to gather food. There are many apiarists in Western Australia who are feeding their bees on sugar. Another food that bees will devour, if given the opportunity, is honey. If there is any semblance of European foul brood in the honey they eat we could well find the disease introduced to Western Australia.

The only honey that can enter Western Australia is from certified disease-free areas or where health regulations have been carried out in order to eradicate the disease. I have already indicated that the disease spreads rapidly. It has been present in Victoria for some time and my understanding is that Victoria in total is a European foul brood declared area.

Earlier this year the disease was identified in South Australia and in May something like 500 colonies were affected. Today I was speaking to the senior apiculturist of the South Australian Department of Agriculture who advised me that now, in August, 20 000 hives are affected. South Australia has had a particularly wet winter and it is not anticipated any major impact of the disease will be noticeable until the warmer weather arrives. In May the prediction was made that 30 000 hives would be affected by September and with the advent of warmer weather the prediction will be eclipsed. Already, there are parts of South Australia which have been declared European foul brood areas.

The Commonwealth Government has accepted the need to evaluate EFB and has given an amount of money for research. The Minister for Primary Industry said in a news release—

The presence of this disease in southern Australia is causing significant losses to beekeepers, particularly as control measures can involve destruction of hives.

The Commonwealth has referred to this as emergency research finance.

As I have said already there is no European foul brood in Western Australia. On the 16th August I asked the Minister for Agriculture whether he could advise me of those Australian States where European foul brood had been detected and the extent of hives known to be affected. The Minister indicated the States concerned were New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. I have already indicated the extent of this problem in Victoria and South Australia.

In question 1276, dated the 22nd August, 1978, I asked the Minister from which Australian States were honey and honey products imported since January, 1978. The Minister replied that honey was imported from Queensland, Tasmania, and South Australia. In the same question I asked whether there were any conditions relating to the importation of honey from other Australian States to Western Australia and, if so, what were they. The Minister replied as follows—

Bulk honey is permitted from New South Wales provided that it is from disease free areas and certified as such. Bulk honey is not permitted from Victoria.

Pre-packed honey is permitted from New South Wales and Victoria provided that it has been pasteurised to the recommended temperature and certified to this effect.

The Minister did not mention South Australia in his answer as an export State that had hygiene controls relative to honey exports to WA.

In April of this year beekeepers were concerned to the extent they held a meeting at which a resolution was carried banning the importation of honey products from any Australian State affected by European foul brood. That request was ignored. At the annual general meeting of beekeepers held at Toodyay in July, this same resolution was put and carried. It was carried after a walkout by responsible members of the union who were sick and tired of what they had been subjected to by being ignored by their

executive members. The resolution was carried subject to the necessary regulations being complied with.

A further meeting was held within the last 10 days and, again, discussion was virtually aborted by the executive members concerned on the basis that the meeting was not held in accordance with the rules of the Farmers' Union. It was a public meeting, so how could this be?

I would like to state that, first of all, the union executive is not representing the views of its members—certainly not the views put to me. At present we have a clean State; we are not affected by European foul brood. We must bear in mind a million-dollar industry could be affected. The threat to the Australian honey industry has been acknowledged by the Commonwealth Government with its contribution to research funds.

I recommend the Minister take cognisance of what I have said tonight as I have conducted much research into the matter. The people I have spoken to are very responsible and I believe the executive of the beekeeping section of the Farmers' Union is not representing the views of its members.

**MR OLD** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [6.00 p.m.]: I acknowledge the concern of the member for Vasse and I understand it. A number of people in the beekeeping industry live in his electorate. However, I can assure him no decisions have been taken lightly with regard to the importation of honey.

As pointed out by the honourable member, this State has experienced two periods of drought. This has had a profound effect on honey production as a result of which there has been a shortage in Western Australia. I was requested to grant permission for the importation of a consignment of honey from Queensland. As has already been indicated, that State is a disease-free area. Although Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania are disease free, honey cannot be imported into this State unless it is certified as being from a disease-free area by the Director General of Agriculture in the State from which the honey is being exported.

I admit that near the Victorian border in New South Wales an area exists which is infected with European foul brood. This is a carryover from the Victorian industry which has been plagued by this disease for some 20 years.

The same situation applies in South Australia where a strip of country west of the Murray River is infected. There is a buffer zone of approximately 30 kilometres in New South Wales. Outside that zone the area is considered to be free from disease. Despite this fact, any importation of honey or queen bees comes from an area north of Sydney where, I am assured, there is no chance of the disease being transmitted.

The point is well made that the apiarists in Western Australia must sustain their hives. I am well aware of this fact. I am well aware also that bees will feed on honey if they are given the opportunity to do so. However, according to the scientists, the amount of honey from an infected area which would need to be available to bees for it to result in adverse effects would be considerable.

Members should bear in mind that no packaged honey is allowed to be imported into Western Australia unless it has been pasteurised at an extremely high temperature. This would give the honey a great safety margin. Queen bees can be imported only from New South Wales and Queensland. In the case of New South Wales, they may be imported only from the area I have mentioned previously, which is north of Sydney. The queen bees must be certified by the Director General of Agriculture in that State.

It is unfair to imply that an irresponsible attitude has been taken to this matter. The decision to allow the importation of honey was not taken lightly. We must look at the industry as a whole and it is apparent that, as a result of the severe shortage of honey in Western Australia, action had to be taken. I think members will agree that the action taken recognised the safety factor. The Department of Agriculture in Western Australia is well aware of the necessity to prevent the possibility of the disease existing in imported honey.

I should like to draw the attention of the House to motions which were carried by the industry at the beekeepers' annual conference which, I understand, was held in Toodyay. The conference was held on the 3rd and 4th July, 1978. The motions read as follows—

That this Conference held in Toodyay on 3rd & 4th July 1978 sees no reason why bulk honey should not be imported into W.A. from the Eastern States provided it can be certified disease free by the exporting state.

At the same Conference the following motions were also carried:

- (1) That this Conference moves a vote of confidence in the Apiculture staff of the Department of Agriculture.
- (2) That queen bees be allowed into Western Australia from Queensland and NSW only provided they are certified disease-free.

I shall close on the note on which I opened; that is, I appreciate the concern of the member for Vasse regarding the industry, but I assure him all precautions are being taken and my information is that there is no risk of the disease being transmitted to this State.

## HERALD AND WEEKLY TIMES GROUP

### *Interest in Alcoa: Grievance*

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [6.05 p.m.]: My grievance is of a personal nature. It involves a question asked by the member for Murray of the Premier in connection with a statement I made during the Alcoa debate. The statement, as quoted by the member for Murray, was distorted to a considerable degree. The Premier, in replying, obviously had not checked the statement, or he had used the device of answering questions to distort the situation further for the purpose of misleading members.

In the course of that debate I made the statement, "that The Herald and Weekly Times group—and this includes *The West Australian*—controls an interlocking series of companies, including insurance companies and others, which have an interest in Alcoa." That is the substance of the section of my speech which is involved.

The member for Murray conveniently distorted my comments in his question. He asked the Premier if he "had examined the allegation by the member for Warren that The Herald and Weekly Times group, of which *The West Australian* was a part, had interests in Alcoa?" The Premier replied—

Yes. I can find no evidence of such an interest. I have also been assured from all inquiries I have made that neither *The West Australian* nor the Herald and Weekly Times group has any interest in Alcoa,

Those were the actual statements made.

I should like now to have a look at the composition of the Australian component of Alcoa. In reply to a question, the Minister for Industrial Development informed me as follows—

The shareholders in Alcoa of Australia Limited are:

Australian part:—

	per cent
Westminer Investments Pty Ltd .....	20.00
Broken Hill South Ltd .....	16.60
North Broken Hill Ltd .....	12.00
Anglo-Australian Nominees Pty Ltd .....	0.32
Cushion Trust Ltd .....	0.08
	49 per cent

USA part:—

Alcoa of America .....

51.00

Members should bear in mind that common ownership exists. For instance, the AMP Society, which is the third largest shareholder in The Herald and Weekly Times Limited and the fourth largest in Westminer Investments Pty. Ltd., is the largest shareholder in Alcoa; the T & G Society, the tenth largest shareholder in The Herald and Weekly Times Limited, is also the tenth largest shareholder in North Broken Hill Ltd., which holds a 16.6 per cent interest in Alcoa; and Anglo Australian Nominees, the largest shareholder in Westminer Investments Pty. Ltd., with a 20 per cent shareholding in Alcoa, is the eighth largest shareholder in The Herald and Weekly Times Limited.

So I make the point that The Herald and Weekly Times Limited, through the AMP, the T & G, and Anglo Australian Nominees, is connected with Alcoa. There is common ownership and there are common interests. Therefore it would appear that the question asked by the member for Murray and the Premier's reply were calculated to cast reflection upon the veracity of my observation at that time.

In view of this, in view of the fact that I did not say what the member for Murray attributed to me, and in view of the fact that the relationship of the companies is established through the common ownership of The Herald and Weekly Times Limited, I am sure members would agree that I would not be required to apologise to *The West Australian*, but the Premier and the member for Murray owe me an apology.

It is not the first occasion on which the member for Murray has been associated with a

statement which has seemed less than ethical. In a report in his local newspaper he has indicated that I should explain to the workers of Pinjarra that I wanted to stop bauxite mining. That was not the issue. The issue concerned the expansion of bauxite mining, as he well knows. But in his rather distorted fashion he has spoken on two occasions and both statements reveal ethics below those expected of a member of the House.

I refer back to the Premier. In his answer he said he had investigated the statement attributed to me by the member for Murray. The statement I made was indeed factual and the apology owed is not by me, but to me.

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Premier) [6.10 p.m.]: I will reply briefly to the honourable member who has condemned himself out of his own mouth.

**Mr Pearce:** Nonsense!

**Mr H. D. Evans:** I said there was common ownership, and I was perfectly correct.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** If there is common ownership, which he has been emphasising, what is the difference between that and what was inferred and assumed to be inferred from the comments he made?

**Mr H. D. Evans:** The Herald and Weekly Times Limited has involvement in Alcoa, which is what I said.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** I come back to my point. The honourable member has condemned himself out of his own mouth.

**Mr Pearce:** How?

**Mr H. D. Evans:** Tell us why.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** I want to make the point that he has listed certain companies which have substantial holdings in The Herald and Weekly Times Limited and—

**Mr H. D. Evans:** And Alcoa.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** —even tonight he has given a clear impression to me that because of this common ownership and this interconnection of shareholdings he believes very strongly that The Herald and Weekly Times Limited in turn has a big interest in Alcoa—

**Mr H. D. Evans:** Does it not?

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** —and therefore it has some influence over its operations. That is the clear indication which comes from the honourable member's remarks. He should not be using the grievance debate to discuss the matter.

I cannot understand what he is getting at because all he has done is to reinforce the impression he tried to get across to the Parliament and to the public of Western Australia, which is that *The West Australian*, being a subsidiary of The Herald and Weekly Times Limited, or having a common interest in one form or another, was, when reporting anything about Alcoa, reporting about something in which it had a vested interest. That is the strong impression he gave and I think he intended to give it.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** And I repeat it.

**Mr Pearce:** And it was correct.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** If the honourable member is to keep repeating this, I do not know what he is grieved about. Does he want to ensure that we understand that he was casting aspersions on the newspapers?

**Mr H. D. Evans:** I am referring to the impression you gave that there was no association between the paper and Alcoa.

**Mr Pearce:** You misled the House.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** Yes.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** If the honourable member studies my answer to the question I was asked he will find that the answer was meticulous because I went to a great deal of trouble to check on the information.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** But the answer was distorted.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** If he can demonstrate where the answer was wrong, naturally a correction will be made. However, he stood in this place and gave the clearest indication—and it was picked up by the Press as well as by us—that he was accusing the local newspaper of having a vested interest in the Alcoa operation—

**Mr H. D. Evans:** And is that not the position?

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** —because of its interlocking interest—

**Mr H. D. Evans:** And common ownership.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** —and therefore was virtually saying that *The West Australian* should not report about Alcoa at all because it has a vested interest in its operation.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** I did not say that at all. I pointed out the relationship.

**Sir CHARLES COURT:** I feel the honourable member is putting himself further and further on the hook because I am trying desperately to find

out what is really bugging him. He seems to want to make doubly sure that the Parliament understands that in his opinion *The West Australian* and *The Herald and Weekly Times Limited* have a vested interest in Alcoa.

Mr H. D. Evans: In your reply you said it did not, but it has.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the honourable member that the very nature of the shareholdings which exist and which he has listed tonight does not in itself mean that the people in the newspaper have any direct control or any say in the management of any of those companies.

Mr H. D. Evans: They have because of common interests and directorships. You know it happens all the time.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The honourable member knows that a company as big as *The Herald and Weekly Times Limited* has its own board and own autonomy. He also knows that the organisations to which he referred, like the AMP and the T & G, are likewise very big organisations. In some cases they are societies of a mutual nature, but they have a big operation and are very responsible. They are also very autonomous.

Mr H. D. Evans: They also have a common ownership.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I say that the honourable member tonight has only reinforced in my mind and, I imagine, in the minds of other members—

Mr H. D. Evans: That you tried to whitewash the situation.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —that he revealed a malicious purpose and intent.

The SPEAKER: Order!

#### *Point of Order*

Mr PEARCE: Is not the Premier doing what he accused me of doing last week; that is, attributing improper motives to a member of this Chamber? He should withdraw the remark.

The SPEAKER: I see no point of order.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr PEARCE: Mr Speaker, could I persist with my point of order? Perhaps I expressed myself badly, but the word used by the Premier, and to which I objected, was "malicious". I feel that the meaning of the word does imply an improper motive. It is not the same as saying that there has been an error, or that something is incorrect. The implication of this word "malicious" is one of improper motive.

Would you rule whether or not the word "malicious" is unparliamentary?

The SPEAKER: I would have preferred that the word had not been used because it is my desire to try to keep out of this place words and phrases which are offensive to other members. In the circumstances, I do not intend to comply with the request from the member for Gosnells.

Grievances noted.

### **ROBINSON-WITHERS AFFAIR: PREMIER'S VIEW OF PRIME MINISTER'S ATTITUDE**

#### *Tabling of Paper*

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [7.33 p.m.]: May I table the paper which I promised to make available to the member for Mt. Hawthorn? It is the statement I made regarding the Prime Minister's problem in Canberra.

*The statement was tabled (see paper No. 323).*

### **BILLS (6): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING**

1. Valuation of Land Bill.
2. Land Valuation Tribunals Bill.
3. Acts Amendment and Repeal (Valuation of Land) Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

4. Mining Bill.
5. Western Australian Coal Industry Tribunal Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Mensaros (Minister for Mines), and read a first time.

6. Acts Amendment (Proportional Representation) Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition), and read a first time.

## REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS AGENTS BILL

### Report

Report of Committee adopted.

## PORT AUTHORITY REGULATIONS

### *Disallowance: Motion*

MR McIVER (Avon) [7.40 p.m.]: I move—

That regulations made under the Albany Harbour Board Act, Esperance Port Authority Act, Fremantle Port Authority Act and Geraldton Port Authority Act, published in the *Government Gazette* on the 5th April, 1978, and laid on the table of the House on the 18th April, 1978, be and are hereby disallowed.

This motion has been on the notice paper for some considerable time. Members will be aware that the subject matter of it has been *sub judice* due to the intervention of Mr Justice Wallace of the Supreme Court when, following the arrest of several meat industry employees who were picketing the wharf during the last live sheep dispute, he ruled that the regulations were invalid. To bring members up to date on the matter, I advise that last Thursday the Chief Justice (Sir Francis Burt) ruled that the regulations are valid and can be implemented.

To me, the regulations that have been gazetted typify the Liberal Government's approach to industrial relations in Western Australia since it came to office. Because of its shortcomings and failure in government, it has had to divert attention from itself to issues which it feels will gain public support.

Nothing is more contentious or more appetising to the Government than industrial strife. Industrial strife has been a real ally to the Government because—we must face facts—irrespective of the magnitude of any industrial stoppage in Western Australia or throughout Australia, it reverts to the Australian Labor Party. Through its propaganda machine the Government has very successfully been able to throw the real issues of industrial situations onto the Labor Party, which has had to suffer the consequences and the wrath of the majority of the people in the State and in the nation, thus perpetuating the situation. Hence we have the regulations mentioned in my motion.

With the port authority regulations the Government is moving towards a position where it

will amass a wealth of industrial legislation and, as a consequence, activities of workers which were formerly legal will suddenly become illegal. Nobody wants strikes but we have in this State a situation we have never had before where violence could result if these regulations are implemented.

The Chief Justice has given his ruling on the legal aspect of the regulations but it certainly does not concern the moral ramifications of that ruling. The situation which exists as a result of the ruling of the Chief Justice is that any person—perhaps even the Premier—on any part of any wharf where his presence could be challenged, could be removed and arrested by a policeman patrolling that area, without any approach to the port authority or to the wharf manager. That is what these regulations mean; that is the essence of them.

Surely we have not come to that in Western Australia. Let us not fool ourselves: that is why the regulations were gazetted. They will solve nothing and will aggravate any future situations which may arise.

Only in the last few days we have noted in the Press that black clouds are appearing in relation to the loading of live sheep. I categorically state and emphasise that if a situation similar to the last one arises, irrespective of the merits or demerits of it and who is right or wrong, there will be violence in view of the announcement of the Trades and Labor Council that it is determined there will be no scab labour—referring to farmers loading their own sheep. Naturally, there will be violence. We as legislators have it in our own hands to prevent it by disallowing these regulations. If the Government wants the violence to occur, let it say so, and it will be on the Government's own head. I sincerely trust common sense will prevail.

Let us examine some aspects of the regulations. At the present time they prohibit hymn singing, bell ringing, gong striking, and playing musical instruments without permission of the wharf manager. I repeat that, following the Chief Justice's ruling, any person can be arrested in a wharf area if he is deemed to be a person who is not supposed to be in that area or if it is considered he is causing a crowd to gather or demonstrating in any way. Under these regulations, members of the Salvation Army who are playing tunes on the wharf can be arrested. Members may feel that is an exaggeration but it could happen on the strictest interpretation of the regulations. Let us withdraw the regulations now

and strike them out while we have the opportunity. I would hate to think members of the Salvation Army could not play hymns and tunes on the wharf.

The workers on the wharves love their jobs so much that they often whistle while they work, but that would be barred under the regulations. They would have to act like the people in countries behind the Iron Curtain—be grim-faced and walk around without a smile. Is that the Australian way of life? Is that what thousands of men and women of this nation have died to preserve?

Mr Hassell: They are allowed to smile—as long as they do it quietly.

Mr McIVER: No. The honourable member is a lawyer. According to the interpretation, even that might encourage a demonstration under the regulations. It is a very serious matter and cannot be treated lightly.

Mr McPharlin: If these regulations are withdrawn, will the unions guarantee to load the sheep?

Mr McIVER: I am pleased the member for Mt. Marshall has raised that issue. We are not dealing with the loading of sheep; we are dealing with the port authority regulations, which could apply even if we were deporting Liberal politicians: not that there would be any objections to that, and probably a band would be played.

Mr Jamieson: The member for Mt. Marshall would support that, too, I think.

Mr McIVER: Do not let us confuse these two issues. It may please the Government to raise the live sheep issue. I will touch on that question later on; I will not dodge it. It is not only the unions which are involved in this matter; the State Government, the Federal Government, and the pastoralists and graziers are involved in it. I share the member for Mt. Marshall's concern because I also am genuinely concerned about the shipment of live sheep.

The subject matter before this Parliament tonight is the regulations. Certainly we will not allow them to be implemented. Let us be honest about the absurd situation that we are facing. Look at what we have in Western Australia at the present time and how regulations affect the daily lives of the people in this State and in Australia generally.

Every day by legislation we erode the privacy of the individual. The trend is continuing and gathering momentum under the rules of this particular Government. At the present time there

are approximately 850 Statutes in force in Western Australia, and these are supplemented by copious regulations.

The State Government is responsible for more than 63 statutory corporations, 70 advisory committees, 33 regulatory bodies, 32 quasi-judicial bodies, and seven primary produce boards. In addition to that, regulations tell us how much water we can drink and how much fluoride we must have in that water. We have regulations monitoring the air we breathe. We are told how much liquor we can consume and when we can consume it. We are told when we can go to the shops to purchase goods.

Mr O'Connor: Do you support 24-hour-a-day shopping?

Mr McIVER: To a degree.

Mr O'Connor: I did not say to a degree; I said "Do you support it?"

Mr McIVER: It would depend on the type of legislation brought forward. It would need to be better than the legislation brought forward recently.

Mr O'Connor: Of course you would support it.

Mr McIVER: I would support the situation where the people had a choice, and where shops could open when they pleased, as in Europe. I certainly would not run away from a decision as many people do for political reasons.

We have regulations telling us how many eggs we may sell, how many onions we may grow and sell, and how many potatoes we may grow and sell.

Mr Old: No, you are wrong there.

Mr McIVER: The Government now wishes to impose more regulations on us. I am endeavouring to bring to the notice of members the seriousness of the situation.

In the last two years the State of Queensland has been ridiculed because of the legislation it has passed in regard to gatherings of people demonstrating. What a ludicrous situation now applies over there. Let us consider a family which wants to go window shopping. If there are more than two people in that family, they will have to go in relays. Any gathering of more than two people could find its members arrested for inciting a demonstration. That is the situation in Queensland, and it is what the Government wants to impose here.

I ask members not to be sidetracked by the issue of the loading of live sheep. That is not the issue at stake. The principle involved in these

regulations will most certainly affect the people of Western Australia in earning their livelihood and in their every-day life.

Mr Stephens: You should put that to the farming community.

