

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 21 March 1985

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 10.45 a.m., and read prayers.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

Tabling: Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am rather concerned at the statement appearing in this morning's copy of *The West Australian* under the heading, "By-law lapse in Parliament". The first paragraph of the statement reads: "Regulations of the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act and the Road Safety Act have lapsed because of an administrative oversight at Parliament House".

I have made inquiries concerning this matter and have been assured that the officers of Parliament House who handle such documents have no knowledge of these particular documents arriving at Parliament House. I want to make it perfectly clear that the parliamentary staff handling papers for tabling are well aware of their importance and treat all such documents with utmost care and urgency.

As to why, or how, some papers may be tabled in the Legislative Council but not in the Assembly, I have no explanation but am assured by the Clerk that all papers received for tabling by appropriate officers have been tabled in the normal manner.

In addition, I would point out that the Votes and Proceedings contain a list of papers tabled on each sitting day and that normal departmental routine ensures that separate acknowledgment is returned to the department from which papers for tabling have originated.

It might be appropriate for the department concerned to note the Votes and Proceedings and those routine replies applying to the Legislative Assembly.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS: SWANBOURNE HOSPITAL SITE

Preservation: Petition

MR WILLIAMS (Clontarf) [10.50 a.m.]: I have a petition which reads as follows—

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

We, the undersigned:

- (a) respectfully draw the attention of the House to the historic buildings comprising Swanbourne Hospital,
- (b) deeply regret the decision of the Government on the future of the Hospital, which will see the majority of the buildings demolished,
- (c) point out the eminent suitability of the buildings and the surrounding land as a headquarters for community groups, and to house a technology museum, a conference centre and a nature reserve, and
- (d) call for the Swanbourne Hospital complex to be preserved, thereby enabling a science centre unique to Australia to be established, as well as preserving a part of Western Australia's heritage.

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

The petition bears 18 signatures and conforms to the Standing Orders of the House, and I have certified accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 86.)

ENERGY: FUEL

Import Parity Pricing Policy: Standing Orders Suspension

MR COWAN (Merredin) [10.51 a.m.]: I move, without notice—

That so much of standing orders be suspended as would enable the following motion to be moved forthwith—

In view of the urgency of the need to reduce costs, particularly in the primary industries this House urges the Federal Government to immediately abandon its world parity pricing policy for petroleum.

Further, as the proposed introduction of unleaded fuel will be accompanied by increased costs to consumers the sale of this product be delayed indefinitely.

My reason for seeking to move the suspension of Standing Orders is that the matter is urgent. Some reference has been made to this matter being taken before a tax summit but there is no doubt that action following that tax summit would not be implemented until August or September.

The reason that we must deal with this matter now and this House must bring the matter to the attention of the Federal Government before the tax summit takes place is very simple. In the primary industries, particularly agriculture, the major fuel costs will be borne within the next two months and, therefore, action must be taken immediately to reduce that cost.

Therefore, I move for the suspension of Standing Orders in order to debate this issue.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [10.52 a.m.]: I would like to indicate, on behalf of the Government—as I indicated yesterday—that we are still of the opinion this matter should be debated by the Parliament. The Opposition decided yesterday not to support our motion, therefore it was defeated. We would be quite pleased to debate this issue as a matter of great importance, so the Government supports this motion.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [10.53 a.m.]: I ask the Minister whether he received notice of this intention.

Mr Tonkin: It was discussed with me yesterday.

Mr HASSELL: So this was in fact an arrangement?

Mr Brian Burke: Not at all. The National Party indicated yesterday it might move to suspend standing orders. It indicated it might do it yesterday.

Mr Tonkin: It is not an arrangement. Do not come here telling lies on Thursday morning as on other days? You have asked me a question and I have given you a truthful answer.

Mr HASSELL: I asked the Minister a question and I am listening to his reply. I have not said anything about it. The fact of the matter is that the Government had discussions about this possibility yesterday. Is that correct?

Mr Tonkin: I said that yesterday it was possible this motion could be moved, but we did not know whether it would be moved yesterday or today. We certainly did not say what we were doing about it. That is not the point. Do we want to debate this issue or not?

Mr HASSELL: I am on my feet and I will get to that point when I am good and ready. Let me say to the Minister, as we said yesterday, that we have no objection to debating the issue. We observed yesterday there was clearly some arrangement or understanding between the National Party and the Government.

Mr Tonkin: That is untrue. The National Party did not know of our intention.

Mr HASSELL: I am glad to have the Minister's confirmation of that if that is the case. The Minister certainly did not give us any indication of that yesterday. Let me point out that the National Party has given us no notification today.

Mr Tonkin: You don't talk to them.

Several members interjected.

The **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr HASSELL: Members seem to be very sensitive about this issue. The Government's complaint in the last couple of weeks about these sorts of motions being brought on without notice now seem to be complaints of political convenience purely and solely depending on the issue and whether the Government wants to have a debate. However, I have ascertained the facts I want; namely, that the Government has had notice.

I want to indicate that although we were yesterday unwilling to debate the issue, we are happy to go along with this motion. We think it is certainly a significantly better motion than the one proposed yesterday. It gets much closer to the issue which is to be considered.

I think seriously that where one is dealing with a substantive issue of this nature—not a censure motion arising out of something the Government has done, but where the Government simply does not want to be put in the hot seat—it is only reasonable that everyone should have notice. There is a very clear distinction between the situation we had a couple of weeks ago where the Government sought to gag the Opposition, and the position where we want to debate a substantive issue of policy. I indicate that we will not oppose the passage of this motion.

The **SPEAKER**: To be carried this motion requires an absolute majority. If when I put the question I hear a dissentient voice I shall cause the House to be divided.

Question put.

The **SPEAKER**: I have counted the House; and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the question carried.

Question thus passed.

Motion

MR COWAN (Merredin) [10.58 a.m.]: I move—

In view of the urgency of the need to reduce costs, particularly in the primary industries this House urges the Federal Government to immediately abandon its world parity pricing policy for petroleum.

Further, as the proposed introduction of unleaded fuel will be accompanied by

increased costs to consumers the sale of this product be delayed indefinitely.

I do not want to deal at any great length with some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. It strikes me as extremely petty that he should start questioning whether there was a deal or some discussion about this issue. If I were the Leader of the Opposition I would be concentrating on the motion itself rather than on ascertaining whether there had been any discussion between the National Party and the Government and whether he feels a little piqued inasmuch as there has been no discussion between the National Party and the Opposition.

I suggest to him that if he wants some discussion he can initiate it himself—something he has been most reluctant to do in the past, despite the fact that we are on the same side of the House.

The motion is in two parts; the first relates to world parity pricing which, I regret to say, was introduced by a coalition Government. The reason given at the time was that it was introduced to induce members of the Australian public to practice the conservation of fuel. Of course, as everybody knows, the real truth of the matter was that the Federal Government saw it as a windfall tax. It knew that this country had the potential to produce a minimum of 70 per cent of its petroleum product and, indeed, it has been estimated that that figure could go as high as 90 per cent as far as domestic production is concerned.

The Government knew that the cost of production was around \$14 per barrel, yet the benchmark for Saudi Arabian light crude was, at the time, about \$25 a barrel. This means that the Government, in imposing this tax, was receiving a vast sum of money for old oil. With respect to new oil, that money was being channelled into the oil companies themselves, which were producing in Australian territory.

Added to that, the parity price is expressed in American dollars. As everybody knows, the Australian dollar has fallen dramatically against the American dollar and that, too, has exacerbated the situation in relation to the cost of petroleum products on the retail market.

My major concern is for the people I represent, and that means people in the country. It is a well-known fact that country people consume, on a *per capita* basis, far more petroleum than do their city counterparts. I am not talking here only of farmers but of all country people who have to bear the major burden of this parity pricing policy.

Those in the farming industry—particularly the cereal producers of this State, who by far and away comprise the major element in agriculture in

Western Australia—will, over the next two or three months, be required to purchase all the petroleum products they require for the 1985 cropping programme, if they have not already started to do so. That is the real need for urgency. We cannot wait for a “talk fest” in July to deal with this issue. The matter has to be brought to the attention of the Federal Government now in the expectation that some action will be taken within the next two weeks. In that way the farming community in particular, and members of the rural public in general, will be able to take advantage of any abandonment of this policy.

In relation to the final matter outlined in this motion—that is, the introduction of unleaded fuel—there have been several reports of the cost to consumers of the introduction of this product. Estimates have been made which indicate the cost will be at least 2c a litre on all petrol grades. I see no reason that we should have to bear this cost, especially in view of the fact that the price of petrol is increasing at an alarming rate in any event.

I am sure a number of other members wish to deal with this issue. I feel I have covered it sufficiently. I am quite sure the Opposition spokesman on consumer affairs will be able to give far greater detail on these matters than I have been able to give. Nevertheless, the substance of the motion is extremely important and needs to be dealt with immediately. I hope it receives the approval of the House.

MR PARKER (Fremantle—Minister for Minerals and Energy) [11.05 a.m.]: The Government shares a considerable degree of the concern which has been expressed on these matters by the member for Merredin and the National Party. It particularly recognises the issues which have been stated by the National Party so far as the problems of people in the rural sector are concerned.

I might say that it is not only the primary producers mentioned by the member for Merredin who are particularly disadvantaged by rapid rises in oil prices, although there is no question that they fall into one of the groups of people which are particularly affected; other primary producers, including those in the minerals sector, are similarly affected, as are the people who live and work in those—in many cases—very remote towns.

The other two major groups which are principally affected are the State instrumentalities, such as my own instrumentality, the State Energy Commission, and Westrail. They experience considerable cost imposts as a result of the way in which the import parity pricing policy—not the world parity pricing policy—operates at the mo-

ment, and because of the decline in the value of the Australian dollar relative to the value of the United States dollar.

However, the import parity pricing policy straddles a number of different issues. It is not true to say, as the member for Merredin said, that the policy was introduced principally as a conservation measure, although that was one of the reasons for its introduction. The principal reason was to encourage exploration for oil in Australia.

I remind the member for Merredin that it was not just a coalition Government which introduced this policy—although, he was right in saying that was the case—but, in particular, it was Doug Anthony, the Leader of what is now the National Party, who was the strongest advocate for the policy and who pushed very hard for its introduction at a time when it would have been at some electoral cost both to the Federal Government of the day and the National Party in particular.

Doug Anthony pressed the issue, not just as a conservation measure after the first oil shock in 1973, but also, and principally, in order to encourage exploration for oil in Australia.

The value of an import parity pricing policy, whether this one or another one, is something to which I shall turn in a moment. However, it is of inestimable value to explorers for oil to know that, if they find it, they will get the world price, or something which approximates it, and that is something which encourages exploration for oil within Australia.

Indeed, one of the aspects Mr Anthony was keen to encourage—and I think he was right in this—was the growth in oil exploration in this country during the period within which we had the opportunity to move towards that parity price. Prior to that the position was that the 70 per cent self-sufficiency to which the member for Merredin referred was—and it still is—almost entirely accounted for by the production from Bass Strait and from Esso-BHP's involvement in the production from those fields.

It is certainly the case that the Bass Strait fields have a very limited life. I have never heard anyone, other than the member for Merredin, say that Australia could be 90 per cent self-sufficient in this area on the basis of currently producing fields. I do not know whether there is any truth in that, nor do I know the source of the member for Merredin's information.

The truth is that Australia is entirely self-sufficient at the moment in terms of light crude, but there is no possibility of it going above 70 per cent self-sufficiency because the remaining 30 per cent of requirements is in the heavier fractions of the

petroleum spectrum; that is, the areas in which we do not produce any oil at all. We do not produce any heavy oil, bitumenised types of oil, or oil capable of being made into diesel fuel and the like. Those products, or the crude for them, are all imported.

Irrespective of the international parity pricing policy, given the level of prices nationally and the value of the Australian dollar relative to the United States dollar, price increases would occur as a result of the fact that those products are imported. This occurs in the same way as we see the prices of imported cars increase; the value of the United States dollar has increased as against the value of the Australian dollar, thus the cost of cars has increased proportionally. For those reasons, there is no possibility of increasing the production of domestic oil above 70 per cent nationally.

What is happening, as the member for Narrogin indicated, is that our self-sufficiency in oil is declining, and fairly rapidly at that. Members might think the value of the Australian dollar is bad at the moment, but apart from what it is doing to petroleum prices, the value of the dollar is a marvellous thing for the agricultural and mineral sectors because it is saving them from a very much worse situation than they might otherwise be facing. I note that all primary industry organisations around Australia have very strongly supported the Federal Government's policy on the exchange rate for our dollar.

But putting that to one side, there is no doubt that without considerable additional discoveries, which in turn involves very considerable exploration, we are going to experience a very rapidly declining self-sufficiency; indeed we are already experiencing that. In turn that will have an even worse impact on our ability to have a strong dollar, because if there is to be a decline in our self-sufficiency, we will have to import a greater proportion of petroleum products into the country.

Mr Clarko: We have a lot of Jeremiahs when people talk about the future of oil. What was said in the mid-1970s has proved to be wrong.

Mr PARKER: I suggest that the member for Karrinyup might like to have a chat with the member for Narrogin.

Mr Clarko: I worked in the oil industry for eight or nine years and I understand that the world reserve of oil has always been about 30 years.

Mr PARKER: We are not talking about the world reserve of oil but about Australia's reserve of oil, about our self-sufficiency.

Mr Clarko: It was said 10 years ago that we would now be importing much more than we are

importing. Our position now is better than it was 10 years ago.

Mr PARKER: That is not the case.

Mr Clarko: The figure is nearly 80 per cent. It was 70 per cent then.

Mr PARKER: It is around 70 per cent currently. Again I suggest that the member might like to talk with one of his colleagues who understands the industry. The member apparently does not believe me.

Australia has one major producing oil field, and that is Bass Strait. The Bass Strait oil field produces the vast bulk of our oil; indeed it produces all but a very small proportion of Australia's oil, the 70 per cent which goes into our refineries. But that figure is declining and projections show that it is declining rapidly and will continue to do so as we approach the year 2000. The figures produced by the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association and the figures produced by the refineries and the big companies involved, including our own BHP, all show that that is the case.

There have been some new discoveries in Australia and they have been occasioned in part by the exploration which has taken place as a result of international parity pricing. I would be very surprised were the Opposition to want to move away from some form of international parity pricing. Whether the current mechanism is the correct one is another question to which I will return in a moment.

The Barrow Island oil field, which is Western Australia's major producing oil field, has most of its oil classified as old oil. As a result of that the vast proportion of the revenue from that field, like the vast amount of the revenue from Bass Strait currently, goes into the Federal Government's coffers by way of taxation.

It is important to understand that one of the results of the import parity pricing policy has been that both producers—Esso-BHP and West Australian Petroleum Pty. Ltd.—have taken the opportunity to expand production, drill wells, and expand the reservoir of oil which is currently recoverable. In the case of Bass Strait and Barrow Island there is, as the member for Merredin mentioned, some argument about whether some of the fields currently being credited with being new oil should have been credited as old oil. But that is an argument about whether the revenue from those fields should be going to either Esso-BHP or the Federal Government. That is the only point of interest for consumers.

It is certainly the case that Esso-BHP, as a result of the current taxation regime and the

import parity pricing policy, have decided to drill other areas and have considerably expanded the life of the Bass Strait field. This has happened to the extent that we will be able, as the member for Karrinyup suggested, to have a better reserve possibility and more assurance of the possibility that Australia can preserve a substantial proportion of its self-sufficiency. This is dependent on those producers getting a price for oil which is reflected in international prices and which is reflected in the return on their investment.

I have seen in great detail the figures that WAPET can point to to show Barrow Island reserves and costs. I have not seen in the same detail the relevant figures for Bass Strait. However, in the case of Barrow Island and WAPET there is no question that the new wells which are extending the life of that field and providing more oil for Western Australia would not have been viable had old prices—or, indeed, anything less than current prices—been received.

This very much depends on how many millions of barrels they can get out of the ground, and that depends on the economics of production. This relates to the known existing reservoir. What is not known and what is a changeable factor is the amount of oil recoverable and the amount of oil recoverable is dependent on the return from the investment and whether it is worth making that investment.

Virtually the same situation applies with the Bass Strait partners, because they have drilled additional wells as a result of a greater return and the parity pricing policy. That is with the existing known oil fields.

We then look for new potential for oil fields and at the prospects which have been discovered and the tremendous exploration here, in South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, and the Northern Territory. Exploration programmes have been commenced very largely as a result of the parity pricing policy. Fields being developed are fields which could not be developed economically were it not for some form of ability to get this sort of international parity pricing.

There are two reasons for this: Firstly, the returns, and secondly, the incentive for world explorers. We are talking about huge amounts of funds necessary for investment to drill for wells; we are talking about a limited number of companies which have those funds. Those companies, including BHP, are international companies which look to see where they will get a return on their investments and where they will be able to recover the costs and get a sufficient return

to enable them to decide on their drilling programmes.

I have been in New York and visited the Exxon and Texaco companies and seen all the various things they take into account when making a decision, things like the prospectivity, the return on investment and the taxation regimes.

It is certainly true to say that the major oil companies would not continue to invest the very substantial sums of money that they are investing in Australia for oil exploration were it not for the incentive provided by parity pricing on oil. Australian companies are also involved in exploration, but it is very much the case to say that Australian companies, with the possible exception of BHP, do not have the capital that is necessary to go into this area. Of course, the case of BHP is a classic one where it has complete opportunity to explore elsewhere than in Australia. In fact, BHP is investing quite substantially in oil properties outside of Australia, particularly in the United States.

Let us consider a company like CSR, which one would think is a very strong company. It is, comparatively speaking, a very strong Australian company, but it has been very substantially brought down—not completely, I am pleased to say, but brought down from where it otherwise could have been—by its investment in the Delhi Co., which put a tremendous drain on its resources. That point illustrates that even one of the largest Australian companies, CSR, finds it almost impossible to fund a major oil exploration programme and is having to quit a number of its other properties, including its pastoral properties, in order to achieve that funding.

All of those matters need to be taken into account when one is assessing a world parity pricing policy and it needs to be recognised. Certainly, speaking in my capacity as Minister, we believe that such a policy—whether it is this precise policy is another issue—is very important.

A range of factors are involved in the current trend of oil prices. The first is the value of the Australian dollar and, as I indicated to the House a few minutes ago, there is no question but that the value of the Australian dollar will have an impact on certain areas of oil pricing anyway, no matter what the import parity pricing policy is, because all of the heavier fractions of crude oil need to be imported, so inevitably whatever we do in regard to our own parity pricing policy will result in an impact—particularly in the areas of diesel, fuel oil and so on—on the price of petrol products—I suppose it is always technically possible for the Government to artificially bolster up

the value of the dollar, but it is certainly universally accepted by the primary sector that that should not happen.

The second aspect of it is whether the parity pricing policy is in fact operating in a way which is commensurate with the best interests of both our oil industry and our consumers, whether in the primary sector or other sectors of the economy. There is an avenue whereby we can look at the current policy and say, "We don't believe it is working properly". However, we believe there are other ways of addressing the situation to make sure that the oil exploration sector and the existing oil companies are able to explore and to develop existing known reserves to their maximum potential to ensure that we do have our own oil—because if we do not have our own oil we will not be able to decide for or against an import parity pricing policy. We will have an import parity pricing situation because we will not have any control over it; we will have to purchase all our oil from overseas. On the one hand, we must continue the stimulus to that industry and, on the other hand, we must recognise that there may be reasons for changing that policy.

For example, yesterday the Minister for Transport was asked by the member for East Melbourne—certainly a member of the Opposition—into what areas we could move. He and I, and the Minister for Consumer Affairs have had extensive discussions on this matter and I in turn have had quite considerable discussions with the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy on the matter. The Government believes the system can be adjusted in a range of ways. Some of these ways have been embraced, or even suggested, in the first instance by some of the companies involved. For example, Russell Finimore, who is the head of BHP Petroleum, has suggested a number of ways in which the Federal Government could maintain the principle of Australian parity with world crude oil prices, but at the same time adjust the operation of that principle in such a way as to not have such an adverse impact on the consumer.

Because of this fact that more of the oil produced is new oil, in fact, a rapidly declining proportion of the price that we all pay at the pump is now going to the Federal Government as more and more of it is going to these producers.

Ways in which I believe these matters could be addressed involve, firstly, looking at what we regard as the oil parity price, what we see as the market price by which we judge oil parity considerations. For example, the current Oil Market Price for the purpose of a number of things, including some internal issues within the SEC, is the

Saudi Arabian light crude price ex Ras Tenura in Saudi Arabia. It is currently set at \$US28. When that rate was initially set, the Australian dollar was valued at \$1.17, \$1.20, or something like that, and is now valued at 70c. That has meant that whereas the price of oil was set at \$US34 which it was for a while, back in 1979-80, in Australian dollar terms it was considerably less than that and certainly considerably less than the current Australian dollar price which is about \$40 or \$41, based on that \$US28 oil market price in Saudi Arabia. The OMP, it has been argued, quite strongly—and I think there is considerable validity to this argument—is no longer a legitimate basis for determining the world parity price. Perhaps one should look towards, for example, the spot price at Rotterdam or the Japanese import price average, or a whole range of possibilities. There is a way in which one can nett back, for example, from the refined products which are sold internationally by Saudi Arabia and the other Middle East countries. One can work out at what price those countries are putting their own crude into their refining processes, crude which is less than \$US28. It is more like \$US24 or \$US25. In fact, when the banks look at any petroleum project they take as a reference point now the price of oil at \$US25. My understanding of the matter is that that is a far more accurate reflection of the current price for oil internationally than is \$US28.

We believe that there are ways in which one can say, "Well, we believe in a parity pricing policy", but effectively the Federal Government and our own producers, so far as new oil is involved, are getting much more than they would be getting under a true parity pricing policy because they are using an artificial market which very few people now actually receive, and it should be adjusted.

That itself would have a major impact on the price that our producers receive and the price that we have to pay as consumers, whether ordinary consumers with our cars or the people whom the member for Merredin and the Government, and I am sure all of us, are interested in protecting.

The second question that should be asked is whether a strict relationship between the value of the Australian dollar and the value of the US dollar is the appropriate way of assessing the manner in which we should translate the international parity price, and what it should be translated into in terms of Australian dollars. Currently the Australian dollar has sunk quite considerably against the value of the US dollar. As I said before, if we were, for example, to recognise that oil is an international commodity, that our dollar is an international commodity, and that the US dollar is an international commodity and say that in

fact we should determine the parity price on the basis of a sort of artificially created currency, an official currency, a Euro currency or world currency—it is possible to construct the price quite easily. In fact, for all sorts of purposes prices are constructed and used with such indices. There is a whole range of ways by which one could do it.

Then we could say that rather than strictly reflecting the changes in value between our currency and that of the United States, it should reflect the changes in value between our currency and a basket of other currencies, because it is true to say that whereas our dollar has fallen very substantially against the US dollar, it has not fallen so substantially, and in some cases not at all, against other currencies. For example, over the last 12 months the Australian dollar has in fact appreciated against the pound sterling. If one goes to Britain now one can purchase a lot more with one's Australian dollar—not a lot more than one could purchase a couple of months ago, but certainly more than one could have purchased a year ago. That is possibly another way which would also impact upon the way in which the Australian price could be reduced.

The third way in which the Australian price could be reduced would be to look at the other taxation imposts on the price of petrol, apart from import parity pricing, to the extent that it is a taxation impost and is not passed through to the producers.

For example, there is the Commonwealth Government levy for the bicentennial roads programme. It levies about 2c a litre to fund the programme. Given that the Commonwealth is getting a windfall gain as the result of the value of the Australian dollar, it may be said that it could be possible for the Commonwealth to say that instead of funding our bicentennial roads programme out of that levy it should be funded out of the windfall gain. That will keep in place the important general policy of parity pricing and at the same time take around 2c off the cost of fuel. That would be one way of doing it.

The States universally have some form of taxation on petroleum products to fund road programmes, and so on. Again it might be possible to say that—the member for Merredin would know the States do not get any benefit out of the import parity pricing policy; indeed, it only costs us money through the instrumentalities we have under our control—the States do have to raise revenue for roads, etc., using an impost on the cost of petrol.

The Commonwealth is in effect getting a substantial windfall gain as a result of the parity

price policy; therefore it might be possible for the States to be rebated an amount of money which means that they can drop their imposts on petrol in return for some rebate of funds from the Commonwealth, which in turn would have an impact on the price of petrol.

The Commonwealth has already devoted a portion of its North-West Shelf gas revenue to the State in terms of its arrangement with the State Energy Commission which has been announced. There are all those sorts of things. The Commonwealth is getting more offshore revenue, not only from the North-West Shelf gas, it is also receiving the 10 per cent royalty from Bass Strait. Of course that has also substantially increased and is another area in which the Commonwealth could make a rebate.

There is a range of ways in which the Commonwealth, while maintaining the incentive for exploration and the incentive to expand the utilisation of existing reservoirs of oil and gas, can still help reduce the price to us. A final point which the Minister for Transport alluded to last night is the possibility of saying what our import parity price should be—the price an exporter of Australian crude or refined products would get for that produce. In fact Esso-BHP are now exporters of Australian oil, because we have an over capacity. We cannot use the amount of light crude that is produced, because of the distribution of the need for petroleum products in our country, while, we are importing the heavier fractions. What we are now doing is exporting light, which cannot be used in Australia, which in turn helps to balance the trade situation with the heavier crudes we do need to import.