Mr McIVER: It would be very difficult to get it across to the Farmers' Union.

Mr Stephens: I said the farming community.

Mr McIVER: Farming people are generally fairly well balanced, and if this matter were explained to them properly and put in its right perspective, they would listen.

I am not alone in my views on these regulations. When the regulations were gazetted, some learned people in our community expressed a similar viewpoint. The Dean of Perth (Reverend Cornish) was most vocal in his sermons on this matter. He said that these regulations would erode our way of life and the liberty of the people of Western Australia.

While I admit I am a layman on legal matters, surely we should take notice of people such as the Reverend Cornish. Surely the Government should take notice of such statements, but no, this Government feels it was born to rule and anything it wishes to implement is all right.

Of course I must again say that what the Government wishes to do is to create industrial strife in this State. This is the bread and butter of Liberal politicians at this time. We have seen a decline in the popularity of the Federal Liberal Government in Canberra, just as we have seen a decline in the popularity of the State Government in Western Australia. This trend is gaining momentum, and so there is nothing going for the State Government at the present time.

Since this Government came to office in 1974, all we have seen is little fiddling bits of amendments to legislation. It has done nothing for the people of Western Australia, and it will do nothing in the future. So the State Government must look for something to lean on, and it has chosen the industrial sphere.

How many times have we heard the Premier through the different media speak about industrial muscle and left-wing elements in the unions? We have heard this day after day and week after week, but is not the Government here attempting to use muscle? How absurd it is to try to say to a waterside worker who has worked at Fremantle for 30 or more years that he is no longer permitted to sing a song or to make a noise. That is making a mockery of the law, the

Parliament, and of us. I cannot understand the thinking of the members of Cabinet who allowed these regulations to be gazetted. I believe a decision was made in haste because of the emotional atmosphere surrounding the live sheep situation. The Government felt it was on a winner, and it pursued it.

Of course at the time of the dispute the people were right behind the rural community because of the drought situation. The primary producers of Western Australia have had a very rugged time over the last few years, but that situation will not last for much longer. We must think of overseas marketing in the long term.

As my colleague, the member for Warren, has pointed out on many occasions, the State Government did nothing to grapple with the situation. The Tonkin Government set up a special committee to investigate live sheep marketing, but that committee has never been called on. The State Minister for Agriculture says it is up to the Federal Government to make a decision. This matter affects everybody—not just primary producers.

The Miller report which has just been published proves that we must approach the problem with realistic common sense and not with political motivation. These markets could so easily be lost to us. These regulations are politically motivated.

On behalf of the Opposition I have outlined our argument for the disallowance of the regulations. Experience has shown that in this place it is of no advantage to dwell too long on a particular situation because the best arguments cannot defeat the numbers game.

However, surely what I have said has tremendous merit for the reasons I have outlined. I hope common sense will prevail and the regulations will not be implemented for the reasons I have given, because I am most concerned about the matter. The Premier has had visits from the Secretary of the TLC (Mr Peter Cook), certainly not a militant person, and certainly not of the left wing element, although I have yet to learn just what that really means. Most certainly Mr Cook is not one who would want to disrupt industry in Western Australia. He has laid it on the line to the Premier in respect of the reasons that the regulations were gazetted.

I was a little disturbed tonight to hear the Premier when replying to a grievance in respect of ambulance drivers saying that he felt it was a matter for the association and the drivers. I would

say that as Premier he should grasp the opportunity to talk to the drivers and prevent an industrial dispute arising. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out tonight, the Premier would do that if he were sincere. He should be the first to go to those involved to see what the Government can do. We do not want an industrial dispute, particularly in relation to ambulance drivers.

However, this highlights my main point: the Government wants industrial trouble. The Government and the propaganda machine of the Liberal Party, with the great financial resources behind it from large companies in both the State and the Federal spheres, want to create industrial situations. Of course, in all of these situations the average person is the one who suffers. I conclude on this note, and I am most sincere in what I say: If we pass legislation which impinges on the freedom of Australian people and provokes them, then we must accept the consequences which must ultimately follow.

I trust the motion will be carried.

**DR TROY (Fremantle)** [8.02 p.m.]: I would like to second the motion moved by the member for Avon in respect of these regulations. When describing the regulations, he used the word "absurd"; I would go a little further and say they are obscene. The regulations concerned were promulgated with one thing in mind, and one thing only. They were promulgated in order to attack a union picket line. In doing that the Government has attacked one of the fundamental rights of the union movement; that is, the right to picket.

This action of the Government did not have implications only for the particular union concerned; it also had implications for a whole lot of other unions. In that respect, the action of the Government is anti-union in character and adds to a long list of anti-union legislation the Government has put forward over a period of time.

(81)

It would be true to say that the right to picket is not written into the laws of our community, but it is a practice that has been accepted for a long time, particularly in relation to the waterfront. One could go back to the conditions that pertained before 1919 when, of course, there was no established right to picket. However, a right to picket was established, and it was established in a bloody and brutal battle on the Fremantle wharf. That battle led to the death of one wharfie by the name of Tom Edwards, who died as a consequence of being batoned by the police.

This Government is attempting to take the industrial conditions on the Fremantle wharf back to the conditions that pertained before 1919. The regulations the Government has promulgated are indeed aimed at giving legal protection to strike breakers. In that respect the Government is declaring its bias on a question of a given industrial dispute. The Government entered this industrial dispute on the side of the exporters of live animals. The matter was not necessarily or even primarily in the interests of the vast bulk of people who grow live animals in this State; it was in the interests of only a small section of people who export live animals.

If, for example, we consider the meat processing industry, we will find there are many people within that industry who have not gained from the export of live animals. It did give some advantage to a small sector of the community, and only a small sector at that.

Another interesting little incident came out of the given dispute to which the Government took exception and, therefore, promulgated these regulations; that was the incident when a so-called farmer discharged a firearm at a group of workers. A court subsequently dismissed a charge against him, and he has gone about his business. As far as I am concerned that is a clear indication that on this occasion the Government is not prepared to intervene in any kind of real way even when a fellow takes the law into his own hands; yet it was prepared to act against the union movement. This has been evident again in the last few weeks in respect of the Government's carryings-on in relation to proceedings in the High Court, after having had the charges kicked out in the lower court.

The incident that occurred in Fremantle is another clear example of the Government being prepared to use the police to intervene in industrial disputes. It is not as though that was the first such recent example. The police arrested

a whole picket line of men in North Fremantle in June of last year, and that action caused much upheaval. A number of examples have occurred since. The flourmillers dispute was another example of the police being called in.

It is not only the question of strike breaking that is involved in the recent dispute; the Government was party to the destruction of hundreds of jobs in the local meat processing industry—something I daresay it can be proud of. This has particular application to the Fremantle area, where a number of meat processing workers are currently unemployed.

The direct outcome of the arrest of the pickets in the dispute to which we are referring was the use of scab labour on the wharf, which was a direct attack on the right of maritime unions to conduct their affairs there. It was a direct attack on the strongest of the unions in the State. It was not simply an attack on the maritime unions, but an attack on the union movement in general.

It is not accidental that this Government has conducted its attack on the union movement at this time. Its attack on the union movement goes hand in hand with the destructive attacks it is initiating in relation to the standard of living of people in this country. We see in the Fremantle area, for example, that in the last 12 months over 1 000 jobs have disappeared. One need only look at the meat processing industry, the waterfront, and the fishing industry to count up those 1 000 jobs. Of course, the number is in excess of that; one cannot get accurate statistics on it. This is part of the general attack the Government is waging on people in this area.

The attack is not only in respect of the number of jobs. If we look at wages levels, particularly of people employed on the wharf in the Fremantle area, the attack can be seen there, too. In the last 12 months the average earnings of a waterside worker have dropped by between \$1 200 and \$1 400 in absolute terms. If we take into account inflation, the relative drop is even greater than that, and the loss to the area of Fremantle in respect of only those 1 000 workers is in excess of \$1 million and this is having a deleterious effect on small businesses in the area, and so on.

An important meeting was held last Friday morning on the wharf. The people of the Fremantle area are not going to be pushed around for much longer. They will be prepared to fight back; and in concluding my remarks I can assure the Premier the workers will treat these regulations with the contempt they deserve.

**MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Works) [8.09 p.m.]:** I rise to disagree with the motion moved by the member for Avon, and certainly to disagree with the remarks made by the member for Fremantle. I am absolutely astounded by some of the comments made here this evening. We have heard members talking about the Government and others using industrial muscle against the unions. We have heard talk about the live sheep export issue. If members opposite want to talk about industrial muscle, let them talk about that which was used against the farming community which, at that particular time, was experiencing tremendous difficulty. Some members opposite are inclined to forget that there is a farming community in this State, and they forget how much we depend on the rural resources of Western Australia.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** Spare us the crocodile tears.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I know the member for Warren is not worried about the farmers, but we are. I can understand some members not wanting farmers to be able to get their products out of the country and not being able to obtain the returns to which they were entitled during that critical period.

However, most members would agree that during the period of about six to eight months ago the rural community in many areas of Western Australia was in dire straits. It was of great assistance to the farmers to be able to export live sheep. In addition, by the export of live sheep we were able to increase our carcase exports, and in both of these areas a high degree of employment is involved. During that critical period, the farmers were in desperate need of money.

We listened to the member for Fremantle talking about the flour strike. Obviously, he was not concerned about the women and children who were unable to obtain bread; he was interested only in the fact that someone broke a picket line and got some bread through to the women and children. Quite frankly, I will do everything I can to see that the women and children of this State are provided with food and that the farming community is permitted to export its product and obtain the returns which are so necessary to enable it to carry on.

**Mr Pearce:** You are interested only in votes by promoting confrontation with the unions.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** In fairly recent times, we have seen the flour strike and the concrete strike. Members opposite talk about creating

employment, but what did the concrete strike do? Look what happened as a result of that: Many hundreds of people in the State were thrown out of work because of that strike.

Mr Pearce: Because of your inability to solve the strike.

Mr O'CONNOR: No, because of the inability of members opposite to comprehend the problem. Members on this side realise the problems, and we will do all in our power to assist in overcoming these problems.

The member for Fremantle talked about a drop in wharf wages. That is understandable; the Port of Fremantle has one of the highest costs per tonne of goods handled of any port in the world, and it is only natural that people begin avoiding the Fremantle wharves in an endeavour to bring their goods in by a cheaper method.

Mr McIver: What does this have to do with my motion? My motion does not mention the flour strike.

Mr O'CONNOR: These are the things about which the honourable member spoke.

Mr McIver: I did not mention the flour strike.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am sorry; the honourable member's colleague who seconded the motion mentioned the flour strike.

Mr McIver: What about talking about the moral issues contained in my motion?

Mr O'CONNOR: I have not finished yet.

Mr Pearce: You have not started yet.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister for Local Government has had enough; he is leaving the Chamber.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Deputy Speaker, we have become used to that sort of comment by the member for Balcatta. Since he has been a member of this House I have not heard him say one decent thing; he is always down in the gutter. It comes as no surprise to hear his interjection; we expect him to continue in this manner.

Mr B. T. Burke: When your arguments are worth answering, we will answer them.

Mr O'CONNOR: Look what happened to Mr Cortis as a result of the member for Balcatta; he was sacked from his position for supplying the honourable member with documents.

Mr B. T. Burke: Your Government was responsible for that. You are absolutely unprincipled and without any morals whatsoever, the like of which has never been seen by any Government previously.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned a moment ago, it comes as no surprise to hear the member for Balcatta talk in this way because we have come to expect it from him. Irrespective of who is speaking, we can expect that sort of comment from the honourable member.

I believe the port authority should have control of the wharf; this is what this motion is about.

Mr McIver: It does not have control now if you interpret Mr Justice Virtue's ruling. Have you seen it?

Mr O'CONNOR: While one ruling was agreed to by the courts, it has been overruled in another way; this obviously irks some members opposite.

Members opposite continually talk about the freedom of the individual. Surely we must support the freedom of the individual to export his product and not prevent him from doing so by posting picket lines. All that does in this day and age of strikes is to create unemployment. The farmers were faced with an intolerable position where they were unable to obtain a return on their investment, and this Government tried to assist them.

Members opposite should realise there are more people in this community than a dozen pickets who do not want these products to be exported. Until we in this House reach the position where we are protecting the people who want to work and make this a decent community, we are not doing our job as members of Parliament.

It is quite farcical that a few pickets should be able to get the country down on its knees. In fact, sometimes it is not because of what has happened in this State but what has occurred elsewhere. I am sure the member for Avon would be the first to admit that a number of the people involved in the recent picketing in Western Australia did not want to be involved; however, they received their instructions from the Eastern States and had to follow orders.

The member for Avon spoke about freedom, but freedom of what? Surely we want freedom for the people to go about their occupations and to go onto the wharf if that is what they want to do.

Mr McIver: You have stopped them singing on the wharf, now. Is that what you call freedom?

Mr O'CONNOR: What about the freedom of the individual who must obtain a return from his sheep to carry on his business?

Mr McIver: That is irrelevant to the motion.

Mr O'CONNOR: The member for Avon has farmers in his electorate, but is he worried about them? I doubt it very much because he does not think they should be able to get their sheep to the ships.

I believe there is probably no need for any action at all in this respect. If people acted in a reasonable way and let other people get on with their jobs and work within the community, there would be no problem.

The motion should be thrown out by this House. It will do no good to the economy of Western Australia or to the people who want to get on and do a good day's work. I hope members from this side of the House and some members opposite will understand and realise the problems faced by other individuals in our community, and oppose this motion.

**MR OLD** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.18 p.m.]: I rise to oppose the motion. It is a sad state of affairs when this House has to spend time discussing the disallowance of regulations which were brought about by a set of circumstances that denied a section of the community, which has received very little mention tonight, the right to make a living. It is a sad state of affairs when somebody sees a person's livelihood put at risk. I do not care whether that person is a member of a union, or is a private enterprise farmer; I have concern for anyone in that position.

Whilst one must sympathise with those who were involved in the dispute which arose at the wharf, the body of people who really were the meat in the sandwich received very little recognition. I remind members opposite that it was not very long ago that the price of mutton was about 6c or 8c per kilo. Perhaps they would like to see the price return to that level.

It was only because producers were able to export live sheep, mainly to the Middle East, that the rural community were given a glimmer of hope that perhaps they could bail out from the depths of the recession into which they had been plunged. It was virtually a world-wide recession, the effects of which were being felt in Australia, and it was only through the work of relatively few

people that the market for live sheep to the Middle East was fostered and we were able to see some sort of hope for the rural community.

I believe everybody who produces has the undeniable right to sell and export. Unless they are given that right one section of the community will be prevented from earning a decent living.

It could be said that by exporting live sheep we are denying the meat industry employees the right to slaughter those sheep. However, if the industry had gone on along the path it was being led I doubt there would have been many sheep to be slaughtered because to a large degree people had stopped breeding sheep. It is only now that with a little help from within the industry we are seeing some return to the restructuring of the flocks in Western Australia.

The situation pertaining to the shipping of live sheep in relation to the number of sheep for slaughter has recently been the subject of a report. It has been clearly demonstrated that whilst there may have been some diminution of the number of sheep for slaughter certainly a tremendous amount of employment has been generated in other directions.

The live sheep industry, especially in Western Australia, has become one of the pivots of the rural industry. This industry was pioneered by Western Australians in an area formerly termed the Singapore market. Not very long after the war the Singapore market was established by some enterprising men in Western Australia.

We have the opportunity to sell meat in the Middle East and despite what may be said to the contrary the sale of carcase meat is contingent upon the supply of live sheep. It is that simple. If we do not ship live sheep we will have no market for our carcase meat.

If we return to the situation of having mutton exported purely as a filler meat for Japan no-one will be in a position to supply the meat because it is just not worth killing. So the industry will fade into oblivion.

It is only a matter of the unions recognising that if we can foster the live sheep trade, as has been the case, then the widening of the carcase meat market will be a natural consequence. The Middle East is very keen to purchase young carcase meat from Australia; it is looking for quality, but contingent upon that quality is the necessity to supply live sheep.

It is thought that perhaps the demand for live sheep will plateau and this is something I suggest

might happen. It will not happen this year but it is happening. Demand for carcase meat is increasing in the Middle East as more cool stores are provided and as household refrigeration becomes a reality rather than a fantasy in that area. People in the Middle East are becoming used to dealing with frozen meat.

We can understand that the situation with frozen meat in some areas is something which obviously could not be handled as the traditional style of meat eating is to kill the animal and virtually move straight into it.

With our movement of lamb into the Middle East, which has been on a seasonal basis, but which is being rationalised to a degree so that there is a continuous flow, at least there is movement to encourage the consumption of chilled meat. From that it is anticipated the demand will lessen for the old style of live sheep slaughter.

There will always be a demand for live sheep from a sacrificial and religious festival point of view but I am assured, and I have seen it myself, there is a transition from the traditional open-fronted butcher shop, if one could call it that, to the establishment of hygienic stainless steel fitted retail stores. Such stores are catching on.

In the past it has been mainly the expatriate population demanding this type of meat, but now the supermarkets are extending throughout the cities of the Middle East and reaching the local people who are going along with this type of consumption.

Not only does the disruption of shipping affect the farmers, but it also naturally affects the people who are involved in the purchase and shipping of the sheep. Whilst the word has not yet been received there is a definite feeling of uneasiness amongst the shippers in the Middle East. It must be understood that many Middle East shipping companies are themselves importing meat into their countries.

We must settle the problems of the shipment of sheep, otherwise these Middle East importers will look elsewhere. Some people say they will not be able to get sheep elsewhere, but I am assured there are plenty of sheep available. It is probably due in no small measure to the promotion of lamb in the Middle East that we are able to maintain our position as one of the prime suppliers.

Western Australia and South Australia between them ship virtually all the sheep that leave Australia, apart from a small number

shipped from Victoria. This number is very small because only one exporter has been allowed to do this. Many of the shipments from South Australia come down from Queensland and New South Wales, whereas in Western Australia this is becoming a vital part of the industry. It is probably one of those things which grows and was able to be diversified in the past.

It is unfortunate that we tend to become reliant on one market, but there are activities right throughout the Asian countries in an endeavour to diversify, and wherever the destination may be it comes back to the fact that we have to get the sheep on the ships.

While I have sympathy for all sections of the industry, I feel it is only by a common-sense approach by the industry in general that we will overcome the problems being experienced today. In the short term it may mean some discomfort and problems for the meat industry employees, but I am afraid that unless we can rationalise the industry there is little or no future for the slaughtering trade. We have to get our priorities right as far as our purchasers are concerned. When all is said and done, without customers we have no production. I reiterate that those people who are most vitally concerned, and those who took up the challenge during a period of industrial unrest to exercise their right to export their produce, should not be denied that right in the future. I appeal to all who are involved in the industry to see that it is rationalised, and that the farmers in this country are allowed to export their produce as and when required.

I oppose the motion.

Mr McIver: Mr Deputy Speaker, do I have the right of reply?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You do.

MR McIVER (Avon) [8.30 p.m.]: It is obvious from the comments made by the Government members who have spoken that they have endeavoured to confine the argument to the live sheep issue. If members look at the motion, they will see that it does not refer to the live sheep dispute. I do not accept the red herring which Government members have tried to introduce into this debate.

Mr Stephens: Did you not hear what the member for Fremantle said?

Mr McIVER: Yes; and there were a number of good points in his speech.

The Minister in his reply referred to the live sheep issue, the flour workers' strike, and the

concrete drivers' strike. He tried to relate these matters to the motion when in fact they have nothing to do with it. I can understand the Government shying away from the essence of the motion. The Government wants to perpetuate industrial unrest in this State. Not only does the Government wish to continue the live sheep dispute; but it wants to perpetuate also any other industrial unrest. It is the only armour which the Government has. It is the only ammunition the Government holds as a weapon to sway the people of Western Australia who have turned away from the Government. The Government in this State is in the same position as the position in which we found ourselves when we had a Labor Government in Canberra. The discourse presented by the Minister for Agriculture tonight on the export of live sheep from Western Australia is not a new matter. We know about it. We know how important this issue is to the primary producers of Western Australia; but that is not the subject matter before the Chair. The matter before the Chair is the moral situation as it relates to the gazetted regulations which means that a person cannot turn sideways on a wharf without being arrested.

Mr Blaikie: What about Jack Marks?

Mr McIVER: What about the member for Vasse? I am talking about the moral situation and the interpretation of justice. Members opposite have not examined the situation. They are talking off the tops of their heads. Members opposite should realise they are not talking to education theorists. They should look at the situation as it affects everybody. If members read the interpretation of the situation as given by the Chief Justice, they will see that a person can be arrested just for being on the wharf at Fremantle. Do members support that?

Mr Old: That was a Full Court decision.

Mr McIVER: Members opposite are talking about a matter which affects the livelihood of the people of Western Australia. However, they have done nothing but bark. The waterside workers are in favour of loading live sheep.

Mr Hassell: Why did they not load them?

Mr McIVER: The member for Cottesloe is not very experienced in these matters. He learns nothing about industrial relations as a result of walking up and down the streets of Cottesloe. If he listens to me, he might learn something.

Mr Blaikie: Why were the regulations gazetted?

Mr McIVER: I thought I had made the situation quite clear in my motion. The regulations were gazetted in order to perpetuate industrial strife in Western Australia and to give members opposite something to lean on.

Mr Davies: The Government could not control the situation.

Mr McIVER: The Government made a hash of settling the concrete drivers' strike. One manager of one firm only needed to agree with his colleagues and the strike would never have occurred. The members should not use such a matter as a red herring.

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: Nobody has said that in the future live sheep will not be exported. At the moment no ban exists on the exportation of live sheep. The union representatives have said they will wait until the end of the month when they will have a look at the reports and discuss the situation.

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: What about Sampson, the show spruiker? He should be outside shows selling dolls. He is always yelling and stirring up trouble. The Government is trying to perpetuate the situation.

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: If members will allow, I shall continue. The comments made by the Minister for Agriculture in relation to the live sheep issue provided us with no new information. We all know it is a very important matter to the primary producers of this State. We sympathise with them. The provisions implemented by Labor Governments throughout the history of Western Australia have resulted in the survival of the primary producers.

Mrs Craig: You should ask the dairy farmers.

Mr McIVER: The member should ask the member for Warren what the Labor Government has done for primary producers. Of course, the member for Wellington was not here at that time, so she would not be aware of the situation. Members should not believe that the farmers have come out of the situation in a completely blameless fashion as far as the quota system is concerned. I have spoken to many of the farmers in my electorate. They are the first to agree that they have on occasions exceeded the limit imposed under the quota system. They cannot be blamed for this, when we look at the financial situation which they faced.

Let us get down to the fundamentals of the situation. We need to plan for the future as the situation at the moment results in short term returns only. We should look at the situation in regard to packaged meat so that everyone will have a bite of the cherry. The standard of living in the countries to which we export this meat is improving.

Whereas in the past we exported old wethers, in the future we shall have to be more selective. The oil barons are gaining more and more wealth and in the future they will be more discerning. This market will not be as lucrative in the future as it has been in the past. At the moment we are obtaining short term returns and we are happy with that situation.

The subject matter of the motion we are discussing relates to the repercussions of these regulations.

Mr Williams interjected.

Mr McIVER: Here we have a young lad from the drycleaning department claiming his six penn'orth worth. I do not think he would have a great knowledge of the situation. Government members are slap dash.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would ask the member for Avon to confine his remarks to the matter before the Chair.

Mr McIVER: I wish you, Sir, had said that previously in the debate, because members opposite got away with murder. It is quite apparent that the motion will not be passed. However, I do not like to think of the repercussions which will flow from these regulations if they are implemented. The situation will be similar to that which applied in the case of the fuel and energy legislation which was passed by this Parliament. I trust that common sense will prevail and the regulations will not be implemented. I hope members will have a second look at the situation and that they will support the motion.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes 19

Mr Barnett	Mr Hodge
Mr Bryce	Mr Jamieson
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Dr Troy
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Bateman
Mr Harman	

(Teller)

#### Noes 28

Mr Blaikie	Mr Nanovich
Mr Clarko	Mr O'Connor
Sir Charles Court	Mr Old
Mr Coyne	Mr O'Neil
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Mr Crane	Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour	Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden	Mr Spriggs
Mr Hassell	Mr Stephens
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams
Mr McPharlin	Mr Young
Mr Mensaros	Mr Shalders

(Teller)

#### Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Bertram	Mr Grewar
Mr Tonkin	Mr Ridge
Mr T. H. Jones	Mr MacKinnon

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

### STATE FINANCE

#### Federal Supplementary Grants: Motion

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [8.42 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the Federal Government should provide an immediate supplementary grant to W.A.'s General Purpose Capital Grant allocations this financial year and an additional grant under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement to prevent a crisis in W.A.'s building and construction industries, the effects of which are—

- (1) Rising unemployment throughout the housing and construction industries.
- (2) Long delays and financial hardship for prospective home buyers.
- (3) Failure of businesses involved in and associated with housing and construction industries.

Some very solid reasons exist for my moving such a motion, and without going into too much detail I will try to give some of them.

I think everyone knows and acknowledges that the building industry at present is in dire straits. There is high unemployment, there are business failures, and there are low levels of activity. The only way to avert a disaster is to put some funds into the industry. If there is any other way I would be delighted to hear it from members of the House; but obviously the only way to avert immediate disaster is to put some funds into the industry.

The funds available for capital works have actually been reduced in real terms in the most recent Fraser Budget. This applies to general purpose capital funds and to funds made available under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement, and I will give figures shortly regarding this. Indeed, I gave some about this time last Wednesday evening to prove that we were getting reduced funds. However, I do not have to prove it because members have only to read the newspapers to know that our funds are down, and certainly the Premier and Treasurer of this State knows that the funds are down.

I suggest there would be dire consequences for this State if we allowed the building and construction industries to go to the wall. The difficulties in getting new businesses established and geared up to cope with economic recovery when and if that economic recovery occurs will be most severe.

Additional capital funds would not be inflationary now, but if because of a lack of activity now the industry becomes further depressed there will be excess demand for building and construction work later, and that excess demand will then prove to be inflationary. We have all gone through periods of demand in the various areas in the community and know quite well that when there is an excess demand we must make endeavours to meet that demand quickly even though we might not cope with it. Those moves generally prove to be inflationary. If the building and construction industries do collapse now through lack of funds, we will have all these problems in the future.

Mr O'Connor: Have you worked out how much additional money you will need in the housing industry?

Mr DAVIES: Yes, very carefully.

Mr O'Connor: How much is it?

Mr DAVIES: I will come to that in due course if the Minister will be patient. It is \$32 million or \$38 million—something like that.

I do not think the Fraser Government realises the impact of the policies it is pursuing and we must make it realise the consequences of those policies.

If the motion is agreed to by the House then a start will be made towards making the Government realise what position this State in particular, let alone the rest of Australia, is in now. To oppose the motion is to oppose the best economic and social interests of the State and to

oppose the reduction in unemployment, reduction of the waiting lists for housing, and the increases in economic activity. I am sure none of us wants to oppose any of those aspects in our community.

Let us look at some of the problems in the building and construction industries. They may be self evident and I may be wasting my time by drawing attention to them because members may know of them already, but I have some responsibility to draw attention to them.

We must look at three factors when examining the magnitude of these problems and they are the level of activity as revealed by official statistics; unemployment rates; and business failures. I repeat them for members: the level of activity as revealed by official statistics; unemployment in the industry; and business failures. If we consider those three aspects we can get a general sizing up of how the building and construction industries are going.

First of all let us examine the level of activity. This has declined in the building industry in Western Australia in each of the last two years. I will give some figures.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of buildings valued at \$10 000 or more approved for construction in Western Australia was 19 430. In the same period during 1976-77, the number was 21 914; and in 1975-76, it was 26 048. I will remind members we are talking about the number of buildings, costing \$10 000 or more, which have been approved for construction.

Mr Mensaros: What about the total value? That is only the number.

Mr DAVIES: I will give the figures in a moment. We looked at the values as well as the numbers and tried to relate them to inflation and to get the real costs.

The figures I have given show that in just two years the number of building approvals has fallen by 6 618 or some 25 per cent. The number of approvals is down 25 per cent in two years, and that is a rather dramatic drop.

When we consider the home building sector we must also study the numbers approved. This is distinct from figures or amounts of money.

In 1975-76 the number of new buildings approved in Western Australia was 21 388. By 1977-78 this number had fallen to 15 982, a drop of 5 406 dwellings or, again, a 25 per cent reduction. So in the \$10 000 and above bracket there is a 25 per cent reduction. There is also a 25

per cent reduction in the number of dwellings; and that rapid decline has meant something like \$80 million to the industry.

Housing finance statistics tell a similar story with the number of loans given to people by financial institutions, to build homes, falling by 1 215 between 1976-77 and the equivalent period in 1977-78. So, between a certain period during the last financial year, and an equivalent period during this year, the number of loans advanced by financial institutions has fallen by 1 215. I have been told there has been no slackening in demand. Even tonight, at a function I attended, I asked some of the people associated with building societies whether there was any slackening in demand. Those people told me that certainly there was not any slackening, and certainly they wished they had more money to lend—particularly at the lower interest rate.

Despite high inflation driving up the costs of home building, the total value of loans fell by more than \$6 million between the end of March, 1977, and the end of March, 1978. There are numerous other statistics to illustrate this very grim picture which I am outlining.

The number of new dwellings commenced in 1977-78 was down by 4 330, or 22 per cent on 1976-77. The number of new dwellings completed fell in the same period by 4 005, or by 19 per cent. So, the number of new dwellings commenced fell by 22 per cent during the past year, and the number of new buildings completed fell by 19 per cent. It is rather amazing how these percentages average out at roughly the same all the time.

At the end of June, 1978, the number of dwellings under construction was 5 801. That was the lowest number of buildings under construction for years and years—the lowest number for three years. Indeed, the tables of figures which are available to us do not go back far enough to show just when there was a lower figure than that. The figures do reveal a disastrous situation. They reveal the enormous magnitude of the problem with which we are faced, and which has crept up on us. Apparently, we are unable to stop that.

Millions of dollars have been pulled out of this sector of the economy. Hundreds of jobs have been lost, and dozens of firms have gone to the wall, or have their backs to the wall.

Let us look at the question of employment in the industry, which is one of the three factors we need to examine if we are to properly gauge the condition of this industry. In June, 1976, there

were 473 people in the skilled building and construction occupations who were registered as unemployed. I repeat: In June, 1976, there were 473 registered unemployed. By June, 1978, that number had grown to 1 683—an increase of 1 210. In other words, the number of skilled tradesmen looking for work had trebled in two years. Those people have even less chance of getting a job now than they had two years ago, and I will give some figures to prove that point.

In June, 1976, there were four people out of work for every vacancy in the building and construction industries. By June, this year, there were 58 building and construction workers competing for every job. In 1976 there were four building and construction workers out of work for every vacancy, and now two years later there are 58 tradesmen competing for every vacancy. Members can work out the percentage increase there.

Overall unemployment figures show that in the community generally, taking into account all occupation groups, the ratio between the number of people unemployed and the number of unfilled vacancies is 27 to one. We believe that when we see 27 people available for every vacancy registered that is a rather bad state. We all agree that unemployment, generally, is very bad, but how much worse is it in the building and construction industries when the ratio is more than double the overall ratio? In the building and construction industries it is 58 to one as against the overall ratio of 27 to one. That shows how appallingly bad is the situation in the building and construction industries.

Another matter I said we needed to look at was the failure of businesses involved in and associated with housing and construction industries. I have some figures to illustrate just how bad is the tragedy. In 1976-77, a total of 24 businesses which could be identified as being directly involved in building and construction went bankrupt. In 1977-78, the number was 40—an increase of 66 per cent. In 1976-77, 24 businesses went bankrupt and in 1977-78 that number had grown to 40—an increase of 66 per cent. Those were businesses which could be directly identified as being associated with the building and construction industries. Of course, one has only to glance through the *Government Gazette* to find that the position is just as bad in the present financial year. It is not only the small operators who are going to the wall as a result of lack of experience, but also some large

companies. One or two major companies are in that group of bankrupts; they have not been able to survive. One in particular has been on the Perth building scene for many years and I understand it is now on the bankruptcy list.

This economic lunacy we are indulging in means a recession for the whole community and an even worse one—perhaps a terminal one—for the already weakened building and construction sector.

The home building industry has been dealt a double blow because of massive reductions in the funds which have been channelled to the States under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. As a result of the last three Fraser Budgets, funds for the State Housing Commission have been slashed by \$17 million, or by 16.7 per cent in real terms. In a period of three years housing funds have been cut down by \$17 million, or a reduction of 16.7 per cent in real terms. Actually we will be getting less, in simple money terms, for housing in the current financial year than we received in 1975-76. That is hard to believe in this day and age; it is almost impossible to believe, but it is true. The figures are there in the Budget for all to see.

The \$17 million cut I have referred to would, on current costs, finance the construction of 809 three-bedroomed State Housing Commission homes. If only we had that \$17 million extra we would be able to build 809 three-bedroomed State Housing Commission homes at current costs.

The 1978-79 allocation of \$29.8 million is \$6.9 million less than the 1977-78 allocation. Our current allocation is \$6.9 million less than it was for the last financial year. In real terms, that is a cut back of \$10.8 million, or 29.4 per cent. That sum of \$10.8 million would finance the construction of 514 three-bedroomed homes for the State Housing Commission.

The effect of this, of course, on the building and construction sector will be absolutely appalling. I think I said in a Press statement about a week ago that we were at the crossroads and that the present Budget would decide whether we went ahead or went backwards. It is quite obvious where we are going.

The building and construction industry cannot afford to do even less work in this financial year than it did in the last financial year, and the home building sector will be hit by two other side measures which were mentioned in the Budget. Most people know about them but probably have not immediately related them to the effect they

will have on the home building sector. Those measures are the decision to end tax deductibility of home loan interest payments and the decision to delay payment of home savings grants by up to a year.

The home loan interest deductions meant something like \$6 a week, which was a considerable saving to people who were mostly in the lower income bracket anyway—they had to be to enjoy the tax concession. So they are losing their \$6 a week.

The Government came in two years ago and said, "We have this marvellous new home savings grant for you." No-one has yet received the maximum amount proposed because no-one has had time to qualify for it, and despite the fact that it is fully operative it will now be 12 months before people can get the grant they have qualified for. It was said the grant was not for the home but for the furnishings. The Government now says, "Get your home, and then you will have to wait 12 months to get the furniture which we are going to help you buy." I think a sum of \$1 300 was to be allowed to the grantee, but that will be delayed a further 12 months and will lose its value because of inflation.

Mr Laurance: What did the Whitlam Government do with the home savings grant?

Mr DAVIES: It abolished the miserable \$200 which was then available and gave \$6 a week in home loan interest deductions. Six dollars multiplied by 52 gives more than the lousy \$200 which was thrown in as a bait in an election campaign four or five years ago. The Whitlam Government did the practical thing and helped those who most needed help. That was the whole tenor of its approach to these matters; it ensured that the people who most needed help were the people who got it.

Those two factors which I have just mentioned, and which have perhaps gone unnoticed, will no doubt affect home building in this State. High interest payments are also a barrier to home ownership. It is hoped they will drop but in the Budget figures there is no indication that they will drop. We would be pleased to see them drop but I think at the present time it is a forlorn hope, because the position as many people read the Budget—and in the main I can only form my opinions through newspapers—is that there will be little chance of interest rates dropping. In fact, some of the measures which have been brought in to deflate the economy could inflate the economy.

I noticed that the money market went mad the day after the Budget was presented but as soon as people realised the full impact of the Budget the madness which was evident in the money market the day after the Budget seemed to drop away very quickly. There was a lack of interest. That is a matter we must watch. For people who buy Government bonds there may be some hope, but that madness did not last very long.

Sir Charles Court: There was a record response to the Government loan bonds. The interest rate will come down.

Mr DAVIES: The response dropped remarkably after the first day.

Sir Charles Court: No. It was in response to the official loan.

Mr DAVIES: That related to loans of some considerable time ago—loans which had been floated over the past several years. There has long been a hope that one could invest in those and get a higher interest rate.

Sir Charles Court: This is the latest loan, not a new thing.

Mr DAVIES: But in the money market itself the activity dropped immediately after the full impact of the Budget became apparent. When we combine all these figures with the level of activity in the industry, the rate of unemployment, and the number of business failures, we get a picture of an industry which must surely be teetering on the brink of chaos and disaster. I feel the industry is about to expire and we must try to breathe some life into it.

I said earlier we needed funds, and indeed that is the tenor of the motion. We need some funds and that is the only way we can save the building and construction industry. All of the matters I have mentioned are bad enough but the situation will become worse because of the cutbacks in Government funds. I will give some figures on the cutbacks which have affected us.

Between 1976-77 and 1978-79 the capital funds which the Fraser Government has made available to Western Australia for general purposes by way of authorised Loan Council borrowings and general purpose capital grants have been slashed by \$36.1 million or 10.3 per cent in real terms. That is what has been accomplished in just two years—a slashing of our authorised Loan Council borrowings and general purpose capital grants by \$36.1 million or 10.3 per cent in real terms. Specific purpose payments have fallen by a massive \$117.4 million or 22.2 per cent in real terms.

The combined total of general purpose and specific purpose capital grants has fallen by \$153.5 million or 17 per cent in real terms. That is the kind of deal this State has had from the Fraser Government in two years—a drop of \$153.5 million or 17 per cent in real terms.

No wonder the Premier was grizzling. No wonder he was saying it was the worst deal we had ever had from any Prime Minister at any time. I can agree with him. There is not the slightest doubt that the cut in funds has been a major factor contributing towards the decline, slump, and almost stoppage of the building and construction industry.

The capital funds which the Fraser Government is giving to this State for 1978-79 will cause the position to become much worse. We were all hoping after last Tuesday night that there would be some glimmer of hope and that the position would become a little better. I will give the figures.

The Budget contained cuts in Western Australia's general purpose capital funds totalling \$13.3 million or 10 per cent in real terms. It contained cuts in specific purpose capital payments of \$30.9 million or 17.6 per cent in real terms. The total capital funds are down \$44.2 million or 14.4 per cent in real terms.

Last Wednesday night, when we were also dealing with money matters, I quoted to the House an extract from *The Australian* of the 29th June in which the Premier—quite properly in my opinion—described that kind of deal as “a prescription for recession”. He went on to comment that “if you prescribe recession, you’ll get it”. I could not agree with him more. This is shown by the prediction of Treasurer Howard that the inflation rate might come down towards 5 per cent during the year, but that the money supply would grow by only 6 to 8 per cent during the year.

What does that mean? It means it will not be significantly easier to borrow money; therefore interest rates will remain high. While money is in short supply interest rates will of course remain high. The scope for a reduction in interest rates is not great by any means.

What are the consequences of some of these financial restrictions? I think they are self-apparent to all of us here; but we are dealing with the construction and home building industry tonight, and the effect on that industry will be appalling; but not only for those industries. If Government funds available for capital works continue to fall in real terms, then to the extent that they fall so will the building and construction industry fall. If Governments are spending less on building construction, then the building and construction industry will have less to do because there is no sign of a major resurgence in projects by the private sector.

We must look to Governments to give the lead. It is no good saying, "Why must you always look to the Government?" The answer is that the private sector is not giving the lead. We suggested that the private sector should be encouraged, but the Fraser Government has done nothing at all to encourage that sector. Indeed, it seems to be happy to see its demise.

If the Worsley and Wagerup alumina projects go ahead, they will give us a boost. However, projects such as these have long lead times, and it will take quite a while for the benefits that could follow to catch up. If those two projects do provide a glimmer of hope they are about the only things we can look to at the present time, and that hope is quickly snuffed out by the fact that there are few other major constructions on the drawing board in and around the city.

I remember about four years ago a photograph appeared in the *Daily News* showing eight or nine cranes towering above the city skyline. If one went down there today, all one could see would be one major building going up in the city centre. That is a building next to the Australian Mutual Provident Society building in St. George's Terrace, and I believe it is under construction for one of the banks. Just four years ago there were eight or nine cranes towering above the city skyline, but today there is only one. That in itself is an indication of the activity in the business sector, and so we must look to the Government to provide some lead.

For the Government to be able to provide that lead, it must have some money. If Government

building and construction funds are reduced, then the level of activity in the building industry will naturally be reduced.

If the Government does not have the funds, it cannot do the job. Where do the funds come from? The funds must either come from Canberra or the State Government must raise the funds itself, and we all know where that second option will lead. The Premier has indicated already that he alone of all the Premiers is prepared to introduce legislation to provide for an additional levy on personal income tax. Although he says that this could also mean a rebate, I do not believe anyone is naive enough to believe we will ever reach a situation where a State Government will say, "The Federal Government has taken too much from you, so we will refund a little of it." If that situation ever arises, we will be delighted, but it is London to a brick on that we will never see it in this day and age, or in the day and age of anybody in this House. More likely there will be a levy on personal income tax, and I remind the House of the reply to a question asked about a week ago. We were told that a 1 per cent levy on tax as at that time would bring in about \$10.9 million. I believe the Premier went on to say that with the impost of a 3 per cent levy we would be just about out of the woods in regard to our more pressing needs.

The Premier has promised that this legislation will be introduced this year, and we know he does not do things without a reason. He said that no State income tax will be applied this year, but I hate the thought of having that legislation hovering over us because it is quite apparent that we will have the imposition of a State income tax before very long. I want to repeat my earlier comment that I am quite certain no person in this Chamber will live to see the State Government giving us a refund because it believes we have been overtaxed by the Federal Government.

Mr Young: I asked your predecessor this question because I wanted to ensure it would appear in *Hansard*. Do you prefer the present system of flat charges a State sometimes has to impose on taxpayers or the income tax surcharge?

Mr DAVIES: I ask the Minister to show us his figures on this.

Mr Young: I am just asking whether you believe in the principle.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister asked me that once before, not my predecessor.

Mr Young: I also asked your predecessor, and at least he answered me.

Mr DAVIES: We have to look at the various options available to us.

Mr Young: But you are not answering it satisfactorily.

Mr DAVIES: I am not going to be foolish enough—

Mr Young: To answer it.

Mr DAVIES: —to give the Minister an answer and be pinned down forevermore by it.

Mr Young: That is dead right, and I hope *Hansard* got it.

Mr DAVIES: We trusted this Government once, and that was in relation to pay-as-you-use water rates. The Minister said that four options were open, and that we could trust the Government to pick the best one.

Mr Young: You would not like to go back and answer the question I asked you, would you?

Mr DAVIES: I said I am not going to answer the Minister. He must think that I came into the House only last week. I am not going to answer an apparently simple question like that with all it implies. When the Premier introduces the income tax legislation, the Minister can remind us of this situation.

Mr Young: You will not be alive and I do not think I will be, either.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister will be able to tell us also about the other huge reductions the Government has been able to make. I want to remind the House that we trusted the Government in regard to pay-as-you-use water rates, but just look at what we have been left with. I am very grateful to the Minister Without Portfolio for giving me the opportunity to make sure that one or two points are recorded in *Hansard*. I repeat for the eighth time: When the Government introduced the pay-as-you-use water scheme, we trusted it when we were told it would not cost us any more. The Minister said that there were four options, and that the Government would pick the best of the four. If the one the Government picked is the best, I would hate to know the worst.