The producers, Esso-BHP, who are now exporters of quite substantial light crude, get a certain amount of money for that which I am told is considerably less than the import parity price which they get for the product they sell in Australia. It is probably closer to the world spot price, given that they are selling spot in places like Hawaii. Something like that would be another industry which could be used and still maintain a parity pricing, but reduce the cost to consumers.

All those things I have suggested are far more important and substantial, as well as better ways of handling this situation, than the way the member for Merredin has suggested without of course in any sense denigrating the concern that he has put forward on the part of the consumers he represents and I am sure many of us represent.

The Government view is that these things do require much more sophisticated approaches than that which has been suggested. We believe we

should have on-going discussions; and I can assure the House we are holding these on-going discussions with the Commonwealth Government and will continue to do so. We are not solely addressing this matter in terms of the taxation summit—as I have indicated, some matters are non-taxation issues, some are issues which are more policy, quite apart from taxation, because it is not only the Commonwealth getting funds from this import parity pricing. Some are taxation issues; the petroleum type taxes I refer to certainly are.

Amendment to Motion

I second the motion and move an amendment—

Delete all words after the word "House" with a view to inserting the following—

"notes and endorses the Government's decisions to request the Federal Government to examine the possibility of a petrol price reduction at the next taxation summit as a part of its overall taxation reform".

The total motion would then read—

In view of the urgency of the need to reduce costs, particularly in the primary industries, this House notes and endorses the Government's decision to request the Federal Government to examine the possibility of petrol price reduction at the next tax summit as a part of its next taxation review.

MR HODGE: I second the amendment.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [11.36 a.m.]: I wish to speak very strongly against the proposed amendment. I am sure the mover of the motion will too, because it really is a completely inadequate response to a galloping, racing problem. The Government came in yesterday with motion which was not debated. What the Government is trying to do is shift to the Commonwealth the responsibility for considering this issue in July, which is when the taxation summit will be held.

It is no answer to the present situation. It is no answer to the rapidly rising price, not only of petrol but also of fuel.

Mr Gordon Hill: Do you support the comments made by one of your members yesterday that petrol prices will rise to 60c a litre by the time the summit is held?

Mr HASSELL: I think that is entirely possible. I note that the member for Helena is suggesting, by his interjection, that it is not. I suggest it is entirely possible that by the time the tax summit is held—

Mr Gordon Hill: It is highly probable.

Mr HASSELL: Highly probable then, if the member does not wish to call it highly possible. I take the member's technical point on the use of the language. No-one would seriously suggest that we have seen a stabilisation of the Australian dollar yet. Who knows where that will finish up? Many people believe that it will be down to 50c before long. That is a real prospect.

Let us get to the heart of the matter. The Government, with its motion yesterday and with this amendment today, is trying to get a problem off its back, because the problem is too sticky to handle. This Government came to office two years ago with a dedication to reducing prices. The Government called together this Parliament especially to pass an Act to control fuel prices. Not only have fuel prices been increasing ever since, without any remission at all—

Mr Parker: That is not true. They came down.

Mr HASSELL: They came down for a month or two in a totally artificial way and caused problems in Norseman, Esperance, and many other places. Is the Minister seriously suggesting that that misplaced experiment was ever likely to have succeeded in any significant or long term way?

It was a completely misplaced, ineffective experiment which did not do any good but did a lot of harm, and the Minister is underlining the fact that it did.

We have a parity pricing policy which was introduced in circumstances entirely different from those which prevail today. It is now operating in a changed climate and it needs to be examined. It was the right policy then and it has been accepted by successive Governments. Let us not forget that we are in the second term of the Hawke Labor Government, which also has accepted this policy.

This State Government ought to be trying to get the Commonwealth Government to re-examine the policy in a realistic way as a matter of urgency.

Mr Parker: That is what I said.

Mr HASSELL: Not at the taxation summit in July. By July another crop will have been planted.

Mr Parker: Didn't you listen to my speech?

Mr HASSELL: One could listen to the Minister's speech but it would do no good because he did not go to the issue of urgency, and the Government is trying to shovel it off until July.

Mr Parker: We are taking steps with the Commonwealth right now and have been for some time for a review of the basis on which it operates.

International parity pricing is still a good policy, but we are trying to get the basis reviewed.

Mr HASSELL: But not by this motion.

Mr Parker: The motion is irrelevant to what we are trying to do.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister moved the amendment and now he says it is irrelevant. It is no wonder I am firmly opposed to it when he says it is irrelevant.

We have an opportunity in this debate today to express our concern as a Parliament about a situation over which we do not have total control because it is partly in the Commonwealth arena. We have in particular an opportunity to realise that within two months the farmers of this State who provide about half of the vital export income of this State will be planting their crops, and that is their period of great fuel consumption. At the same time a great increase in prices is occurring. There are some rebates of course, but do they go far enough in this context? Is there enough protection for our basic industries? It is right that we should debate this motion and express a point of view.

However, I am not one who believes in instant solutions brought up in a motion which has not been fully considered. In fairness to the member for Merredin I point out that while he brought this up as a matter of urgency he was not able to present a fully researched case. No doubt he has not had the time or the resources to present all the evidence which could be presented.

I have to question a motion which suggests that the Government should abandon its world parity pricing policy. I think that policy has been too well-enshrined for too long and accepted by too many Ministers and Governments, when one looks at the total context, for us to advocate its abandonment immediately as an instant solution. I do not think the motion is right in that respect. We also have to consider financial responsibility, and I think the Minister referred to this as well. The Commonwealth, for good or bad—and many people think it is bad—has come to rely on the massive revenues generated by the policy. As a responsible party we cannot on the one hand advocate control of Commonwealth expenditure and deficit which is affecting us all and affecting inflation, and on the other hand at the drop of a problem—and this is a real problem—say that a policy should be abandoned which would add massively to the deficit problem. I do not believe that we as a Parliament should advocate the instant abandonment of fuel parity pricing. Nor do I think we should simply try to hand it over to the Commonwealth and put it back in the way that

this amendment does. I do not believe the Minister, had he had more time, would have proposed the amendment in that form.

Mr Parker: I found out only about 10 minutes ago; I would have preferred a much more reasoned motion which referred to the things I talked about in my speech.

Mr HASSELL: Perhaps the Minister will now understand why we rejected the suspension of Standing Orders yesterday and why we were disappointed that we had no notice today.

This issue is important and the Parliament ought to be putting on record something of real substance. I have had a go at drafting an amendment in consultation with my colleagues which draws together some issues I think we should consider. I do not suggest my amendment is perfect but it raises some important matters. I want to explain the amendment which I will move when I have an opportunity.

I believe we should take out the words "abandon its world parity pricing policy", and substitute the words "review its". That did not seem strong enough on its own so we added the words "and the effects of abandoning the policy". We would then go on to say this—

The review should include the preparation as a matter of urgency—

That is a critical part. To continue—

—of an economic impact statement to evaluate the impact of the policy in present circumstances on—

- (1) all primary industry;
- (2) small business and manufacturing industry; and
- (3) the cost of living and production, particularly in remote areas;

and further calls on the Federal and State Governments to rebate the whole of the Federal and State excise and taxes for fuel used offroad for primary rural production.

I see that as a specific proposal which involves this State in a responsibility to face up to the problem. The problem is that we are moving into the production phase of another annual crop; that will begin as soon as the opening rains come. There are issues there for the State to consider. The motion would then read as follows—

In view of the urgency of the need to reduce costs, particularly in primary industries, this House urges the Federal Government to immediately review its world parity pricing policy for petroleum—

Mr Burkett: Brought in by the Liberal Government.

Mr HASSELL: That is a foolish interjection, and if the member for Scarborough had listened to the Minister only about three or four minutes ago he would have heard him say there was no political contention in relation to that issue, because as I pointed out to the Minister, and as he accepted, the parity pricing policy introduced by the Fraser Government has now survived into the second term of the Hawke Government.

Mr Burkett: The Liberal Party's shares are up and yours are down, grumpy.

Mr HASSELL: The member for Scarborough is trying to create an issue of a political nature where none exists, and when the Government in Canberra which he supports—I do not know which wing he supports—is as responsible today for the policy as any Government before. The policy has been supported not only by the present Government, but by successive Ministers. That is why we have tried to improve the wording of this further amendment.

I will continue reading the amendment. Perhaps the member will allow me to do that without interjection because I want members to hear the whole amended motion, based on the motion moved by the member for Merredin.

The amended motion will read—

In view of the urgency of the need to reduce costs, particularly in primary industries, this House urges the Federal Government to immediately review its world parity pricing policy for petroleum products and the effects of abandoning the policy.

The review should include the preparation as a matter of urgency of an economic impact statement to evaluate the impact of the policy in present circumstances on—

- (1) all primary industry;
- (2) small business and manufacturing industry; and
- (3) the cost of living and production, particularly in remote areas;

and further calls on the Federal and State Governments to rebate the whole of the Federal and State excise and taxes for fuel used offroad for primary rural production; further, as the proposed introduction of unleaded fuel will be accompanied by increased costs to consumers, the sale of this product be delayed indefinitely.

By foreshadowing that kind of amendment, we are seeking to have recognised the need for urgency in

this matter. That urgency is virtually on a daily basis. It really is not responsible for the State Government, faced with this wildfire of petroleum product cost increases, to try to shift the burden onto the Federal Government and then to forget it. This matter needs to be dealt with now and it needs to be dealt with sensibly. We are trying to suggest that it is not responsible in a realistic sense, looking at the whole situation, to advocate abandonment of the parity pricing system. I do not really think we should go that far at this stage because there are too many implications for Commonwealth revenue, for our international trade, for the value of the dollar, and for the conservation of our fuel. All of those issues are too important to be simply brushed aside in an abandonment of a policy position.

We also need to say to the Commonwealth that it has an obligation to do something urgently and we need to say that the Commonwealth needs to examine the impact of its policies. While it is examining the impact of its policies in the changed circumstances which now exist, it should give some relief, as should the State Government, to the people who are about to plant the new season's crops. It should give that relief by being prepared to rebate, completely and not partially as at present, the fuel costs of the primary farm producer. At the same time, the member for Merredin's motion has stated that the increased costs of unleaded fuel can be avoided by putting that aside for the time being. We believe that is a responsible approach which recognises the various strands which have to be considered and allows for the matter to be dealt with in a responsible way by this Parliament.

We therefore seek to have the amendment adopted. We hope that the Government will not persist with the strand that it established yesterday of trying to hand the whole problem over to the Commonwealth. We really see that as being inadequate.

Mr Speaker, can I move my further amendment now?

The SPEAKER: You can move it, but I want to examine it because I think it will cause the debate to become a bit messy. However, unless it is before the Chair, I cannot determine that.

Point of Order

Mr PARKER: The purpose of this point of order is to assist all of us. Although I would not accept the amendment which has been foreshadowed or, as I have indicated earlier, the motion moved by the member for Merredin, I feel I have a solution to the problem. I acknowledge that neither the motion nor the proposed amend-

ment are terribly adequate because this is a much more serious matter. While the matter may be urgent it is not so urgent that it cannot wait until Tuesday to be debated. I think there is general agreement on the sorts of concerns we have about this matter and I feel it should be adjourned to allow us to come up with a motion which would reflect the true feelings of the House. That will mean that we will not deal with this matter on the run and thereby deny our strongest voice on the matter. I suggest that the matter be adjourned to allow that to take place.

The SPEAKER: That is not really a point of order. However, I know the Minister is trying to assist the Chair. If the Leader of the Opposition moves his amendment, as indicated in his speech, I would have to consider that amendment. That may delay the House for several minutes. If the House wants to test the suggestion made by the Minister for Minerals and Energy, that is all right.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr HASSELL: I am inclined to agree with the suggestion made by the Minister for Minerals and Energy. I do not know whether the member for Merredin is prepared to agree, but it would be right if he did. It may be that if the Parliament genuinely and with complete unanimity were able to present a case to the Commonwealth, our argument would be strengthened. I will therefore simply foreshadow the amendment which I read earlier in my speech.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Gordon Hill.

ACTS AMENDMENT (LOTTERIES) BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

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

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 March.

MR TUBBY (Greenough) [12.00 p.m.]: Last night before the debate was adjourned I was speaking about the problems being experienced in the rural industries and the number of farming properties that are for sale in my area. I stressed on this House that the situation is urgent and that it is alarming.

The following article was reported in *The Geraldton Guardian* on 22 February—

FARMING properties in the Mid-West area are being forced onto the market at a record rate.

Further on it states—

The economic hardship within the farming community is escalating even after what was heralded as a bumper harvest season.

It continues as follows—

"The increase in properties on the market started from the beginning of last year—after the 83-84 harvest, which wasn't very flash," he said. "And there was a marked increase in November last year, even with the good harvest."

The article continues—

...the value of land—which peaked in November, 1981—was now down by around 25 per cent in heavy soil areas ... In light land and light rainfall areas ... property values are down about 40 per cent.

It is a very serious situation. It is very interesting that I should have made those comments regarding the rural industry last night because in this week's *Farmers Weekly* the major headline reads, "WA producer bodies unite in farm costs protest".

The Primary Industry Association and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA have been endeavouring, over a number of years, to get together, but it appears that a crisis is the quickest way of getting them together. I am pleased to see that these two bodies will be united in their approach to the problems in the rural industry. The article reads as follows—

Western Australian primary producers will show their dissatisfaction with the situation of agriculture at a special meeting with the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Kerin, in Perth on Wednesday April 3.

The meeting was called jointly by the Primary Industry Association and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA.

In a joint statement the organisations' presidents, Mr Winston Crane and Mr Max Cameron, said the meeting was designed to impress on the Federal Government the strong views of farmers on the disadvantaged position of agriculture.

Factors such as tariffs, interest rates, fuel excises, governmental regulations and wage increases were gradually stifling agriculture and sapping its enormous potential.

According to the industry leaders, the mood of WA farmers was volatile and it was imperative that Mr Kerin was made aware at first hand of the immense problems of primary producers.

Invitations to attend had also been sent to the Premier, Mr Burke, the WA Minister for Agriculture, Mr Evans, Senator Walsh, Mr K. Beazley and Mr J. Dawkins.

While the matters of concern would be discussed at the next meeting between the National Farmers' Federation and the Federal Government on April 10, producers were impatient at the failure of governments to give firm commitments to reform.

I indicated to this House last night that farmers were becoming militant. In this respect, an article in today's *The West Australian* was headed, "Farmers plan protest meeting", and it reads as follows—

WA farmers are planning one of their biggest shows of strength yet in protest at rising costs.

Between 750 and 1 500 farmers are expected to meet on the lawns of Parliament House early next month.

The Primary Industry Association and the Pastoralists and Graziers' Association will join forces at the meeting, in a move which they hope could have some effect before the start of the coming cropping season.

Angry mood

In 1973, about 6 000 WA farmers met in angry mood at Subiaco Oval to complain about the lack of government action on their problems.

It is coincidental that in 1973 we had both a Federal Labor Government and a State Labor Government, which is the same as we have today; the existing problems clearly reflect the lack of interest in the rural industry by Labor Governments. The article continues—

PIA general president Winston Crane said yesterday that high costs were preventing agriculture from realising its potential and making a full contribution to the Australian economy.

As well, costs made it difficult for farmers to survive.

That is what the argument is about today—it is a case of survival. I can see a stormy period brewing for the State and Federal Governments when the farmers start taking the direct action into which they have been forced.

The Government can assist the rural industry immediately at little cost and it would be of great benefit to the farmers. For example, the Government could assist in the control of vermin and noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are spreading very quickly throughout the agricultural areas and, as a result, the quality of the pastures is being reduced. I refer particularly to *Echium plantagineum*—Patterson's curse or Salvation Jane, depending on whether one wishes to express its virtues or its detrimental qualities. I know that in South Australia and in the areas which are severely affected by drought it is called Salvation Jane because it is of some benefit, but in Western Australia it is a disastrous noxious weed which is spreading throughout the agricultural area.

Management programmes and herbicides have not proved effective in the control of Patterson's curse and the programmes are extremely costly. In 1983-84 the State Government spent \$58 860 in labour alone to control Patterson's curse. That figure does not take into account the cost to farmers who did their own spraying, or the cost of herbicides and equipment used by the Government and the farmers. Collectively, it is a massive cost to both Government and farmers.

With repeated applications of the herbicide 2,4-D all legumes are removed from the soil and this in turn reduces the value of pastures. It also seriously depletes the nitrogen level in the soil. In order to maintain a high standard of cereal crops it is important that there be a sufficient level of nitrogen in the soil. To replace the nitrogen that has been depleted because of the effects of the herbicides used to destroy this noxious weed is very cost indeed.

Over the years I have witnessed the spread of Patterson's curse from a few isolated patches to thousands of hectares throughout the northern wheatbelt, and I am sure that the same problem exists in other agricultural areas.

I have been informed, and I think it is widely known, that there is an economical means of satisfactorily controlling Patterson's curse; that is by biological control. I request the Government to give urgent consideration to its introduction in order to help rid this State of Patterson's curse which, with all its other problems, has a devastating effect on the visual appearance of the countryside.

Mr Davies: What was the form of the biological control?

Mr TUBBY: It is an insect.

Mr Old: It is an insect, but its use was prevented by an injunction issued by South Australian apiarists.

Mr TUBBY: The Government should give serious consideration to implementing this sort of control. The visual effect of Patterson's curse on the countryside is quite phenomenal.

In large areas of the Northampton Shire, and also around Northam, the whole countryside becomes a sickly looking purple colour when the plant is flowering. I find it difficult to look at the flowering plant because it looks so sickly. This is another area where farmers could be assisted to reduce their costs which would be of tremendous advantage in the production of crops and pastures at little cost to the Government. The only objection to biological control of this plant comes from the beekeepers who gain some benefit from the flowering plant. I ask the Minister to weigh up the benefits to the beekeepers and compare them with the long-term impact on the stock grazing and grain production industries. I believe the balance would come out strongly in favour of the use of biological control.

A further matter to which I refer relates to a petition I presented to this House last Christmas on behalf of concerned citizens in the Three Springs, Morawa, Perenjori and Carnamah Shires. The petition referred to a very important road connecting the towns of Morawa and Carnamah. The road is approximately 66 kilometres in length; 50 kilometres of the road is sealed and this covers the sections in the Shires of Morawa and Carnamah. That leaves 16 kilometres which is the boundary road on the south-west corner of the Perenjori Shire. The road traverses extremely heavy land in many sections and it is very dangerous in wintertime because much of the area is affected by salt. A school bus also travels on this road. It is a matter of great concern but the Perenjori Shire has not given a high priority to sealing this section because the traffic using the road—although the road is in the Perenjori Shire—is of benefit only to towns not located in the shire.

Following the presentation of this petition I received strong representations from the shires concerned asking me to approach the Minister for Transport requesting a special allocation of funds to upgrade that section of the road. Unfortunately the reply I received from the then Acting Minister, Mr Dowding, was not very satisfactory. He referred to an alternative route which is available. It is 14 kilometres longer, but gives a direct route between the two towns via Three Springs. I advised the shires of the Minister's reply and I quote from the letter written by the Carnamah Shire Council in response—

The Acting Minister for Transport in his reply of February 18th to Mr Tubby's letter,

said that there was little justification for sealing the road for through traffic because there was an alternative sealed route, albeit 14 kilometres longer. He makes light of this extra distance. He wrote that "... through traffic should be prepared to travel the extra distance for the advantage of a bitumen road". By this simple statement he has overlooked the cost disincentives of the extra distance and not recognized the wishes of the people concerned.

One businessman who uses the road regularly between Morawa and Carnamah calculated that if he were to use the alternative route via Three Springs the extra cost each year of fuel alone would amount to \$1 065. So much for economic sense! In view of discussions in this House yesterday and today on the subject of fuel prices, this increase could be boosted even higher. That is an example of the effect it will have on one farmer. Many business people interconnect and service areas between Morawa and Carnamah and, therefore, the use of the alternative route has a considerable financial impact on a large number of people. In fact, recent traffic counts on the southern end of the route indicate that the use of the road is sufficiently high to support bituminisation.

In fact, a considerably larger number of people would use the road if the route were passable all through the year. In winter sections of the road become waterlogged, have potholes and are very slippery; as a result motorists use alternative routes during this period. This serious situation has existed for 15 to 20 years. The Shires of Morawa and Carnamah have realised how important this road is and sealed their sections many years ago. The situation has now virtually reached a deadlock; it looks as though nothing will be done and the needs of these people will once again be ignored.

I hope the Minister for Transport will reconsider the situation which is very urgent. The Perenjori Shire Council has openly said that under no circumstances will it give priority to that road because the money involved should be spent in other areas of the shire which bring business to the town of Perenjori.

I mention now the air-conditioning of schools in my electorate. Although a number of schools in my electorate which are east of a line stretching from Mullewa to Moora have been subsidised for the installation of air-conditioning, there is one exception. It is interesting to note that the line stretching between the two points has a peculiar dogleg in it which excludes the primary school at Tardun. This mission school was established and

has operated as a primary school since 1948. The buildings provided are the old demountable type normally used in emergency situations. They are usually dumped on the school sites until arrangements can be made to provide permanent buildings. This school has functioned under these conditions over many years and the mission staff, under Father Christoff, have provided excellent boarding facilities for the children who come from the Murchison and goldfields areas. I have visited the school and observed the wonderful atmosphere that the brothers have created for the unfortunate children who come from widely scattered stations and reserves throughout the area.

The Education Department has let the school down badly in the provision of educational facilities for the children. They have considerable problems with regard to water supplies for the school and the mission has extended itself to the limit to provide facilities. However, it is operating as a farming concern and it is financially affected in the same way as the rest of the rural community. Therefore, it cannot find more funds to provide the facilities which would normally be provided by the Education Department.

Mr Pearce: Whose school is it? I am confused by the correspondence I have received. I understand the Education Department has taken responsibility for what was previously established as a mission school and it has continued with the facilities originally provided by the mission when the school was set up as a private mission school.

Mr TUBBY: Prior to 1948 it was set up as a private school but since then it has been accepted as an Education Department school. It is operated as a normal primary school and the Education Department provides teachers and other facilities. A number of reasons have been given for not considering supplying air-conditioning to the school. I think it is important to read those reasons and the reply sent by Father Christoff. I quote—

- (1) The Power supply to the school is insufficient. One section would have to be upgraded at the cost of \$8 000.
- (2) A system for which there would be enough power available, namely an evaporative cooling system, cannot be used because the school has no efficient, independent water supply.

I have just mentioned that is another problem as far as the school is concerned—the water supply for its immediate needs, without the need for air-conditioning.

The letter continues—

- (3) Ducted air conditioning would be very expensive, namely \$40 000.

- (4) The school is outside the air conditioning line which runs from Mullewa to Moora, with a dog leg to exclude Tardun.

Another aspect of concern is the school buildings, which are of a temporary nature. They are demountables. Because of the length of time this school has been operating with over 60 students, it should be put on a permanent basis.

The reply given by Father Christoff continues—

- (1) To spend \$8 000 for correcting a major defect at a school is quite justifiable. The price itself could be debated. To my knowledge the local electrician has not been approached in the matter.
- (2) Not to provide a separate water supply for the school has been another neglect by the Department about which frequent complaints have been made for years.

I have made representations for a number of years because of the lack of water supply. The letter continues—

- (3) The price quoted could be disputed. If it is correct, it would still be comparable to the installation price of air conditioning at other schools.
- (4) A straight line from Mullewa to Moora places Tardun well inside the air conditioning zone. The deviation from the straight line is an arbitrary decision against Tardun. There is no justification on the basis of need. Tardun is a notoriously hot spot, showing temperatures at least as high as Morawa, which has been air conditioned.

I can verify this. East of Tardun is shocking for its heat; it is one of the hottest spots in that area.

The letter continues—

- (5) It is precisely the light construction of the school buildings which makes air conditioning so imperative. All the Mission buildings are constructed in brick and tile, making an effective temperature control possible. The box-like classrooms are like ovens when it gets hot.

Also: The school itself is by no means a temporary thing. It has been in operation (first as private school) since 1948, has a fairly constant enrolment of over 60 pupils and enjoys the full support of the Aboriginal community in the Murchison area. It is there to stay for a long time.

In view of the large amount of funds made available, both by the State and the Federal Govern-

ments, to assist Aboriginal communities, consideration should be given to the upgrading of facilities at this school and air-conditioning provided, because these children are being afforded a wonderful opportunity to have an excellent education, both from the religious side and from the point of view of general education. A wonderful family atmosphere has been created in this school. I would like to see the Government give urgent consideration to upgrading all facilities at this school. I hope provision will be made in the forthcoming Budget to see these improvements carried out.

MR SPRIGGS (Darling Range) [12.24 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to speak on the Supply Bill with a certain amount of sadness, because we do not have the opportunity of denying Supply to this Government. I would love an election.

Several members interjected.

Mr SPRIGGS: Just remember that the Morgan poll was taken a month ago, not last week!

I was delighted yesterday with the Government's decision to withdraw from the diabolical plan to nationalise the flower industry of this State. It has been a tremendously traumatic time for the nursery and cut flower industry of our State. It was brought about by a corrupt Government which was prepared in a stealthy and sneaky way to nationalise the industry.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr GORDON HILL: About 2½ years ago I was suspended from the Parliament for using so-called intemperate language by using the word "corrupt". I was asked to withdraw it. I ask that you request the member for Darling Range to withdraw it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is quite right that the words "corrupt Government" have been ruled unparliamentary on a number of occasions, and I therefore rule the member for Darling Range should withdraw the words.