Mr Young: You have moved away from the income tax surcharge.

Mr DAVIES: We were told there would be an equitable distribution of the rate amongst the community, but the people who can least afford to pay are the ones who will pay the most. There

are a great number of injustices and inequities in that scheme. At that time the Government knew that the new scheme would apply from that date, but the Minister was not honest enough to admit it, or to bring that fact to the notice of the House. We asked questions about it, but the matter was glossed over.

The Minister wants me to return to the matter of taxation. I want to remind the House that legislation is now going through the Parliament to abolish probate duties. This will save the community \$4 million a year, but when I asked the Premier where he would obtain the money to balance this \$4 million he did not answer me. He has told us before that there are no free lunches. If the Government removes a tax to give a benefit to somebody, it must make up the shortfall from somewhere else. I must thank the Minister Without Portfolio for the opportunity to have that recorded in *Hansard*; I have reminded the public where we are at.

Mr Young: You did not answer the question.

Mr DAVIES: I do not intend to answer the question.

Mr Carr: It was a stupid question.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister must think I have just recently entered the House if he believes I would fall for a trick like that. It is an old debating trick and it has been tried before. Others may have answered it, but it will certainly not be answered by me.

What will be the result of reduced spending by the Government? First of all, the waiting list for State Housing Commission homes will grow even longer, and goodness only knows it is long enough now. In the metropolitan area 4 982 applicants are waiting for State Housing Commission homes. There are 343 applicants waiting in Albany, 595 in Bunbury, and 492 in Port Hedland. That is the waiting list at the present time. As I pointed out earlier, because of the cutback in funding, 514 three-bedroomed houses will not be built by the SHC this year.

The effect of the cutbacks will be felt throughout the State when our road programme is cut drastically. Many of these roads are very necessary. It is not just in the housing sector that we use capital works funds, and you know that as well as I do, Mr Speaker. These funds are used in all kinds of Government instrumentalities and utilities for the building of roads, harbours, railways, transport, jetties, ports, etc.

If we are not going to build roads, that will have another effect on the community. As I said, railways will not be upgraded. Public transport will not be improved; and, goodness knows, public transport in Western Australia and in the metropolitan area in particular is grinding to a halt. No new railway coaches have been ordered. Some new buses have been purchased, but it seems nowhere near enough money has been spent on suburban transport.

Water supplies and sewerage schemes will not be extended. Any member living on the outskirts of the metropolitan area will know of the many people who want extensions of water supplies and sewerage schemes. These services will not be extended as quickly as they should be. Of course, some work will be done, but the services will not be provided as quickly as they should be because the money we are getting is not even sufficient to match that which we received last year; and if we are not receiving an equivalent amount we certainly cannot keep up the same programme. The whole community and, indeed, our whole way of life will be affected.

I believe these ill effects will build up until the position is reached where there will be a serious shortfall in facilities. Already gaps are appearing in some areas, and these will grow more serious because we will not have the money to undertake the necessary building. When economic recovery finally arrives, after being delayed as a result of the Fraser Government's failure to spend on capital works, and when new resource development projects are ready to get off the ground we will not be able to cope. We will not have the established industries available to cope with the physical demand which any economic upturn might bring about.

We just will not be up to scratch, and the people available will not be adequate to do the job to cope with even the mildest economic recovery—a distressing situation, to say the least. Our community assets will be run down and will be unable to stand the strain. If our community assets are not up to scratch, this will certainly retard economic recovery and possibly, in the long term, turn developers away from Western Australia, because the State will not be able to supply the necessary services and assets which developers require and which the Premier has told us we now have a responsibility to supply.

The failure to boost the building and construction sector could well provide a boost to inflation in the future because, as I explained

before, if we cannot cope when economic recovery occurs and there is a surge forward with a demand being created, that is the time inflation will skyrocket. We have had that experience in the past few years. Therefore, the consequences of not maintaining the building and construction industry now will deliver a body blow to the industry, it will deliver a body blow to the community, and it will deliver a body blow to the economy as a whole. We cannot let the industry go under now; we need the industry too much for the future.

Those are reasons that I believe the Fraser Government must reverse its policies on capital works and must reverse its policies on spending. That Government must give stimulus to the building and construction industries now, rather than depressing them further as its present policies are doing. As I said previously, we need a stimulus rather than a depressive effect, and a depressive effect is what we are getting from the present Budget.

We need only a comparatively small amount of money in order to breathe life back into the industry; and the lack of that small amount of money will result in serious consequences. That is the reason the Opposition is moving this motion tonight.

As the Minister for Works said earlier, as we are moving this motion and saying we need more money, we have a responsibility to suggest what amounts of money we should be given to fill the need.

Mr O'Connor: And where it comes from.

Mr DAVIES: The motion, of course, asks the Federal Government to come good in this regard. Its whole context is to show that the industry is going into a rapid decline. It is almost breathing its last, and the only way to breathe life back into it is by the injection of some funds. As the Fraser Government has cut down funds so severely over the last several years, we are not able to maintain any growth but are able to maintain only what we have done in previous years. As a result of inflation, we cannot even do that; but even forgetting inflation we are not getting as much as we did in previous years.

Without the detailed information and advice which is available to both the Federal and State Governments, it is most difficult for the Opposition accurately to assess the funds needed. However, we do advance some broad proposals.

The most severe cutbacks in Commonwealth funds for capital works in Western Australia this financial year occur in the general purpose area and the housing area. We believe that in respect of general purpose capital funds, the amount available to the State this financial year should be increased from \$132.7 million to \$146 million to keep pace with inflation.

On top of that we need a further growth factor, and I believe that factor should be not less than 10 per cent which would give us only a very modest stimulus, to say the least. In other words, we believe general purpose capital funds for Western Australia for the current financial year should be increased by special commonwealth allocation from the \$132.7 million presently budgeted, to at least \$160.6 million. This would mean the special allocation would be about \$28 million, or an increase of about 20 per cent.

The same formula should be applied to funds provided under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. This would increase Western Australia's housing funds from \$29.8 million to \$44.7 million. The supplementary funds involved would be \$14.9 million, or an increase on the budgeted figure of about 50 per cent. Therefore, the total supplementary grant we are proposing is \$42.8 million.

That amount would provide only a modest stimulus to the community, and by no means would it be an inflationary stimulus. All in all, from the two major sources, we believe an amount of \$42.8 million would allow us to continue as we are at present, with only a slight increase.

Members will recall that earlier I commented that the cut in real terms in our total capital funds from the Commonwealth this year was \$44.2 million. It will be seen from this that the supplementary allocation we are proposing is just short of the amount required to maintain the level of Government building and construction work that was undertaken last year. So with that \$42.8 million I am asking for, we can only get back to par, because the overall cuts which have occurred amount to \$44.2 million.

I do not think it can be said the Opposition is being extravagant in merely asking that the State should be able to continue to hold its own. I believe the amount I am asking for is the bare minimum we need to avoid stagnation and disaster in the housing, construction, and building industries of the country. It might be just enough to hold the line, although I do not know whether

it will be. A lot depends on how inflation goes and what the private sector and the community are prepared to do. However, let the Government sector give a lead; no-one else is giving a lead. With this \$42.8 million we can just hold the line.

I nominated housing and general purpose capital works as the areas to receive the funds; I believe they are the ones which are in most urgent need of funds. On the one hand, it would go to the area where it is most needed to put more people back to work and to boost the economy and, on the other hand, it would give the Government a degree of flexibility in deciding just where the money will go. It does not have to put it all into housing; there are other buildings—schools and the like—over which the Government has some control and for which it needs more money.

Recently I asked some questions about the accommodation for staff at the Carlisle Technical School and was given the usual answer that the matter will be looked at in conjunction with all other applications for accommodation. I can hardly believe that the staff will continue to work in the conditions under which they work now. There are two people to a table, which is just an ordinary sized desk. The desks are butted end to end and a person must walk right down the row of desks and back up the other side to get to his seat. They do not even have a drawer to themselves in a storage cupboard, but are required to share a drawer. These are some of the disgustingly pressing needs for staff accommodation.

The instructors at the Carlisle Technical School sit down to eat in a lunch room, immediately adjacent to which a toilet leads off. I suppose it is handy and convenient, but it is not very hygienic. There is nowhere else for them to go to eat their lunch, unless they go out in the open air. I suppose that is all right these days, but it would not have been possible during some of the weather we have experienced recently.

These people are trying to do a job of work under conditions which are almost impossible. I certainly would not work under them. The conditions for the staff in my office are bad enough, but they are nowhere near as bad as the conditions under which the staff at the Carlisle Technical School have to work.

Yet I received an answer from the Minister that the matter would be examined in the light of all the other applications for staff accommodation.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not quite true.

Mr DAVIES: It is not good enough. The Government needs the money; it can put it to good advantage in areas where there is a pressing need for something to be done. I do not believe the Government would have any trouble whatever in spending the money which should be made available to it and I believe it could all be spent wisely and to great effect without any inflationary results.

To summarise, no doubt the picture I have painted of conditions in the building and construction industry is one of gloom. Nevertheless, whether we like it or not, it is the true picture. My views are endorsed by people in the building industry and by people in the trade union movement; they are endorsed, too, by people in the building societies, banks and other agencies which are approached by people wanting housing loans which they are unable to provide. Indeed, I believe they are endorsed by the whole community. I am quite certain from the Premier's earlier comments, particularly after the Premiers' Conference and since the last Budget, that he too will endorse what I have said here tonight.

We have a choice to maintain the building and construction industry at a minimal level of activity to enable it to hold on and survive until a time of economic recovery arrives or to let it wither away and die, with the dire consequences for the community and the economy generally to which I earlier referred. We can give it a boost and keep it alive—just alive, as it might be—or allow it to wither away and die. I have already indicated to members the severe consequences which can ensue from not having an effective building industry—one that is there, ready to meet the demand.

The Fraser Government must be made to realise that its policies are disastrous. I am sure people would not get any argument from members on this side that these policies are disastrous, although they might get some from members opposite for political convenience.

Mr Bryce: Only the extremists.

Mr DAVIES: Some members opposite feel they have an obligation to defend these policies but, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, they would be only the extremists.

We have all been dealt a body blow by the Fraser Budget and the money which will be available to Western Australia for capital works is nothing less than a disaster. The Federal

Government is being too restrictive. It is strangling the States and the industry, and this stranglehold must be prised loose. The course of action I have proposed and the amounts of money which I say could and should be made available to Western Australia will not be inflationary, but will benefit the industry and the community and, we hope, will help to release the stranglehold which is now being applied.

The Fraser Government must be made to realise that it has to change its course. I am seeking the endorsement of the House of this motion as a first step towards that objective to try to get the Federal Government to realise what a position the States are in, and to try to get it to change its course.

I do not condemn in any way the attempts of the Premier to obtain additional money for the State. Of course, it was for his own ends, but we were as disappointed as the Premier that he was not successful. We felt that the position we had reached was bound to come because we could not keep up the rate of progress which we were making—small as it might have been—over the past three or four years. We knew even that rate of progress had to slow down because of the deal being handed to the States.

If the House votes against my motion it will be acting against the best interests of the building and construction industry, the community, the economy and the State of Western Australia. I believe very good grounds exist for supporting my motion, and I commend it to the House.

Mr WILSON: I formally second the motion.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [9.38 p.m.]: We have heard a rather pathetic, dull recital of the same things which have been said and said and said by the Leader of the Opposition and some of his colleagues.

Mr Bryce: Every one of them is true.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to point out to some members opposite, as well as members on the Government side that the pattern from the Opposition is becoming clearer every week—in fact, every day. There seems to be a dearth of original thought and we are getting the same old line tossed up each week.

I remind members of the motion which was moved on the last private members' day, which was amended by the Government to give it some balance and respectability. Now, today, we have the same old tune being played on the same old scratchy record.

Mr Pearce: And the same old trumpeter on the other side.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind members opposite that they never seem to get around to acknowledging that the No. 1 problem in Australia today is to get on top of inflation and interest rates; until we get on top of those two things, there cannot be a return to a period of sustained economic growth.

Mr Bryce: Are you going to oppose this motion?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The palliatives the Opposition suggests in the meantime will not give us any permanent or sustained recovery. I remind members opposite of the alternative Budget brought down last night by Mr Hayden when he tried to convince Australians that if he were Prime Minister they would have a different sort of Budget and everything in the garden would be rosy. All we heard was the Hayden version of the Whitlam disaster.

Mr Bryce: Be more explicit and give us facts instead of unadulterated nonsense.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Hayden alternative Budget was directed at trying to cut down anyone who might be successful. It was directed at scaring off overseas investment and the markets that we desperately need if this country is to prosper. It also highlighted a return to the printing press because if members opposite look at what Mr Hayden proposed, even if his figures are right—which I doubt, as they have been disputed today by the people who should know best—

Mr Wilson: Who are they?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Do not members think the people in the Federal Treasury would know what it is all about? I want to remind members opposite that even if the figures are correct, Mr Hayden is advocating a return to the printing press.

Mr Bryce: How?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I listened to the member's leader.

Mr Bryce: He stated facts.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It would not hurt the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to listen for a while. We do not want a repetition of last Wednesday's behaviour. I am trying to explain how Mr Hayden advocated a return to the printing press. He advocated a much bigger deficit for a start.

Mr B. T. Burke: It was not much bigger.

Mr Bryce: Explain how the Fraser Government financed a \$3.3 billion deficit this year.

Mr O'Connor: Let him have a say.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: At the heart of all this difficulty we have in trying to convince the Opposition is the fact that they do not understand the basic principle of how we finance a deficit. The Fraser Government is committed to not using the printing press. As I explained to the House last week, one can do it the phoney way by using the printing press as the Whitlam Government did, which is disastrous. However, it is possible to do it the honourable and responsible way by borrowing money to cover a deficit.

Mr Bryce: I thought that was what Mr Whitlam tried to do.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Do not draw out Khemlani again.

Mr Bryce: We would be happy to.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about the uncontrolled expansion of credit facilities through things like Bankcard?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Listen to what I have to say. The Fraser Government is determined not to use the printing press.

Mr Jamieson: Are you saying they have not increased the volume of money?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Listen for a minute; I listened to the member's leader.

Mr Pearce: I would listen to you if you would stop repeating yourself.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Fraser Government is following the responsible line of making sure that if it does have a deficit it will be able to cover it with the necessary cash, the same as a State Government has to do. Thank goodness State Governments do not have a printing press. The Fraser Government, which in the minds of the Opposition might appear to have an obsession about reducing deficits, is very conscious of the fact that the bigger the deficit the more money one has to drain off from the loan market. If that is done it is that much less money available for the Commonwealth and for the States to cover their essential works; works such as roads, railways, ports, water, sewerage, drainage, and power. And it is that much less money available for housing.

Let us not assume there was a sense of responsibility about this motion. I point out the

motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition was done without regard for responsibility in financial management and would itself be just as disastrous as the Hayden alternative Budget if it were followed in its present form. I assume from what the Leader of the Opposition has said that he is taking for granted that the Hayden alternative Budget is a good one and would work.

Mr Davies: I never mentioned it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is because of that and the basic socialist philosophy the Deputy Leader of the Opposition espouses that he has put forward a proposition tonight which, if it were followed in its entirety and taken literally, would be a Western Australian version of the irresponsible approach put forward by the Federal Leader of the Opposition last night.

I am sad to say the Labor Party itself cannot wash its hands from responsibility in respect of some of the violence which has been surrounding the Budget, bearing in mind this is a Budget—

*Point of Order*

Mr H. D. EVANS: I wonder, Mr Acting Speaker, if you could indicate whether this fits into the motion before the House.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): I do not consider there is any point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the Opposition that the Federal Budget has been brought down by an elected Government. Protest is in order, but not protest with violence. Those people who stir up this kind of thing cannot divorce themselves from the end result, even if they might not have wanted violence to happen. They cannot divorce themselves from it because they play right into the hands of the more militant elements of the community who are waiting for some incitement and chance to destroy law and order.

Mr Bryce: Is that as bad as your stirring up the farmers and loading them on trucks?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition has moved this motion thinking he can cash in on or ricochet off some of the words I have been using following Loan Council and Premiers' Conference meetings. He knows I am in considerable disagreement with the Prime Minister about the strategy he has followed in respect of the Budget.

I say categorically that I am at one with the Prime Minister in his determination to avoid a

return to the printing press and in his determination to get on top of inflation, and through that, to get interest rates down. They are the two most vital things to be controlled if we want to get back to sustained economic growth.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about the effect of tax rises on incentives?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the honourable member that any tax rises through a surcharge are only a tiny proportion of the amount of tax reductions that have been given by the Fraser Government since it went into office.

Mr B. T. Burke: Are you saying it will not affect incentives? Two months ago you were talking about high taxes affecting incentives.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Obviously, members opposite do not follow the Federal financial scene which is so crucial to us, because the Fraser Government has made unprecedented reductions in taxes since it went into office. So, although the Federal Government has put on this surcharge, and whilst I do not like the fact of a surcharge, I want to remind members that it is only a proportion of the tax deductions that have been given by the Fraser Government since it assumed office.

If we have to keep the deficit down to manageable proportions, of course we have to have income. No-one will agree about the method by which we obtain that income; whether it is raised by means of excise, whether it is raised by means of income tax, or whether it is raised by some other method. I notice that Mr Hayden who wants to ingratiate himself with some sections of the community has come out with the great socialist ploy and has disclosed the fact that he is a very committed socialist, because he wants to destroy anyone who is successful. He wants to tear down everyone.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hayden was calling for decreases in sales tax on motorcars months before your Government did it. Now you take the credit and say it is your idea. You attacked him viciously when he suggested it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: At the time he left himself wide open to attack, because he pulled the bottom out of the motor vehicle industry and even the people involved in the industry were pleading with him to keep quiet at the time.

Mr Jamieson: They have 4 per cent tax only in the United States and they sell plenty of vehicles.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I should like to come back to the question of financial responsibility.

Mr Bryce: This is your great strength.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Let me remind members opposite that if we run into a deficit, it has to be financed. We must keep repeating that.

Mr B. T. Burke: Life was not meant to be easy.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind members opposite that despite their irresponsible approach and the fact that they think money grows on trees, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. The Leader of the Opposition made very light of the result of the August loan. He seemed to treat it as though it were something from the past.

Mr Davies: It was only a week ago.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind the honourable member that this loan which has just closed is the record loan since Federation. It is not just a high loan; it is a record loan since Federation. The most important part about it, which the Leader of the Opposition as a student of the matter should understand, is the fact that—

Opposition members interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If he desires to be a leader of the alternative Government, he should be studying this for the alternative possibility. However, I remind the Leader of the Opposition that the important point about this loan is that such a large number of subscriptions have come from the non-banking sector. The significance of that fact is that the non-banking sector is reflecting a return of confidence by taking this action. They are the people who are indicating they anticipate there will be a reduction in interest rates. There has been a substantial reduction in the official interest rates already which the Opposition refuses to acknowledge.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is not true.

Sir CHARLES COURT: But here we are with the non-banking section contributing a major part of the new loan which is at a record level. If the Opposition was being responsible and fair-minded it would acknowledge that this is the most important indicator of two matters. Firstly, it is an indicator that the financial policies of the Government are being accepted and trusted; and, secondly, it is an indicator that on market trends alone interest rates have a chance of coming down in the future.

Mr B. T. Burke: The second thing is more true than the first.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is more important for it to happen that way than it is for it to

happen through artificial means which is the type of reduction that was being advocated by members opposite the other night.

Mr B. T. Burke: The second thing is more true than the first and it does not necessarily reflect an increase in confidence. It says something about interest rates and their expectations certainly.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If it did not reflect confidence, I can tell the honourable member what would be happening to that money: it would be chasing all the high interest rates it could get. It would be chasing assets that were safe because of capital gains that could reasonably be expected.

Mr B. T. Burke: What is the safest place for investment if it is not a Government bond?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The honourable member asks, "What is the safest investment other than a Government bond?" or words to that effect. I should have used the word "asset". I remind the honourable member that in a time of rampant inflation, when people expect inflation to continue and do not expect interest rates to fall, they put money into investments such as real estate and they do not worry about the return on it. They are more concerned about ensuring their money retains its value in the years that lie ahead. This has been one of the problems throughout the world.

Mr B. T. Burke: I certainly say it has something to do with the businessman's attitude to interest rates and the fluctuations which occur. You go on to say that it reflects confidence, but that is not necessarily correct.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It must represent confidence, because this money has come from so many quarters within the economy other than the banking sector. Honourable members know that the bankers, under the Statutes, must make certain contributions, and certain proportions of their investments must be in Government securities. When we see a flow-in of money from a non-banking sector, it is the best news we can have.

I do not think honourable members in their hearts could claim that the fact that this record loan has closed is anything but a reflection of public confidence. It is a reflection that the tide has turned. It is a reflection that people are backing the Government's policies.

Mr B. T. Burke: You were saying this 12 months ago.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is a reflection also that we can expect the progress, even if it is slow, to continue.

Mr B. T. Burke: Twelve months ago you said the same things and matters have got worse.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I remind honourable members of the motion which was before us last week.

Mr Pearce: What about the motion before us now?

Sir CHARLES COURT: We decided the motion should be amended. Again I came back to the point of reminding members opposite that the most crucial matters are the inflation factor and along with that the interest factor. We amended the motion so that it would read as follows—

That this House applauds the determination by the Federal Government to continue the fight against inflation and efforts to get interest rates down because these are the two main avenues through which sustained economic recovery can be assured.