Mr SPRIGGS: With respect for the Chair, I withdraw the words.

Debate Resumed.

Mr SPRIGGS: The fight which the people of this State put up was one which could be fought only by a united group of people who despise socialism; private enterprise people who want to be their own masters, not dictated to by a Government in a socialistic State. Of course the Government has a role to play in the industry, but it is not a competitive role.

The Department of Agriculture built up an advisory service in the horticultural section, a service which was necessary. What this Government has

done has been to reduce that advisory service. In 1975 there were two members of the floricultural section whose time was devoted to promoting that section and creating a very profitable business which enabled people in that business to receive information and gradually to progress and make it a very sound business.

But what did this Government do? It endeavoured to create chaos by removing from that department one of those two members. Let me say that those members have both left the department. One went into private enterprise, and good luck to him. His own funds are involved.

That person was replaced. Then, last September the Government of this State decided to take away from the floricultural section of the department the research officer doing that job for the industry.

What did they do with him? They put him into the Department of Premier and Cabinet as an adviser on the commercial area of the industry. Here we had a chap whose qualifications were clearly in the field of plant propagation and disease control, but the Government decided that he was the greatest thing since sliced bread as far as becoming a commercial adviser to the flower industry of this State was concerned.

In their very clever way they removed whatever advantage the floral industry had to obtain information through a legitimate Government department. If ever the Minister for Small Business had a golden opportunity to show that the Government was committed to promoting small business—which the nursery and cut flower business is—this was it.

Approximately five years ago the floral industry was operating in a very small way. A total of 70 per cent of the flowers sold in our florists' shops were imported either from the Eastern States or overseas. The people involved in the floral industry—those who were under attack from this Government when it attempted to nationalise that industry—reversed that situation so that today, instead of importing 70 per cent of the flowers sold here, they are exporting flowers to the Eastern States and other markets throughout the world. That is a great achievement.

However, what did this Government try to do? In a very amateurish way, it attempted to slide in on the act. The flower producer and nursery operators in this State are the equal of any in the world today. They have put up their own money to develop their businesses which they operate themselves. These are not top-heavy businesses run by 15 staff. These people run their businesses successfully, although they do not make enormous profits.

It was intended that WA Floral Enterprises Ltd. have 15 bosses—never mind the Indians: all of those people were to be chiefs! Phillip Watkins was a most efficient officer in the Department of Agriculture but he was sucked in by this Government. He was seconded to the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Government sucked him into this glorious scheme to nationalise the industry. As a result, his future career has been put in doubt.

I ask members: What will this ruthless Government do? It will say, "Phillip Watkins did not succeed in his attempts to nationalise the industry, so we will wipe our hands of him".

Mr Court: He will go to the Tourism Commission!

Mr SPRIGGS: Of course, he might go to the Tourism Commission!

Plenty of people in this industry have the expertise to expand it rapidly. This industry does not need a Government competitor using public money for which it will not account to taxpayers on the basis that it is a corporate body. This Government stands condemned for its underhand actions which can only cause disruption to an industry which, in the last four years, has achieved much. Not only have those in the industry reversed the position in which 70 per cent of the flowers sold in this State were imported, but also it has developed a market, which, in the words of Phillip Watkins, has increased at the rate of \$350 000 to \$400 000 a year.

Let us look at the Government's takeover bid under the guise of small business, in this instance using the Exim Corporation. In a very sneaky way, this Government created Exim, an organisation designed to do only one thing—I am not allowed to use the word "corrupt"—that is, to enable the Government to camouflage the way in which it spends the money in the public purse. Under the guise that private investment was involved in that enterprise, any information about its dealings was deemed to be private and confidential.

I attended the meeting which was held at Riverside Lodge last Friday. I, along with the other citizens who were there, was not only appalled at the Government's attempts to nationalise the industry, but also at what was happening generally in this State.

When that grand manipulator of money, Mr Gale, was asked questions, he stated he was unable to answer them on the basis that the information was private and confidential, bearing in mind that public money to the tune of \$700 000 was invested in that project, and also that allegedly \$300 000 was coming from a private source.

I draw the attention of members to the implications of that situation. In this case we are dealing with only \$1 million. However, members should consider the implications of the other—I am not allowed to say “corrupt”—exercises in which the Government may become involved. Such ventures could result in the investment of millions of dollars of State taxpayers’ funds and, because a small amount of private investment is involved, these ventures become private businesses and no public scrutiny is allowed. Thus it is impossible to gain information about their activities.

The meeting to which I referred at Riverside Lodge proved to the people of this State that, by establishing the Exim Corporation, this Government—or any Government either corrupt or not—has an instrument which can be used to hide the purposes to which public money is put.

Nothing could be sneakier or more deceitful than using such a method to dispose of taxpayers’ money.

Mr Court: Was the Minister for Small Business at that meeting?

Mr SPRIGGS: Not only was the Minister for Small Business conspicuous by his absence, but also the Premier did not front up.

Mr Brian Burke: I attend more functions and speech-making occasions than you have ever seen.

Mr SPRIGGS: The Chairman of Exim Corporation was not there either. Those lambs were sent to the slaughter and, because they were slaughtered, they have paid the penalty.

I ask members: What will happen now to Phillip Watkins? What will happen to Mr Gale? What will happen to Mr Waldeck and the \$300 000 he is supposed to have contributed to this ill-fated scheme?

Several members interjected.

Mr SPRIGGS: The Minister for Health has enough trouble with the doctors, so he should not worry about the floral industry. He is busy destroying the medical system and the health of this State and he should not worry about anything else.

The Minister for Health answered one of my Press releases in the local paper. He said I was using that medium to carry out a political exercise. The Minister does not realise I work in the field of politics! I happen to be a member of this Parliament.

In that Press release I said that the Kalamunda District Community Hospital would be the next hospital on the Hawke-Burke hit list.

Mr Brian Burke: Why do you drag politics into everything?

Mr SPRIGGS: It is dreadful, is it not? I do it all the time!

Mr Brian Burke: Can you not be objective?

Mr SPRIGGS: What I said was perfectly true. The Minister for Health, who is interjecting on me, is the Minister who wants to destroy the medical system of this State, and he is doing a good job! However, the position in respect of the Bentley Hospital went bad and, therefore, he decided to ease off in respect of the Kalamunda hospital and the Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. The Minister for Health wrote to the paper and said that the member for Darling Range was only using politics.

Of course, the Federal election was around the corner when the Minister said that I was bringing politics into it. But I was telling the truth. He did not say that I was telling lies, just that I was using politics. He went on to say that the Government had no intention of appointing sessional doctors at the Kalamunda hospital—at that time. He went on to add the words “at this time”. The Minister tried to allay the “fears” the member for Darling Range had poured into the minds of senior citizens of the district by saying, “The Government has no intention of putting in sessional doctors at this time”.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Point of Order

Mr MacKINNON: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is highly disorderly for the Minister for Education to be interjecting out of his seat, and I draw that to your attention.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Had the Deputy Leader of the Opposition been listening, he would have heard me call the Minister to order.

Debate Resumed

Mr MacKinnon: It did not stop him, with respect.

Withdrawal of Remarks

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the Deputy Leader of the Opposition like to repeat what he said.

Mr MacKINNON: It did not stop him, with respect

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think there is a great deal of respect in that remark, so I ask you to withdraw and apologise.

Mr MacKINNON: I withdraw and apologise.

Mr Coyne: Get on your knees!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I expect the member for Murchison-Eyre to withdraw and apologise.

Mr COYNE: My apologies.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: And withdraw your remark.

Mr COYNE: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr SPRIGGS: I apologise to my colleagues for getting them into trouble by wanting to defend me, although I do not really need their support.

Do members opposite know what this flower in my lapel represents? It is there as a reminder that the industry it represents has survived the socialistic movement of the Government. I have said before that the Government is trying to nationalise industries by stealth. Let me issue a warning to other industries that this Government is talking about attacking.

Mr Brian Burke: Will you come in next week with a leg of pork in your lapel?

Mr SPRIGGS: When one looks at the Premier one wonders whether he is a leg of pork!

Let us consider what was said by the Chairman of the Exim Corporation, the organisation which is to be able to use public money without public scrutiny. The chairman said yesterday that it was a commercial decision to pull out because Exim did not have the support of the industry.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have been listening fairly carefully to what the member has said. I do not want to stifle debate from the Chair, however, the member has been here long enough to know that Standing Order No. 125 demands that subjects which have already been debated in this place are not to be debated again. That Standing Order is not, in my opinion, there to preclude you from debating Exim, but it is there to preclude you from debating the subject matter debated last night.

Mr SPRIGGS: With respect, what I am going to read out does not relate purely to the floricultural industry.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It should not in any way relate to the subject matter of last night's debate.

Mr SPRIGGS: I will cross over the extravagant remarks made by Mr Hogan on the subject I cannot discuss.

Mr Brian Burke: You say Hogan, we say Horgan.

Mr SPRIGGS: I am not interested in knowing him. Members opposite can know him; I do not

want to. So his name is Horgan. After all, Mr Treasurer, there are 22 schoolteachers on the Government side, so the Treasurer's English should be correct; if it were not he would be corrected by them. The Government does not have a worker sitting on its side. It has 22 schoolteachers and 14 shop stewards, but not one worker!

Mr Brian Burke: What have you got against teachers?

Mr SPRIGGS: Nothing. I have two children who are schoolteachers. Mr Horgan said Exim would continue to develop export industries in new areas such as chilled pork, chicken and eggs and would press for the deregulation of airfreights, which would benefit that subject about which I am not allowed to talk.

While I accept the advice from the Government that the chairman's name is Mr Horgan, I can tell the Government that I am not impressed with him or with his investments in the area about which I cannot talk. I believe any Government or any organisation which decides to go into an industry or to invest in some industry should at least do its homework. The Treasurer would have to agree that there was no homework done into the floricultural industry and the effect on that industry of WA Floral Enterprises. The Government's homework into that subject was something appalling.

Let me go back now to comment on the millions of dollars Exim was to make through its enterprises that was going to export carnations to Malaysia. Let us talk about those exports to Malaysia and about Malaysia's interests in the horticultural and floricultural industries. People in Malaysia in those industries in the Cameron Highlands grow carnations and chrysanthemums which are equal to any grown elsewhere in the world. The carnations they grow are sold throughout the world for 15c a stem, which is roughly 7c a stem less than we can produce them here without making a profit. Yet this unmentionable subject I am mentioning was estimated to find a tremendous market in Malaysia. I do not know how WA Floral Enterprises was going to compete in that market, nor does any other commercial businessman in the industry.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I really do not want to stifle debate, but I think the member is deliberately impinging on the debate of last night, and I ask that he does not continue to do so. There are many ways of discussing this matter and making one's speech without deliberately going against the ruling I have made.

Mr SPRIGGS: I will endeavour to do so. It is very difficult during debate on the Supply Bill for

me to not put the case relating to the action that this Government, if it were a real Government, would take in relation to an industry in which I am interested. With all due respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, when I speak of the flower industry I openly admit I have a vested interest in it. With your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, all I wish to do is to impress upon the Government the way in which it can help the industry in which I am involved. If that is out of bounds to me, it seems unreasonable in the Supply debate—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In respect of the request the member has just made to me, I point out it is not unreasonable for him to raise matters in respect of the flower industry. At this stage, without checking the record, I am not sure which party in this House raised the matter for debate last night. The matters which the member is trying to debate now are matters which should correctly, no matter which party raised them, have been addressed to them. The member had that opportunity last night and if he did not take it—I was not present all night so I do not know if he did so or not—it is rather unfortunate; but he cannot have another stab at it now.

Mr SPRIGGS: With respect to the Chair, I will attempt to avoid mentioning a subject that is, of course, very important to me and to the State.

I reiterate my remarks about Exim Corporation and the reasons that I believe this Government has introduced it as an implement for using public money without public scrutiny, and this was illustrated to me at a meeting that I attended a week or so ago. Clearly, it is a frightening experience to find that public money, the taxpayer's money—members' money and my money—could be spent by a certain organisation and that that organisation could use the cloak of private money in it to not answer any questions about the public money invested in an industry or programme. To me, that was the first sign that if this Government—heaven forbid that it should happen; it will not—were ever returned to office, we would be faced with an economy which would be taxed substantially, probably to the tune of millions of dollars, and that money would never be available for public scrutiny.

For what would the Government use the money? Members know it is possible that the Government might donate the money to its own political party. There is no way, because of its corporate body status, that we could find out what it was doing. Since I have been here no matter has ever arisen in this Parliament which is as dangerous as is the Exim Corporation or its parent body, WA Government Holdings. It is the most dangerous instrument that has ever been brought into the

Parliament. I doubt whether anything as bad has arisen in any other Parliament in the world. It is an instrument that will allow complete corruption in the use of public funds.

I would fear for this State if this Government were ever re-elected because, by stealth, it would use money so that there is no public scrutiny, no public check-up, and it would use money ruthlessly as it attempted to do last week to undermine this State and create a Communist State. The Minister for Health should not laugh about Communist States. "The Minister for big giggles"! He wants to socialise medicine. He wants to turn it around. I ask him whether he went to a private or a public hospital—

Mr Hodge: A public hospital.

Mr SPRIGGS: He would not get into one. Where did the Premier go? Did he go to a public hospital?

Mr Tonkin: I went to a public hospital.

Mr SPRIGGS: The Leader of the House went to a public hospital, did he? I would have thought he would go to a private hospital.

The word "Communist" is probably too wide, but this Government has been seen to have a tendency to want to nationalise—

Mr Hodge: You have a pink flower in your lapel.

Mr SPRIGGS: I have a pink flower in my lapel, which I am proud to wear because it symbolises an industry that escaped being nationalised. The carnations were presented to us. We were asked to wear them. These people suffered a lot of anxiety during the last three weeks, seeing the Government trying to destroy their industry. They were so relieved that they presented each member on this side of the House with a carnation, and our members are proud to wear the carnations because that industry escaped nationalisation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I accept your ruling, but because of it I am unable to discuss those things which the Government should be doing to assist the flower growing industry of this State.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with your permission, I would like to table this note. I hope the Premier will take some notice of it and that he will get on with the job of doing what this pamphlet suggests the Government should be doing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, do I have your permission to table the note?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. Private members do not have a right to table papers. The member can certainly read it out, as long as it is not too lengthy.

Mr SPRIGGS: These are the positive proposals which were discussed at the meeting to put forward to the Government to assist the industry—

- Getting air freight for exports.
- Marketing surveys.
- Research programmes.
- A better extension service.
- Trade displays.
- Co-ordination of existing Government Departments.

In speaking on the Supply debate, my only regret is that we do not have the facility by way of numbers to refuse Supply.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.15 p.m.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.15 p.m.]: I would like to use the Supply debate to indicate to the Premier that in his efforts today to lampoon the member for Darling Range he overlooked one fact: The member for Darling Range almost single-handedly, with the people of the industry, secured a major victory yesterday for the floricultural industry and private enterprise in Western Australia. The Premier can do all the lampooning he wishes but we remind him that the member for Darling Range and every member on this side of the House will get behind every other industry the Government or Exim may wish to take on in the future. All the lampooning of the Premier and the parrot from Armadale will have little effect on our work in that area.

I now turn to the main substance of my speech. I wish to refer to the Tourism Commission and the Price Waterhouse report. The first evidence we had of the action which was to be taken under that report was in early December last year. At that time five senior officers of the Tourism Commission were axed from that department. The Premier can say they were offered redundancy packages or whatever, but the plain, cold, hard facts of the matter are that those senior officers were moved sideways, out of the commission. That move was certainly not at their request. They were handed, on a platter, a very sour Christmas present indeed.

No public explanation was given about that decision. The people concerned were given no information as to why they were removed from their positions. As a consequence of that action several Opposition members and I asked for the report to be made public, but our requests were denied.

A conference was held at the Tourism Commission and staff were brought from around Australia to explain to them the changes that were being made. However, to my knowledge, no member of the staff ever saw a copy of that report.

They were told about the changes that were to be made, but they were not told the basis upon which those changes were to be made.

The latest upset in this particularly sordid saga was the shabby treatment handed out to Mr Len Hitchen, the ex-Chairman of the Tourism Commission, who is now to be the Chief Protocol Officer for the Government. I will explain later why I think the treatment handed out to Mr Hitchen was shabby. Even today a public statement has not been made about this matter. Information has been leaked to the Press only because of the persistent pressure the Opposition has applied to the Government and comments made by the member for Gascoyne earlier this week. Why should the report be made public?

I wish to refer to the front page of today's edition of *The West Australian* which indicates one reason that the report should be made public. The lead sentence of that report states—

The WA Tourism Commission projected an image of mediocrity and even non-performance, according to the controversial Price Waterhouse report leaked to *The West Australian* last night.

Can members imagine the sort of impact that statement and the innuendo that has surrounded this matter since the five senior officers have been moved out have had on the people in the commission? Can members imagine the impact it has had on the morale of the people in the commission? I am sure the people there today and for many months now have been looking over their shoulders wondering who would be next. After all, if the chief executive officer of the commission is to go, they have good reason to ask whether their jobs are secure.

If the Government is dinkum about tourism and about restoring morale in a very important department, it should say immediately that all of those people who work in the commission can look at the report and make a judgment. This Government seems to play with people's lives without a care or concern for in the future.

The commission should seek a staff input. The Government professes to believe in worker participation and decision-making, but clearly it seems the Government does not.

The second reason I believe the report should be made public is the basis of the claims made in the paper. Let us assume the Press report is right. Let us read the second and third parts of the statement.

Mr Brian Burke: You should assume it because you leaked it to the paper.

Mr MacKINNON: No I did not.

Mr Brian Burke: The Opposition did.

Mr MacKINNON: Did we? How does the Premier know that to be the case?

Mr Brian Burke: I understand that to be the case. Do you deny it?

Mr MacKINNON: I deny that I leaked it to the paper, and I do not know who did.

The newspaper report goes on as follows—

The report says that commission lacks innovation and creativity, has been poorly managed and has not contributed to the State's tourism industry.

Who is saying that? Who has the authority to say that the commission lacks innovation and creativity? I believe the report should be made public to ensure that both the public and the departmental officers concerned can see upon what basis that claim has been made. The report goes on as follows—

As chairman, the responsibility rested firmly with the chairman, then Mr Len Hitchen, the report said . . .

That again seems to be a very bland claim. Let us look at the history of Mr Hitchen's involvement. He was deputy chairman of the former Tourism Department. In January last year he was appointed after Australia-wide advertising by this Government while the Premier was Minister for Tourism. I believe there were about 60 applicants for the job and Mr Hitchen was appointed as initial chairman and chief executive of the Tourism Commission. This Government selected him, not the Opposition or the Commission. The newspaper report goes on as follows—

The report said that the chairman and commissioners had determined in mid-1984 that a study was required to gauge the WATC's efficiency.

So Mr Hitchen together with the commissioners decided that they needed to have an assessment of the commission's efficiency. That was six months into the life of this new body. Less than six months later out comes the report, and one month or so later out goes Mr Hitchen. Do you, Mr Deputy Speaker, think that is fair? What chance did Mr Hitchen or the commissioners for that matter have to get the old department or the new commission onto an efficient and workable basis? How could they make decisions knowing that this report was being completed? They were probably awaiting it before making most of their major decisions.

It seems very strange to me if that were the case, but I will come to that in a moment and show how it is probably not so strange when we see

lurking behind it none other than Mr Brett Goodridge who was appointed by the Premier initially as his adviser and who is the person who has gained most from this change. It seems to me Mr Hitchen has been treated very poorly, and for no other reason than to ensure that his credibility is maintained, the report should be made public immediately so that a senior public servant who has dedicated most of his working life to the State of Western Australia has a chance to clear his name from all this innuendo. It will give him a chance to hold his head high as he should be able to do for the service he has rendered to Western Australia, and not be treated in a shabby and shameful way as the Premier has done.

The third reason the report should be made public is that it questions the commission's usefulness. The newspaper report today says—

In a covering letter, the director of Price Waterhouse and Associates, Mr R. P. Webb, questioned the commission's usefulness.

Why does the Government not want to make that point public? Surely in the interests of the community and of encouraging sensible debate and open government it would be useful to have that letter. Let us see what Mr Webb of Price Waterhouse said about the commission's usefulness. If that is the case, has the right decision been made in sacking Mr Hitchen? Maybe—and I am not saying it is the answer—some of the fault should be shared by the commissioners. If that is the case let the blame fall squarely where it should lie. We do not know that. All those reports I have read are not the report itself. We do not have the ability to look at the \$120 000 worth of advice the Government has been given, hours of work were put into preparing it, and we should have access to that information.

Mr Brian Burke: Are you saying you have not seen the report?

Mr MacKINNON: I have not seen the report. Even if I had seen a copy of the report it would be no thanks to the Government. The Government commissioned the report, and it is the Government's responsibility to make it public, not that of the Opposition. The Government should be making sure the report is being made available for public scrutiny and that ample copies of the report are available.

A further reason that the report should be made public is that it indicates that the commission itself should become much more involved in the tourist industry in Western Australia and more involved in directing the operations of tourist bureaux, regional travel and associations, and the like.

The report apparently indicates there should be much more direct involvement in the operations of the tourist industry in Western Australia and if that is to be the case, I am sure the people of Western Australia would be interested to know why. I am sure the people involved and concerned about the operations of Exim would like to know exactly what the Tourism Commission is planning.

The Leader of the Opposition asked a question last night indicating the Tourism Commission was seeking to take a direct equity participation role in ventures in this State and that it is because of the Price Waterhouse report that is taking such a position. If there is to be a significant change in the direction of the Tourism Commission, the public are entitled to know about it. After all, those are not my words which were put at the head of the advertisements recently and paid for by the taxpayers of Western Australia. They were the words of the Premier who said, "It is your money and you are entitled to know how it is being spent". The Premier is dead right. It is our money and we and the general public of Western Australia are entitled to know exactly how it is being spent, particularly if it is being spent in the wrong way.

The fifth reason I believe this important report should be made public therefore revolves around that point. The report goes on to say that the Government of Western Australia spent \$120 000—the same amount, I might add, as for the land rights advertisements—of our money commissioning the report.

Have we seen the report yet? Has the general public had access to the report? Have the people whose lives, careers, and families will be affected by this report seen it? Of course they have not and it is time they did.

Finally, who are the authors of the report? This matter was drawn to my attention last night when the member for Vasse asked a question about a Mr Webb who was an author of this report. The member asked what relationship Mr Webb had to a report which had been completed in the Northern Territory. I did some research and found an extensive article in the *Business Review Weekly*. It was headed, "Judge blasts top accountants after NT liquidation inquiry" and reads as follows—

The judge described Barber and Webb as not entirely satisfactory witnesses.

The article continues—

Webb had reluctantly admitted that this clearly amounted to an attempt to defraud creditors.

I am not casting any aspersions on Mr Webb, but this article questions his propriety and he did apparently have something to do with this report. If that is the case and there is some relationship between Mr Webb and the report, surely to dispel any rumour of innuendo that may eventuate because of the report in the *Business Review Weekly* about the case in the Northern Territory, it would make sense for the Government to release the report to the public to show that everything is above-board and that Price Waterhouse was commissioned by the Government to investigate the Tourism Commission.

However, the Government has chosen to maintain that report in a cloud of secrecy to make sure that it is not made public. I wonder how long it will be before the Government succumbs and releases the report to the public.

Mr Brian Burke: You already know that the decision has been made to release it. The Opposition already has a copy of it.

Mr MacKINNON: Has it?

Mr Brian Burke: In fact, I am told that the Opposition released the report to the Press.

Mr MacKINNON: Is the Government releasing the report to the public?

Mr Brian Burke: I understand that the Minister for Tourism is about to release the report and to table it.

Mr MacKINNON: I hope that is the case. It has certainly taken a lot of effort on the part of the Opposition to get the report released.

Mr Brian Burke: The Minister is releasing the report this afternoon.

Mr MacKINNON: I would be pleased to receive a copy of it and I am sure the members of the public will be pleased also.

Mr Brian Burke: Why not ask the member for Vasse about it?

Mr MacKINNON: I will ask him.

Let me turn to the specific claims made by the Minister for Tourism in another place, claims which the Premier repeated when replying to the points made by my colleague, the member for Gascoyne, in relation to this issue. On page 2 of the Minister's statement he said—

Allegations regarding Mr Goodridge are completely unfounded.

Let me remind the house of some facts relating to Mr Goodridge. I will turn to a report in *The West Australian* about Price Waterhouse which reads as follows—

It also recommended that managers who were incapable of making decisions be re-

moved and non-performers "de-hired", and only the most appropriate individuals be recruited.

One must ask whether Mr Goodridge was the most appropriate person to be appointed to the position. I will be interested to read what the report says about Mr Goodridge. It begs the question again: Why was Mr Goodridge recruited to such an important position without there being one advertisement in the Press advertising it?

Mr Brian Burke: Do you understand that the report was finished before Mr Goodridge was appointed?

Mr MacKINNON: That is what I am saying. Perhaps the report has something in it about Mr Goodridge's appointment.