Mr Bryce: That is the motion debated last week.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It happens to be very pertinent. In respect of this, the Leader of the Opposition did not return today with a motion that acknowledged the fact that there is a fight against inflation. He was silent on that. He does not want to learn. He does not seem to want to indicate he understands this.

Mr B. T. Burke: He is learning fairly quickly.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition has moved a motion which says that the Federal Government should provide an immediate supplementary grant. It is irresponsible to talk about a grant to Western Australia. He is not referring to a loan, but a grant. It shows his sense of irresponsibility, because such a grant would go straight into the Federal Government's deficit. It must be added to that deficit. This shows the sense of irresponsibility of members opposite. Not even the Labor Premiers have had the temerity or the irresponsibility to ask for further assistance from the Commonwealth Government by way of grants in respect of this matter. If they wanted money, they would get it either through the General Loan Fund or through increased semi-Government loans. The Premiers even went so far as offering collectively to the Federal Government to accept the right to borrow General Loan Fund money

without underwriting from the Commonwealth and without the usual one-third assistance which we get under the General Loan Fund.

This money is, of course, the best money of all because the Commonwealth pays a nice share of the cost of servicing it. Naturally we put out our hands for as much General Loan Fund money as we can get; but we were prepared to waive that and to go into the market and take our own risk on underwriting for about \$200 million to be borrowed for General Loan Fund works.

Mr Davies: What progress have you made?

Sir CHARLES COURT: We did this so that we would not embarrass the Federal Government's deficit. Labor Premiers, Liberal Party Premiers, and a Country Party Premier offered to do this with a sense of responsibility. They said that because of the fight against inflation which was acknowledged as the number one priority, they were prepared to get the money on a basis which would not embarrass the Commonwealth's deficit.

We did not succeed, but that does not mean we will not try again. This is where I am in disagreement with the Prime Minister because I believe that, contrary to the motion talking about grants and handouts which must come from the Consolidated Revenue Budget and add to the deficit and to inflation, we should have a programme worked out with the Commonwealth, as I stated in my amendment last week, whereby we can undertake these essential works.

The Leader of the Opposition has been quoting some of the things which I have been saying since long before the Premiers' Conference and which I repeat tonight. We must get on with some of the programmes of essential works; that is, what I refer to as the working assets of the nation. They can be financed, without causing an upsurge of further inflation, and without upsetting the Commonwealth's own financial policies and its deficit programme, only by raising the money in the loan market. Here again we come back to the question of responsibility about the deficit, because if the Commonwealth does not keep its hand firmly on that deficit figure it will deny not only itself, but also the States, access to borrowed money of which we will need more and more for the programmes which lie ahead. The best way to ensure that the maximum is available on the cheapest basis—whether it be for housing or general works—is to get that inflation rate down.

So I remind members opposite, for the second consecutive week, that the Leader of the

Opposition has failed to acknowledge that inflation is still the No. 1 enemy, and he has failed to join chorus with the Government, as we suggested last week, to show the Commonwealth Government that it is possible to keep our hand on the throttle, to keep inflation down, to fight inflation, and at the same time to maintain the economic activity which is so important.

Mr B. T. Burke: Zero economic growth.

Mr Davies: Do you know that this motion was moved because of your amendment last week? I will tell you why when I reply.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have searched the amendment—

Mr Davies: But you have forgotten what you moved last week.

Sir CHARLES COURT: No I have not. I have it right here.

Mr Davies: And so have I. I will remind you of a few things in it later.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will read it right through if the Leader of the Opposition would like me to do so.

Mr Barnett: As long as you do not read it aloud.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I would remind members that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition today reads—

That in the opinion of this House, the Federal Government should provide an immediate supplementary grant to W.A.'s General Purpose Capital Grant allocations this financial year and an additional grant under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement to prevent a crisis in W.A.'s building and construction industries, the effects of which are . . .

I remind members also that last week we moved in a responsible way to acknowledge the fight against inflation, and the need to get interest rates down, while at the same time asking for a works programme which would enable us to get to grips with the basic working assets of the nation referred to tonight, but without embarrassing the Commonwealth Government's fight against inflation. This is the basic difference.

Last night while driving I listened to Mr Hayden, and it was only the voice which was different from Whitlam.

Mr Barnett: It was lovely; so fine to listen to: someone genuine and sincere for once.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I did not know the honourable member disliked Gough Whitlam so much. Mr Hayden was rattling on.

Mr B. T. Burke: The best economic manager in the country is Hayden.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: Have a look at the latest opinion polls, my friends. They show 39 per cent for Fraser and 55 per cent for Hayden.

Mr O'Neil: I would not like to be a popular Leader of the Opposition.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: All the way through his speech he was saying that if a person is making any money or is being successful, it should be ripped off him. If a person has assets, they should be ripped off him.

Mr Barnett: You should talk!

Mr Davies: What is Fraser doing? Ripping it off them!

Sir CHARLES COURT: He overlooks the fact that the average person is not as stupid as to believe that. The average person knows that we must get some stability into the economy. We must have good sense and good management and get back to base before we can have prosperity. Therefore in order to get a little bit of sanity into this—

Mr B. T. Burke: You will accept the motion!

Sir CHARLES COURT: —in order to acknowledge that there is such a thing as inflation and that we should try to get interest rates down, and in order that this Parliament will not be held up to ridicule because we ignore these things, I intend to move an amendment. It is a nice simple amendment.

Mr Bryce: We are pleased to learn that it will not be as verbose as the one last week.

Sir CHARLES COURT: In view of the fact that I laid the foundation so well last week, I do not need to move a long amendment this time. I merely need to get members related back to it.

#### *Amendments to Motion*

I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the word "should" in line 2 with a view to substituting the following—

—without relaxing its attack on inflation and the policy to get interest

rates down—immediately confer with the State Governments to determine a programme whereby more funds can be made available for capital works, including housing, in accordance with the final form of the motion passed by this House on 16th August, 1978.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hear, hear!

Mr O'NEIL: Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr Barnett: Surely not! Shame on you!

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [10.07 p.m.]: I would like to say I am very disappointed with the contribution the Premier has made so far to the debate. It would have been his worst parliamentary performance I have heard.

Mr O'Neil: You say that every time you get up.

Mr Barnett: He is getting worse.

Mr B. T. Burke: He has not improved yet.

Mr Wilson: We will have to keep on saying it.

Mr PEARCE: I would say that the embarrassed silence from the Premier's pseudo supporters during his speech was a fair indication that what we said was true. He reminded us of things over and over again. In fact, we will find that word "remind" features in *Hansard* as every fourth word. His was a pathetic effort to justify the position.

Mr O'Neil: It has to be repeated for slow learners.

Mr PEARCE: He kept talking about it being necessary to keep away from the printing press, yet we can cast our minds back to what occurred when the previous Federal Government tried to borrow funds to bring down the deficit in the same way the Premier is advocating now.

Sir Charles Court: They declared their purpose and it was not for the deficit.

Mr PEARCE: Last year the Federal deficit was \$3 300 million. Presumably if the Premier is accurate what the Federal Government will have to do to cover the deficit is borrow \$3 300 million.

Sir Charles Court: You do not understand much about Government finance if you say that.

Mr O'Neil: He does not understand much—period!

Mr PEARCE: When the previous Federal Labor Government wanted to borrow \$4 000 million—almost the same amount—we all know the attitude of the Premier. However, his attitude changes dramatically.

Sir Charles Court: That money was not for the deficit.

Mr PEARCE: The Premier thinks that deficit money is separate from what is raised in the Budget. He does not understand. The deficit is money spent in other areas. If we spend more than we take in in receipts, the difference between the two is the deficit. It has nothing to do with areas in which it is expended.

I am used to grey-haired professors lecturing me and I am prepared to listen to a lecture on economics or anything else from the Premier, but his lecture on economics must be more precise and he must not speak down to members if he wants us to pay attention to him.

I wish to indicate that the Opposition will be prepared to accept the Premier's amendment, because it does not in fact diminish our thrust in regard to Commonwealth funding for housing. We will accept that the Premier for the second time wants to make a face-saving gesture rather than vote for a motion moved by the Opposition.

We will let the Premier have his few words and do his face-saving by amending the motion we have moved.

Mr Sodeman: What is face-saving about something he said months ago?

Mr PEARCE: The Premier has not the gumption to vote for the motion we have moved. The motion is right, but he has to amend it in his own way.

Sir Charles Court: We are too responsible to accept your motion.

Mr PEARCE: The present Government never accepts any amendment moved by the Opposition, no matter how meritorious it might be. This Government saves face by having the same amendments moved in another place by its own members. That is quite different from the time of the Tonkin Government. When the then Opposition—now the present Government—moved amendments many of them were accepted.

Mr O'Neil: What would you know? You were not here.

Mr PEARCE: I was alive then. It appears the Deputy Premier is only aware of the facts he personally witnesses, but others of us can read.

Mr O'Neil: At least, I interpret facts better than you do.

Mr PEARCE: Perhaps we can give the Deputy Premier a chance to deny what I am saying, and a chance to say whether I am right or wrong.

Mr O'Neil: I think you are wrong.

Mr PEARCE: Is the Deputy Premier saying that the present Ministers, when in Opposition during the term of the Tonkin Labor Government, did not move amendments on the floor of this Chamber? Is the Deputy Premier saying that the Tonkin Labor Government did not accept, on the floor of this Chamber, amendments to Bills moved by his crowd?

Mr O'Neil: What crowd?

Mr PEARCE: The Deputy Premier's party.

Mr O'Neil: That is better. I cannot nominate specific occasions, but I have accepted amendments, moved by members of the Opposition.

Mr PEARCE: I am accurate in saying that the party I represent, when it was in Government, was prepared to accept amendments moved by the then Opposition. The then Government gave credit for those amendments, and did not use face-saving tactics.

Mr O'Neil: If you are here to get credit for a legislative certificate, third class, you have come to the wrong place. Is that why you are here?

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: It is a tired old bunch on the Government bench tonight.

Mr B. T. Burke: We have accepted the Premier's amendment.

Mr PEARCE: The abusive term directed at me by the Deputy Premier should be directed at the Premier. He is the one who has moved the amendment to the motion.

Mr O'Neil: I said, "legislative certificate, third class".

Mr Davies: You have just insulted your leader.

Mr PEARCE: The problems in the housing industry need to be sheeted home to those who are responsible. It is all very well to say that inflation has to be brought down. We accept that, and that it is necessary for interest rates to be brought down. But the unemployment rate also needs to be brought down. To suggest that unemployment can be neatly shelved while we pursue other related matters is very bad economics. We cannot forget unemployment until some time in the future. A tremendous investment of Australian reserves is involved in unemployment.

The 400 000 or so unemployed people in Australia all draw—or mostly draw—unemployment benefits. That is a totally unproductive use of a tremendous part of our resources. If that same money were put into employment it would not be necessary to shell out unemployment benefits involving thousands of millions of dollars.

To make the situation worse, in the housing industry there is a good deal of concealed unemployment. Members will be aware that a large number of workers in the housing industry do contract or subcontract work. At the present time, most of those contractors would be working three days out of five in each week. Really, for all the people employed in the building industry there is only a 60 per cent utilisation of the employment capabilities of those people. If all those people worked a full week then there would be another 40 per cent unemployed in the building industry.

Those who are employed do not draw unemployment benefits, because they work part time if they can get subcontract work and keep going for three days out of five. As I have said, because of the nature of the building industry there is a tremendous section of disguised unemployment involved. Those people who work for three-fifths of their effective time suffer a drop in their earnings and in their living standards, and they face difficulty in meeting their financial commitments. That does not show up but it is a very real factor in the crisis facing the building industry.

There is only one way in which the housing industry will be revitalised, and that is for people to buy more houses, and for more and more houses to be built. That can only be done if finance is made available. The lending institutions cannot lend money if they do not have any money. Where will the money come from? Normally, it has to come from the Government. If the Federal Government was to make available to the State Government a supplementary grant it could be immediately put into the lending channels so that people would be able to buy houses which they desperately want. That would provide employment in the building industry, and would have an important effect on the economy in Western Australia.

I hope all members understand that when things go bad in the economy, the building industry is always the first to suffer. If the building industry is buoyant the general economy is buoyant.

The motion moved by my leader suggests a stimulation of the building sector of the economy by asking the Federal Government to make available a supplementary grant to this State so that our building industry can be made more buoyant, so that unemployment can be reduced, so that more money will be made available to the people who are the consumers, and so that they will buy more and, in fact, build up general confidence in the economy, which is lagging—all the clichés of the Premier notwithstanding.

I was disappointed with the Premier's contribution to the debate, as I have already said by way of interjection. If that is the best which the Government can do then W. W. Mitchell and his mates clearly are not earning their "dough." I believe the motion should pass in its original form but, as I have already indicated, the Opposition as a face-saving gesture to the Government is prepared to let it have the amendment which has been moved.

**MR B. T. BURKE** (Balcatta) {10.17 p.m.}: I am quite happy that the Opposition should accept the amendment moved by the Premier. If one has listened very closely to the Premier, and is aware of what he has been saying in recent weeks, it will be obvious that the Premier knows, as members of the Opposition know, that the economic line the Fraser Government is attempting to walk is very thin and very dangerous.

It is all very well to talk about waging a war on inflation, and about trying to bring down interest rates, but at the same time bring about economic growth.

During the past few months the Premier has called increasingly for Government expenditure on what he so nicely terms as working assets. The Premier knows it is a two-pronged thing that is sought when he calls for investment in this area. Firstly, there has to be investment in productive work and in the producing of assets. Secondly, the preservation of those assets is necessary to allow the economy to function properly.

The policies being undertaken by the Fraser Government are very dangerous; their task is fraught with the prospect of forever having turned upon this country the most damaging downward escalating recession that it is possible to have. There is no doubt, unless the Fraser

Government is very careful while it is trying to combat the force of inflation, it can easily plunge this country into a very major recession. The non-replacement of what the Premier called "the working assets" of the country could lead to very great concern and could send unemployment rising to close to one million people. That is a very real danger.

The Opposition, if it has done nothing else, has highlighted the fact that this danger exists, and the Fraser Government appears to be acting in a very heavy-handed way in its call for a prescription which it says is essential in such delicate economic matters.

It is extremely important to understand that if, as is almost certain, within the next few months America acts to bolster its failing currency and overcome the economic ills it is at present suffering, the effect of the action America takes will be compounded throughout our own economy.

It would be idle to talk about trading out of our difficulties. There is no doubt at all that the restrictive measures taken by the Fraser Government are in very dire danger of being compounded into absolute horrors if they are joined by other countries whose actions have a decisive influence on the Australian economy. There is no doubt that if those other countries with which we are so closely connected also act in restrictive ways to overcome their economic ills, the restrictive measures of the Fraser Government will be amplified far beyond anything the Federal Treasurer thinks is desirable and certainly anything the Premier of this State thinks is desirable.

If the Opposition's motions have done nothing else, they have on two different occasions caused the Premier to restate his position—that the Fraser Government is acting foolishly in allowing the wastage of what the Premier calls the national assets. And even if it is necessary to move a motion of this nature every week this Parliament sits, it is quite within the Opposition's realm to do so if it causes the Premier, time and time again, to remind his Federal colleagues that they are not doing the right thing at least at the margin of their economic policy where they are allowing to waste national assets which are important not only to the employment of productive resources at the present time but also to the success we seek for the revitalised economy once those resources become necessary for a resurgence in activity. It will be too late in 12

months' time to complain that this country is not poised to come out of the recession because the assets the Premier talks about are no longer available or no longer capable of being used in the manner they will have to be used to allow us to come out of the recession from which we are suffering.

It is true there is a dire need at the present time for selective spending within the Australian economy. It is of no use continually to chant and rant about Government spending being non-productive. That is not true. Spending in the area of public works employs resources which are today lying unused. It is true that spending in certain areas of the economy results in the employment of resources in the private sector, the production of materials, and the employment of labour, expertise, and services, and these expenditures which do not produce or provoke inflation are certainly the order of the day today. The Premier said so himself.

If nothing else, the motion spurred the Premier on once again to restate his position publicly—that the Fraser Government is falling down on the job at least at the margin of its economic policy, and if it continues to do so the compounding effects of actions by other countries could well deepen the recession in which we are now wallowing to an extent which will not allow us to climb out easily.

At the same time it is important that the Premier faces up to the fact that it is false to call continually for investment-led recoveries and to talk about investment allowances which are simply designed to cater for the fortunes of a particular political party and not for economic recovery.

There will not be an investment-led recovery in Australia. There cannot be an investment-led recovery in this country when industries across the nation are operating at 50 and 75 per cent of their capacity. They will not invest in increased capacity while they have that excess capacity lying idle, and it is futile for the Premier to say investment allowances will result in spurs to the economy. Of course they will not. Let us be honest about investment allowances and say they will pander to a particular part of the community which traditionally supports the conservative parties.

Mr Sodeman: Why did you not make this speech in 1974? It would have been more appropriate then.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is important also to understand that the Premier's postulations about interest rates are not necessarily correct. The Opposition applauds the level of investment in the latest Government loan but it does not make the illogical jump which the Premier seems to make with no difficulty at all by translating that investment level into a gross increase in business confidence. That is not true.

Mr Clarko: Would you like to suggest what will happen to interest rates in the next six to 12 months, in your opinion?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I would not be at all surprised to see interest rates fall, but I am not saying the fall in interest rates caused by investment in that Government loan necessarily signifies rising business confidence, which is what the Premier suggested. I would not be surprised to see interest rates fall, and I would not be surprised to see a recession of the dimensions of the depression we faced in the 1930s. Unless this Government attacks the problem with the same kind of precision as the Premier is calling for when talking about investment in national assets, it will be very easy to cross over that very thin line of proper economic management. The member for Karrinyup can talk about lower interest rates, but during depressions and severe recessions low interest rates mean nothing.

Mr Clarko: Are you suggesting we are in a depression?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will repeat what I just said, for the honourable member's benefit. Unless there is a very precise economic hand on the tiller of this economy, we could very easily experience restrictive policies of a kind which will leave no alternative but a recession of the depths and type we experienced during the 1930s. There are already 400 000 people out of work. Australia, among all the OECD countries, is taking longer to recover from the economic recession all have suffered, and at the same time we have yet to see the effects of America's attempts to deflate its own inflationary trends. If the honourable member is putting forward the proposition that America's attempts will not affect the Australian economy, it is quite silly. Once those policies are implemented by America they will compound the restrictive policies undertaken by the Fraser Government. That is why the Premier is saying it is time for selective increases in Government expenditure.

It is also very important, when implementing any kind of economic policy, to try to ensure that

as far as possible the effects of that policy fall equitably on the community. That is something this Government has failed to do. Quite clearly, certain sections of the economy are being asked to make a greater effort than are other sections.

How can the Premier stand in his place and say so blithely that tax surcharges become essential at different times, when just a month or six weeks ago the Liberal Party was talking about the need to restore incentive by lowering taxes? The Premier said the Fraser Government had instituted lower taxation. Following the institution of that lower taxation the Liberal Party was still talking about lack of incentive and the dampening down of incentive caused by high tax rates. How members opposite can now sit in their places and blithely accept a tax surcharge of this kind is beyond me.

Mr Clarko: Because with indexation it is still lower than the charges under the last Hayden Budget.

Mr B. T. BURKE: How these people can then say a tax surcharge is inevitable is beyond me. At the same time it is also important to note that certain areas of the economy are much more volatile and easily affected by Government activity than others are.

When we talk about the management of the economy, it is very easy to ignore the real hardship and heartbreak that can be wrought by Government action upon particular families and upon particular occupational groups.

What the Opposition has tried to do in its motion is to tell the House, to emphasise to the public, that the building sector of the economy is a particularly volatile sector, a sector particularly prone to the influences in quick succession of different Government moves. It is essential for any Government that pretends to be a responsible Government to ensure that the harshness of Government policies is not felt too visibly by one particular sector of the economy.

Our motion attempts to say to the Government that in the particular sector of the economy in which housing and construction are carried on, there is great anguish, there is very great misery and hardship being wrought by the policies of the Fraser Government. We are saying that there needs to be some particular action in that area.

Whether the Premier wants to move amendments that he says will avoid some technical aspects of the motion of the Opposition, he cannot camouflage the truth; that is, that he is

accepting in principle the Opposition's chiding of the Fraser Government, and he is endorsing in principle the warning the Opposition is sounding in regard to the economic management, and he is agreeing with the Opposition about the effect in particular areas of the economy of the policies of the Federal Government.

Mr Sodeman: You are one year behind the Premier.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If the things I am saying are the things that the member for Pilbara understood the Premier to say, then I am perfectly happy to be a year behind him or two years behind him. I only want to see happen those things that I think are the right things. Provided they are happening, if that is what the Premier is saying, most certainly I will agree with him and I will vote for the amendment. If he cares to put up amendments of this sort every day, I will support them, and I hope the honourable member will too.

Sir Charles Court: Don't get too carried away and agree to join the Liberal Party.

Mr Davies: We would not let him go.

Sir Charles Court: I would have to think about it.

Mr Grill: Your star is falling, and we all know it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: When considering control of fiscal policy, it is important not to be misled by the Premier's talk of the printing of money, the money supply, and the need to restrict our thoughts to areas directly under the control of the Government. The Premier talks continually about the dangers of increasing the money supply, but I have never heard him refer in this place to the expansion of private credit facilities that is carried out in an unbridled fashion, subject not one whit to Government policies. We all know of the operation of credit facilities by the different department stores, by the finance institutions, and by the banks themselves, through facilities such as Bankcard; and yet, to listen to the Premier, we have only one source of credit in this land and that is the Commonwealth Government with its hand on the printing machine. That is not true, and we know it is not true.