Mr Brian Burke: The commissioners unanimously agreed that he should be the person appointed to the position.

Mr MacKINNON: Why did the commissioners make that decision?

Mr Brian Burke: I do not know—ask them.

Mr MacKINNON: That is a good question. I do not believe for one moment that the commissioners made the appointment without the Premier's knowledge.

Mr Brian Burke: They did.

Mr MacKINNON: Mr Goodridge was an adviser on the Premier's staff and I do not believe that the Premier was not told about the appointment before it was made.

Mr Brian Burke: I learned of his appointment while I was in Japan.

Mr MacKINNON: The Premier must think that I came down in the last shower if he thinks I believe that the commission would take a senior adviser from the Premier's Department without the Premier's being told. If that is the case it is an appalling weakness on the part of the Premier to let that sort of thing happen.

Mr Brian Burke: That does not detract from the fact that I did not know about his appointment until the appointment was made.

Mr MacKINNON: It would be interesting to read what the report states about Mr Goodridge's appointment. I wonder whether the appointment was recommended. Why was Mr Goodridge appointed to an important position that was not advertised? Why was it that 12 months prior to Mr Goodridge's appointment, Mr Hitchen was appointed by this Government after an Australia-wide advertising campaign? It certainly is not what I would call good business. The normal pro-

cedure one would follow when looking for the best person for a job is to advertise the position.

I turn now to the comments made by Mr Basil Atkinson. I remind the house of question on notice 2745 which I asked on Tuesday 19 March and which read as follows—

- (1) Do the commissioners serving on the Western Australian Tourism Commission receive any remuneration for acting in that position?

The answer was "Yes". The next part of my question reads as follows—

- (2) If so, will the Minister detail for me those payments?

The answer was as follows—

- (2) All members, other than the Chairman and Chief Executive who is a salaried officer, are eligible for an annual fee of \$3 000. Five of the six part-time members of the Commission receive the fee.

I then asked—

- (3) Have any of the commissioners received payment from the Tourism Commission in addition to those payments?

The answer was "Yes". The last part of my question read as follows—

- (4) If so, will the Minister detail for me the amounts paid to each commissioner and the reasons for that payment?

The Minister replied—

	\$
(4) Mr Basil Atkinson—Travelling expenses	233.11

And he listed the amounts paid to the other commissioners.

The amount shown as paid to Mr Atkinson was \$233.11. The very next day—20 March—the Minister for Tourism made a prepared statement to the Legislative Council. The same Minister who prepared the answer to the question I asked on 19 March said the following—

With regard to the suggestion of impropriety concerning Mr Basil Atkinson I am informed the firm Basil Atkinson and Associates was appointed as a consultant earlier this year to make full use of Mr Atkinson's experience and expertise.

It continued—

A fee with Mr Atkinson of \$2500 per month was calculated on the basis of 50 hours consultancy work per month at \$50 per hour.

He was approached by the commission to ascertain whether he would be prepared to carry out the work at the prescribed fee. At

no stage was Mr Atkinson a party to any discussion regarding his appointment.

It is a very strange state of affairs when on 19 March the House was told that Mr Atkinson was paid \$233.11 yet the very next day the Minister for Tourism had the temerity to come out and say that Mr Atkinson was employed for \$2 500 a month.

Mr Court: The Government should have mentioned that in the first place.

Mr MacKINNON: I would have thought that that should have been the case. However, the Minister has totally misrepresented the situation and he stands condemned for telling the Parliament what seems to me to be a straightout lie.

It appears that the Government has an awful lot to hide in regard to the Tourism Commission and perhaps that is the reason it does not want to make public the Tourism Commission report, prepared by Price Waterhouse.

I turn now to the question of Cheri Gardiner and radio station 6PR. The first occasion on which I heard about the level of expenditure to 6PR and to other radio stations was during question time last night. I refer to what was on the public record prior to last night, and the basis upon which the statements were made by the member for Gascoyne.

In question 2902 of April 1984 I asked the following question—

- (3) What is the Tourist Commission's total promotion budget in 1983-84?

The answer was: \$2.4 million.

The next question was, "How much was spent on radio?" The answer came back, "Some 13 per cent, or \$1 347 000". The very next question was, "How much was spent on radio stations other than 6PR?" The answer came back that on 6KY it was \$5 000.

If members cast their minds back they will know that the only reason that \$5 000 of the \$1 347 000 was allocated was because at that time the two highest-rating talk-back shows in Perth were run by Howard Sattler and Bob Maumill. The Government, being concerned with the way Howard Sattler represented its view-point, ensured 6KY received \$5 000. No other radio station in Perth received a single dollar, hence the statements the other evening by the member for Gascoyne.

Finally, let me come to the commissioning of the report and see how the Government all along has tried to weave a web of intrigue or misinformation about this whole matter. I am pleased that the report has now been made public, I under-

stand, by the Minister for Tourism in another place. It is not before time.

Let us see what the Premier said on Tuesday in answer to a question in this Parliament about the commissioning of that report. He said this—

As a result of the Price Waterhouse Associates Pty. report which was sought by the senior officers of the commission—namely the chairman (Mr Hitchen) and the general manager (Mr Watling) who both asked and recommended to the commission that such a report be commissioned—

In that question the Premier seems to imply it was merely Mr Hitchen and Mr Watling whose idea the report was, yet it seems that the report itself indicates that the chairman and commissioners had determined in mid-1984—again, a misstatement of fact by the Premier in this matter—

Mr Brian Burke: Who was the chairman?

Mr MacKINNON: The chairman then was Len Hitchen.

One final point in relation to the question of the Tourism Commission, relates to the appointment of Mr Neil Barrie. Mr Neil Barrie is not known to me. He was apparently a former employee of Price Waterhouse, which company is known to me; it is highly respected and I have no criticism of it. I am, however, very critical of Mr Barrie, Mr Goodridge and the Government for seeking to employ Mr Barrie. It is unprecedented for a professional man who prepares a report recommending a certain position to take up that position himself. That is totally unprofessional and unprincipled, and for the Government to be a party to it is totally wrong. I wonder how many other reports might be floating around Governments now and in the future where the authors of those reports are saying, "I will write myself into a position here". I understand that is not the half of it.

I understand the major person engaged with Mr Barrie in creating and finalising that report was none other than Mr Goodridge himself. So the big winners out of the Price Waterhouse report are Mr Neil Barrie, the person who prepared the report, or worked very largely on the report, and Mr Brett Goodridge, who has had a significant jump in salary and position. The big losers, of course, are the Tourism Commission employees, those five who have been sacked, Mr Hitchen himself, the tourism industry in Western Australia, which is suffering because of the present row in the Tourism Commission, and the people of Western Australia, because they have not been entitled until today to see exactly what is in the report.

Mr Court: I got the feeling the Minister was not on top of his portfolio.

Mr MacKINNON: I think that would apply to both the current Minister and the previous Minister.

The second point I wish to raise in this debate relates to another matter of public expenditure. It seems to me this Government wants to spend money willy-nilly without very much public accountability. We debated this yesterday in relation to Exim. We have seen how this Government squandered money on television advertisements promoting Aboriginal land rights. We come back to another situation which requires the Premier and the Government to be accountable.

The public are entitled to know what is happening with their money. Specifically, the Minister for Industrial Relations seems to have been abusing his privilege by taking his driver with him to Broome on holiday. I am not talking there about the driver going on holiday, I am talking about the Minister himself going on holiday.

Let me give members an outline of the facts of this case as they are known to me. Let me say at the outset that I am not critical of the Government driver in any way; he is merely working for the Government and he operates, as does my driver and I suppose the Premier's driver, at the direction of the person for whom he drives. In this case, however, the facts warrant a much closer investigation and a much more honest approach by the Government than has already been the case.

In January, while the Leader of the Opposition was on holiday, I had the privilege of being Acting Leader of the Opposition. During that time the whole question of Mr Dowding's tax avoidance affairs was raised, and the fact that he was a tax cheat. In relation to these matters—

Mr Gordon Hill: What did you say?

Mr MacKINNON: I said he was a tax cheat.

Withdrawal of Remark.

The SPEAKER: Order! I refer the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to the Standing Orders. If he reads those Standing Orders he will realise it is highly disorderly to reflect on a member of Parliament.

Mr Brian Burke: Do you realise the member for Gascoyne had a driver drive him to Carnarvon on four occasions?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MacKINNON: Do you want me to withdraw?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr MacKINNON: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: You have to apologise too.

Mr MacKINNON: I apologise.

Debate Resumed

Mr MacKINNON: I am not aware of what the member for Gascoyne has done previously. We are not the Government now. It so happens that the Government now is headed by the Premier who sits directly opposite me. To say that if a member on this side of the House is wrong, and that two wrongs make a right, does not wash with me, and it does not wash with the general public. Whichever party is the Government of the day, if there is an abuse of taxpayers' money, those people abusing their privileges should be brought to account for that particular matter. Whatever is said about any member on this side of the House does not make one skerrick of difference.

Mr Wilson: Why was the member for Gascoyne not brought to terms?

Mr MacKINNON: The Government is making the claim against Mr Laurance. If the Minister wants to make that claim he should stand up in the Supply debate, just as I have, instead of sitting on his butt and making inane interjections.

Mr Wilson: Coward!

Mr MacKINNON: The only coward in this House is the Minister for Housing, who is not prepared to stand up and put his money where his mouth is.

Let me refer to some Press statements made at that time. These related to Mr Dowding's tax issue. On 13 January it was said—

A spokesman for Mr Dowding said yesterday the Minister was preparing the final draft of his statement, but the spokesman said Mr Dowding would not be present at the Cabinet meeting because he was still officially on leave.

Again, on 14 January, this was said—

Mr Dowding, who was on leave in Broome, is not expected to be present at the meeting.

That was said in a Press statement the next day. I did not take much notice of it at the time.

Subsequently it was drawn to my attention by a journalist—how he found out I do not know—that at the time Mr Dowding was making his statement to the Press and his spokesperson was making those statements that he was officially on leave, he also had with him in Broome his driver and his vehicle.

As a consequence of that I asked some questions in the Parliament. On 27 February I asked—

(1) Did the Minister for Industrial Relations take his driver with him when recently visiting Broome on holiday?

(2) If so, who paid the driver's expenses whilst he was living in Broome?

(3) Did the driver's family accompany him?

The answers I received were as follows—

(1) I am informed the driver was present when the Minister performed official duties.

The Premier did not reply that the Minister was not on holidays, just that the Minister had performed official duties. The answers continued—

(2) Expenses related to official duties were met by the Government.

(3) During time off due to him, his family joined him in Broome.

Those answers were pretty straightforward. However, I then asked a question on 5 March, parts (1) and (2) of which were as follows—

(1) What were the total costs paid by the Government on behalf of the Minister for Industrial Relations' driver as referred to in question 2319 of 27 February?

(2) How did the driver travel to Broome?

The reply was that certain costs were involved for the driver and that the driver had driven to Broome. I then asked how long the driver was in Broome and how long during that time he was on holidays. The answer was—

The driver's stay in Broome on holiday is a matter personal to the driver. It is believed he was in Broome for about a week.

For the additional information of members the cost of hiring a car for six weeks would have been in excess of these costs.

Subsequent to the article I have mentioned the *Daily News* gave some publicity to the matter. On 6 March I received a phone call from someone who outlined to me the facts surrounding Mr Dowding's trip to Broome and some of the alleged factors surrounding his driver's visit to Broome.

I did not come into the Parliament at the time saying that this or that had been alleged. What I did was what I thought any responsible member of Parliament should do, and that was to place a series of questions on the Notice Paper, questions I thought were reasonable and seeking information from the Government about decisions in which it was involved and for which it—not the driver—had responsibility. In answer to my three

questions on 13 March I received the following response—

A number of questions asked on this matter by the member have related to the activities of a Government driver and his family whilst on holidays. These are not matters within the Government's jurisdiction.

The procedures in respect of this assignment were in line with procedures followed on numerous occasions by previous Governments.

However, if the member has any specific concerns about the matters raised in his questions and they fall within the Government's jurisdiction I will be pleased to have them investigated.

Let me repeat what those questions were and the subject they dealt with, matters which are still of concern to me and to the public and which should have been answered. These questions that I am about to outline were the self-same questions that were asked on 13 March. They dealt with a matter which was the responsibility of Mr Dowding and the Government, not the Minister's driver, bearing in mind that I was told in answer to an earlier question that the driver was present with the Minister when the Minister performed certain official duties.

I asked, quite reasonably I think, "What official duties had Mr Dowding carried out in Broome that required him and the Government to go to the expense of having a driver drive up to Broome and then back again?" I am prepared to let the matter lie if the Minister had an official commitment which necessitated his taking his driver to Broome rather than making use of a taxi or his private car. What official duties did Mr Dowding have to attend to which necessitated his having his driver with him in Broome at a time, I repeat, when the Minister's staff were saying that he was officially on leave?

My second question is: How did the Minister's driver travel to Broome? Did he travel by car or by air? I think that is a reasonable request to make of the Government. If the Minister had to travel to Broome and wanted to make some calls on the way perhaps he had to take his driver; perhaps his driver had to be put to the trouble of travelling to Broome and back. But I would like some answers other than, "This is none of your business".

I am not asking questions about the driver. My questions relate specifically to the Minister himself and to his movements, not the movements of the driver.

I then asked: Did this driver, while in Broome, travel to Perth and back at any time at the Government's expense?

That is not a personal question about the driver; it is a question about Government expenditure. The information made available to me indicates that that is just what happened: The driver was in Broome for some time but in fact came back to Perth during the time Mr Dowding was in Broome. He then returned to Broome—I do not know for how long—and returned to Perth again. Again, if that is the case, we are entitled to know exactly how our funds are being used. We are the people paying the bills. It is our money being used by the Government. If the driver was used for legitimate purposes I will be the first to say, "Fair enough". I understand the sorts of pressures Ministers come under. However, if that is not the case we are entitled to know the answers to the questions I have asked.

I will not labour that point any further but I do not intend to let the matter rest there. The Treasurer has not answered those key questions, which are not directed at the driver, of whom, I repeat, I am not being critical. What I want to know is what the Government is doing with public money. Is the Minister for Industrial Relations on the up and up? If he is not, why continue to hide behind a smokescreen by saying, "Refer to question 2655"? These matters are well within the Government's jurisdiction and responsibility. This is a Government Minister and the Government is spending taxpayers' money. We are entitled to know the information and the answers should be given to those questions, otherwise we must fear the worst about Mr Dowding and the way he has used his driver. Did Mr Dowding use his driver for personal rather than official reasons? If he did, that would represent a blatant abuse of taxpayer's funds and he should be censured in the most severe manner possible.

Debate adjourned, until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer).

(Continued on page 1241.)

TOURISM COMMISSION

Price Waterhouse Report: Ministerial Statement

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [2.58 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement and to table the Price Waterhouse Associates report on the WA Tourism Commission.

Leave granted.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: At the outset, I wish to make it abundantly clear that this report is being tabled at the request of the Opposition and because of the patently false allegations made about

the commission by the member for Gascoyne in his recently acquired role of chief Opposition mud-slinger.

As members will see, the report contains material that is critical of former senior officers of the commission and I have no doubt that some of them, if not all of them, will be deeply hurt by the report's contents becoming public. I can only say that if they feel aggrieved by the report becoming public—as they quite understandably might—it is on the heads of the Opposition because it is the Opposition which has demanded that this course of action be followed. The responsibility for this rests solely with the Opposition.

Members who peruse the report will no doubt reflect on the irony of the situation which has arisen. The member for Gascoyne in this place on Tuesday made a number of allegations about the Tourism Commission, allegations which, as was pointed out so tellingly in this morning's editorial in *The West Australian*, he has conspicuously failed to substantiate. In his speech on Tuesday, the member referred to the replacement of a number of senior officers from the commission, intimating that this action was unjustified and suggesting that it did not have his support.

In seeking to pursue the matter yesterday, his colleagues have demanded that this report be tabled and its tabling makes public the justification for the replacement of the senior officers—justification which the member for Gascoyne suggested was totally lacking.

The position of the member for Gascoyne on this current matter was, of course, further weakened last night when one of his colleagues was responsible for the leaking to *The West Australian* of a copy of the Price Waterhouse report. The article published this morning shows why the senior management changes made at the commission—changes which the member for Gascoyne has virtually said should never have been made—had to be made. And I take this opportunity to stress that the Price Waterhouse report, which was instigated by the commissioners themselves at the suggestion of the then chairman, Mr Len Hitchen, refers to the activities of the commission prior to the recent changes in senior management.

I wish to stress—because it was not made clear in this morning's report in *The West Australian*—that the changes in senior management made at the commission recently have occurred because of the highly critical findings of the Price Waterhouse report. This report highlighting inefficiency has been acted on promptly by the Government, as any reasonable

taxpayer would expect. And once again, as has happened in so many other cases, the Government's efforts to increase the efficiency of the machinery of Government and to get better value for the taxpayer's dollar have been attacked by the Opposition. The fact is, of course, that the deficiencies in tourism performance highlighted in the Price Waterhouse report are the legacy of years of neglect of tourism by the Court and O'Connor Governments. Under the leadership of the late Sir David Brand and his Government, tourism assumed an important place in State Government activity.

But during the nine years of coalition Government between 1974 and 1983 it was downgraded and ignored. In later years the office of the Minister for Tourism had a revolving door through which passed a succession of junior Ministers whose only interest in the portfolio was whether it would assist them in their aspirations to higher office.

Mr Blaikie: You are ignoring the 150th year celebrations.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Did the member for Vasse release the report to the Press?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Did the member leak the report, after asking questions seeking a copy of the report when he had a copy all the time? To continue: Tourism was poorly funded. Its great potential as a means of generating economic growth was ignored. The tourism industry never received anything more than lip-service from successive conservative Governments, preoccupied with creating the State's financial crisis over North-West Shelf gas.

It took a change of Government to change all that. We came to office fully conscious of the tourism industry's great capacity to generate growth. In our first Budget—a no-growth Budget for most areas of Government—we increased funding by more than 35 per cent. In our second Budget we increased funding by more than 80 per cent. We set about breaking out of the bureaucratic departmental approach to tourism and creating a dynamic, fast-moving and market-oriented structure, complementary to the dynamic nature of the industry itself.

The preparation of the Price Waterhouse report and the implementation of its major thrusts represent the final break with the non-performing past.

Western Australia has before it the greatest tourist industry opportunities in its history. We have moved to take advantage of them, not only

with substantially increased funding but with new strategies as well. These include—

- an aggressive drive to increase international air services to the State;
- the ground-breaking tourism forum;
- assisting with and encouraging the formation of new industry organisations such as the WA Tourism Industry Association and the WA Country Tourism Association;
- greater funding for country tourist organisations and the Perth convention bureau;
- allowing competition on intrastate air routes;
- the opening of new Holiday WA centres; and,
- allowing public participation in planning for Rottneest.

And this list is by no means exhaustive.

Yesterday, the Opposition made a demand of us with respect to the Price Waterhouse report. We have met that demand with consequences that I am sure are far different from those intended by the Opposition and which the Opposition—if it has any sensitivity at all—ought to find both embarrassing and unfortunate. That is on its own head.

Today, it is our turn to make demands. We make two demands: Firstly, we demand to know where is the evidence of the wrong doing in the Tourism Commission and particularly by the managing director. So far, the member for Gascoyne has been very free and fulsome with his allegations, serious allegations, but he has not produced any evidence to back them up.

Secondly, we demand to know just where the Opposition stands on the future of the State's tourism industry. We have heard plenty from the member for Gascoyne, but we have heard nothing from the Leader of the Opposition or from his deputy, the Opposition's official spokesman on tourism matters. Do they believe, as the member for Gascoyne apparently does, that there should have been no changes to the senior management of the Tourism Commission? Or do they believe that the findings of the Price Waterhouse report should have been implemented, as they have been?

If they do not believe the Price Waterhouse findings should have been implemented, what evidence can they bring to show that they are right and that Price Waterhouse is wrong? To use an old Australian expression, it is now time for the Opposition to put up or shut up.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 518).

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.07 p.m.]: The Government is treating the release of the Price Waterhouse re-

port with disdain. It is another example of the Government's record of mistakes along the way. The Government knew it would release this report today, but we received a copy of the Premier's statement three minutes before it was made.

Mr Brian Burke: It was made in the Legislative Council half an hour ago.

Mr MacKINNON: The Premier made the statement in this House. It is not up to us to go to the other House to obtain a copy of his statement. The Premier is making the statement, so it is his responsibility to ensure that the Opposition receives a copy. Again, the Premier has tried to get out of the whole matter. What has the Government got to hide? I guess the Government wishes to avoid a situation when it is clear the Opposition could debate what is contained in the report.

I must first scotch one comment made by the Premier and that was that we were attacking the Government because it was trying to implement efficiencies. That is not the case at all; we are attacking the manner in which five senior officers of the Tourism Commission were removed from the commission, when this report had not been finalised. Those officers did not know why they were sacked.

Mr Len Hitchen, a senior officer of longstanding in the Public Service, gave years of loyal service, but was shifted aside before this report was made public. That causes us concern. We are not concerned that the Government wishes to implement efficiencies; that is what we all want. However, the people involved in this commission should be treated with respect and dignity. That is something this Premier does not know the meaning of.

I refer to specific points the Premier made in his statement. When the Premier referred to the number of past Liberal Government Ministers for Tourism it was a case of the pot calling the kettle black. I remind the Premier that his Government has been in office for two years and how many Ministers for Tourism have been appointed in that time? One has been appointed each year, so I do not know what the number of past Liberal Ministers have to do with the present situation.

The Premier has attempted to indicate that the answer to all the problems in the Tourism Commission is the amount of money it spends, just as the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs tells us that land rights will solve all the problems of the Aborigines. That is what the Premier believes: He thinks all the Tourism Commission needs is more money to be spent on it.

I remind the House and the Premier that tourism is about people—the people who operate the industry, the way in which they are organised in the industry, and the way in which the Government protects those people and looks after them. Tourism is not about the amount of money paid for a television advertisement or the commissioning of grandiose Price Waterhouse reports, and the like. Tourism is all about people, and the Government is losing sight of that.

The Premier went on later to say that the Government demands to know where the Opposition stands on the future of this State's tourism industry. The Government will not have long to wait before it finds out, because our policy papers on tourism are in the final stages of preparation. Our policy will be bold and forward-looking, and it will focus on exactly what I am talking about—that is, people. They will have the pivotal role in our tourism policy, while the Government's policies place the pivotal role on tourism policies.

Let us have a look at some of the claims made by the Government about substantially increased funding and new strategies. These claims include an aggressive drive to increase international air services to the State. Who was it who first raised the question of direct flights from Japan to Western Australia?

Mr Brian Burke: Not you.

Mr MacKINNON: It was the Opposition, and the Premier well knows it. We have been calling for that for some time. Months and months ago, the Leader of the Opposition made a statement along those lines. The move came from the Opposition parties, not the Government. What have we seen as a result? We have heard of a big report—the Avmark report which cost thousands and thousands of dollars—and who has seen that report? It has been kept secret. The Government does not want the people to know its ideas on getting international flights into Australia.

What has the Government done about international flights? Has it sent a tourism officer to Japan to research the market, to see what the Japanese people like, and work with Qantas and JAL, trying to encourage them to put people on planes to come to Perth? Of course it has not done that. The Government asked an American agency to write a report about the situation, but that is not the way to get the job done. We believe the way to get the job done is to fill up the seats on the planes and get people to come to Western Australia.

The Premier also dealt with the "ground-breaking" tourism forum. Let me give credit where credit is due. When the forum was held, it

was hailed far and wide around the State. It was a good idea. Of itself, the forum was very good, but that is where it started and ended. If one speaks to any of the people who were involved in the forum, and particularly to the people who were involved in the working parties subsequently, one finds they reckon they have wasted their time. What has happened in relation to penalty rates? That was a key recommendation of the forum, but nothing has happened—absolutely nothing.

Mr Court: It went the same way as the redundancy decision.

Mr MacKINNON: Exactly. What happened to all the other reports of the tourism forum? By and large, the answer is the same—absolutely nothing. The tourism forum has led the tourism industry in Western Australia absolutely nowhere.

The Premier claims that the Government has encouraged the formation of new industry organisations such as the Western Australian Tourism Industry Association and the Western Australian Country Tourism Association. I applaud that; they were good moves. However, I remind the House that they are not Government bodies, but private associations; and while the Government may have helped them to get together, the establishment of the organisations has absolutely nothing to do with the Government.

Mr Brian Burke: They came out of the tourism forum. That was another success.

Mr MacKINNON: The Country Tourism Association was originally suggested by Noel Semmens at the country tourism conference in Esperance about four years ago. That is when the idea was first floated.

The Premier talked about greater funding for the country tourism organisations and the Perth convention bureau, and that is probably the worst part of his statement. I asked a question in this Parliament last week about the funding for country tourist bureaus. If one compares the amount of money that has gone to them in the last three years with the 80 per cent and 60 per cent, or whatever the figures were, about which the Premier talked, one sees that the country tourist bureaus and regional travel associations have been done by very poorly by this Government. They have been left out in the cold.

Just after the release of the Budget last year, or just before it—I cannot recall which—the Opposition made a commitment that, when returned to Government, it will give a significant boost to the people who play a key role in the development of the tourism industry in this State. That brings me back to the point that those people are the people of Western Australia—the little people

with their country tourist bureaus, regional travel associations, and information bureaus—in fact, the people who provide a service to the tourists who travel. The Government has passed those people by. It has paid lip-service to them; but the Opposition does not intend to do that.

The Premier dealt with the competition on intrastate air routes. We applaud that move. The Premier also talked about the opening of new Holiday WA centres. Which new ones? Was he referring to the one at the Merlin Hotel? I cannot see that it has done an awful lot to promote tourism in Western Australia. I think the centre in Brisbane shifted from an upstairs position downstairs; but that move was first suggested when we were in Government. So much for the fantastic tourism initiatives!

The Premier also talked about allowing public participation in planning for Rottnest Island. What a joke! The Government was not going to have any part of the public in its plans; but as the public cottoned on to what the Government was about, the public and the Opposition demanded that the public have some say in the development. The Government then came around to that point, having seen the folly of its ways.

I will now deal with the demands of the Government. The Premier said that the Government demanded to know where there is evidence of wrongdoing in the Tourism Commission, and particularly the managing director. Let me repeat what I said earlier today: How many people were in for the job of Mr Goodridge? How many applications were lodged for that job? How was it advertised and where? It was not! The only man who lodged an application for the job was Mr Goodridge himself. Who was it, in fact, who actually helped draft the Price Waterhouse report tabled today? Mr Goodridge! Who, in fact, has benefited the most out of the Price Waterhouse report? None other than Mr Goodridge!

Mr Blajkie: The *Daily News* today states that Mr Goodridge is the key man for the top job.

Mr MacKINNON: I am not in the least surprised. In fact, if he does not become the chairman, that is when I will be surprised.

The Government's second demand was to know just where the Opposition stands on the future of this State's tourism industry. The Government will hear about that, as I have indicated, in due course. We will make sure that our policies are written down on paper for all to see and for the Government to criticise, if that is its wont. We have taken a long time to prepare our policy because we want it to be right. We have listened to

what people have had to say, and we are still listening to them.

The Premier said that the House had heard plenty from the member from Gascoyne and nothing from the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy. Let me remind the House and the Premier that, firstly, unlike the Government, the Opposition is not a one-man band. We have more than one person who can make a statement or a speech. In fact, we have a whole team of people who can do that. The Government has only one man who can make speeches.

Mr Court: And he is getting tired.

Mr MacKINNON: Dead right. The Premier is getting tired from carrying the rest of them on his back.

We have plenty of people over here who have knowledge of tourism. I am quite happy to let the member for Gascoyne, or, for that matter, any other member on this side of the House, make speeches about tourism. The Leader of the Opposition has made speeches about tourism, and he will continue to do so. I have made speeches and statements, as I am entitled to do, as is any other member on this side of the House. What a weak sort of statement from the Premier that one was. What sort of an attack is that? It was an attack with a feather, and it got the result it deserved.

Does the Government believe, as does the member for Gascoyne, that there should be no changes in the senior management of the Tourism Commission until the recommendations of the Price Waterhouse report have been discussed publicly? The Premier tabled the Price Waterhouse report at the conclusion of his speech, and during that selfsame speech he asked whether we believed that the recommendations in the Price Waterhouse report should be implemented.

How the heck are we supposed to know? The report was tabled only today. What an inane and ridiculous suggestion that is. We will stand up and be counted. We want to stand up and be counted.

This report has been tabled because of the vigilance and ability of the Opposition to embarrass the Government. We are proud of that and we are proud that we are able to have that report now available for the public to peruse. We are proud that people such as Len Hitchen now have the opportunity to defend themselves through that document. We will continue to attack the Government every time we see it trying to hide behind that facade it always puts up. We wanted the public to see this Government's real performance and we have been able to show it this time.

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR CRANE (Moore) [3.23 p.m.]: In my contribution to this debate I wish to cover some of the problems which we are facing in Western Australia because of a situation that exists throughout Australia. There is a lack of confidence in this country. The fact that our dollar has been devalued so dramatically is an indication of what other people think of us. Business has declined to such an extent that it now cannot afford to employ people. It has lost confidence in itself. It has lost that confidence because it is not allowed to make a profit any more. "Profit" has become an ugly word. It is as a result of that that we have so much unemployment.

I can remember not so many years ago when one could go into a department store in the city and receive courteous service. The department stores were able to employ the people who today, in many instances, are standing in dole queues. They employed those people because they could afford to employ them and because they wanted to employ them. That was good for business. If one goes into a department store today—here I am talking about any business house in the metropolitan area—one certainly does not receive proper service. People have to provide their own service. One cannot make inquiries without great difficulty. One cannot purchase goods without having to find somebody to take one's money and wrap one's purchases. Service is non-existent. It is non-existent because, as I have said there is no confidence.

Demands being made by militant unions for higher wages and for shorter hours have also decreased confidence and caused hardship in the business sector. That will continue as long as Parliaments such as this and idiots like the Minister for Education allow it to happen. He keeps interjecting. I understand that interjections are highly undesirable in this place. I will therefore continue to disregard them.

Until such time as we can regain confidence in the business sector things will get worse. Here I am referring to all businesses including Government businesses. Until employers can get a decent day's work for a decent day's pay I cannot see much possibility of Australia ever becoming prosperous again. That applies not only to the business houses, but also to our export industries. In the past there was a saying, "A day's work for a day's pay". I assure everybody who has a job today that they are getting their day's pay. All we need now

is to get a day's work from them and then we shall all be able to move towards regaining the prosperity that we once had.

The 17 per cent loading placed on businesses is tantamount to the straw that broke the camel's back.

Mr McNee: Seventeen and a half per cent.

Mr CRANE: We could perhaps concede the 0.5 per cent if the Government took away the 17 per cent. Workers' compensation insurance payments have gone up. Payroll taxes have been imposed on businesses. I am not blaming this Government for any of these matters; I am blaming Governments generally. I concede that my party was in office for many years and would be responsible for most of the blame. However, it is time that we recognised the problems facing us and were big enough to do something about them.

Income tax is another deterrent for the business sector. It is not possible now to improve one's business because of the tax burdens placed on it. This is a Federal issue, of course, but the results directly affect this State.

We have a tremendous task ahead of us. I believe the only way the problem will be resolved is by Parliament being big enough to recognise the mistakes made in the past. This Government was not necessarily the Government which made those mistakes, but with our co-operation, we can correct them.

The Premier recently made certain suggestions relating to national service for young people. Those commitments were worthwhile, I believe, although, how he came to receive the credit for them, God only knows. Many of us have been making those comments for many years. He just happened to be in the right place at the right time. It does not matter very much who receives the credit as long as those suggestions are implemented. I do not consider, necessarily, that the national service about which he spoke should be based on military service although that has its place. Rather, I feel that young people could be given a purpose in life by being taught responsibility and discipline and, as a result of that early training, go on and further themselves as adult, responsible people in our community. I believe the suggestion should be supported by everyone. Perhaps a parliamentary committee could be set up to consider the ramifications of such a suggestion. I am not suggesting that I will ever move for the establishment of such a committee because I know they are time-consuming. However, I would like to see co-operation in this Parliament.

We, on this side of the House, should not oppose simply because we sit on this side. We should

support good suggestions for what they are worth, amend them and improve them if necessary and, in so doing, make the Government recognise the spirit of our intentions. In those circumstances, I believe that only good could come from our deliberations.

I am pleased that at long last the Jurien boat harbour will be established. I have spoken of this for many years—I think about nine or 10 years if I remember rightly. There is a need for such a facility in that area. There has always been a great deal of trouble launching boats, and particularly the pleasure boats. For a number of years the Dandaragan Shire Council has provided a removable launching ramp for the pleasure boats.

Mr Taylor: The member for Kalamunda did not seem too happy about it.

Mr CRANE: I will sort him out in a moment. In the wintertime the temporary ramp was regularly washed away with the result that it was a costly exercise to provide a new one each year. After discussion with the shire council—in fact, it was at my suggestion—it was agreed that rather than spend money on something more substantial which did not wash away in the winter, we should be prepared to put forward a proposal for a proper boat harbour to serve both the fishing fleet and pleasure boat industry.

Representations were made by many people over the years and it is unfortunate that the Jurien boat harbour was not built during the term of the previous Government because that is when it should have been built. All the cards were stacked in its favour. However, the Esperance boat harbour was given priority and built first even though it did not have a fishing fleet of any consequence or the need for it because of anchorages. Obviously for political or other reasons the Government decided to give Esperance priority. When the Opposition was in Government it was wrong to take this action and, therefore, it does us no good to criticise this Government for contracts it has let to do a job on which we could have saved more money if it had been done when it should have been. I hope that will put the record straight in this regard.

Going around my electorate, I have had renewed representation from people living in the Quinns Rocks-Yanchep-Two Rocks area over a matter I have raised in this Parliament many times. I have also written many letters on the subject and recently wrote to the Minister for Transport concerning crosswalks at Wanneroo. This matter should have been attended to many years ago but it has not been. Only a matter of weeks ago one of my constituents from Yanchep

was knocked down by a motor vehicle at the intersection of Hastings Street, Conlan Avenue, and Wanneroo Road, adjacent to the shopping centre. This is a very busy spot and the hazard is made worse because the north-bound traffic entering the Wanneroo townsite approaches over a hill. It is usually travelling a little faster than it should with the result that the vehicles are almost at the hazard spot—where a crosswalk should be provided—before they realise what is going on.

People crossing Wanneroo Road are in a very precarious situation with the two-way traffic lane. I know that it is said one can get to the island in the middle, take refuge, and watch the traffic the other way. However, it is difficult for elderly people and mothers with prams or young children to cope with this road. A few years ago my office was in Wanneroo—and it had been there for some years—and I found it extremely difficult at times to cross the road and I had to be extremely careful when doing so. I bring this to the attention of the Minister for Transport; I have written to him and he will recall that I spoke with him on the matter recently. I am sure that it is receiving attention and he will consider it.

Mr Grill: I will have another look at this one for you.

Mr CRANE: I appreciate that comment by the Minister.

This should have been done before he became Minister; probably the Main Roads Department or the previous Minister should have taken action. I wrote on one occasion and suggested that surely we did not have to wait for someone to be hurt or killed before action was taken. "No answer" was the stern reply! However, I now have an assurance from the Minister that he will consider the matter and I have every confidence that he will do so.

I am concerned at the costs this Government is incurring on projects which I believe do not warrant such an expenditure. I refer of course to the unnecessary cost of \$130 000 for television advertising to propagate the Government's case for Aboriginal land rights. I know that legislation is before the House and I believe this propaganda—which is probably a better word for it—is being used as an opportunity for the Premier to put himself before the people. It is unfair in as much as it is one-sided and the Opposition is not given an opportunity to put forward its point of view. This should not be necessary, and would not be, if the Government had refrained from spending this \$130 000 with the television companies. It is really a gift. No such advertising should have been undertaken. There is no need for the Opposition to be given an equal sum of money because

if that happened, the Government would be wasting \$260 000 and I do not believe we should be wasting any money. There are many more important projects on which this money could be spent.

I reiterate my concern, and the concern of Western Australians generally, at the increasing lack of respect for the law and at the sentences handed down for miscreants who have been found guilty. I would like to know where the directions come from that certain sentences may be reduced. Nowadays it seems that we are far more tolerant; we accept it as inevitable that people will break the law, and cause a great deal of mischief and inconvenience to others, and will not be asked to make restitution to those whose goods they may have stolen or damaged. In fact, in many instances, they do not receive any punishment at all, or perhaps only a light fine or a rap over the knuckles and a request not to do it again. This matter is of tremendous concern to us all. It is another indication of why people are losing faith in Western Australia and why there is a lack of confidence in life itself.

As citizens we are entitled to the protection of the law, yet even the police—who do their job so well; I have nothing but praise for the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities—are let down when cases come before the courts and soft and easy judgments are delivered. Probably the most blatant and shocking example of this, an example which increased the lack of confidence of the community, was the dropping of the charges against the Secretary of the TWU, Mr O'Connor recently. That was shocking action for any Government to take. I very carefully did not say "any responsible Government" because the action taken demonstrates that the Government is not responsible. The ramifications of that action will reverberate through our community for many years.

I hope that, in its wisdom, the Government may recognise the mistake it has made and endeavour to reverse the decision. We all make mistakes and we shall all continue to make them. However, it is important that, having recognised that one has made a mistake, one is big enough to admit it and do something about correcting it. The Government should recognise where it made the mistake in respect of the O'Connor case and it should correct that mistake. If it did so, it would command a great deal of respect from the community of Western Australia.

It was suggested in the newspapers yesterday that the Government was losing favour. I do not conduct polls; I simply talk to people. However, when one is talking to people one cannot always be

sure of the exact position, because people tend to tell one things which are not necessarily the case. For example, I have met only one person in my electorate who did not vote for me, yet the figures which came out at the ballot suggested a few others may not have voted for me. I make the point that people do not always tell one what they are really thinking. However, generally speaking, one can gauge the level of feelings on an issue. The mistake the Government made in its handling of the O'Connor case was very serious. As I said previously, the result of that mistake will be far more devastating to the Government than it appreciates.

In a moment of lightheartedness I said that the disease which will result from that mistake will be far greater than AIDS; the Government will be suffering from "O'Connorrhoca" for the rest of its life!

There is a problem in respect of the school bus contract system with which the Government could assist, but it has not done much about it so far. This matter remains unresolved and the Minister for Education who interjected so frequently previously is not now in his seat, which is unfortunate, because he is a person who could do something about it. It is a shame that contractors who entered into agreements with the Government now find that those agreements are not being honoured. All agreements should be honoured when they are entered into in a proper manner. Many of these bus contracts were drawn up properly, but unfortunately the Government has decided to disregard them. A great deal of hardship and frustration is being caused as a result.

It is always the responsibility of Government to endeavour to cut costs. However, the Government must exercise discretion when doing so and it should bear in mind that the school bus service is of tremendous importance not only to country people—although mainly it affects country people, because their children could not attend school were it not for school buses—but also to city people, particularly those who live on the outskirts of the metropolitan area.

A problem exists at Quinns Rock where we are endeavouring to obtain a separate bus service for the primary school. The route taken by a bus which serves Wanneroo includes a spur which takes the children in outlying areas into the primary school at Quinns Rock. However, according to all the criteria, the number of children using the bus service is sufficient to warrant establishing a separate bus service. I am not sure of the exact number of children involved, but there would be 20 or 23 children using this bus service.

These children are entitled to have their own school bus, but because they have not been given one, they must travel on a bus which operates from Wanneroo. As a result, these children are picked up by the bus very early in the morning and dropped off very late in the afternoon, which causes distress to their parents and results in the children having to undergo a very long bus journey each day.

I am not being unreasonable when I ask the Government to examine the matter with a view to providing a separate school bus for the Quinns Rock Primary School.

I notice the Minister for Water Resources is in the Chamber. The other day I approached him with a deputation from the Moora Shire which was well received. It related to the water situation at Bindi Bindi and Miling. For the last seven years water restrictions have been imposed on the people of Miling. This summer restrictions have been placed on top of restrictions, if members know what that means—I am not too sure of the meaning myself. However, the net result is that no water is coming out of the taps and people get very thirsty.

We made a deputation to the Minister and he listened to our pleas and promised to look into the matter. There is no easy solution to the problem and any solution necessitates expenditure. There is no water to be found around Miling or Bindi Bindi. For years the Public Works Department investigated this matter and eventually it produced the conclusion that there is no point in looking further for water there. Therefore, it would only be a waste of time, effort, and money to look for an alternative water source in that area.

There is only one solution to the problem and that is the suggestion I, along with others, have made in the House, although I raised it first. The solution relates to the Agaton project. If the water in the Agaton were tapped from the basin west of Watheroo, it was proposed that a pipe be installed to connect with the comprehensive pipe at Pithara and the eastern wheat-belt. That would augment the scheme there and a pipe could then be installed through to Miling and Bindi Bindi.

I appreciate the shortage of money and the difficulties which would be associated with starting such a project. However, the side benefits to the State would be substantial not only in respect of the increased employment which would be provided in the laying of the pipe, but also in the manufacturing industries which would make the pipe. I have presented such a suggestion to the Premier already.

I suggested a solution to the Minister and I feel confident he will ask his officers to look at it. That solution was that the Agaton project be commenced in reverse by bringing a pipe back from Pithara to connect with Miling and Bindi Bindi. When the project commences at Watheroo, a pipe could be laid to connect with the pipe at Pithara and, in turn, with the pipe to Miling and Bindi Bindi.

Bindi Bindi is my home town. Although it will not be of great interest to members of the House, I went to school there for seven years. I used to walk 1 000 miles a year to and from the Bindi Bindi school, which makes a total of 7 000 miles, and it did not do me any harm. As I once said, I learnt all I learnt at Bindi Bindi and now I know nothing!

In the summertime, not only did I have to walk to school, but also I had to carry my waterbag, because there was no water at the school. It was a one-teacher school and the building housed the teacher's accommodation and the schoolroom. The teacher and his wife lived there and in one big room infants to grade 7 students were taught. There were only two water tanks which had a capacity of approximately 7 000 gallons each. They ran dry in very hot summers and, therefore, we had to carry our own waterbags. I am familiar with the difficulties in country areas, because I have experienced them myself.

I have walked to school and carried my waterbag, but that does not mean I go around my electorate telling other people they ought to do the same. We have moved beyond that situation and, therefore, I am confident the Minister will examine the proposal the deputation put before him, to ascertain whether we could install the pipe from Pithara first, so that that area can be served with water.

In passing I remind the Minister that when the Country Water Supply Authority told the people of Miling that they would be on restrictions, they were told they would have to water their gardens with bath water. This is rather unfortunate.

I suppose I could have asked a rather sensational question in this place a few weeks ago, but I did not want to do so. I just want to illustrate the point here that these are some of the inconveniences people in the country have had to put up with over the years. I well remember many years ago—and I am not ashamed of this fact—Saturday night was bath night. Of course, the children were bathed first; then mother got into the bath and, after that, father had his bath. One kept topping up the hot water. That is not something we should laugh at because it happened out of necessity. When I was a little fellow I had

my bath first, but when I grew up and had a family of my own, I slipped down to the other end of the line and I was the last one to get into the bath. I am not ashamed of it, because that is what we had to do.

Fortunately, we have progressed a little further now away from home water tanks. Although we do not have to suffer these inconveniences, this situation did occur and water is still scarce and precious.

I ask the Minister to please be tolerant of the situation in the country because the concern is quite genuine. It is a very productive area. The amount of wheat, wool, and sheep that it has produced over the years is tremendous. Its contribution to the welfare of this State and this country—in terms of revenue which comes from the area—and the rewards have been tremendous. Therefore, as an area which is making its contribution, it should be shown some compassion.

I noticed in the newspaper the other day that steps are being taken for the Government to spend \$8 million to run fresh water to Rottnest Island. I am not saying we do not want fresh water at Rottnest, because we probably do, but people who are holiday-making are going over there to enjoy themselves at their leisure for recreational purposes. I ask the Government to put its priorities right. Water is needed at Miling and Bindi Bindi. That is a productive area which is making a tremendous contribution and is of great value to the State, and I am sure it will continue to do so for many years, because it is in an area which has never known a drought and which has never failed to produce. I see no reason for it ever to fail in the future.

Today and over the last couple of days we have discussed the effects of the world parity pricing of oil and the hardship that it is causing in rural areas. I mention in passing that I know we will debate this issue at some time in the near future, and I will make a greater contribution then. I remind members that I do not speak of this merely because I represent a rural electorate. There is no other commodity which could affect the general public more than the price of fuel. People living in the metropolitan area are affected in the same way as are people in country areas. This is a problem the Government must come to grips with because it is adding to the rural hardship problem which we have faced for many years.

I want to spend a little time on the vexing problem of rural hardship. In 1983 I raised this matter in the House; the Government moved an amendment to my motion and a Select Committee was set up to inquire into rural hardship. I would like

to pay tribute to the members of that committee with whom I had the privilege to serve. The committee comprised the member for Mt. Marshall from this side of the House and, from the other side of the House, the member for Kalgoorlie, who was the chairman of the committee, the member for Scarborough and the member for Mitchell. During our investigations we interviewed many people and we saw the problem at first hand. I could not fail to be impressed with the compassion and the understanding shown by my colleagues on that committee, many of whom had not appreciated the problems that some rural people face and the difficulties being encountered as a result of the decline in prices and the increase in costs. I can only thank those members for their consideration and determination to write the report, tabled on 11 October last year, setting out the areas involved, and the extent and the location of this hardship. Unfortunately, like most reports, it is taking a while before it is being acted upon; usually reports are not acted upon and they gather dust in a pigeonhole!

Today we are still facing the same problem, but it has accelerated. Prices, unfortunately have declined, in the main, and costs have continued to escalate. We do not know how many forced sales are occurring, but we hear different figures. We do know, as the member for Greenough said earlier today, that many farmers are in desperate straits and are having to move off their properties. They are not able to sell them because no buyers are available, and they are not able to continue farming because of an insufficient level of finance.

Because of my concern, on 2 November I wrote to the President of the PIA who, incidentally, is my nephew, Winston Crane.

Mr Parker: A very decent name too!

Mr CRANE: Yes, it is. I wrote to him as a result of an article which appeared in the *Western Farmer* of 25 October 1984, under the unfair headline "Groves tips bucket on hardship report".

Mr Gordon Hill: The letter read, "Dear Uncle Bert".

Mr CRANE: If the member for Helena really wants to know the truth, my nephew did not write back, and that is not to his credit.

Mr Parker: He was not very well brought up, obviously.

Mr CRANE: I do not know whether it was a lack of respect for his uncle or because he is a very busy person, but he got his senior vice president to write back to me on 11 February, but unfortunately Mr Lee did not answer the question or address the matters which I brought to Winston's attention. The point I would like to

make here is that the economist's report in the newspaper says—

An agricultural research economist has fired a salvo at a parliamentary select committee for its "spoiled child syndrome" approach to WA rural sector hardship.

That is an insult to the intelligence and the integrity of the five members who comprised that Select Committee, and I am sure the chairman would agree. There was no "spoiled child syndrome" approach by the committee. In fact, I referred Winston to the second paragraph on page 6 of the Select Committee report. The same situation applies today. It reads as follows—

Had not the current season turned out to be as promising as it has the Select Committee believes that the marginal wheatlands and new land farming areas it visited would have entered a state of collapse. The Select Committee feels that a good season in 1984/85 will only help delay this collapse which is inevitable if there is no dramatic reduction of costs coupled with increased commodity prices.

I am sure the chairman would agree entirely with that paragraph which we all wrote. We had an above average season in 1984-85, and the position in the country is worse than it was last year. That bears out exactly what our Committee wrote in this report.

That is why I asked a question the other day of the Minister for Agriculture to reconstitute our committee so we could receive information from the country.

In my letter to Winston Crane on 2 November and another letter to the President of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association I asked them for once in their lives to get together in view of the difficulties the industry was facing and approach the Premier and ask him to send the members of our committee to Canberra to speak with the Prime Minister, the Federal Treasurer (Mr Keating), and the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin).

That was the letter to which I did not receive a reply, except from Mr Lee who did not answer the questions. I have not received a reply from Mr Cameron either, and I wrote to them both today reminding them that I have not received a reply and asking them whether we are not all kicking in the same direction. If they think I am a bloody idiot that is okay by me, but let them write back and tell me so. I will not take action. It is a fair question to ask of them. Both those organisations are endeavouring to push their own wheelbarrow and go to Canberra. They have done this for years.

If they have been so damned successful why is the industry in such a hell of a mess? They have not been successful, but they do not have the intelligence or the integrity to join forces now and ask us to at least have a go.

The chairman and members of the Committee—and I see the member for Scarborough resuming his seat—were the ones who went out and took evidence and on occasions had to go up and put an arm around someone who was crying. The member for Scarborough will well remember that.

Mr Gordon Hill: Male or female?

Mr CRANE: It does not matter whether they are male or female when one has to offer some condolence or assistance or help, or give them some encouragement. We did that. Do not tell me we would not be the best ones to take that committee report to the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke). But no, those two useless ruddy leaders, as useless as tits on a bull, will not join forces and ask us to do that. I am pleading on behalf of the rural industry.

Lately I have been asked if I would raise in this Parliament the need to reintroduce three Acts which were brought into this place in the 1930s, the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act, and the rural relief Act. There is a school of thought which says that if these Acts were reintroduced funds would dry up. I spoke this morning with one of the leading bankers of possibly the biggest bank in Western Australia who said there was no evidence of it and he did not believe it would happen. It is a herring drawn across the trail by people who are being encouraged by banks and financial institutions not to allow this to happen.

The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act went out of operation only in 1972, I think, and there is no reason it should not be reconstituted. We could do it in a relatively simple manner and it could give to the rural community the relief it gave over many years. Was there a restriction on finance in 1972? No, there was not. I will tell members what is the problem with most people, and that includes the majority of members of Parliament: Man fears most that which he does not understand. Let us all understand how the banking system works and what it involves, and let us get together as a Parliament because if we do not do something very damned soon we will not have a rural industry at all. It is at the point of collapse.

We said in our report it would collapse if there was not a good season in 1984-85. It did not collapse simply because it has been given a good season—thank God, He did it; He gave us a little

respite for another 12 months—but it is not enough for the majority of farmers.