One of the reasons this Government is experiencing such major problems at the present time is that it has failed to face up to the power its cronies have in respect of the expansion of private credit facilities. Those credit facilities

have as marked an effect on the Australian economy as does the Australian Government's printing of money, and there is no doubt about that. There is no doubt that the Australian Government should have control over the operations of the finance companies which are owned largely by banks, and are really established by banks to avoid the financial restrictions placed on them as a result of the Chifley legislation of 1946.

It is passing strange that the Premier remains silent. Does he not agree with the Opposition about the need for some sort of control over private credit facilities?

Sir Charles Court: Not the sort of control that you want by any means.

Mr Davies: What kind does he want?

Sir Charles Court: He wants a tight control which would virtually dry these things up. He defeats his own argument.

Mr Davies: He has not outlined it.

Sir Charles Court: It would immediately reduce consumer demand.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Even if the Premier wants to take me to task about restrictions I have not even outlined, and to say the ones that I have not outlined are unacceptable to him, the House can judge for itself the omission from the Premier's speech of any reference to private credit facilities. Only when the Opposition raised the matter did the Premier indicate or imply there was some need for restriction, although the need for restriction was not restriction of the type I left unstated. The House is entitled to ask: What sort of restriction does the Premier think appropriate?

Sir Charles Court: Are you advocating the restriction of credit facilities? If so, you defeat your own argument, because credit is directed at the consumer market.

Mr B. T. BURKE: What sort of credit does the Premier think is appropriate with respect to private credit facilities?

Sir Charles Court: I am just saying that if you are advocating a restriction—

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier refuses consistently to answer the question. I am not advocating a restriction of that credit; let us get that clear. I am saying that any economic manager, in the context of the Australian Government seeking to implement fiscal policies and seeking to control the money supply, must have some sort of supervision over the expansion of private credit facilities.

Sir Charles Court: You are advocating a restriction of those credit facilities that exist today.

Mr B. T. BURKE: No, I am not advocating any restrictions of that facility—

Sir Charles Court: You could have fooled us.

Mr B. T. BURKE: —but what I am advocating is that the Federal Government should have the power to influence that credit expansion. I am not saying it is a power that should be exercised now, but I am saying that if it is a power the Federal Government does not have, then it cannot manage the economy as a whole.

Sir Charles Court: It is purely rhetorical, purely academic.

Mr Clarko: What did the Whitlam Government do about it?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Whitlam Government sought restrictions of this kind.

Mr Clarko: When?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will tell the member precisely how the Whitlam Government sought to do it. It introduced the Finance Corporation Bill which the member's Government has refused to proclaim.

Mr Clarko: Give us the details of it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have one minute left, and I will simply say this: The Opposition is flattered by the Government's promotion of a further amendment which adds weight to the Opposition's position. The Opposition is not persuaded by the Premier's technical argument, but it is happy to support his amendment.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [10.37 p.m.]: In his speech the Premier denigrated the Hayden alternative Budget, and he made great play about it. He tried to draw us away from the subject of the motion with a series of red herrings, but he was careful not to analyse in any depth the alternative propositions put forward by Mr Hayden.

The overall suggestion in the Hayden Budget was an increase in the deficit from \$2.8 billion to

\$3.6 billion—a matter of \$837 million or \$50 million more than last year. This is the extent of the deficit referred to in the alternative Budget.

The theme taken by the Premier was that inflation must come down and interest rates a well. We indicated previously that we agree with him, but the cost of reducing inflation and interest rates can be far in excess of what it could be. This is the situation we are facing at the moment.

In his amendment the Premier referred to the two areas that must be blended together. We need a very delicate and intricate harmony to have a national Budget that reduces inflation and yet avoids the recession we are obviously facing. As the Premier says, without relaxing its attack on inflation, a policy is called for to get interest rates down immediately and to institute a programme whereby more funds can be made available for capital works. This is the whole basis of the problem; we must have a delicate balance to ensure that the economy is maintained at an equilibrium that will enable inflation to come down and yet ensure that these other horrors do not ensue.

The obvious method that has been suggested—and it is the most certain indicator of all—is the building industry. However, it does not mean only those people involved in the physical building activities. It goes far beyond that, and it does not require much imagination on the part of members to realise the full ramifications of the materials and other flow-ons that are involved when we talk of the building industry. Small engineering firms are involved in providing services throughout every town in Western Australia, especially in respect of building. Then there are the brickworks; it would be interesting to know how they are faring at the moment and just how the jobs of their employees are in the balance. The timber industry is experiencing probably the greatest slump for many years. Every mill is short of orders and is cutting for stock. Stockpiling is of very real concern at the moment, and some mills have doubled their normal stockpiles. Were it not for selective cutting for overseas, the trade of most mills would be at an all time low.

We must have an improvement in the building industry to obviate what could be still greater unemployment in country areas. Unemployment has reached record levels, the highest since the great depression. Less conservative authorities are now indicating that we are looking at 500 000

unemployed in the new year. This indicates just how inappropriate the Fraser Budget is at the moment. With record unemployment, purchasing power will be reduced considerably.

This nonsense of an investment-led recovery can be described only in that manner. If there is a decrease in the real wages earned by the people of the country, they cannot spend money. The recent increases in taxation amount to \$8 per week on the average wage, and that is just for starters. We can add to that an additional amount of \$2 for running the family car, and then we have a \$10 deduction from the average wage.

The deduction will be greater, of course, as we go into higher earnings. In addition to that we will have 500 000 or so people who will not have any wage at all other than unemployment benefits. How can they meet the purchase of the commodities that are being produced now?

As we heard from the last speaker, there is a gross over-capacity for production right throughout Australia in all industries at this time, and this comes back to previous policies of the coalition Government. I suppose the slump in the building industry goes back to the grey money which previous Canberra coalition Governments allowed to be invested in Australia, amounting to thousands of millions of dollars. This brought with it a sudden upsurge in building in every capital in Australia, so much so that now excess office space can be found in every capital city in the nation.

This, of course, is catching up with us at the moment. That boom and that heyday are now extracting their payment.

Getting back to our over-capacity for production and what it means, the very fact that there is no purchasing power in the community which is necessary to get the nation out of its difficulties has already taken us from a recession to a depression. It is now simply a question of what degree the depression will reach.

The move which has been implemented and the fiscal management of the Fraser Government leave very much to be desired. Rather than denigrate the Hayden alternative budget the Premier should have acknowledged the fact that there has to be some gentle prodding of the economy, some stimulation somewhere; otherwise the situation will deteriorate further. The only way this can be done is by stimulating the building industry, and it is in this respect that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition strikes right at the heart, the nub, of the problem.

That is how we will lift the economy from its present trough—a trough of which it has not yet plumbed the depths.

It is rather strange to the Opposition that the Premier has moved an amendment that we will accept. It is not a panacea to the problems as we see them, but it is acceptable. But why should it take a motion moved by the Opposition to stimulate the Premier to take some action, and why has no other action been taken? The Premier brays occasionally about what is done in Canberra, but let it not be forgotten that he espoused the concept of the new federalism very strongly at the time it was proposed—he above all other Premiers.

Therefore, the Leader of the Opposition is perfectly right in his approach and in his fiscal philosophy in respect of the building industry. Mark you, Sir, when we refer to the building industry we also refer to everything that appends to it: the timber industry and those who work in it, the brickworks, the small engineering works, and the other peripheral industries which are dependent to a large degree on the building industry.

If the Federal Government does not listen to its political colleagues in this State, then the recession of which we have spoken will become a depression of the magnitude of the depression of the 1930s. I accept the amendment, but I support strongly the motion as moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR DAVIES** (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [10.47 p.m.]: I am flattered indeed that for two weeks running motions moved by the Opposition have been accepted by the Government, with only different words being used. Last week we were critical of the Government because it was rather verbose in the manner in which it rephrased something we set out fairly simply. This week I could be critical of the Government for stating very simply what we have set out in some detail, drawing particular attention to the needs of and the unemployment in the housing and construction industries, the long delays and financial hardships facing home buyers, and the failure of businesses associated with the building and construction industries. Those are the areas with which we are particularly concerned, because it has been said many times that if the building industry is at a low ebb then the whole of the community and the economy is at a low ebb.

I do not say that applies only to the building industry; it applies also to the farming sector of our economy. Of course, both of these sectors have been at a somewhat low ebb for some considerable time.

**Mr H. D. Evans:** This Budget is just about the last straw.

**Mr DAVIES:** Whilst there was some hope in respect of farmers, I believe the Budget brought down last Tuesday night, which is criticised by the Leader of the National Country Party in tomorrow morning's newspaper, does not give us the hope we expected for farmers in the future; and there is no hope for the building industry at the moment.

What I must admire about the Premier is his support for the unsupportable. Although he can speak with many tongues, tonight he chose to say that he supports what the Fraser Government is doing. Of course, we know that is not always so, but it fits the bill fairly comfortably tonight as far as he is concerned. He gave us the same old tune, the same old expressions of surprise, and showed the same lack of ability to get to the nub of the debate.

The Premier skimmed over the matter fairly quickly and did not show much regard for the unemployed and the people who will be adversely affected by the continuing decline of the construction and building industries. He was critical of the fact that we should even ask for more money. However, in the motion as he amended it last week, he was asking for the same thing. He wanted an infusion of capital into the works programmes of the respective States. He said he believed the economic activity generated by the infusion of a realistic sum would not be inflationary, or words to that effect and, in the main, we agree. Once again, as we were able to agree last week, we are able to agree tonight with what the Premier said here.

The Premier also ranged fairly widely in his interpretation of what we are supposed to stand for. But, of course, it suited his purpose to do so. He would hate to acknowledge that there is a genuine concern on the part of the members on this side of the House for the failing sections of our community.

The Premier used terms like, "Hayden was hitting out wherever he saw success." Hayden was supposed to want to destroy anyone who showed any initiative. Of course that is pure humbug. Are the 40-odd bankruptcies in the building industry to which I referred earlier a

result of what Hayden did, of his hitting out to destroy everybody? It is complete nonsense to make such a claim. Again, the Premier's words suited his purpose in the debate.

However, it has never been suggested—no person in all honesty could point to any such statement—that this was Mr Hayden's ultimate objective. We realise as much as anyone that there must be a private and a Government section of the economy, yet here is the Premier claiming we say, "Hit out and get rid of it."

However, the greatest horse laugh of all was the Premier's reference to the massive reductions in taxation which have been instituted by the Fraser Government—"The unheard of reductions", he said. But what did we get? From the 1st February last year, there was a 1 per cent reduction in income tax which was estimated to cost the Government something like \$1 000 million. What did we get out of the last Budget? The Federal Government imposed an increase in income tax rates—not amounts—of 1.5 per cent which is estimated to bring the Government about \$1 532 million. So, what we have been given over the last five months has now been taken from us and increased by at least 50 per cent.

Mr Clarko: The taxation is still lower than it was under the Hayden Budget.

Mr DAVIES: It does not matter, because the Premier said the Prime Minister had reduced taxation and had done a wonderful thing.

Mr Clarko: He has.

Mr DAVIES: I am just telling the honourable member that he reduced taxation five months ago and increased it again in the last Budget. A man without dependants on a salary of \$11 700 a year will pay an additional 10.5 per cent in weekly tax, while a married man on the same income will pay an extra 8 per cent each week. I point out that these figures may be subject to very slight correction.

Mr Clarko: It still is less than under the Hayden Budget.

Mr DAVIES: That does not mean a thing. If we cannot be better than other countries, what is the use of our being here at all? If the member for Karrinyup thinks things are so good in other countries why does he not go there to live?

Mr Clarko: The taxation is still less.

Mr DAVIES: It is not less.

Mr Clarko: It is because of indexation.

Mr DAVIES: The Premier pointed with some pride to the taxation reductions; I have already proved his statement to be completely fallacious. I would like to recite the increases which have been imposed in the Budget, apart from the increase in income tax. The price of beer has increased by 3.5c a glass which works out over the counter at 6c a middy; spirits are up by 10c a nip, which over the counter means an additional 12c a nip; cigarettes are up 10c a packet which, over the counter, will mean an additional 12c a packet; petrol is up 16c a gallon, which works out from the pump at an increase of 21c a gallon, and takes the price of petrol to \$1.17 a gallon. Certain tariff quotas now are going to be subject to a 12.5 per cent cut and there is to be a \$10 tax on people leaving Australia. That should make the Prime Minister a whole lot of money, because I am sure there will be a general exodus from the country once the full realisation of the Budget hits the people.

Air navigation charges, which reflect on every person travelling by air, have been increased by 15 per cent and the home loan interest deductibility scheme, estimated to save the average wage earner about \$6 a week, has been abolished. An increased range of welfare payments are to be taxed. I was pleased to see that the Government does not propose to proceed with its shameful means testing of the pocket money children earn on newspaper rounds or errands. I think it is bad enough that the Government will need an army of people to means test the income received by children by way of family trusts.

Mr Wilson: That is a mean test.

Mr DAVIES: It is going to cost the Government more to police that provision than the benefit the means test will bring.

Mr Clarko: I thought the Labor Party believed in means tests.

Mr DAVIES: Let us look at the Budget proposals in relation to accrued annual and long service leave. Unused annual leave is to be taxed at the normal rate instead of on 5 per cent. I was talking to a senior officer of the Police Force last week who informed me that this provision will cost him something like \$7 000. Members can imagine how pleased he is and how glad he is that he voted Liberal at the last election! Similarly, accrued long service leave will be taxed at normal rates from now on.

In addition, the Government has foreshadowed that it intends to go before the Arbitration Court

and oppose wage increases along the lines of the CPI. The Government also plans to abolish the maternity allowance. So, for the Premier to suggest that the Fraser-Howard Budget has reduced taxation is the greatest laugh of the year. The statement is completely fallacious; indeed, it is a very careless handling of the truth and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to put the record straight in some small way.

But that is not all; I have not read out the complete list. On our estimates yesterday, we reckoned it will cost the average man an extra \$13 a week in additional charges and taxes as a result of this Budget. When one takes into account the fact that since the Fraser Government has been in power real wages have fallen something like \$12 a week, it means that the average working man is \$25 a week worse off since the Fraser Government took over. This is something for which we are supposed to be extremely grateful. What do we have to be grateful for? Nothing! So, the mere problem of how we get this money is not important; it is how we use it to put more life back into the building industry that is important.

According to the latest figures, for every job which is available within the building industry there are 58 men available to fill that vacancy. That is a disgusting rate of employment. It compares with the overall average of one vacancy for every 27 unemployed, which indicates that the building industry is bearing an unfair proportion of the national unemployment situation. It is completely unacceptable to the Opposition.

It is all very well to say that inflation and interest rates are the things we must attack. We cannot completely blind ourselves to all the other situations which are developing in the community because of inflation and because of interest rates. I think the Premier has tried to convince us that as long as we attack those two things, everything will be okay.

I have tried to point out tonight that unless we get the building industry back on its feet, when and if an economic recovery or upturn descends upon us, we will not have the people to do the job which will have to be done and we will be faced with a highly inflationary situation. So there is no balance to what is being done and there is no overall objective.

I am flattered and delighted to think that for the last two weeks the Government has accepted the Opposition's motions after rewording them to suit its purposes.

Sir Charles Court: And make them responsible.

Mr DAVIES: If the Premier says they are more suitable to him it is just a matter of a different view being taken.

Sir Charles Court: I said "make them responsible".

Mr DAVIES: If there were an opportunity to apply for grants it would not be the first time we applied for a particular reason, going back as far as the days of the Menzies Government. We are happy to have the Government amend the motion as long as the Parliament carries it. The Opposition will be happy as will those building workers who have been earnestly looking for a job for far too long.

Amendment put and passed.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [11.02 p.m.]: I move an amendment—

Substitute the following for the words deleted—

— without relaxing its attack on inflation and the policy to get interest rates down— immediately confer with the State Governments to determine a programme whereby more funds can be made available for capital works, including housing, in accordance with the final form of the motion passed by this House on 16th August, 1978.

Mr OLD: I second the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

*Debate (on motion as amended) Resumed*

Question put and passed.

### BILLS (5): RETURNED

1. Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
2. Wheat Marketing Act Amendment and Continuance Bill.
3. Firearms Act Amendment Bill.
4. Land Valuers Licensing Bill.
5. Acts Amendment (Land Valuers) Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

### SECURITIES INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

#### *Receipt and First Reading*

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier), read a first time.

*House adjourned at 11.04 p.m.*

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### MINING: BAUXITE

#### *Alcoa's ERMP: EPA Report*

1273. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Premier:

Will the Minister have the Environmental Protection Authority issue a public report on Alcoa's Environmental Review and Management Programme?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

This will be a matter for decision after the Government has received the Environmental Protection Authority's report and recommendations.

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Calista Primary School, Collie Senior High School, Mt. Lawley Technical College—staff room; Leederville Technical College—joiners' shop.

Tenders have already been called for the removal of asbestos ceilings at Calista Primary School and at Collie Senior High School; estimates of costs are being obtained for this work at three other schools.

## HOSPITALS

### *Beds: Number*

1302. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is the total number of "A"-class hospital beds under construction for—
  - (a) the State Government; and
  - (b) private sector?
- (2) What is the total number of "A"-class hospital beds that have been approved to be built but construction has not begun as yet?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) "A"-class beds (including 88 neo-natal cots) under construction—
  - (a) public, 859;
  - (b) private, 30.
- (2) "A"-class beds approved but not under construction—
  - (a) public, nil;
  - (b) private, 33.

## EDUCATION

### *Schools and High Schools: Asbestos Ceilings*

1303. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware of any schools which may have an asbestos compound lining on their ceilings?
- (2) If "Yes" will he advise the names of those schools and whether it is intended to remove the lining?

## HOUSING

### *Rental Accommodation: Eviction of Family*

1304. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it a fact that the State Housing Commission is in the process of evicting a family whose breadwinner is presently unemployed?
- (2) If "Yes" is this case one in which the tenant is held liable for arrears incurred in respect of a previous tenancy?
- (3) If arrears on the present tenancy are also a basis for eviction, is it a fact that an offer to pay any arrears owing on the present tenancy has been rejected by the commission?
- (4) Who does he believe will house families such as this if they are evicted by the State Housing Commission?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (4) As at the present date, the current account is reduced to arrears of ninety cents, the eviction action will not be proceeded with.

However, the commission holds the tenant liable for an amount of \$543.51 for arrears incurred in respect of a previous tenancy and will be seeking to make mutually satisfactory arrangements with the tenant to clear this account.

**LAND: CAPE NATURALISTE**

*Director of Department of Tourism:  
Support for Proposition*

1305. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Referring to my question 1203 of 1978 is it a fact that prior to the Director of the Department of Tourism expressing strong support for a proposition to develop property at Cape Naturaliste the owners of the property had been informed that it was to be compulsorily acquired?
- (2) If "Yes" how had they been informed and on what date?
- (3) On what date did the Director of the Department of Tourism state his support?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Not to my knowledge.
- (3) The member is referred to the answer to question 1203 of 1978.

**LAND: CAPE NATURALISTE**

*Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning: Representation*

1306. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Did he receive written representations from or on behalf of the English-Wake partnership, which was seeking to develop property at Cape Naturaliste, dated 26th February and 6th April, 1976?
- (2) If "Yes" from whom did the representations come and what was their nature?
- (3) Did he subsequently attend a meeting on 23rd June, 1976 to discuss the proposed development?
- (4) If "Yes" who convened this meeting?
- (5) Who attended the meeting?
- (6) What was discussed at the meeting?
- (7) Did the correspondence referred to in question (1) above remain unanswered at the time of this meeting?
- (8) If "Yes" was any explanation given for the correspondence remaining unanswered?

- (9) If "Yes" who provided the explanation and what was it?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (9) At present I have an appeal before me from the English-Wake partnership. I have recently been informed by Mr R. L. English that the partnership has ceased its business activities. I am not prepared to answer further detailed questions on a matter which is currently before me on appeal.

**LAND: CAPE NATURALISTE**

*Minister for Works: Writ*

1307. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Was a writ issued against the Minister for Works during the middle part of 1976 relating to a proposal to develop a landholding at Cape Naturaliste?
- (2) If "Yes" who issued the writ and what was the result?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Not to my knowledge.

**LAND: CAPE NATURALISTE**

*Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning: Meeting*

1308. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Did he receive a letter from the English-Wake syndicate dated 5th July, 1976 indicating that a meeting had been held at which the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning was in attendance and which discussed a proposal to develop a landholding at Cape Naturaliste?
- (2) If "Yes" in what terms did the syndicate describe the outcome of the meeting?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) I gather from the number and nature of questions on the subject of the English Wake partnership that the member has had on the notice paper that he is engaging in something of a "witch-hunt" or a "fishing expedition".

This is not, in my understanding, the purpose of questions, and I respectfully suggest the member go back to the source of his questions and seek verification of the information on which he bases this question and question 1310 of 1978.

#### LAND: CAPE NATURALISTE

##### *Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning: Proposal*

1309. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) As a result of a meeting he attended on 23rd June, 1976, did he receive a proposal for the development of a landholding at Cape Naturaliste?
- (2) If "Yes" when did he receive it?
- (3) On how many subsequent occasions was he requested or urged to provide an answer to the proposal?
- (4) When was each request made, and by whom was it made?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (4) See answer to question 1306 of 1978.

#### LAND: CAPE NATURALISTE

##### *Misrepresentation by Syndicate*

1310. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Did he, under date 15th November, 1976, or at any other time in 1976, say or imply to the English-Wake syndicate that they had misrepresented the Government's position and had embarrassed the Government?
- (2) If "Yes" will he please table the relevant correspondence?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

See answer to question 1308 of 1978.