I do not know how I am going to do it because I have not yet decided, but I intend to bring this matter forward again so that we can reinstitute those Acts of Parliament and save the primary industry of this country. If we do not there is no future for anyone. I make that plea not only on behalf of people in the rural industry, but on behalf of every person who lives in Western Australia because the benefits which flow from rural industry when it is productive and well are of value to everyone.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House).

(Continued on page 1253)

MINING AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

MR PARKER (Fremantle—Minister for Minerals and Energy) [4.07 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes to amend the Mining Act 1978-1982 to deal with the terms and conditions upon which mining exploration and development may occur on land granted under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Bill 1985 which is currently before the House.

The Mining Amendment Bill (No. 2) builds onto and adapts issues sought to be introduced in the Mining Amendment Bill which is currently before the House, for instance, with respect to the adaptation of the Mining Compensation Tribunal.

These amendments have been drafted by the legislative drafting committee containing representation from the following organisations—

- the Aboriginal Lands Trust;
- the Aboriginal Advisory Council;
- the Federation of Aboriginal Land Councils;
- the Australian Mining Industry Council;
- the Chamber of Mines of Western Australia (Inc.);
- the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia (Inc.);
- the Primary Industry Association of Western Australia (Inc.);
- the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies Inc.; and,
- the Australian Petroleum Explorers Association.

The Western Australian Department of Mines was, of course, closely involved.

The current provisions with respect to miners' entry onto Aboriginal reserves are controlled by the issue of entry permits. While there may be consultation with the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which in turn must consult with the Aboriginal people occupying a reserve, there is no statutory formula which allows direct negotiations to occur between a mining explorer and those Aboriginal people occupying the reserve to which the miners seek access. The provisions in the Bill propose direct negotiations between the miners and the Aboriginal owners or occupiers of Aboriginal land with reference to a tribunal in cases where the parties are unable to reach agreement. The tribunal's power is recommendatory except with respect to the payment of compensation in which case its ruling is determinative.

The Bill maintains the proposition of Crown ownership of minerals to which access is allowed to miners upon satisfactory protection being accorded to matters of concern to Aboriginal owners or occupiers. There is no veto proposed nor can any *de facto* veto arise. Compensation payments are not connected to the value of the minerals. Protection is given to sacred sites and they cannot be traded for monetary or any other consideration. The provisions of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 remain unaffected by the proposals contained in the Bill.

I now propose to deal with the provisions of the Bill in two parts: (A) entry; and (B) post-tenement pegging exploration and mining development.

(A) Entry: It is proposed that those miners wishing to enter Aboriginal land would have to obtain a permit from the mining registrar or warden. To obtain a permit a miner would have to establish, not necessarily by the giving of oral evidence in formal proceedings, that he is a bona fide miner. Those proceedings are to be held *ex parte*.

As part of those proceedings the miner must identify which Aboriginal land he proposes to enter and whether any negotiations have taken place with the Aboriginal landholder with respect to that entry. Such applications may be determined by the registrar. He may, however, refer the matter to a mining warden for determination. A mining warden may require formal proceedings to be undertaken. A permit once issued lasts for a period of four months and may be renewed. The issuing of a permit authorises the miner to enter onto Aboriginal land to prospect for minerals and mark out the land for mining and confers those rights to the same extent as if the miner held a miner's right and was entering upon Crown land and is subject to the miner paying compensation for damage caused on the same basis that a pastoral lessee may obtain damages from mining ex-

ploration. Those damages are to be assessed by the warden.

The Bill provides that prescribed conditions relating to the social conduct of miners on Aboriginal land may be made by regulation on a region-by-region basis. Regions will be those areas covered by Aboriginal Regional Organisations as created under the Aboriginal Land Bill.

In cases where a miner does not enter in good faith for mining purposes or breaches a prescribed condition, the Minister for Minerals and Energy has the right to revoke the permit or suspend the operation of the permit and refer the question as to whether there are grounds for continued suspension or revocation of the permit to the wardens' court for hearing and the making of a recommendation. In lieu of the revocation of the permit, there may be a determination that no penalty be imposed or that a penalty not exceeding \$1 000 be imposed.

There is provision under the Bill for the Minister for Minerals and Energy, upon being satisfied of a person's good faith, to declare a permit to be deemed to have issued in favour of that person. In such a case that person must serve notice in writing on the Aboriginal landholder stating that he is deemed to be the holder of a permit and of his intention to enter the land and that notice must be served within a period of four months preceding his entry onto the land. There is power in the Minister to vary or revoke such a declaration. Such a deemed permission to enter will be subject to the permit complying with the prescribed conditions relating to the miner's social behaviour on Aboriginal land.

In cases where a mining registrar or warden refuses to grant an application for the issue of a permit, a mining applicant may appeal to the Minister against such refusal and the Minister may determine the issue of whether such a permit should be issued.

As has already been mentioned in the second reading speech for the Acts Amendment (Aboriginal Land) Bill the system of requiring a ministerial permit to enter currently existing reserves which under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Bill will be vested automatically as Aboriginal land will be phased out from the expiration of the period in which claims for Aboriginal land may be made under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Bill 1985.

(B) Post-tenement pegging exploration and mining development on Aboriginal land: When a miner, pursuant to the issue of a permit, has pegged a claim then he must make application in the ordinary way for the grant of a mining ten-

ement. The miner must, within 21 days of lodgment of the application with the mining registrar, serve a copy on the Aboriginal landholder and on any mortgagee or other person who has a legitimate interest registered on the title relating to the Aboriginal land. The mining warden will then proceed to hear the application in the ordinary way.

The Bill specifically provides that such an application shall not be challenged on the basis that the land should not have been granted as Aboriginal land or that, being Aboriginal land, the land should not be used for mining, or being Aboriginal land the title to that land should not have been granted to that particular Aboriginal landholder, or that the effects of the mining will be detrimental to the use of the land by an Aboriginal person. Nor will the warden be able to comment on other matters which would normally fall within the Mining Compensation Tribunal's jurisdiction. That jurisdiction will be outlined shortly.

Upon a determination as to whether the mining tenement should issue, the warden makes a recommendation to the Minister. In cases where his recommendation is that the tenement be granted, a copy of that recommendation is to be given to both the mining applicant and to each Aboriginal land corporation and/or any regional Aboriginal organisation in relation to which the land affected applies.

In cases where the warden does not make a recommendation in favour of the granting of the tenement, but the Minister decides that the grant ought to be made, the Minister shall cause a similar notice to be given to the parties.

The Aboriginal landholder may, within either 60 days of service of the application for a mining tenement, or within 30 days after service of a copy of the recommendation of the warden, whichever is the longer, or in such further period as the Aboriginal landholder and the mining applicant may agree in writing, or in such further reasonable period as the Minister, upon cause being shown, may permit, cause a notice in writing to be served on the mining applicant setting out "Aboriginal interests" which are defined to cover the following matters:

The location of any Aboriginal residential area or house or other permanent or regular dwelling or any other area customarily occupied by Aboriginal people;

the location of any dams, bores, wells, springs or waterholes customarily used by Aboriginal people;

notification of any improvements;

the location of any cemetery or burial ground in which Aboriginal people are customarily buried; and

sites in relation to which Aborigines wish there to be no mining access and/or in relation to which mining access is sought to be made subject to conditions.

Where Aboriginal groups do not serve such a notice within the time above specified, or at all, mining may proceed as if the land were open Crown land but subject to any areas declared protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972. Where the groups do serve a notice, negotiations in relation to those issues shall take place between the applicant miner and the Aboriginal landholder in relation to all matters in respect of further entry upon, access to, and use of the land for mining purposes. The parties shall attempt to reach an agreement.

Where, within a period of 60 days from the date of service of the notice of Aboriginal interests, or such longer period as the parties may in writing agree, a written agreement is not concluded, then the matter may be referred by either party to the Mining Compensation Tribunal.

For the purposes of this Bill the Mining Compensation Tribunal shall consist of an independent chairman of the same qualifications as the chairman proposed under the Mining Amendment Bill, an Aboriginal representative and a mining representative. Upon a party referring a matter to the tribunal the tribunal shall cause the other party and the mining registrar and Director General of Mines to be notified that a reference to the tribunal has been made. There is a provision for the tribunal to grant an expedited hearing.

The tribunal is recommendatory except in relation to any question of compensation where its determination shall be final. Nothing shall however require the miner to proceed with his mining application if after a decision has been made he is not prepared to accept the terms and conditions set.

Compensation will be payable to the Aboriginal landholders or occupiers for social disruption caused to Aboriginal residential areas by post-tenement exploration or mining development activities.

The Bill allows for variation of conditions and/or compensation provisions in cases where there is a substantial change in the exploration or development proposals.

In all cases a miner may not commence mining operations unless and until he has paid or tendered any money by way of compensation that he is required to pay.

In determining which areas miners should not be permitted to enter because those areas contain sites, the tribunal must seek a balance between the public interest in the facilitation of mineral exploration and mining and the need to protect areas of special significance to Aboriginal persons. However, as with provisions of the Aboriginal Heritage Act, a prohibition once imposed may be lifted by the Governor by Orders-in-Council but not otherwise.

The Bill also deals with procedures with respect to miners seeking to enter land that is the subject of a pending claim under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Bill. The provisions of the Aboriginal Land Bill which relate to the vesting of land are, under that Bill, unable to be given effect to until provisions of the Mining Amendment Bill (No. 2) become operative.

There has been much consultation between the interest groups with respect to the provisions contained in this Bill. The outcome represents a fine balance which will allow mining exploration and development to proceed subject to the protection specified of Aboriginal interests, and avoids difficulties which have arisen in other parts of Australia at the interface of Aboriginal and mining parties.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Peter Jones.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Presence in Speaker's Gallery

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman): Before I proceed to the next item of business, I wish to acknowledge in the Speaker's Gallery the presence of Hon. A. T. Evans, the State member for Ballarat North in Victoria.

[Applause.]

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [4.19 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill will ensure that members of the parliamentary staff, and the Government Printer and his officers, who help members in the printing of copies of their speeches or extracts therefrom for distribution, will not be liable for any defamatory material which might appear in those copies.

The law as it now stands confers an absolute protection on members in respect of what they say

in debate in either House. No matter how defamatory their statements may be, no legal action can be sustained against them. There are also protections applying to those who report the proceedings of Parliament, but in the main, these protections apply only if certain conditions are met.

Firstly, there is the privilege conferred on any fair report of the proceedings of either House, provided that it is made in good faith, for the information of the public. This is found in section 354(1) of the Criminal Code.

Secondly, there is the privilege conferred on any publication which is made in good faith, for the information of the public, or a copy of, or an extract from or abstract of, any paper published by order of either House. This is found in section 354(2) of the code.

Finally, there are the provisions of the Parliamentary Papers Act, 1891, which in effect confer an absolute privilege on the publication of a copy of any paper published by authority of either House, and in respect of extracts from or abstracts of such papers, confer a privilege which is qualified by the requirement that the publication is made bona fide and without malice.

So far as the Criminal Code is concerned, a publication is said to be made in good faith, for the information of the public, if the person by whom it is made is not actuated by ill-will to the person defamed, or by any other improper motive, and if the manner of the publication is such as is ordinarily and fairly used in the case of the publication of news.

Although different words are used, the requirement for "good faith" in the code is essentially the same as that in the Parliamentary Papers Act.

It is probably safe enough for members to act on the assumption that *Hansard* is published under the authority of the Houses, even though there is no express authority to that effect. On that assumption, copies or abstracts of, or extracts from speeches which have already appeared in that publication can be said to attract the statutory protections applying to things published with the authority of either House.

In this case, the privileges of the Parliamentary Papers Act are available—an absolute privilege in the case of the publication of a copy, and, in the case of the publication of an extract, or abstract, a privilege qualified only by the requirement that the publisher act bona fide and without malice.

Where the speech is published—either wholly or in part—outside the House, prior to its appearing in *Hansard*, then those responsible for its publication must rely on the more qualified privilege provided in section 354(1) of the code. It is doubt-

ful that this provision affords any privilege in respect of defamatory statements contained in an account of a member's speech which is published separately from any account of the rest of the relevant debate.

As a result, there are serious doubts about the legal position of a member, or any other person, involved in the publication outside the Houses of any report of the words used by a member in connection with the proceedings in either House. The fact that those words are absolutely privileged when used in the House does not mean that the same words, subsequently published outside the House, can not be made the subject of an action for defamation.

In understanding the present proposals it needs to be remembered that, where defamatory words are published, action may be brought not only against the person whose words they are, but also against any person who has participated in the publication. This includes not only those concerned in the actual distribution or dissemination, but also those who composed the libel. These people, as well as the person who first used the defamatory words, may have cause to claim the protection of one or other of the statutory privileges which I have mentioned.

Although the better opinion seems to be that those only incidentally involved in the publication will not be deprived of an otherwise available privilege because of the malice of the person who made the defamatory remark, there remains some doubt as to whether the incidental helper who is aware of the untruth of the statement before he passes it on, can escape liability.

I understand it has long been a practice for *Hansard* staff and the Government Printer to assist members wishing to prepare copies of their speeches or extracts therefrom for distribution outside the Parliament. However, in recent times the *Hansard* staff have been made aware that, in some circumstances, this activity could involve them in legal liability. As a result they withdrew the assistance previously given pending the carriage of a resolution in both Houses which was directed to protecting their position. Although the Government Printer has not expressed any similar disquiet, his legal position and that of his staff, is very much the same.

It is proposed to give a special privilege to all those who are involved in assisting members in this way. That is done by clause 2 of the Bill which provides for a new section 3A, the effect of which will be to confer an unconditional privilege on all those whose assistance is provided on the written request of a member. Subsection (2) of the

proposed new section extends this privilege to words which are published in the report of the speech, though not attributed to the member whose speech it is.

This is to cover defamatory words in an interjection by another member where that interjection is published as part of the report of the speech.

It should be clearly understood that this measure does not extend the privilege which members themselves now enjoy.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Mensaros.

COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION BILL

Second Reading

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [4.26 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In 1974, the Standing Committee of Attorneys General resolved "to consider the existing legislation and reports on commercial arbitration with a view to preparing a model Bill to form the basis of uniform legislation".

The need for reform and restatement of this area of the law has been recognised in a number of Australian jurisdictions. South Australia's Law Reform Committee first reported on commercial arbitration in 1969 and our own Law Reform Commission reported on the subject in 1974. Victoria's Chief Justices' Law Reform Committee considered the matter twice—in 1974, and again in 1977; the Queensland Law Reform Commission reported on the subject in 1970; the ACT Law Reform Committee in 1974; and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission in 1976.

This Bill is substantially based on the model Bill, subsequently agreed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys General.

New South Wales and Victoria have already passed, but not proclaimed, similar legislation. Minor technical variations have, however, been made in each jurisdiction to accommodate the laws of each State.

It is intended that Australia will ultimately have a substantially uniform system of arbitration for the settlement of disputes arising from commercial agreements.

At present, the Arbitration Act 1895 provides for arbitrations in this State. The Act is very brief, and inadequate for the complexities of modern contractual conditions. The Bill repeals the Arbitration Act and updates the provisions needed to deal both with large commercial claims and international disputes.

The use of arbitrators to attempt to settle commercial disputes has a very long history. The settling of a commercial dispute by arbitration enables the parties to put their case before a tribunal of their own choosing, a tribunal which has expertise in the particular subject matter of the dispute.

The major advantages to the parties over a court hearing are, generally, savings in time and cost, flexibility, privacy and the availability of expertise. It is an important advantage to the parties that hearings are conducted in private so that the risk of release of confidential commercial information in open court is removed.

Commercial enterprises operating throughout Australia will greatly appreciate the availability of a uniform system of arbitration. Most large arbitrations involve interstate companies and personalities. It will facilitate the settlement of disagreements between persons in different States.

While the Bill is lengthy, many of the provisions relate to purely procedural matters. I shall draw attention to some of the more important aspects of the legislation.

Appointment of arbitrators: The Bill makes provision for the court to appoint an arbitrator where an arbitration agreement is silent as to who should arbitrate, or where an appointed person dies, or otherwise fails to act. The court may replace an arbitrator. Apart from this, the possibility for court intervention is kept to a minimum.

The Supreme Court will have primary jurisdiction in matters related to the resolution of disputes by arbitration, although it is provided that the parties may agree to nominate the District Court.

Conduct of proceedings: The arbitrator will have a wide discretion as to the manner in which arbitrations are conducted. The arbitrator must act according to law, but may otherwise conduct proceedings as thought fit.

On application to the court, a party to an arbitration will be able to obtain a writ or summons requiring a person to appear or to produce documents.

An arbitrator will have power to make interim awards. This is frequently necessary in order to preserve the status quo, to safeguard property, or to protect the interests of a party pending a full hearing.

An arbitrator will have the power to order specific performance of an agreement in circumstances in which such a remedy would be available in the court. Arbitration awards will be final and binding.

Unless the arbitration agreement makes specific provision as to costs, the arbitrator will have a discretion as to costs. There is also provision for an interest component to be included in the award. Such a provision takes account of commercial reality.

Clause 22(2) is derived from the rules of the United Nations Conference on International Commercial Arbitration. While Victoria has adopted an English form of words, New South Wales and the present Bill retain the original expression. This is included to ensure that our legislation is consistent with the United Nations Conference rules. The provision will enable an arbitrator, where the parties so agree, to decide according to general considerations of equity and good conscience, by way of compromise, or on such other basis as may be agreed.

Powers of court: There will be no jurisdiction in the court to set aside an arbitrator's award on the ground of error of fact or law on the face of the award. The new commercial arbitration system is intended to supplant the jurisdiction of the court where an agreement permits arbitration as a means of dispute resolution.

It will encourage the development of a speedy and economical means for resolution of disputes by experts in the field.

To appeal from an arbitrator's award, consent of the parties, or the leave of the court, will be required. The court will have power to deal with instances of deliberate delay by a party and incompetence on the part of an arbitrator.

Foreign awards and agreements: The proposed system is specifically intended to encourage arbitration in settlement of disputes arising under international agreements. Parties from countries which are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards will be encouraged to arbitrate in Australia, and the court will have the power to enforce overseas awards.

Representation of parties: Of particular concern to the standing committee was the question of representation.

Clause 20 provides for representation and relies upon the judgment of the arbitrator to determine whether to grant leave for a party to be represented. Where it is likely that representation will have the beneficial effect of lessening the length or cost of proceedings, the granting of leave is mandatory. The provision applies equally to legal or other expert representation.

Schedule 1 contains amendments consequential to the repeal of the Arbitration Act 1895.

Schedule 2 sets out the articles of the United Nations Convention on the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Mensaros.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS: RULES

Council's Resolution: Motion to Concur

Debate resumed from 19 March.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [4.34 p.m.]: The Opposition does not intend to oppose these rules. They relate to the delegation of certain powers by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations as explained by the Minister on introduction.

The only question I raise with the Minister—and it is very much for the sake of hearing his answer in a genuine way—is whether there is not a modicum of concern about rule 5. We have no objection whatever to the broad provisions of clause 4 allowing the commissioner to delegate his functions to the deputy commissioner, but rule 5 relates to a delegation of most of the commissioner's powers to an officer described as a specific officer of the commission.

A specific officer is defined as an investigating officer, a legal officer or any other officer of the commissioner occupying a position not lower in classification than an investigating officer or a legal officer.

It seems to me that is rather wide, and bearing in mind the breadth of the powers which might be delegated, I raise a question about it.

I know the Minister has expressed an intention on behalf of the commissioner to follow certain practices. I cannot see any reason why those practices cannot be defined in the rules; it is not as if those rules were a matter of great urgency. It is not as though the administrative situation is desperate, or that a better job could not be done.

I am suggesting that the Minister might seriously like to take up in the circumstances the substantive question of how broadly we are prepared to confer on the commissioner power to delegate his functions when those relate to such matters as entry into premises and other quite considerable powers of investigation.

An investigating officer, after all, is not a person of particular qualification. The Minister might be anxious to consider how far this should go.

I guess it is not a Government matter in a strict sense; it is a parliamentary matter. The Parliamentary Commissioner is not answerable to the

Government of the day; he is answerable only to the Parliament. It is therefore not a matter of contention politically between the opposing parties in this House; but it is a matter of importance in a broad sense.

Although this has clearly been accepted by the upper House, I still feel it is necessary to raise the question with the Minister and ask him to consider adjourning to seek a recommendation at a parliamentary level.

MR GRILL (Esperance-Dundas—Minister for Transport) [4.38 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition is indicating that he has concern over the generality of the delegation made by the commissioner in the circumstances set out in rule 5. It seems to me that it is probably necessary in those circumstances for the delegation to be effective for it to be done as generally as that.

I do not want to be dogmatic about the matter. I do not have briefing notes, so I cannot go further than that. I am happy to adjourn it. I might have appreciated it if the Leader of the Opposition had given me some notice of the question.

Mr Hassell: Let me tell you frankly that if I had had time I would have gone to see Mr Marquet, the Clerk of the Council, in advance, but I obviously have not done that.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr GRILL: I accept that. In those circumstances I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [4.40 p.m.]: It is somewhat unusual that the Supply Bill receives a full-scale debate with all members, at least of the Opposition, participating. I think the reason for this is the change to the parliamentary sessions the Government made when it came to office.

Since the Tonkin Government in 1971 the parliamentary sessions had been worked on the calendar year and this provided a number of advantages. These were accepted and taken up by the subsequent Court and O'Connor Governments.

The advantages, particularly to the Government, were that it could have an autumn session at the beginning of the year during which members were able to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate and talk about any subject, particularly subjects

concerning their electorate, which never is really an advantage to the Government.

In the second part of the year the Government had the spring session and members were able to speak during debates on the Budget and the Supply Bill. When the Supply Bill was debated in the second session it was generally the case that only one or two Opposition speakers would participate.

The Burke Government changed all that for reasons possibly best known to itself; it has not told us what those reasons were. I suspect that a lot of changes were made simply to make changes.

This type of financial-year session arrangement also has disadvantages in that there could be certain Acts of Parliament which bear the same numbers. An Act numbered No. 26 of 1985 could result from a Bill passed in the 1984-85 session and then in the spring session, the longer Budget session, an Act with the same number could be passed. This is one of the reasons John Tonkin altered the situation and I do not know why this Government made the change.

I will take this opportunity to deal with a few matters for which I am responsible. The first is the Attorney General's announcement by way of letter to all members of the Opposition—perhaps also to all members of the Government—in which he simply announced that he was going to take what he called a six-month moratorium in dealing with applications for the appointment of commissioners for declarations.

I acknowledge that the Attorney General, as the Minister responsible for the appropriate Act, has a discretionary right in the manner he deals with the appointment of applicants. I understand that there is no time span in the Statute which provides for the appointment of these commissioners and that there is very little that the Opposition or anyone else can legally do to prevent the Attorney General from doing what he has announced he is going to do. Nevertheless it is quite proper for the Opposition to protest, and fairly violently so, against his discretionary decision which is quite unacceptable and unjustified, and which despite what the Attorney General said in his letter is against the interests of the public.

The decision is unjustified as long as no proof is supplied—and it has by no means been supplied—to indicate that applications have increased. I can use the Attorney's reply to one of my questions to show that there has been no increase in applications.

I asked the Attorney General what was the number of applications received for the appointment of commissioners for declarations over the

last 15 months, I think. His reply showed conclusively that while the applications might have varied from month to month, they were by no means more than before; there was no noticeable increase. On average they numbered the same.

So, on that basis, the Attorney General had no reason to claim that he needed a moratorium to deal with the applications. In fact he is dealing with the same number of applications as did his predecessors, albeit in another portfolio previously.

No proof has been supplied that fewer staff have been employed under the Attorney General than under the Chief Secretary, or the Minister for Administrative Services as he was until quite recently. That is no reason to simply declare a moratorium. There is no suggestion or factual information and it is not factual to say that the statutory provisions changed with the result that many more commissioners for declarations had to be appointed because certain amendments or new Statutes provided that certain things had to be done by commissioners for declarations. There is no increase in the necessity for qualified witnesses other than perhaps the normal population increase, which nowadays is very small.

When one searches for reasons for this sudden and unilateral decision conveyed to us, one could ask whether the Attorney General has fewer, or less competent, staff than the Chief Secretary or the Minister for Administrative Services had. I do not think that could be said. Perhaps it could be speculated that the officers of the Crown Law Department consider themselves more important and want to justify their important position and so suggested to their Minister that it takes them longer to look after these applications.

I can recall only one case in the administration of this State when such a moratorium was announced, but in comparison I think it was very much justified. It occurred during the years of 1969 and 1970 which, generally speaking, people refer to as the mining boom years. At that time the applications for various mining tenements increased drastically, perhaps tenfold, and it was not only impossible for the existing available staff of the Mines Department to deal with them but also there was some know-how needed with people who could have been additionally hired.

The fact was that we were unable to hire enough staff, even if that had been the aim, because it must not be forgotten that we had a Liberal Government then, and full employment. There were not enough people to be hired. It was a moratorium which the people accepted and one which was justified because of the volume of the

increase in applications to the extent I have mentioned.

However, in the case of the Attorney General's announcement, such an increase has not been proved or even suggested; indeed, the contrary has been proved by the Attorney General's reply to my question.

I have already said that his decision is unacceptable. According to the longstanding custom accepted by subsequent Governments—although this is not prescribed or provided for in the Act—the appointments have been made through the local member of Parliament.