#### HEALTH

##### *Dioxin*

1311. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is Dioxin?
- (2) In what circumstances is Dioxin produced?

- (3) What effect does Dioxin have on—
  - (a) people;
  - (b) plants;
  - (c) animals and birds;
  - (d) insects; and
  - (e) on any total environment into which it is introduced?
- (4) What information is available from other countries about experiences with Dioxin, e.g., Italy, Holland, England?
- (5) What contingency plans exist against the release of Dioxin either in the atmosphere or within a building in the metropolitan area?
- (6) Can Dioxin be controlled at all if it is released in the atmosphere?
- (7) How is Dioxin destroyed?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) 2, 3, 7, 8—tetrachlorobenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD).
- (2) Dioxin may be formed in minute amounts during the manufacture of 2, 4, 5-T.
- (3) (a) Dioxin has caused chloracne in people who have been accidentally exposed to it. Other illnesses have also been reported such as liver disease, toxic nephritis, tracheobronchitis, polyneuritis and uroporphyrinuria.
- (b) Oats and soybean are known to accumulate small quantities of Dioxin following exposure, and subsequently gradual losses can occur. Dioxin has not been detected at harvest in the grains or beans of affected plants.
- (c) Dioxin has been shown to be toxic to animals and can cause death, fatal losses and birth defects.
- (d) Dioxin can cause deaths among insects.
- (e) Dioxin is persistent in environments into which it is introduced, being only slowly degraded or leached away.
- (4) Information is available from the United States, Germany and Italy on incidents involving occupational exposure, soil contamination and accidental release into the atmosphere.

- (5) No Dioxin is imported or used commercially in Western Australia and its only occurrence in this State would be as a contaminant in minute amounts.
- (6) No.
- (7) Dioxin may be destroyed by incineration or by UV light.

## TRAFFIC

### *"No Parking" Sign and Crosswalk Attendant: Woodlupine School*

1312. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In view of the confusion experienced by parents of children attending the Woodlupine primary school with the Road Traffic Authority over the "No Parking" sign outside the school when they arrive to deposit or collect their children:

- (1) Will he have the "No Parking" sign removed immediately, as it causes a bottleneck in the traffic on the corner of Solandra Way?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) Will he further investigate the need for the appointment of a crosswalk attendant at this particular school in Solandra Way?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) The control of parking in this area is the responsibility of the Kalamunda Shire Council and therefore any request for an alteration should be addressed to that council.
- (3) and (4) Yes. A further meeting of the schools crossing committee has been arranged.

## HOUSING

### *Forrestfield Development*

1313. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What stage has the building construction reached at the proposed State Housing Commission development in Forrestfield?

- (2) Are funds still available for this development to proceed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Construction of buildings has not commenced.
- (2) The development of fully serviced home sites will be finalised in this financial year, and although the commission has no building programme planned in this period, it proposes to offer some of the lots for private sale.

## HOUSING

### *Forrestfield Development*

1314. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that the residents affected by the dust problem last Christmas, which extensively damaged their homes, are far from satisfied with the compensation offered to them by the Shire of Kalamunda?
- (2) Is he further aware that Mr K. R. Stacey of K. R. Stacey and Associates, who has purported to have inspected and assessed the claims for damage, did not in fact enter some of the homes?
- (3) If "Yes" will he arrange for Mr K. R. Stacey to inspect those homes which were not open on his inspection, with a view to re-assessing the damages?
- (4) If not, why not?
- (5) If "Yes" to (3), when will such inspection take place?
- (6) In view of the personal hardship suffered by many of the people with the dust problem, can he explain whether K. R. Stacey and Associates took this fact into consideration when compensation was being assessed?
- (7) Is he also aware that Mr K. R. Stacey admitted to one of the householders affected that he had no idea on how to assess the damage to their properties?
- (8) If he is aware of the preceding questions, will he arrange for a re-assessment by another competent firm of valuers?
- (9) If not, why not?

- (10) Will he advise if the residents who sign the discharge agreement forwarded to them from the Kalamunda Shire Council, will be eligible to claim for liability for damage done to their homes caused by further dust nuisance during the forthcoming summer months?
- (11) If not, why not?
- Mr O'CONNOR replied:
- (1) No. No such advice has been received by the commission.
  - (2) Only one case where there was no one in authority at home.
  - (3) and (4) Yes, if the householder contacts the Shire of Kalamunda and makes a firm time he or she will be at home.
  - (5) At a time mutually agreeable to the householder and assessor.
  - (6) Ex-gratia payments have been assessed to reflect the cost of cleaning and repairs determined as being due to the dust nuisance.
  - (7) No.
  - (8) and (9) Not applicable.
  - (10) As a result of extensive land rehabilitation works, it is not expected that the problem will re-occur. Any claims would be treated in the light of the conditions applying at that time.
  - (11) Not applicable.

## EDUCATION

### *Teacher: Abrolhos Islands*

1315. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many times during the 1978 Abrolhos Islands fishing season did the department's advisory teacher visit—
  - (a) each island school;
  - (b) each island with correspondence students?
- (2) How did he travel to and between the islands?
- (3) What was the cost to the department of this travel?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Twice. (One other trip made as part of a filming team).
- (2) Boat.
- (3) Nine days' charter at \$70 per day equals a total cost of approximately \$630.

## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

### *Geraldton*

1316. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Works:

With reference to a rumour circulating Public Works Department workforce in the town—

- (1) Are any cutbacks proposed?
- (2) If cutbacks are proposed:
  - (a) how many jobs are involved; and
  - (b) what is the justification for the cutbacks?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Decisions on employment depend on fund allocations provided in the forthcoming budget.

## ROAD

### *Kalamunda Road*

1317. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that a dangerous situation exists on the unrepaired section of Kalamunda Road between Hawtin Road and the crown of the hill?
- (2) If "Yes" will the Minister advise when it is intended that this section of the road will be repaired?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) The section of the road referred to is the responsibility of the Kalamunda Shire Council. I am not aware that a dangerous situation exists. If the member is referring to the construction of a climbing lane I can advise that the council is planning an extension during 1978-79 of work on the climbing lane commenced last year.

## PUBLIC SERVICE

### *Unfilled Vacancies*

1318. Mr BATEMAN, to the Premier:

In view of the continued increase of unemployment and the fact that there are a great number of vacant situations

in the State public service and that there are many unemployed qualified people to fill these vacancies, when is the current ban, which has been placed on the filling of vacant situations in the public service, to be lifted?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Restrictions on filling vacant positions within the authorised establishment of Public Service departments were put into effect for a period of about two weeks in order to allow permanent heads to review the staff situation in their respective departments.

Since 4th August, 1978, many vacant establishment positions have been advertised and are in the process of being filled within the permitted limits.

This practice will be continued.

## HOUSING

### *Redcliffe-Belmont Estate*

1319. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission intend to proceed with plans to redevelop its Redcliffe-Belmont estate?
- (2) If not, will he explain the reason for the decision?
- (3) If the State Housing Commission intends to proceed:
  - (a) what stage has the planning reached;
  - (b) when has it indicated work will commence;
  - (c) what is the estimated cost of each stage of the project; and
  - (d) what are the boundaries of the first stage?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) The redevelopment of this area as originally proposed has been deferred for an indefinite period due to planning problems of a major nature, and which are outside the responsibility of the State Housing Commission.

In the meantime, the commission is proceeding with a programme of general upgrading and maintenance of the houses.

## EDUCATION

### *Belmont High School*

1320. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

Further to my question 910 of 1978 in connection with the Belmont High School, will he indicate when the information promised will be available?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The search to establish all details is being undertaken by the Public Works Department. Such a task involves considerable research and resolution of differing conditions such as the size of projects, cost values at different periods and methods of construction to provide comparability between the two schools.

I expect to be able to write to the member giving the information requested by the end of August.

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

### *Industrial Lands Development Authority: Expenditure*

1321. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

How much has been spent by the Industrial Lands Development Authority during each of the last five financial years?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

	\$
1973-74	— 2 466 561
1974-75	— 2 607 967
1975-76	— 1 921 539
1976-77	— 3 844 577
1977-78	— 5 167 527

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

### *Industrial Lands Development Authority: Fund*

1322. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

What is the current balance in the Industrial Lands Development Fund?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

\$2 076 079.04 at 22nd August, 1978.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### *Industrial Lands Development Authority:*

##### *Location of Land Acquired*

1323. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What are the names of the different towns, regional centres and suburbs, etc., where the Industrial Lands Development authority has acquired land?
- (2) How much land is currently held in each case?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The authority currently holds land in the following metropolitan locations—

Armadale  
Baldivis  
Bayswater  
Canning Vale  
Henderson  
Jandakot  
Kewdale  
Kwinana  
Mandogalup  
Munster  
Osborne Park  
Rockingham  
Spearwood

It also has holdings in the following country centres—

Bunbury  
Geraldton  
Katanning  
Merredin  
Narrogin  
Northam  
Pinjarra

- (2) The area of unsold land in each of the above locations is being calculated and I will make it available to the member in due course.

### INDUSTRIAL LANDS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ACT

#### *Amending Legislation*

1324. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

In respect of the amendment to the Industrial Lands Development Authority currently before the House, in which areas of the State does the Government propose to "... provide, construct, adapt, alter and maintain buildings or structures and works ancillary thereto, on land acquired by the Authority"?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

In any country or metropolitan location where—

- (a) there is benefit in encouraging either the establishment of a new "pioneer" industry or the expansion of an existing industry; or
- (b) there is a demand for rental factory space which is not being met by the private sector.

In each case the private sector will be given first opportunity to provide the accommodation.

This endeavour, of course, is subject to finance being available, the immediate prospect for which—under the well known present conditions—is not very rosy.

### LAND

#### *Right of Fee Simple*

1325. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) To what depth does right of fee simple extend in a normal residential title?
- (2) What other type of title exists that grants rights beyond this depth?
- (3) Beyond the depth of the title limit are all minerals, etc. considered to be the property of the Crown?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) Depth varies as to the date in which application for the land was made.

- (a) Prior to 1898 the depth of Crown Grants was unlimited.
  - (b) From 1898 depth limited to 12.19 metres (40 feet) within a proclaimed mineral area and 609.60 metres (2 000 feet) outside a mineral area.
  - (c) On 1st January, 1904, depth amended to 12.19 metres (40 feet) within a mineral field, to 60.96 metres (200 feet) outside the mineral field. Since this date mineral areas have been amended progressively and now all applications are approved to a limit of 12.19 metres (40 feet).
- (3) Whether within or beneath the depth limit, all minerals are the property of the Crown.

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act: Commissioners*

1326. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Do any persons at present exist as commissioners as set out in section 3 of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act?
- (2) If so, what are their names and designations within the Public Service?
- (3) If none, when were the last such commissioners in existence?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3)—

J. S. Abbott—Engineer for Programming and Special Projects, Public Works Department;

K. T. Cadec—Assistant Under Secretary, Public Works Department;

R. A. Gregory—Accountant, Public Works Department;

G. Spencer—Chief Resources Management Division, Department of Agriculture.

Commissioners not in the Public Service are—

J. Iseppi—Farmer, Waroona;

W. Barnes—Farmer, Harvey;

V. Bevan—Farmer, Burekup.

### ANIMALS

#### *Import Licences*

1327. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

With reference to regulations under the Wildlife Conservation Act, 1950-1977 gazetted on 21st July, 1978 and specifically the second schedule:

- (1) Would the Minister indicate whether a licence to import has to be sought for all animals, including domestic animals brought into this State from Australian states to the east of Western Australia?
- (2) Would a licence be needed and fees have to be paid for—
  - (a) animals entering the State with travelling circuses;
  - (b) dogs and cats for breeding purposes;
  - (c) dogs and horses for the racing industry;
  - (d) animals imported for breeding or other use in the rural industries?
- (3) If "No" to (2), under which regulation are these animals exempted?
- (4) If "Yes" to (2) would the Minister indicate the fees payable?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Sub-regulation (5) of Regulation 20 of the Wildlife Conservation Act Regulations provides that a license is not required to authorise the importation into the State of any species of domestic cats, dogs, farm animals or poultry which is already commonly held in domesticity in this State.

Any other animal or class of animal whose habits or nature might, in the opinion of the Minister, become or threaten to become injurious to fauna shall not be brought into the State unless by the authority of a license which is in operation. The Act further provides that no person is entitled to a license as of right.

- (2) An inter-departmental committee considers import applications and co-ordinates the procedures of licensing provisions set out in various pieces of legislation administered by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Protection Board. Broadly speaking, the answers to the parts of this question are—
  - (a) Yes;
  - (b) and (c) no;
  - (d) yes, if they are not exempt as in (1).
- (3) Answered by (1) and (2).
- (4) In each case where a license under the Wildlife Conservation Act is required the fees payable may be computed in accordance with subparagraphs (b), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (3) of the Second Schedule. They may be waived depending on the circumstances.

### HOSPITAL

#### Wooroloo District

1328. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many beds are there at the Wooroloo District Hospital?
- (2) What has been the average bed occupancy rate over the past two years?
- (3) Does the hospital accept geriatric patients for short stays of one or two weeks to provide a break for those normally entrusted with the patients' care in the home?
- (4) If not, why?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Eight beds.
- (2) Average bed occupancy 1976-77—3.9.

Average bed occupancy 1977-78—3.0.

- (3) and (4) All admissions are controlled by general practitioners. If hospitalisation is considered necessary, the patient would be admitted.

### ANIMALS AND WHITE SWAN

#### *Declaration as Fauna*

1329. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) What is the significance and meaning of declaring a species of animal "fauna" for the purposes of the Fisheries and Wildlife Act 1950-1977?
- (2) Why was it necessary to declare the white swan (*cygnis oloc*) to be "fauna" under the Act?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Exotic species declared as fauna are afforded the same status and protection as the Wildlife Conservation Act automatically bestows on indigenous Australian birds and other animals.
- (2) To continue to protect the Avon River colony at Northam.

### INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS AND AWARDS

#### *Breaches*

1330. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

How many employers have been prosecuted by the Department of Labour for breaches of awards or industrial agreements since the Court Government came to office in 1974?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Seven, of which four were commenced but withdrawn when settled out of Court.

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT***Department of Industrial Development:  
Surveys*

1331. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has the Department of Industrial Development commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf during the past 12 months?
- (2) If "Yes" how many surveys were performed during the past 12 months?
- (3) What was the nature and purpose of each survey?
- (4) Who performed each survey?
- (5) How much did each survey cost?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Three.
- (3) (a) A supermarket study to assess the sales performance of products carrying the Local Products symbol.
- (b) A consumer attitude survey to the Local Products Campaign.
- (c) A survey of the metal trades industry in Western Australia to establish local capability to service requirements of the North West Shelf Project.
- (4) (a) Chadwick Martin Consultants Pty. Ltd.;
- (b) R. J. Donovan & Associates Pty Ltd.;
- (c) Department of Industria Development in conjunction with Woodside Petroleum.
- (5) (a) \$4 130;
- (b) \$5 412;
- (c) performed by the Department of Industrial Development; no costing for this survey is available.

All the above costs exclude printing costs.

**HEALTH***Public Health Department: Surveys*

1332. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Public Health Department commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf during the past 12 months?

(2) If "Yes" how many surveys were performed during the past 12 months?

(3) What was the nature and purpose of each survey?

(4) Who performed each survey?

(5) How much did each survey cost?

Mr RIDGE replied:

(1) to (5) No.

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND  
INDUSTRY***Surveys*

1333. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has the Department of Labour and Industry commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf during the past 12 months?
- (2) If "Yes" how many surveys were performed during the past 12 months?
- (3) What was the nature and purpose of each survey?
- (4) Who performed each survey?
- (5) How much did each survey cost?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (5) The Department of Labour and Industry has not engaged any outside organisations to conduct public surveys on its behalf during the past 12 months.

It should be noted however, that the various branches within the department, utilising their own resources, have conducted numerous major and minor surveys during the past 12 months in conjunction with their day to day operations. Such branches include the Division of Industrial Training, the Bureau of Consumer Affairs, the research section and the Factories and Shops Branch.

The costs of these surveys would be measured in terms of hours spent by departmental officers engaged in such activity, phone calls and postage. Precise records of expenditure in this regard are not kept separately.

## COMMUNITY WELFARE

### *Community Welfare Department: Surveys*

1334. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Has the Department for Community Welfare commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf during the past 12 months?
- (2) If "Yes" how many surveys were performed during the past 12 months?
- (3) What was the nature and purpose of each survey?
- (4) Who performed each survey?
- (5) How much did each survey cost?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (5) During the past 12 months the Department for Community Welfare has not commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf.

However, the department has funded projects which involve public surveys, for example—

- (a) Communicare, total \$2 703.

A survey of the need for Family Support Services in the Riverton and Langford areas, family support services being defined as after-school care, occasional day care and sick care facilities;

- (b) Homeless Youth Project, total \$4 900 (survey cost \$3 000).

The Homeless Youth Committee has been funded to describe and locate the homeless youth population of Perth and develop intervention techniques to combat youth homelessness and its associated problems. The project has involved surveying the establishments frequented by homeless youths and this has cost approximately \$3 000;

- (c) Mandurah Shire Council, total \$5 000 (survey cost \$2 430).

The shire council has been funded to develop a social planning model that will enable it to objectively plan, develop and operate social services in an effective manner. The project involves a survey of the perceived needs of the Mandurah community.

The department has conducted an "internal" survey for its own purposes, for example—

A survey of all children under the care of the department on 30th June, 1978, was conducted by the planning and research unit of the department. The aim of this survey was to obtain exact figures on the characteristics and dispersal of children for whom the department is responsible.

The department is the sponsor of several special projects funded by the Commonwealth. These projects have involved consumer surveys as part of their evaluation procedures—

- (a) The Parents Help Centre;
- (b) The Pilbara Isolated Communities project;
- (c) The Parent Education and Assistance project;
- (d) The Aboriginal Advisory Housing Service.

## RECREATION

### *Community Recreation Council: Surveys*

1335. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Recreation:

- (1) Has the Community Recreation Council commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf during the past 12 months?
- (2) If "Yes" how many surveys were performed during the past 12 months?
- (3) What was the nature and purpose of each survey?
- (4) Who performed each survey?
- (5) How much did each survey cost?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Two public surveys were conducted in the last 12 months, in October, 1977, and July, 1978.

- (3) The two surveys were related. A random sample of 1 200 metropolitan households was taken on each occasion, with an interview being administered to each member of the household over the age of 15 to determine the type, frequency and duration of involvement in recreation activities in the previous fortnight.
- (4) The surveys were conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics interviewers working for the Community Recreation Council. Assistance was given by the Bureau of Statistics in the drawing of the sample, in the training of the interviewers, as well as in the development of instruments to be used.
- (5) The surveying of the sample in October, 1977, cost \$7419.11, and the July, 1978, sample cost \$11 771.

The analysis of the data is being conducted by the Community Recreation Council staff.

Funds for the surveys came from the Commonwealth Government allocation to the "Life Be In It" campaign and from the Community Recreation Council budget.

1336. *This question was postponed.*

## EDUCATION

### *Education Department: Surveys*

1337. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Education Department commissioned any public surveys to be performed on its behalf during the past 12 months?
- (2) If "Yes" how many surveys were performed during the past 12 months?
- (3) What was the nature and purpose of each survey?
- (4) Who performed each survey?
- (5) How much did each survey cost?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (5) No.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *Contributions by Government Departments and Instrumentalities*

1338. Mr CARR, to the Treasurer:

With reference to contributions made to local authorities in lieu of rates, by Government departments and instrumentalities, semi-Government bodies and such organisations as Co-operative Bulk Handling, will he please provide me with a statement of how much was paid by each such department or instrumentality in each of the last three years?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Extraction of the information requested would involve a great deal of work by the departments and instrumentalities concerned. Unless there is a very good reason why the member requires such detailed information on this matter, I do not consider the time and cost involved warranted.

However, I would point out that there is an important principle to be recognised when considering the matter of payments in lieu of rates to local authorities; namely, that one level of Government should not be taxed by another.

In line with this principle, local authorities derive considerable benefit through being exempt from payments such as payroll tax, stamp duties, land tax, motor vehicle licences and third party surcharge.

Perhaps more important to consideration of payments in lieu of rates, is the fact that the Local Authorities Assistance Fund was established expressly with compensation of this type in mind. It was the announced intention of the Government that the establishment of the fund and the payment of formula grants were to be in lieu of payments of rates on land held by the Crown and requests of a similar nature advanced by local authorities.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*Water and Sewerage Rates*

1339. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

With reference to charges levied against local authorities for water and sewerage, in lieu of rates from which they are exempt, will he please provide me with a statement of how much was paid for—

- (a) water rates;
  - (b) sewerage rates,
- in each of the last three years?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The question involves detailed research by each of the 14 country branches of the Public Works Department. Furthermore, there are difficulties with telephone communication because of Telecom bans.

Therefore the information cannot be provided today. The member will be advised by letter immediately it is available.

## LUCERNE APHIS

*Outbreaks*

1340. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many outbreaks of spotted lucerne aphid have occurred in Western Australia in each of the past two years?
- (2) What eradication methods are being used to overcome this pest?
- (3) Are any trials of new aphid resistant varieties of lucerne being carried out, and if so—
  - (a) where are they being conducted;
  - (b) what varieties are involved;
  - (c) what conclusions have been derived from such tests?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The aphid was first detected in January 1978 at Upper Swan. Subsequently aphids were found on lucerne crops in the Swan Valley, Guilderton, Gingin, Wanneroo and Medina areas. Since then it has been found south of Lake Clifton, east to Wooroloo and north to Guilderton.

- (2) The spread of the aphid and its reproductive capacity is such as to rule out eradication.

Measures to suppress and control the infestations are:

insecticide sprays.

release of parasite of the aphids. A specialist Entomologist is involved in this programme.

development of aphid resistant lucerne plant varieties.

- (3) (a) Deniliquin, Tamworth, Benalla, Northfield and Toowoomba.
- (b) 15 varieties are involved. Because of quarantine restrictions on the importation of lucerne seed to Western Australia on account of bacterial wilt disease no resistant testing is being done here at present but two varieties, CUF 101 and Faulkner have been made available in small quantities.
- (c) It is concluded from reports in the Eastern States that some of the new varieties are productively as good as, if not better than, the susceptible Hunter River—but it is not known how suitable these will be under Western Australian conditions.

## HOUSING

*Donnelly River Mill*

1341. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many houses at Donnelly River Mill are owned by the State Housing Commission?
- (2) Is there any agreement between the State Housing Commission and Bunnings Ltd. regarding the tenancy of such houses?
- (3) In the event of houses at Donnelly River Mill becoming vacant now that the mill has ceased operation, with whom will ownership of these houses rest?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 28 houses.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) State Housing Commission.

## WATER SUPPLIES

*Dam: Harvey Area*

1342. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

Is it intended to construct a new dam in the Harvey area, and if so—

- (a) where will it be located;
- (b) what is the estimated cost;
- (c) when is it anticipated construction will commence?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The justification for a new dam in the Harvey area has not yet been established, thus there is no proposal for its construction.

- (a) Investigations for a new dam have been made and the chosen location is approximately ½ kilometre downstream from the Harvey Weir.
- (b) The estimated cost of a dam, as at January 1978, is \$14 million.
- (c) The time for construction will be decided after justification has been established.

## RAILWAYS

*Manjimup-Northcliffe*

1343. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Has any survey of the economics of operating the Manjimup-Northcliffe section of railway line been carried out, and if so—

- (a) when was such a survey conducted;
- (b) what were the findings of such a survey with regard to profit and losses of operating this section?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No such survey has been undertaken.

In the 1950's Westrail maintained a set of accounting figures on all sections of line, which was used as a guide to sections which were not performing well financially. The heavy cost involved necessitated its discontinuance.

## WHEAT

*Bulk Handling Charges*

1344. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the charge for bulk handling costs levied on wheat farmers in Western Australia at the present time?
- (2) What will be the expected bulk handling charge on Western Australian wheat growers if the proposed new system of grower payment, whereby growers will pay for costs incurred by their particular State handling authorities, is introduced?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The average bulk handling charge for Australia for the 1976-77 season was \$7.99 per tonne. The cost for the 1977-78 pool, which is on the "at cost" basis has not been finalised by the Australian Wheat Board.
- (2) Had State accounting operated in the drought season of 1976-77 the charge for WA would have been \$10.09 per tonne.

## LAND

*Salt-affected Agricultural Land*

1345. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What was the area of agricultural land affected by salt to the extent that it would not grow crop or pasture sufficient for sustained grazing in—

- (a) June, 1960;
- (b) June, 1970;
- (c) June, 1978?

- (2) What amount of finance has been spent on—

- (a) research;
- (b) reclamation,  
of salt-affected agricultural land in each of the past five years?

- (3) What is the estimated cost of reclaiming and restoring the agricultural land which is salt-affected in Western Australia?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Information is not available for the years 1960-1970 and 1978. However, salt land surveys were conducted in 1955, 1962 and 1974 and at those dates the area of salt-affected land previously used for crop or pasture was reported by farmers as:—

Percentage of Cleared land	
1955	73 505 ha 0.7
1962	123 591 ha 0.7
1974	167 294 ha 1.2.

A further survey is planned for 1979.

- (2) (a) Estimates of expenditure on salinity research by the Department of Agriculture (including funds from State Wheat Industry Research Fund and the Australian Extension Services Grant, but excluding all salaries) are as follows:—

1973-74	\$22 919
1974-75	\$22 825
1975-76	\$28 026
1976-77	\$20 493
1977-78	\$30 697

Total: \$105 860

Salaries derived from AESG over the last five years total \$43 432. Salaries derived salt-affected over the last five years are not readily obtainable but as an indication, the cost of salaries related to salinity research for 1977-78 are estimated at \$158 600.

- (b) Reclamation of salt-affected land is undertaken by individual landholders and consequently information on expenditure is not available.
- (3) Some cost estimates concerning salt land were provided for the Commonwealth-States collaborative soil conservation study 1975-77 but they do not relate to reclaiming or restoring the affected land to cereal cropping. The estimate for managing severely affected farm salt land was \$8 600 000 at mid 1975 contract cost levels. Approximately 50 per cent of this cost was for protective fencing. No cost estimate was made for managing mildly salt-affected land on which cropping can be continued with slightly modified standard management practices.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### Walpole

1346. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Have investigations regarding the upgrading of Walpole town water supply been completed?
- (2) If "Yes"—
- what is the precise location of any new dam for the Walpole town water supply;
  - when will work commence on upgrading the Walpole town water supply;
  - what will be the cost of upgrading?
- (3) If "No" to (1), when is finality of investigations expected?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) By the end of 1978.

## SHEEP AND SHEEP MEAT

### Iran: Withholding of Payment

1347. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Government of Iran is withholding payment to the trading concern, Austiran, for sheep meat and live sheep supplied in the 1977-78 years?
- (2) If "Yes"—
- what amount of finance is involved;
  - what quantity of meat and number of live sheep does this amount represent?
- (3) (a) What numbers of live sheep were supplied to Iran in 1977-78;
- what numbers of live sheep has Iran contracted to take from Western Australia in the 1978-79 year?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (3) Austiran exported 661 197 live sheep from Western Australia to Iran in 1977-78. I have no factual information on the other matters raised by the member.

**MEAT***Lamb: Export*

1348. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What quantity of lamb did the W.A. Lamb Marketing Board sell to—
  - (a) Iran;
  - (b) other Middle East countries in 1976-77 and 1977-78?
- (2) What quantity of lamb is it expected that the W.A. Lamb Marketing Board will dispose of in—
  - (a) Iran;
  - (b) other Middle East Countries, in the 1978-79 year?
- (3) Have W.A. Lamb Marketing Board contracts for 1978-79 with Iran for the sale of lamb/sheep meats been finalised, and if not, what is the cause of delay?

Mr OLD replied:

		1976-7	1977-8
(1)	(a) Iran.....	12 023 tonnes	5 704 tonnes
	(b) Other Middle East Countries...	2 925 tonnes	8 804 tonnes
(2)	(a) Iran.....		6 500 tonnes
	(b) Other Middle East countries.....		8 000 tonnes

- (3) The board indicates that it has an irrevocable commitment with an overseas operator by way of a letter of intent for the supply of approximately 6 500 tonnes to Iran in the 1978-79 year.

**RAILWAYS***Parcels Depot*

1349. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it Westrail's intention to retain the parcels office at Fremantle and not transfer it to Robb Jetty as was indicated in 1977?
- (2) If so, would he state his reasons?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Studies that have been undertaken to date indicate there are cost advantages in transferring the parcels function from Fremantle to Robb Jetty.

There are also advantages to clients in centralising all parcels and goods receipt and delivery activities at one point.

At this stage the indications are that the transfer will take place in due course.

**HEALTH***Herbicide 2,4,5-T: Banning*

1350. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that in 1970 the United States Department of Agriculture prohibited the use of 2,4,5-T around homes, parks and other recreational areas to protect women of child bearing age from possible birth defects?
- (2) Will he take action to ensure a similar decision is made in Western Australia?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) It is known that 2,4,5-T is not registered for use in domestic and recreational areas in the USA.
- (2) In line with National Health and Medical Research Council views there are no such restrictions on the use of 2,4,5-T in Western Australia.

**HEALTH***Funding*

1351. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

In respect of the proposed changes to Medibank and other changes to health care funding, has he any advice to offer to Western Australians?

Mr RIDGE replied:

It is important that people realise that there is no need to take immediate action.

As the date for the changes announced by the Federal Government is the 1st November, 1978, there is time in which to carefully consider the position and decide what action should be taken.

To assist the public, wide publicity will be arranged by the Commonwealth Department of Health and by each of the private health funds. In addition, the health funds will contact their members.

## HOSPITALS

### *Free Treatment for Disadvantaged Patients*

1352. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Under the new Budget changes to health care costs, will he explain the procedure for socially disadvantaged patients to receive free hospital treatment?
- (2) Will this procedure apply at both State and private hospitals?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) Hospital arrangements for both public and private hospitals have not been changed by the Federal Government.

In Western Australia the agreement between the Commonwealth and State in relation to the provision of public hospital services provides that all persons other than those who are privately insured, are entitled to free public hospital treatment. In view of this, the State is obliged to treat free of charge in public hospitals all uninsured persons whether socially disadvantaged or not.

## DAVID JONES (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.

### *Dismissal of Staff*

1353. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What action has he taken in respect of the dismissal of staff by David Jones?
- (2) How many persons have been dismissed?
- (3) How many persons have been offered or found other employment?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The Government was greatly concerned to learn of the decision to close down the operations of David Jones (Aust) Pty. Ltd. in this State. So much so I immediately convened a meeting with the senior executives of the major retail stores operating in Perth to discuss with them the job opportunities within the trade that would be available to the retrenched staff.

In addition, I have met with officials of both the Federated Clerks Union and the Shop Assistants Union at which time I again expressed the Government's concern at the closing down of this retail store.

Also, senior officers of the Department of Labour and Industry have had discussions and met with the management of David Jones and through this medium I have been kept informed of their endeavours to place staff and of further developments.

Furthermore, officers of the Commonwealth Employment Service have been interviewing the staff to ascertain their suitability for prospective positions.

- (2) 325 as at today.
- (3) Since the announcement of the impending closure, 43 staff have left to go to other jobs and 26 management staff have done likewise.

A total of 507 job offers have been received from prospective employers but the exact number of former employees engaged by the employers is not known and will not be known for some time.

I might mention that the information was given to the member for Vasse several days ago.

## PRISONS

### *Inmates: Number and Drug Offenders*

1354. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Chief Secretary:

Referring to question 1244 of 1978 dealing with drug offences—

- (1) How many of the 118 commitments in 1976-77 and 209 commitments in 1977-78 for drug offences involved—

- (a) white Australians;
- (b) Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal people?
- (2) How many of the 117 persons serving sentences as at 1st January, 1978, for drug and drug related offences were—
  - (a) white;
  - (b) Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal people?
- (3) What percentage of the total population did those numbers in (2) (a) and (b) comprise?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Separate statistics on white Australians and Aborigines were not kept in 1976-77 but the answer to this question is that very few, if any, Aborigines were committed for drug offences in that period. For the 1977-78 period, no Aborigines were committed for drug offences so that the 209 commitments refer to non-Aborigines only.
- (2) (a) 117.
- (b) None.
- (3) A running total of the percentage of Aborigines and non-Aborigines is not kept but Aborigines generally account for between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of the prison population at any one time: e.g. the census figure as at the 30th June, 1978, shows that 33 per cent of the prison population was Aboriginal.

- (2) While sewerage extension to unsewered areas is an ideal, funds do not permit more than a very small proportion each year.
- (3) The board's "Development Plan 1978-83" which was published in May, 1978 and supplied to all members, gives details of intentions over the next five years.

*The map was tabled (see paper No. 321).*

## SHOPPING CENTRE

### *Girrawheen*

1356. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is the State Housing Commission negotiating with private developers for the development of a shopping centre in Hainsworth Avenue, Girrawheen?
- (2) If "Yes", what is the present state of these negotiations and when is it anticipated that development will begin?
- (3) If negotiations are currently under way, what are the commission's plans for the development of the site concerned?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) No.

## SEWERAGE

### *Melville*

1355. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What areas of the City of Melville are not served by sewerage facilities?
- (2) Is it Government policy to extend the sewerage service to all parts of the City of Melville?
- (3) When does he expect that work will commence on extending the sewerage system to all parts of the City of Melville?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Unsewered areas in the City of Melville are shown on the plan tabled herewith.

## HOUSING

### *Girrawheen*

1357. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission have any development proposals for lot number 1079 in Girrawheen?
- (2) If "Yes", can he say what sort of development is proposed and when it is likely that work will begin?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) The land has been set aside for future residential use, for which it is zoned, but the commission has no proposals for development at this time.

## HOSPITAL

### *Mirrabooka Area*

1358. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are there any long term planning proposals for a hospital at the corner of Mirrabooka Avenue and the proposed North Perimeter Highway?
- (2) If "Yes", what are these proposals?
- (3) Does the department favour the continuing reservation of the site for future planning requirements?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) No. This is not a hospital reserve. It is State Housing Commission land which is shown on the original schematic proposal for the area as a possible hospital site.
- (3) No.

## EDUCATION

### *Schools and High Schools: Balga*

1359. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

With regard to question 1249 of 1978 dealing with additional numbers in schools, where will the proposed Warriapendi junior primary school be located in relation to the existing school buildings?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

Junior primary buildings, if and when required, will be built where the old Bristol rooms are now located.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Reports*

1. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

For the fourth time I wish to ask the Minister a question without notice, as follows—

- (1) Will the Minister table all the reports for the past 12 months of the Water Purity Committee and the Water Resources Council when the House next assembles?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the Leader of the the Opposition for ample notice of the question and

apologise for not having the answer on the floor of the House earlier. The answer is as follows—

- (1) The Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water was formed to advise the Minister for Water Supplies on questions relating to the purity of water from metropolitan and country supplies. Its normal role is to review regular chemical and bacteriological reports from the two water authorities on a bi-monthly basis and to make recommendations on specific matters referred to it involving, among other things, the management of water supply catchment areas. It does not issue formal reports on a regular basis.

The reports of the Water Resources Council refer to some matters which are still under consideration and therefore they are not available for publication at present.

- (2) See answer to (1) above.

## HEALTH

### *Herbicides 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T: Use by Local Authorities*

2. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

With reference to his answer to my question without notice advising me that I would be aware that the herbicides 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T have been widely used safely for over 25 years and there is no evidence to indicate that its use is dangerous, would he advise—

- (1) Has he read the journal "Capsules" dated the 24th-29th July, 1978, that the left-over agent orange, the half and half mix of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D herbicide used by the military for defoliating operations in Vietnam, is being destroyed on the Dutch incinerator ship *Vulcanus* 120 miles west of Johnson Island in the Pacific?

- (2) If "Yes", will he inquire why empty steel canisters containing traces of the herbicide are being crushed for the ultimate purpose of being melted down in steel furnaces at the required high temperature to destroy the herbicide?

- (3) If "No", why not?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I thank the honourable member for plenty of notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No, the 2,4,5-T used in this herbicide mix was, I believe, heavily contaminated with dioxin.
- (3) 2,4-D used in Western Australia is free from dioxin and 2,4,5-T used in Western Australia is either free of dioxin or contains it at a level below that required by the Australian standard.

## HOUSING

### *Purchase: Low-interest Government Funds*

3. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:

Will he give an assurance that applicants, some of whom have had their names on the State Housing Commission purchase list for several years, will continue to receive preference in the distribution of low-interest Government housing funds?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

That is the intention of the commission.

## DAIRYING: MILK

### *Production Costs: Report*

4. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture
  - (1) Will he table a copy of the 1976-77 report on the cost of milk production in Western Australia?
  - (2) If "No" to (1), will he explain his reasoning for refusing to do so?

Mr OLD replied:

I thank the honourable member for adequate notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) and (2) The report on the 1976-77 cost of production is almost ready for publication and should be available for general release within the next few weeks.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

### *Membership*

5. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Who are the members of the Public Accounts Committee?
- (2) Who is the present Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee?
- (3) Is there not ample precedent for the fact that a member of the Public Accounts Committee should cease to function thereon or influence its activities once he becomes a Minister?
- (4) Is it not a fact that the Government decided to replace Mr Young with Mr Watt?
- (5) Is it not desirable that the Public Accounts Committee should be reconstituted and allowed to resume its urgent inquiries as soon as possible?
- (6) How much longer does he intend to delay Parliament from dealing with his motion to terminate Mr Young's appointment and appoint Mr Watt in his place on the Public Accounts Committee?
- (7) Is it his intention to move to discharge Mr Cowan from the Public Accounts Committee?
- (8) If not, what has been his reason for this delay?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I extend thanks to the honourable member for ample notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) The Public Accounts Committee consists of Mr Young, Mr MacKinnon, Mr Cowan, Mr Hodge, and Mr Skidmore.
- (2) Mr Young is the present Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

- (3) Standing Orders are silent on this point, and refer only to "five Members to be chosen as the House may direct". Normally, a Minister would not be appointed if he were a Minister at the time of his appointment.
- (4) Yes, in due course.
- (5) Yes, with reasonable despatch and with proper regard for any matters calling for attention by existing incumbents before retirement from the committee.
- (6) Not yet known.
- (7) Such a prospect has not been considered.
- (8) Not applicable.

### HOUSING

#### *Purchase: Low-interest Government Funds*

6. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:  
As the Minister has announced that purchase applications for SHC homes are to be discontinued, is the Government intending that terminating building societies will distribute low-interest Government housing funds on a first-come first-served basis?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No.

### HOSPITALS: ST. JOHN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

#### *Industrial Dispute: Union Representation to Premier*

7. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:
  - (1) Is it a fact, as reported in *The West Australian* of the 22nd August, 1978, that representatives of St. John Ambulance Association drivers asked on a number of occasions to meet him but have received no reply?
  - (2) As the possibility of a stop-work meeting could be averted by such a meeting taking place, would he be prepared to agree to such a meeting?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) To the best of my knowledge my office has received one request for me to see a representative of the union on this question. I have, as is proper in a case like this, referred the matter to the association to ascertain the situation because the honourable member would know that the Government normally deals with the association and any union matters are between the association and the union and likewise between the employees and the association. For that reason I did not think it right or proper for me to see the union on a matter which is essentially one for the association. I have not at this stage conveyed to the union the final answer on the matter, but I will do so in due course now I have some information back from the association.

Mr Davies: You could prevent the stop-work meeting taking place.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It would not stop that, and you know it would not.

Mr Davies: It would.

### HOUSING

#### *Purchase and Rental: Demand*

8. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Housing:  
How does the Minister reconcile his statement which appeared in Saturday's issue of *The West Australian* that there is not an intensive demand for housing with the fact that there are several thousand applicants for both purchase and rental homes on the waiting lists?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

On the basis that 60 per cent of the applicants that are being offered houses or flats are rejecting them.

## HOUSING

### *State Housing Commission: Underspending*

9. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Housing:

Is it the intention of the State Housing Commission again to underspend this financial year forcing a repetition of the 1976-77 situation when several million dollars were returned unspent to the Australian Government?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No.

## HOUSING

### *Minister's Duties: Effect*

10. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Housing:

Has the Minister found that the demands placed on him by his having to act as temporary Minister in several portfolios, in addition to his normal ministerial duties, has resulted in his being able to devote less time and effort than is desirable to the delicate area of housing?

If not, how does he account for the confused and depressed state of the housing and building industry?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

In view of the fact that I did not receive any notice of the question, I suggest the member place it on the notice paper.

## ROBINSON-WITHERS AFFAIR

### *Premier's View of Prime Minister's Attitude*

11. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Yesterday afternoon the Premier was in the process of answering, in a somewhat indifferent way, a question without notice which I put to him touching on certain statements which he was reported to have made; that is to say, a report which appeared in *The West Australian* yesterday.

I wonder whether he would be good enough now to answer the question because of all the people around the place he would probably be the best one to tell the Parliament and the people what is going on in the mind of Master Fraser?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In answer to the honourable member, I can only repeat what I said yesterday afternoon when I was cut off in my prime. I am only too pleased to let him have a copy of the full statement I made, which he can compare with what appeared in the newspaper report. I do not think I need to go beyond that because the confidences of the Prime Minister are not enjoyed by me in matters of this kind.

I tried to indicate to the honourable member that if he had listened to last Thursday's ABC programme, "AM", he would not have needed to be very smart to realise the dilemma of the Prime Minister in respect of ministerial confidentiality. I refer to the interview with the editor of *The Bulletin*.

Following that, I decided it was time a public statement was made by me from this State because I believed the time had come when the people of Australia wanted Governments to get back to governing, and not to be spending so much time on a demeaning squabble such as was going on throughout the nation and centred in Canberra.

## HOUSING

### *Purchase and Rental: Demand*

12. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:

Is the Minister aware that the majority of the 60 per cent of applicants who reject offers to purchase homes do so because they are unable to raise the finance demanded by the restrictive system imposed by the State Housing Commission?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

In my reply to the earlier question I was referring to rental accommodation.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

*Glitter Lamps*

13. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is it a fact that attractive glitter lamps containing a chlorinated hydro-carbon resembling perchlore-thylene are being sold in Western Australia?
- (2) Is it a fact that inhalation of the vapour can cause anaesthetic effects and also liver damage?
- (3) Is it a fact that if the lamps leak into an enclosed area, such as a lounge room, a real threat to adults' and children's health could ensue?
- (4) If "Yes", will the Minister take action to remove the lamps from public sale?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (4) I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I am advised that there is a glitter lamp on the market.

In view of the honourable member's question I will arrange to have the matter investigated.

## MINING

*Production: Value*

14. Mr Carr (for Mr BRYCE), to the Minister for Industrial Development:

What was the value of all mineral production in Western Australia for each of the last five financial years?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

	\$
1972-73.....	720 269 104
1973-74.....	811 323 883
1974-75.....	1 117 655 248
1975-76.....	1 354 966 823
1976-77.....	1 612 863 735

Figures for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1978, are not as yet available.