Therefore, when anyone applies for such an appointment he is advised that he must first approach his local member of Parliament, and of course that is what constituents do.

The decision of the Attorney General was not published. He did not issue a Press release, he simply wrote to members. He placed the onus onto the members who have to tell their constituents, "Sorry, your application cannot be dealt with before the six-month period".

If an applicant went to the Attorney General's office he would not be entertained; officers probably will not talk him. The only advice he would receive is that he must go to his local member of Parliament. This action by the Attorney is incomprehensible, particularly when we know the Government is bending over backwards to be efficient. The Government says it is being efficient, but what sort of efficiency is that? Applications are put aside for six months.

The moratorium is also against the interests of the public, because—contrary to what the Attorney General has written in his letter, when he said that there would be no detrimental effect in terms of inefficiency of service to the public—there are many people who, by virtue of their office *ex officio*, are entitled to witness statutory declarations. Not only the public but also the people who are applying to be qualified to witness signatures are being inconvenienced.

Members know that most people who apply for these appointments are estate agents who serve the public. Many are insurance agents who, because of their profession, are in a position where they have to witness signatures or assist in the preparation of a statutory declaration.

If people who are commencing in this profession do not have an opportunity to be appointed as commissioners for declarations, it will cause a great inconvenience to them and their clients. During the time of the previous Ministers an average of only two months elapsed between the time

of application and of appointment and often even less.

It is the applicants, the young starters in their profession and their clients, who are inconvenienced in this way. If a signature cannot be witnessed after hours, when banks and various other offices are closed, and a schoolteacher or another professional cannot be found, the matter would have to be held over until the next day and the applicant might lose his client.

I urge the Premier to discuss this matter with his Attorney General in an effort to have the situation reviewed because, as it is at present, it is not doing any good for the public and is no credit to the Government.

Another matter I wish to raise relates also to the Attorney General's portfolio and concerns the appointment of justices of the peace. I spoke about this matter during the Budget debate of last year, and the Attorney General accorded me the courtesy of writing a letter to me. However, he did not reply to the queries I had raised. I believe the situation has become worse because, when one considers the appointments of justices of the peace, one notes in the *Government Gazette* of 8 February 1985—the publication before the last, a list of new appointments. A total of 35 people have been appointed as justices of the peace. Of those 35 new appointments, 23 are located in electorates represented by the Labor Party. Only 10 new appointments have been made in electorates which are represented by the Liberal Party and two new appointments have been made, one in the electorate of an independent member and one in the electorate of the National Party. Despite the fact that the Liberal Party has 42.6 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly it has been accorded only 28.6 per cent of the total number of justices appointed.

Mr Gordon Hill: How about going back to the time when the Liberal Party was in office? At that time justices of the peace were appointed on a party political basis.

Mr MENSAROS: That is absolute nonsense. The member has no evidence and is making an accusation against the previous Attorney General. I do not think any parliamentarian would have a higher reputation than the previous Attorney General (Mr Medcalf). The previous Attorney General did not make an appointment without consulting. In most cases he consulted the member who put forward the application for an appointment, and if he was not sure about anything or did not have enough information on the application he looked into the matter himself. He wished to make

sure that the applications were considered with complete objectivity and unassailable propriety.

Mr Gordon Hill: I am not accusing anyone.

Mr MENSAROS: I am simply illustrating the facts and explaining how the appointments were made. I will leave it up to members to speculate whether it is a coincidence or of any consequence that the appointments were worked out on any basis. We will be able to note whether this pattern continues.

In any event, I have not seen one of my constituents on whose behalf I made application appointed as a justice of the peace in the time of the present Government. The situation is that applicants have to apply through their local members of Parliament. Of course, if an application is rejected, the member of Parliament has the responsibility of telling the applicant that. It appears to me that, in many cases, the rejection is quite unjustified.

I refer to one case which I probably mentioned some time ago. It involved the chief executive officer of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals who, by Statute, is obliged to deal with documents which can be signed only by a justice of the peace. These documents are court-related. It is his duty to prosecute people for certain criminal actions prescribed in the relative legislation. This man deals with about four of those cases every week. On those occasions he has to approach a justice of the peace to sign the documents because he cannot sign them himself. He was turned down despite my explaining the circumstances and acting on his behalf.

The next subject about which I wish to speak is land tax. It is becoming less and less bearable because it is a very inequitable tax burden on only some people. The Government has said that it cannot do anything about it. I consider that the promised 10 per cent reduction will not do much to alleviate the hardship being experienced by some people and will not make the tax more equitable. Undoubtedly, it is a wealth tax and a discriminatory wealth tax. Despite the fact that it is called a "land tax", not the land but people who own land are being taxed on a progressive scale. That means that if somebody owns land-taxable land, that land is subject to a very cruel wealth tax year after year. People who hold assets in other properties, for example, shares in minerals, are not subject to this type of wealth tax. It is a highly discriminatory tax. It is almost a disincentive for people who want to develop land and there is a need for land to be developed. There is a need for people to be able to buy cheap land which could be made comparatively cheaper if the amount of land

tax were reduced and, as a result, supply would exceed demand.

This Government, being a socialist Government, has to provide more services and it has to raise the money from somewhere. However, this tax should be more equitable and, as a wealth tax, should be placed on various assets, not only on land. If it is to remain a tax only on land, land should then be taxed at a flat rate instead of on a progressive scale. It can be established, in order to achieve the same amount of revenue, what flat percentage the land tax would have to be. That flat percentage would be a considerably lesser amount for most people.

I believe that the circle of people paying land tax should be enlarged to include Government instrumentalities which do not pay land tax even though they pay payroll tax. It could be argued that that would only enable the tax to go from one pocket of the Government to another. However, the same applies to payroll tax. Government instrumentalities such as the Urban Lands Council do not pay land tax, yet they are in direct competition with private enterprise. It is a similar situation to another case which was canvassed today where the Government went into business in competition with private enterprise. The Government has definite advantages in that competition apart from the fact that it takes away a slice of the business from private enterprise.

Certain other bodies such as non-profit organisations are exempt from other Government charges but have to pay full land tax. Here I am talking about clubs which, particularly if they are in the metropolitan area, have to pay land tax on enormously highly-valued properties. These clubs have very humble facilities and the payment of the land tax makes it almost impossible for such clubs to exist. Subscribers to those clubs are almost unable to pay their subscriptions to cover the land tax. Those organisations ought to be exempt or enjoy a cheaper rate as they do with water charges where they pay a non-rateable charge.

In the time remaining to me I wish to mention, again, a subject which has been raised many times in this House. It relates to the way the Government deals with public servants. Contrary to so many heated arguments, I am not one who begrudges the fact that occasionally we have to be in Opposition. I believe this is part of our system and this system is one of the best. I am enormously concerned, however, when the Government of the day tries to change the system so that the system that we have used since Parliament was first established in Western Australia is replaced with something else.

Attempts have been and are being made by this Government to politicise the Public Service. Since it came to office, about half of the departments which existed then have been either abolished, renamed, or reorganised. Why? It has been done so that the permanent head of each department could be replaced with somebody suitable to the Labor Party and the Government. I asked the Premier how many departments had been abolished since this Government came to office. I asked him how many new departments there were and how many departments had been renamed. One would think, surely, that the Government would not have any great problems answering those questions. Even though there are about 40 departments, that is not such a large number that some competent officer in the Public Service could not answer the question within 10 minutes.

Yet the Premier postponed the question and after a day he replied to it, but he reverted to the tactics to which the Government often reverts, even though it has prided itself on being an open Government, and said to the member who asked the question that he would receive a reply in writing. It is not because the Premier cannot answer such a question—it is such a simple question that I could answer it with no more than a five per cent error.

Mr Brian Burke: I sent that question through in the normal way to the department and that is the answer I got back.

Mr MENSAROS: I cannot see why the Premier could not give the answer. He might have made a five per cent error one way or the other.

It is not the first occasion on which a question has come back to the member concerned saying he will be advised of the answer in writing. If the member is advised in writing the media and the public do not know the answer to the question. One purpose of questions is to allow the public, whom we represent in the same way as does the Government, to obtain answers to questions through the Opposition which must pursue this duty. If such simple questions are answered in this way, there is no other conclusion, by anyone who thinks logically, but that this action is being taken simply to avoid publicity.

Mr Brian Burke: I am perfectly happy for that matter to be answered and put on the Notice Paper rather than in writing to the member.

Mr MENSAROS: The statement the Premier has just made is commendable and I hope he will use the same policy in regard to other questions. Questions today are handled entirely differently from the way they were when I first came into this Parliament. At that time the names of the members who asked the question and the Minister who replied to it were reported in the media. Nowadays the media report mentions the Minister of the day who has nothing more to do with it except to answer the question, even though the matter was highlighted by the Opposition.

The Attorney General goes one step further: If the Opposition highlights a question which obviously has public interest he quickly issues a Press statement before the answer is put on the Notice Paper. For example, if a question is put on the Notice Paper on Thursday for reply on Tuesday he issues a Press release taking all the kudos from the Opposition. I am not saying that is immoral or wrong, but he is a smart alec, something which he very much endeavours not to be called.

I emphasise again that I am tremendously concerned with the fact that this Government uses its term of office to try to change the entire system. This concern is, I am sure, felt by every citizen because it is undermining the situation we had in Western Australia, a situation which, indeed, was an enviable one, before this Government came to office.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McNee.

OCCUPIERS' LIABILITY BILL

Receipt and First Reading

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

CONTROL OF VEHICLES (OFF-ROAD AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

[Questions taken.]

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2754. *Postponed.*

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS

Advertising: Australian Posters Pty. Ltd.

2774. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When was Australian Posters given the franchise by Westrail for the billboards on Westrail property?
- (2) When does the term of the contract finish?
- (3) What revenue does Westrail obtain annually from this contract?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) 1 December 1970.
- (2) 30 November 1990.
- (3) This information is of a commercial nature and must remain confidential between the parties concerned.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES: ACCOMMODATION

Geraldton: Land Cost

2786. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) What was the cost of the land for the new Government office block in Geraldton?
- (2) From whom was the land purchased?
- (3) Was the land purchased by public auction or private treaty?
- (4) If by private treaty, what was the asking price?
- (5) Did the Valuer-General value the property before the purchase?
- (6) What is the cost of the building under construction?
- (7) Who is the builder?
- (8) What was the original estimated cost?
- (9) How many square metres of usable space will be available?
- (10) Who will occupy the building?
- (11) If the building is leased, for what time, at what rent and with what outgoings and what frequency of rent reviews?
- (12) Who is the owner of the building?
- (13) When does liability for rental begin?
- (14) When will the building be completed?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) \$655 000.
- (2) The Roman Catholic Bishop of Geraldton.
- (3) Private Treaty.
- (4) \$700 000.
- (5) No, it is not normal for the Valuer-General to value properties purchased by the SGIO. It is normal for the SGIO to obtain a private valuation.
- (6) \$4 500 000.
- (7) Geraldton Building Company.
- (8) \$3 725 000.
- (9) 3 553 square metres.
- (10) Various Government Tenancies.
- (11) Lease for 21 years. Rent equals 12 per cent of final cost plus outgoings.
- (12) The State Government Insurance Office.
- (13) Upon completion of the building.
- (14) September/October 1985.

2792. *Postponed.*

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Transfers: Voluntary

2803. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Did he, earlier this year, make a statement to the effect: "We would not move teachers unless they applied for a transfer."? (This statement was made in response to a letter from the Australind Primary Parents and Citizens' Association.)
- (2) Is this factual?
- (3) If so, does this apply to all teachers?
- (4) Can a teacher remain at a school if he or she does not wish to move?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) In the normal course of events, yes. However, the Department reserves the right to transfer teachers according to the Department's needs. This has happened in a number of cases this year.

**GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES:
DEPARTMENTS**

Changes: Burke Government

2807. Mr MENSAROS, to the Premier:

- (1) How many departments, as defined in the Public Service Act, were there at the day the present Government took office in 1983?
- (2) How many departments are there today?
- (3) How many of the departments mentioned in (1)—
 - (a) were abolished;
 - (b) received a different name,
 since the Government took office, and which are they?
- (4) How many new departments were created since the Government took office and which are they?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (4) The information is being checked and the member will be advised in writing.

2816. *Postponed.*

DEFENCE: NAVIES

Visits: Fremantle

2819. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

- (1) Adverting to the reply given to question 2415 of 1985, is the State Government, or the Parliamentary Labor Party represented on the committee of the working party considering the visits of allied warships to Fremantle?
- (2) If so, who are the representatives?
- (3) When is it anticipated that the findings and report of the working party will be available?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The State Parliamentary Labor Party is represented by David Parker, MLA.
- (3) This is not a matter for decision by Government.

PASTORAL INDUSTRY: LEASES

Emanuel Family: Negotiations

2820. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

- (1) Adverting to the reply given to question 2481 of 1985, what method is the Government seeking to pursue in its negotiations regarding the Emanuel leases?
- (2) If the Government's intentions are within the permissible limits of the Land Act, for what reason is the advice of the Crown Solicitor required?
- (3) When is it anticipated that advice on the legality of the Government's intentions will be available from the Crown Solicitor?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) to (3) Negotiations regarding the Emanuel leases are confidential and I am not in a position to release details at this time.

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS

Suburban: Losses

2821. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

Would he please detail why he considers a media report that the extra losses on suburban rail services due to the reopening of the Fremantle line amount to in excess of \$5 million, to be "wholly fallacious"?

Mr GRILL replied:

I thought the member would have understood the rather straight forward reasoning of my answer to question 1482 from which his present query stems.

I said the original estimated cost to the State for reinstatement of the Fremantle Passenger Trains was \$0.799 million in 1983 prices, but \$0.883 million in current dollar values.

Also, I explained that an examination of the accounting figures since the passenger trains resumed did not suggest these estimates have significantly changed.

A newspaper report which attempts its own arbitrary allocation of costs can serve as no useful guide to the costs and benefits of the reopening of the Fremantle rail line.

TRANSPORT: RAILWAY*Fremantle-Perth: Cost-benefit Analysis*

2822. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

Is it the intention of himself, the Government, or any Government department or instrumentality to undertake any cost study, or cost-benefit analysis, into the true financial position relating to the present operations of the Perth-Fremantle passenger rail service?

Mr GRILL replied:

The costs and benefits of all public transport services are under continual evaluation.

MINERALS: DIAMONDS*Agreement Act: Reports*

2825. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Adverting to the reply given to question 2604 of 1985, concerning the Diamond (Ashton Joint Venture) Agreement, what specific reports have been outstanding, and are now expected in the near future?

Mr PARKER replied:

The reports that are currently outstanding are the interim annual environmental reports for 1984 for the alluvial and kimberlite stages of the Argyle development.

ENERGY: OIL*Exploration: Government Encouragement*

2826. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Adverting to the reply given to question 2603 of 1985, by what method, action, and initiative is the Government continuing to give "maximum encouragement to petroleum exploration" within Western Australia and off-shore?

Mr PARKER replied:

This Government has encouraged explorers to continue with drilling programmes during the world-wide recession by being flexible in the exercise of powers under the petroleum legislation to control work programs. This, together with the Government's firm support for the appraisal and development of recent oil discoveries and the

extremely low rate of revenue-raising, has clearly been an important factor in encouraging petroleum explorers to maintain petroleum exploration activity in the State.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER: EQUITY*Government Involvement: Intent of Discussion*

2827. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

Adverting to the reply given to question 2546 of 1985, concerning his radio talk back on the Bob Maumill programme, in what way has the quote in part (1) of the question been misinterpreted and the "intent of the discussion" been misunderstood?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The member for Narrogin is advised to refer to the full text of my talk on the Maumill Programme, copy of which I am pleased to supply to the member if he wishes.

The member is also referred to the reply to question 2355.

2831. *Postponed.*

TRANSPORT: RAILWAY*Boyup Brook-Katanning: Reopening*

2832. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Adverting to the reply given to question 2703 of 1985, concerning the Boyup Brook-Katanning railway line, if there is any possibility of reopening the line, for what reason is it being allowed to deteriorate, and fixed improvements, sleepers etc, being removed?

(2) What is the precise detail of removals being made to the fixed improvements?

(3) What are the details of the land that has already been leased to—

(a) shires;

(b) local residents,

and referred to in part (4) of the reply?

Mr GRILL replied:

(1) The line is presently being retained in the event of changed circumstances such as a large mineral development in the area, justifying line restoration and resumption of rail services. While there is

no indication that the current situation would change it could well do so over the next decade. Certain rail assets have been recovered from the line with economic benefits to Westrail.

- (2) Approximately 5 000 sleepers and a telephone pole line were recovered from the track following approval by the Minister for Transport in the former Government in September 1982.

A further 17 000 re-usable sleepers, some 26 bridge spans and timbers and a set of flashlight signals and associated track work have more recently been recovered from the line for use elsewhere in the railway system, with my approval.

(3)

(a) Shire of Boyup Brook	3,345 1 ha	Grazing
Shire of Kojonup	8 853 m ²	Beautification & Playground
Shire of Kojonup	25 m ²	Public Toilet facilities
Shire of Kojonup	280 m ² (Kojonup Station building)	Community purposes
(b) Boyup Brook D J & A C Inglis	8,204 7 ha	Grazing
Dinninup Upper Blackwood Agricultural & Pastoral Soc. W R & S R	611 3 m ²	Showgrounds
White	11,724 6 ha	Grazing
Kojonup W J Lawlor	179 m ²	Bottle Handling
CBH	417 6 m ²	Grain Handling
P J Burkin	3,838 5 ha	Grazing
T M Evans	32,572 2 ha	Grazing
Total Western Transport	2 078 m ² (Goods Shed)	Freight Handling
Nookanellup Ladyman C R	128,690 0 ha	Grazing

2834 to 2836, and 2843 to 2845. *Postponed.*

TOURISM COMMISSION

Mr Brett Goodridge: Terms of Employment

2846. Mr RUSHTON, to the Premier:

- (1) Who is the employer of Mr Brett Goodridge of the Western Australian Tourism Commission?
- (2) What is the term and conditions under which he is employed, including termination of contract?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Western Australian Tourism Commission.
- (2) Refer to answer to question No. 2140 of 19 February 1985.

2847. *Postponed.*

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS: LAND RIGHTS

Claim: Mt. Yokine Site

2848. Mr CASH, to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) In which part of Mount Yokine is Reserve 35407 located?
- (2) What is the area of the reserve?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Swan Street, Mount Yokine.
- (2) The area is .1804 hectares. The Department for Community Services currently operates "Bamburra" Educational Hostel on this land.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shackleton: Replacement

2849. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Are the buildings of the Shackleton primary school listed by the department for replacement?
- (2) (a) If "Yes", when;
(b) if "No", what plans does the department have for the upgrading of the Shackleton school facilities?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) Replacement facilities at Shackleton are continuing to be considered with others for a future budget.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Australind District: Student Numbers

2850. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What number of students are required to justify the building of a District High School at Australind?
- (2) What number of students are required for a Senior High School?
- (3) When the expected smelter is built at Parkfield, will a Senior High School be built at Australind?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) By Regulation, a minimum of 150 students (including 25 or more students enrolled in lower secondary courses) are required before a primary school may be upgraded to a district high school.

However, in areas like Australind which are located in close proximity to a large

senior high school, lower secondary enrolment substantially in excess of the minimum numbers required by Regulation would be necessary.

- (2) There is no requirement stipulated in Regulations. Numbers in excess of 100 students enrolled in each lower secondary year should ensure a sufficient number of Year 11 and 12 students for a reasonable range of upper school courses to be offered.
- (3) In the reply to question No. 2719 (of Thursday, 14 March 1985), it was indicated that the Education Department would be in a position to recommend a definite time-frame for the establishment of a secondary facility in Australind once the 1985 Census data from all schools in the Bunbury area had been received and processed and the necessary consultations had been undertaken with local parent groups.

Obviously, the possible impact of the proposed smelter on secondary enrolments in the Australind area will also be an important component in deciding the future provision of secondary educational facilities in Australind.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Armadale: Music Specialisation

2851. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What progress has been made towards establishment of Armadale Senior High School as a specialist High School in music for the whole of the South East Corridor?
- (2) Which new technology courses have been introduced into Armadale Senior High School in the past two years?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Mr Rushton is aware from my answer to a similar question given on 28 March last year that with a view to establishing a community music centre for the Armadale region negotiations have been initiated between the Shire of Armadale, the Music Branch of the Education Department and the Music Department of the University of Western Australia. Such a centre would not be a specialist music school in the sense of the specialist

schools at Churchlands Senior High School and Perth Modern Senior High School, but would provide opportunity for enriched musical experience for students from throughout the region and for community members more generally. The location has not been determined.

The member is also advised that music is already being provided at Kelmscott Senior High School, Cecil Andrews High School and Armadale Senior High School, all of which are located in the South East Corridor and that the music facilities at Armadale Senior High School have recently been upgraded and compare more than favourably with those at the two special music schools at Churchlands Senior High School and Perth Modern Senior High School.

- (2) No new technology courses were introduced into Armadale Senior High School in 1984. However, this year additional Year 11 courses in furniture woodwork, applying mathematics, introductory word processing, business data processing, general business studies, clerical studies and theatre arts have been established.

2852. *Postponed.*

PASTORAL INDUSTRY: LEASE

Ord River Station: Consultants

2853. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

- (1) Has the Government engaged a firm of consultants to advise them on the future of Ord River Station?
- (2) If "Yes", who are the consultants and what is their expertise in the field of the pastoral industry?

Mr McIVER replied:

- (1) The Government has engaged consultants to give an appraisal of the Ord River Regeneration Area.
- (2) M.P.W. Rural Development Pty. Ltd. which is a Perth based firm of expert rural consultants.

2854. *Postponed.*

WATER RESOURCES: RATES

Revenue: Country

2855. Mr McNEE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

What is the amount of revenue earned from rates from the country water supplies, and the amount of revenue received from the sale of water from country water supplies?

Mr TONKIN replied:

1983-84	\$
Rates and Annual Service Charges	12 067 631
Water Sales	29 216 999
Total	<u>\$41 284 630</u>

2856. *Postponed.*

POLICE: FIREARMS

Act: Amendment

2857. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is his department preparing amendments to the Firearms Act?
- (2) If so, considering the reasonably wide community interest in the matter, will he issue a position paper about the proposed amendments, so that the public can discuss them and interested people can submit their views?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A copy of the news release containing a schedule of the proposed amendments is tabled for the information of the member.

The views of interested persons are welcome and it is proposed to allow adequate time for discussion following the introduction of the Bill into the Parliament.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 517).

CEMETERIES ACT

Review Committee

2858. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Who were the members of the committee reviewing the Cemeteries Act?
- (2) What were their terms of reference?
- (3) Will he publish their report so that interested parties may make submissions before amended legislation is drafted?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) The original membership of the Committee was:—

Mr J. Watson—Chairman (Former Deputy Secretary—Local Government Department)

Mr P. D. MacLean—Administrator, Karrakatta Cemetery

Mr S. Parks—Former Town Clerk, City of Fremantle

Mr P. Usher—Former Mayor, City of Bunbury. (Country Urban Councils' Association Representative)

Mr R. Coffey—Former Secretary, Country Shire Councils' Association

Dr R. S. W. Lugg—Public Health Department.

Mr Coffey was replaced by Mr R. Leggo, the then Secretary of the Country Shire Councils' Association in September 1981.

- (2) The original terms of reference were to examine the present legislation of this State and also that of other States and to submit recommendations on which a new Cemeteries Act might be based. They were later widened to include a review of the Cremation Act.
- (3) The Committee's final report was printed and released to all municipal councils and other interested parties in July 1982.

LAND: NATIONAL PARK

Windjana Gorge-Tunnel Creek

2859. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Has he received a letter from Mr A. D. Jones of Manjimup enclosing a copy of his letter to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service proposing certain improvements regarding the

"Windjana Gorge-Tunnel Creek National Park"?

- (2) Does the proposed signposting recommendation regarding "Pidgeon's History" meet with departmental approval?
- (3) If so, and as this matter obviously comes under the jurisdiction of the State National Park Authority or the new Department of Conservation and Land Management, will he cause such signposting to be done?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Generally, yes.
- (3) The National Parks Authority has compiled information on the history of "Pidgeon", and in fact a short summary is given in the brochure on "National Parks of the Kimberley" which unfortunately is now out of print.

However, through the new Department of Conservation and Land Management, there will be a greater opportunity to document this rich history and to make it more widely known, including through appropriate displays.

In addition, National Parks Authority staff have corresponded with Mr Jones on this matter.

EDUCATION: STUDENTS

Needy Parents: Scheme

2860. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

Could he please give a detailed explanation about the eligibility conditions and payments within the recently announced new scheme to assist needy parents in the education cost of their State high school students?

Mr PEARCE replied:

The State Government School Book Assistance Scheme is available to needy parents with students in Years 8, 9 and 10 who attend government and non-government schools. In 1985 the level of assistance was increased from a maximum of \$80 to a maximum of \$100 per eligible student and is intended to assist with the cost of books, fees, etc.

Applicants must have a total gross weekly income equal to or less than the

following amounts to qualify for assistance. These levels are aligned to the Commonwealth Department of Social Security payments for pensions and benefits.

	INCOME LEVEL
SINGLE PARENT	\$
with 1 dependent child	167
with 2 dependent children	187
with 3 dependent children	207
with 4 dependent children	227
with 5 dependent children	247
with 6 dependent children	267
MARRIED COUPLE	
with 1 dependent child	239
with 2 dependent children	259
with 3 dependent children	279
with 4 dependent children	299
with 5 dependent children	319
with 6 dependent children	339

For additional children add \$20 per child to the income limit.

ARGENTINE ANTS

Herdsmen Lake

2861. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Health:

Is the Government taking steps in order to eradicate Argentine ants, particularly proliferated around the Herdsmen Lake area, or is this being left to local governments?

Mr HODGE replied:

The Argentine ant control programme is carried out by the Department of Agriculture.

An eradication programme is under way on land adjoining Herdsmen Lake. Approximately 200 properties were treated in the last year.

The problem of treating the infestation within the lake area is being addressed by an interdepartmental committee. It is intended that any controls would be carried out within the framework of an overall management plan for Herdsmen Parks and Recreation Reserve.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER: ELECTRICITY

Generating Units

2862. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

In view of the statement in the 17 December 1984 issue of the *Western Australian Government Notes*—

- (a) what will be the prime energy source for the new power-generating units to be constructed to supply the proposed aluminium smelter with the required quantity of electricity; and
- (b) what will be the anticipated yearly quantity of that energy in each of the first five years of the smelter's operation?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (a) A number of gas turbines will be installed initially to assist early supply to the proposed smelter but the prime energy source will be coal from the mid-1990s onwards;
 - (b) it is anticipated that approximately half the smelter's electricity requirements over the first five years will be generated from gas and half from coal.
- The long term annual coal requirement for the smelter will be 1.9 million tonnes.

- (4) If so, what action has he taken to ensure that the TWU is precluded from continuing this most callous practice?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Public Service officers from the Office of Industrial Relations made the inquiries, which were quite extensive.
- (3) There was no evidence whatsoever and no-one suggested that such a practice was ongoing at any level. No names or leads were provided by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and there was certainly no evidence from anyone suggesting that there might be such practices.
- (4) Not applicable. However, if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was prepared to supply the Government with any leads in this matter it would be happy to follow them up again. Extensive inquiries were made and no evidence of this was found.

2862. , 2865. *Postponed.*

WATER RESOURCES: WATERCOURSES

Natural: Diversion

2866. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Water Resources:

What provisions, if any, control the diversion of water from a natural water course?

Mr TONKIN replied:

Part III, Divisions 1 and 2 of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MINERALS: DIAMONDS

Dispute: Picket Line

872. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has the Minister investigated reports that the TWU is, or was, recruiting young unemployed people to act as pickets on the TWU picket line that was in place and disrupting work at the Argyle diamond mine project, as he said he would in answer to question 819 a week ago?
- (2) If so, who made the inquiries on behalf of the Minister?
- (3) Did those inquiries indicate that the claims were in fact correct?

PRICE WATERHOUSE

Consultancies: Use

873. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Premier:

- (1) How many consultancy assignments have been undertaken for the Government by Price Waterhouse in the past 12 months?
- (2) Is this an unusually high number within the overall use of consultants by successive Western Australian Governments?
- (3) Is any central Government body responsible for hiring or approving of the hire of consultants by Government departments and agencies? If so, which body?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I thank the member for Pilbara for ample notice of the question. It is an entirely appropriate question in view of the way the Opposition is shaping up to embark upon character assassination of the firm Price Waterhouse.

I think it is entirely appropriate that I read into the record the facts that answer this question and set the record straight in preparation for the onslaught upon which I am sure the Opposition, in burning its bridges with the private sector, is about to embark.

I should note that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has now by implication, if not explicitly, joined the member for

Gascoyne by defaming Mr Webb and indicating that he is unfit to hold his position, which may be the position of State Manager of Price Waterhouse.

Mr MacKinnon: Read *Hansard* if you want to know what I said.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should not try to worm out of it.

Mr MacKinnon: I am not.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Of course the member is. Why did the member raise those criticisms of Mr Webb if he was not trying to imply that he was not a fit and proper person to carry out work for the Government?

Mr MacKinnon: Read *Hansard* and you will see why.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not need to read *Hansard* because I heard what the member has forgotten he said.

If the member thinks he can blithely say that Mr Webb by implication or by explicit statement of some justice in Darwin or somewhere else is guilty of these sorts of things and think he escapes by putting onto whoever originated the statement any inference about Mr Webb and his character, both Mr Webb and I will tell the member he is wrong.

Two Opposition members have started what amounts to a character assassination of Price Waterhouse in general and Mr Webb in particular and I am sure that campaign will be carried on over the next few days. I do not know whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition believes it is true but the members of the Opposition have made it perfectly clear that in its view Price Waterhouse has serious question marks over its ability to carry out the work it was commissioned to do. In addition, Mr Webb appears to have black marks against his name in the minds of the Opposition.

That is the implication I drew from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's statement and my recollection is that that was the explicit statement of the member for Gascoyne. I do not know whether the member for Gascoyne wants to deny or retract what he said.

To continue with my answer to the question—

- (1) Five: Review of State Superannuation Board; review of SGIO/MVIT with Rothwells Limited; operations review of Western Australian Tourism Commission; computer planning for Department of Local Government; corporate plan for Department of Computing and Information Technology.

Price Waterhouse was also engaged to undertake an America's Cup visitor study but, as the member will know from media reports, this has been terminated without the commission being completed.

- (2) No, it is not an unusually high number within the overall use of consultants by successive Western Australian Governments. It has been the case for many years that at any time there are numerous consultancies being performed for the Government of the day. The number undertaken by Price Waterhouse over the past year is a very small proportion of the total and by no means a remarkably high number.
- (3) No, there is no central Government body responsible for hiring or approving of the hire of consultancies. Each department and agency is responsible for hiring consultants to undertake studies on its behalf.

"AUSTRALIA II"

Purchase: Commonwealth Government

874. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware of reports that *Australia II* is to be purchased by the Commonwealth Government from the funds totalling \$30 million allocated to the State by the Commonwealth Government for the America's Cup preparation?
- (2) Does he consider this proper use of those funds bearing in mind that *Australia II* will ultimately be housed in Canberra?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The decision by the Federal Government to use some of the \$30 million is nothing but a gigantic rort. It certainly does not conform to the State Government's view as expressed to the Prime Minister about the plans the

Government has for the permanent location of *Australia II*.

When this matter was initially raised, to give the Commonwealth Government credit it agreed to purchase *Australia II*. At the time the announcement was made the Prime Minister's representative indicated that *Australia II* would remain in Western Australia for a number of years and when facilities were completed and available it would then find a final resting place in the National Museum. I have expressed my concern at that and I am very disappointed to say the least to find that the Commonwealth Government intends to purchase *Australia II* from those funds.

An Opposition member: That is our money.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is not our money. The \$30 million was made available as the Commonwealth's contribution.

An Opposition member: It is taxpayers' funds.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Certainly, but it is not the State Government's money.

Mr Thompson: It would have been ours had they given it to us.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is true. The member for Kalamunda's seat would have been ours if he had given it to us.

Mr Thompson: No chance.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In that case we might have to take it.

Mr Court: We will support the Government in its endeavours.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am very pleased. I know of the member for Nedlands' interest in things nautical and we may be able to display it on a Sunday.

Mr Court: You cannot sell it on a Sunday.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I know the member will do anything to turn a quid.

Mr Old: Don't tell me that you wouldn't.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I certainly would not.

I am very disappointed at the decision by the national Government not to agree to exhibit *Australia II* in Western Australia on a permanent basis. I can see that the yacht is a national treasure and part of our national heritage and I acknowledge the interest all Australians have in *Australia II* and the right they have to share in the permanent addition of *Australia II* to the assets of the country.

However, I am not satisfied that it should be exhibited permanently in the National Museum and I am very dissatisfied with the decision to purchase *Australia II* from the \$30 million allocated by the Commonwealth Government to provide facilities and assistance for the defence of the America's Cup.

As a result I have asked the Minister for the Arts, whose responsibility encompasses this matter, to prepare a report on the possibility of the Western Australian people—that is the Western Australian Government—supplanting the Australian Government as purchaser of the yacht without any commitment—

Mr MacKinnon: In line with the suggestion we made three weeks ago.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: At least we are only three weeks behind the Opposition now and about four seats in front. I have asked the Minister for the Arts to investigate the possibility of the Western Australian Government replacing the national Government as the purchaser of *Australia II*, without commitment at this stage because we are not sure of the commercial arrangements that have been made, but with a view to ensuring that *Australia II* remains in Western Australia. That is the situation and I would be less than honest if I refused to say I was extremely disappointed with the decision announced over the last day. The announcement was not made prior to that and that was the first we knew of it.

ELECTORAL: POSTAL VOTING

Changes

875. Mr HUGHES, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

Would the Minister please advise the House of the decisions the Government has made concerning postal votes for future Western Australian elections and referenda?

Mr TONKIN replied:

A new postage-free system for postal votes is to apply in all future Western Australian elections and referenda. This will help many handicapped, sick, and elderly people.

The Government has decided to pay return postage on postal votes and appli-

cations for postal votes at an estimated cost of \$8 300. This cost is based on the 1983 State election figures when 13 500 people cast their votes by post and is a small price to pay for the benefit and convenience it will provide to people who cannot get to polling booths to vote.

The previous Government stands condemned in that it did nothing for the sick and the aged as far as voting is concerned. Postal voters should not have to pay a fee to vote.

The Commonwealth Government already provides return postage-paid envelopes for postal votes and applications and this latest initiative is yet another example of this Government updating and improving Western Australia's electoral system and indicates that this Government is ready for an election when the time comes.

MR PHILIP WATKINS

Employment: Future

876. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Premier:

- (1) Will Mr Philip Watkins be retained as an employee within the Premier's department?
- (2) If not, what will be his future position in the Government?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) No final decision has been made on the matter which is the subject of the question. When a final decision is made, then the member for Murray-Wellington can be assured that he and others will be told of it.

YOUTH: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUTH LITERATURE

Government Assistance

877. Mrs WATKINS, to the Minister for the Arts:

As part of International Youth Year, there will be a combined international conference on youth literature held in Perth in early September this year. Has the Government given any special assistance to this important conference because of its international importance and because of the fact it is International Youth Year?

Mr DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question, but it is one I would have gladly answered without any notice at all because this Government recognises the importance of International Youth Year as a symbol of the vitality of our young people and the fact that they hold the future in their hands.

As one of many initiatives the Government is undertaking to make International Youth Year an outstanding success here in Western Australia, I have authorised a grant of \$13 000 from Instant Lottery funds to the organisers.

They expect hundreds of delegates from interstate and overseas as well as from Western Australia.

The theme is "Brave New World: International Understanding Through Books".

The conference is being convened by local people—Christina Priest and Maxine Walker—on behalf of the International Board of Books for Young People and the Loughborough Conference on Children's Literature.

The organisers expect the conference will bring lasting benefits to the State's reading youth and creative writers.

The Government is glad to play a significant constructive role in this event.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FLORAL ENTERPRISES LTD.

Costs: Recoupment

878. Mr OLD, to the Premier:

- (1) Who will pay the costs associated with the Western Australian floral exports joint venture which has now been abandoned?
- (2) Will Mr Barry Waldeck be reimbursed for the money he has expended on the joint venture?
- (3) If so, who will pay these costs?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) I am not aware that costs have been incurred, but if costs have been incurred they would be fairly minimal. Nevertheless I am perfectly happy to make inquiries about costs which might have been incurred and to inform the member of the level of those costs and who will bear them when I ascertain the

details which will provide that information.

PREMIER

Staff: Mr David Hatt

879. Mr CASH, to the Premier:

- (1) Is David Hatt still employed as an adviser to the Premier?
- (2) If not, when was his appointment terminated?
- (3) Why was his appointment terminated?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) Not applicable.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

Official: Visit

880. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it correct that a senior official from the Communist Party of China will be visiting Australia in the near future?
- (2) If so, who is that official?
- (3) What is the purpose of his visit?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) Yes, it is true that a secretary of the Communist Party will be visiting Western Australia during April. This is the Chief Secretary General of the Communist Party. He will be coming here in connection with the development by China in the Pilbara of a new iron ore mine.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition may or may not be aware of the consultations which have been proceeding about the development of this mine between the Chinese Government and Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. That consultation followed the very successful visit to China by the Prime Minister and the very successful visits to China by different Ministers of the State Government. The Western Australian Government is looking forward to the visit of the Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, and I expect the Opposition to pay him no fewer courtesies than it would extend to any equally significant Government leader who would visit this State from any other country.

TAXES AND CHARGES

Indexation: Introduction

881. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it correct that the Government is considering the introduction of a system to index Government taxes and/or charges?
- (2) Who is investigating this proposal on behalf of the Government?
- (3) Will the indexing system be introduced this year?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) I have no knowledge of such an investigation, but it may be that Treasury is looking at something or the Minister for Budget Management has instructed that some inquiries be carried out. I certainly have no knowledge of any investigation into the indexing of taxes and charges. However, I will take the opportunity to say that the Government has a very proud record as being a very low-taxing and low-charging Government. Had we indexed increases in taxes and charges we would have had increases in both areas far in excess of those imposed in the last Budget. We know that Opposition members, while claiming to be members of a low-taxing party, are in fact the biggest taxers in this State's history.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Mt. Lawley is fresh from local government but I have heard him say that taxation revenue has risen, therefore this is a high-taxing Government. What he does not understand is that as the economic recovery beds down we will collect more revenue at lower rates of tax. Even the member for Nedlands can be distracted long enough from the leadership struggle to understand that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition does not like the truth. The Opposition miaowed and whinged about payroll tax, for example, but left it to us to be the first Government in the history of the tax to reduce the general rate of payroll tax. The Opposition whinged away.

In respect of electricity charges, had we indexed the increase in the last Budget

we would have had an increase about three times as high as that which was imposed. We increased the State Energy Commission's charges by only 1.8 per cent.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Three point eight per cent is heavier than before. Even the Deputy Leader of the Opposition must know that for the past financial year the rate of inflation was more than 3.8 per cent. Are members aware of that?

Mr Clarko: You are the highest-taxing Government this State has ever had.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member for Karrinyup is the most taxing member to sit in this place.

Let us face the facts about these matters. In terms of water charges last year, had we indexed the increase we would have imposed something in excess of what was imposed. In terms of SEC charges we would have done the same thing. Had we indexed taxes there would have been no 10 per cent reduction in land tax about which the member for Mt. Lawley miaows. Instead there would have been an increase of between six and seven per cent.

I need no inquiry to determine whether it is desirable to index taxes and charges. On the basis of the record of this Government we would have imposed greater increases than were imposed in the last Budget. Under the previous Government, whenever there were increases in taxes and charges, it would have advantaged the public because its record for increasing taxes and charges was one of exceeding the rate of inflation by many times.

MINERAL: IRON ORE

Exports

882. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) What was the level of iron ore exports in 1984?
- (2) How does this figure compare with previous years?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) 1984 was a record year for iron ore shipments which totalled 91 million tonnes.

- (2) That is five million tonnes more than the previous record of 86 million tonnes which was set in 1974, a decade earlier. Although the international recovery has positively affected the demand for iron ore, these figures suggest also that the State Government's policy of promoting the industry, as well as its consensus approach to industrial relations, has succeeded in making Western Australia a more productive, competitive, and stable supplier of raw material, despite fierce competition from other suppliers.

DAIRYING: NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Minister's Attendance

883. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Premier:

Following the announcement today that the plan to support the dairy industry of all Australian States, that was promoted by the Premier's Victorian counterpart, John Cain, 24 hours prior to that State's general election has been rejected, does the Premier acknowledge that the failure of his Minister to attend that vital meeting could now have placed many Western Australian dairy farmers in grave risk of being put out of business by Federal Labor Government decisions?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The handling of this question is typical of the way in which the Opposition handles its questions. As I came into the House for question time, I bumped into the member for Vasse. It was necessary for me to circumnavigate him to get to my seat. He turned to me and said, "Dave Evans is not here. I shall ask you this question. I want to get it on the record." I am happy to answer the question, but it is a funny way to genuinely seek information to look around to see whether the Minister for Agriculture is here, and, if he is not, expect to ask the question of someone else.

The answer to the question is, "No". In fact the Minister for Agriculture has stamped himself as a guardian of the interests of primary industry to an extent that the previous Government never stamped itself.

Even on a radio broadcast today, a spokesman for the Primary Industry Association paid tribute by exempting the

State Government from any criticism of the actions of Governments that might be construed to be detrimental to the industry.

In respect of this meeting, you, Sir, will be pleased to know that the Minister for Agriculture contacted me when the meeting was announced. He informed me that he had been in touch with his Federal counterpart, and I understand at least one other State Minister for Agriculture, and had gained the information that, according to the Federal Minister, this plan would be rejected and it was not necessary for him to attend that meeting.

Mr Old interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If I were the member for Katanning-Roe, I would not interject. He really is a field burner when it comes to agriculture! He is possessed of a record about which no-one could boast in terms of agriculture and the protection of that industry.

The Minister for Agriculture made all of the necessary inquiries and, in addition, consulted with me, as Premier, about whether he should attend the meeting. On balance, it was decided that he should remain in order to discharge his obligations in this Parliament. As the member for Vasse indicates himself, the whole matter, which was attempted to be pumped up by the member for Vasse and others on the Opposition benches, has not amounted to anything at all. As a result, I cannot see any substance to the member's question, with the exception of his disappointment and frustration which is evident at the fact that all his expectations of being able to pursue a political matter based on this meeting have fallen flat.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Kalamunda: Sessional Appointments

884. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has any action been taken to arrange for sessional appointments for doctors at Kalamunda District Community Hospital?
- (2) Have any advertisements been placed to attract doctors?

- (3) If so, have any doctors sought such sessional appointments?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) to (3) No.

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Promotions: Representations

885. Mr CLARKO, to the Minister for Education:

In answer to a question I asked on Tuesday, 19 March 1985, regarding whether the Minister would agree to a meeting with representatives of the Primary Principals Association he said, "The proper group to approach me in regard to industrial matters is the Teachers Union".

Will the Minister advise me whether he intends to insist that such approaches come only from the union and that he would exclude approaches on industrial matters from various other associations or groups of teachers, or does the Minister mean that he prefers approaches from the union, but will accept approaches from other interest groups?

Mr PEARCE replied:

I have answered the question already. When the member made the approach on behalf of the Primary Principals Association and asked me if I would meet with that group, I said that, if I received an approach from that association, I would consider it. Clearly that means I would not rule out automatically an approach from the Primary Principals Association on this industrial issue.

In the past the understanding has been that the union represents all teachers and is the only organisation which speaks for teachers on industrial matters, and promotion has always been looked on as being an industrial matter.

The Primary Principals Association is not the only group affected by the proposed new promotional arrangements. Every teacher will be affected by them, whether he or she is already a recipient of a promotion or hopes to be a recipient of a promotion in the future.

However, I said that I would consider an approach or deputation from the Primary Principals Association. Let me assure the House that I still have not

received any such approach, from which I can only assume that the Primary Principals Association is not interested in talking to me or the Education Department on this issue. It appears that association prefers to distribute Press statements.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: HARVEY SHIRE COUNCIL

Discussions: Minister

886. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) In answer to a previous question I asked, did the Minister say that he and his officers have had plenty of discussions with the Harvey Shire Council?
- (2) If so, how does he justify the report which appeared in the *South Western Times* of 19 March that "there had been a total lack of communication between the council and the Government"?
- (3) Will he in the future show to the Harvey Shire Council the respect which it deserves?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes, there have been repeated and frequent discussions between the Harvey Shire Council as such, its officers and members, and both myself and my officers and those of various Government agencies—I assume as far as the relevance of the matter is concerned, that the member is talking about the aluminium smelter issue—for a very long period.
- (2) and (3) I am not aware of the report to which the member refers. I can only indicate to him that, on Tuesday of this week, which was 19 March, I met again with the Harvey Shire Council in Perth and all but one of the councillors were present, together with a number of its officers and professional employees. Again both the President and the Shire Clerk of the Harvey Shire Council repeated their thanks to me for the very many occasions on which they had been able to discuss a range of issues with both myself and the Government.

Mr Brian Burke: Not only that, the member told me himself that he supported the smelter.

Mr Bradshaw: I don't support the siting of the smelter at Kemerton.

Mr Brian Burke: Which site do you support?

Mr Bradshaw: I do not have a site.

Mr Brian Burke: We could put this smelter on a barge! We could put the smelter in Melbourne!

Mr Bradshaw: I have said before that I do not want it at Kemerton.

Mr Brian Burke: Where do you want it?

Mr Bradshaw: I don't care, but not at Kemerton.

Mr PARKER: Let me assure the member and the House that we have thought out very carefully where we want the smelter to be sited. We have taken into account very stringent environmental considerations and have sought to cause the minimum dislocation to people, agriculture, and State forests.

We have considered a whole range of issues and unquestionably the best environmental location for the smelter as determined not only by this Government, but—as acknowledged in this House either last week or the week before by the member for Narrogin—also as determined by the previous Government, was Kemerton or, as the shire prefers to call it, Parkfield.

The president and the shire clerk, both spokesmen for the council, when they met with me on Tuesday, indicated how pleased they had been with the consultation that had taken place. Of course, they indicated that some issues were still outstanding. They said they were still concerned about certain aspects. They are subject to pressure from their rate-payers. They were not satisfied that all of the matters which should have been addressed were addressed within the environmental review and management programme. They were not satisfied that some of the issues which they felt were of importance had been addressed adequately, but they said at least twice that they were very satisfied with the number of consultations which had taken place and the level at which they had occurred. They were pleased that I had taken the trouble to see them again on Tuesday to discuss some of the outstanding issues.

I might say that the methods of resolving those outstanding issues were addressed on Tuesday and a statement has been issued today outlining some of the ways

in which we have approached them, including a study of the service corridor to the site—which is not specifically addressed in the environmental review and management programme, and is not something which would normally be part of an ERMP, but a study which the shire and others have expressed considerable concern should take place. The Government and the shire have jointly commissioned a study, funded by the State, to ensure attention is given to the service corridor and to consider such things as transmission lines, roads and railway lines, and issues such as overpasses and underpasses and level crossings, the speeding up of the purchase of properties, and all other matters that will eventuate as a result of that service corridor. Those issues are being studied by Dames and Moore.

The other area of concern is what might be called the general social impact and infrastructural question. This includes existing roads and how they will be used by trucks, and by employees of contractors and employees of the smelter once it is operating, as well as things like recreation demands following the increased population in the area, both the temporary population in the construction camp initially and then the permanent increased population when the smelter is operating. It involves also problems of school and hospital requirements. Much of the work on this has been done and is being made available to the shire, the EPA, and other bodies which need all this information for their own purposes. All the information will be made public.

I might say that the Shire of Harvey has indicated that the Government's actions on this occasion have contrasted sharply with the lack of discussion which took place between the shire and the previous Government over the Worsley alumina refinery. The shire indicated that on the previous occasion it had been completely left out of any discussions even though it was its own area and its own roads that were to be affected by that Worsley project. It had not been consulted at all.

Similarly, the Boddington Shire has indicated that it had been completely left out in the cold in planning for the Worsley project despite the fact that the bauxite was to be mined in that shire. The Boddington Shire is pleased with the

consultation it has received from this Government in relation to the Boddington gold project.

GAMBLING: CASINO

Environmental Review and Management Programme: Discontinuance

887. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer him to my question 2617 of 14 March 1985 and his tabled letter of 14 September 1984 which was addressed to Hon. Phil Pental, MLC, and I ask—

- (1) Why was the environmental review and management programme into the casino development proposed by the Environment Protection Authority not proceeded with according to normal practice?
- (2) Is it a fact that the Government's decision to proceed with legislation prevented the implementation of the ERMP?
- (3) In what way does the investigation and report under an ERMP and a PER differ?
- (4) What public participation is provided for under the PER procedure?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) to (4) At the time Hon. Phil Pental referred the matter to the EPA under section 55 of the Environmental Protection Act, there was no knowledge of who the successful person would be or of the nature of the development. When it became apparent what the nature of the development would be, the EPA decided that it did not want a full ERMP, but a PER—which is a new system of having inquiries into environmentally sensitive areas and a system which had not been developed when I replied to Hon. Phil Pental—would suffice.

Mr Rushton: They said that there would be an ERMP.

Mr DAVIES: Everyone said that there would be an ERMP because there was no alternative. But by the time the PERs were developed during the last eight months to try to hurry on, not that particular project but all projects, with the idea that they would be directed to the particularly sensitive areas that needed investigation—in this case it relates to the leachates and the effect of the development of the old rubbish site on the Swan River in particular—the nature of

the development became apparent. Therefore, the EPA decided that a PER would be sufficient. An ERMP is developed in exactly the same way as a PER except that with a PER a much shorter period of public review is available than in the case of an ERMP. Public input for an ERMP can take up to three months whereas for a PER it takes from six to eight weeks. Exactly the same opportunity is provided for public input, but in a shorter time. Of course, a longer time is not necessary because PERs deal only with the most environmentally sensitive areas rather than the total development.

MOTOR VEHICLES: LICENCES

Transport Commission

888. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Is the Government planning to transfer the licensing and registration activities of the Police Department to the Transport Commission or a new department of transport?

Mr CARR replied:

No, there is no proposal before the Government to do that.
