

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 2nd May, 1979

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

THE LATE HON. ERNEST KNIGHT HOAR

Condolence: Motion

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [4.32 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

That this House records its sincere regret at the death of the Honourable Ernest Knight Hoar, a former member of this House, Agent General for Western Australia, and a Minister of the Crown, and tenders its deep sympathy to his widow and members of his family in their bereavement.

On behalf of those who sit with me I would like to say that Ernie Hoar, as he was known, was a very kindly person. He was conscientious in his duties as a member and a Minister, and also in his duties as Agent General.

He came into this Parliament at the election in 1943 and he was then the member for Nelson. When that seat was abolished under a redistribution, it became the seat of Warren for which he was the member in 1950, and he held the seat until December 1957 when he resigned his portfolio and his seat to become the Agent General for Western Australia in London.

He was Minister for Lands and Agriculture from February, 1953, until December, 1957, and when he left this place we all realised that he had gone to an appointment for which he was well fitted and which he valued dearly. When he became Agent General he carried into that work the same dedication and simplicity of approach and the same friendliness and kindness he demonstrated when he was a member of the House.

He was in the Chamber when I first came here in 1953 and was a person one could always talk to, whether a member or a Minister. Both he and his wife were people we got to know very well and we valued their friendship.

Had he lived until October of this year he would have reached the grand old age of 81 because he was born in 1898, and the fact that he has a record of four years of service in World War I from 1914 to 1918 in the engineers would indicate he must have joined the armed services at a very early age. However, that is the record.

On behalf of those who sit with me I would like to record our sympathy to his widow and our appreciation of the work he did as a member of Parliament, as a Minister, as Agent General, and, more particularly, as a citizen and as a friend to many. He came into the House very much in the tradition of the Labor Party at that time and he was active in the Timber Workers' Union prior to that. He was also very highly respected in his electorate. Our sympathy goes to Mrs Hoar and the family.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.35 p.m.]: On behalf of the members of the Parliamentary Labor Party I certainly would like to indicate that we support the motion. I find myself in a somewhat invidious position because I was, in fact, born shortly before Ernest Hoar was elected to the House.

One of the remarkable things about this institution itself is that despite the fact that one has been gone from this place for a long time one's reputation, whatever it happens to be during one's period of service to the Parliament, tends to live on for a long time after one has gone. Certainly the references I have heard to the friendly, very dedicated and conscientious Ernie Hoar have been echoed by the Premier.

At this stage I would simply like to say that we certainly extend our condolences to his wife, Dorothy, his son Dennis, and his daughter-in-law Shirley, and I would like to invite my colleagues, the member for Welshpool, who served with Mr Hoar, and the member for Warren—who succeeded him in that seat after Mr Rowberry—to support my remarks.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [4.37 p.m.]: Being the only member on this side of the House today who was present when Mr Hoar was a member of the Chamber, I would like to be associated with the remarks of the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Hoar was a very sincere man, as the Premier has indicated. He had no great claims to being a world figure, but he did a good job as Minister when he served in that capacity. His only great claim to fame in this Chamber, as far as I can recall, was that he was the only Minister who had the gag applied to one of his Bills, thus preventing him from replying to the debate. One would have to appreciate the situation at that time to realise the feeling concerning the legislation. It led to the only fist fight I have seen here, although Ernie Hoar was not involved. Nevertheless, those were the times and that was his experience which I think he appreciated.

He was great company. When he came back from his period as Agent General, he had several connections with different business houses in Western Australia and still maintained a great interest in the Labor Party and, indeed, in parliamentary activities. The only time he was really upset was on the occasion when he was not able to reply to his own Bill. However, be that as it may.

Those in Parliament at the time appreciate having known him and in extending our sincere sympathy and best wishes to his wife, Dorothy, we all hope she has a very happy life from now on and soon overcomes the grief of the moment.

I support the motion.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [4.38 p.m.]: I certainly support the motion. My own family have been friends of the Hoar family for in excess of 50 years. Indeed, I attended the Pemberton School with Dennis and so feel a sense of personal loss on this occasion.

There is certainly no question about the way in which Ernie Hoar was respected and revered in his electorate firstly of Nelson and subsequently of Warren. He was always regarded quite rightly as a very modest man. That was probably his most endearing quality, but also he had a simple directness which with his sincerity had a very wide appeal.

I recall that on his return from the post of Agent General in London he jokingly remarked that he had a career somewhat similar in one respect to that of Abraham Lincoln. When he first came to Western Australia he and his wife lived in a very small timber hut, and when Mrs Hoar required to dress to go out somewhere he had to move outside during that dressing period. Upon taking up his post as Agent General in London he found he had been booked in as a tenant in an establishment called the White House. That did not last very long when he found out what the monthly rent was. So he was able to say he had almost gone from a near log cabin to white house in finest tradition.

On behalf of the people of Warren, particularly his old electorate, I would like to extend condolences, along with those of other speakers, to Mrs Hoar and to his son and daughter.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [4.41 p.m.]: Like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am at a severe disadvantage because I did not personally know the Hon. Mr Hoar. However, it would be remiss of me if I did not offer the condolences of my predecessors in the Country Party to Mr Hoar's relatives on his passing, and particularly those of my immediate

predecessor in the seat of Katanning and the portfolio of Agriculture. I refer to the Hon. Sir Crawford Nalder, to whom I was speaking this morning. I would like to put on record the sincere sympathy of members of the National Country Party to the relatives of the deceased.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [4.42 p.m.]: On behalf of my colleagues in the National Party I would like to add condolences. I had some association with Mr Hoar during the period he served as Agent General and I met him a few times on his return from that post. I knew him to be a sincere man who was respected in every field in which he occupied a position. I join in offering condolences to his family.

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I ask honourable members to rise in their places to signify their support of this motion.

Question passed, members standing.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Margarine Act Amendment Bill.
2. Skeleton Weed (Eradication Fund) Act Amendment Bill.

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

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier), read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the second reading.

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Deputy Premier) [5.26 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I would point out that this is one of the Bills listed in the schedule of 12 Bills the House has agreed to pass before the Address-in-Reply is adopted.

Prior to dealing with the content of this Bill, it may be of interest to members to have some appreciation of and background to how this proposed Act came into existence. A stipendiary magistrate, Mr Terry Syddall, had for some time

been undertaking a personal and private study of Aboriginal tribal law.

In 1970, after being posted to Broome, he introduced the practice of inviting tribal elders to sit with him in the courtroom while Aboriginal defendants were being dealt with. The whole idea of this was to enable the elders to see at first hand how the law operated.

In the event of the defendant being convicted of an offence, he would outline to the elders the various options available to the court by way of penalty and then ask them which penalty they considered the most appropriate.

Although Magistrate Syddall made the final decision in accordance with the law, the practice which he developed no doubt laid the groundwork for what was eventually to follow.

In 1973, Magistrate Syddall left the Broome district but, at his own request, was transferred back there at the end of 1976.

In 1977, with Magistrate Syddall's concurrence, the Government requested him to conduct an inquiry on its behalf into aspects of Aboriginal tribal law and as to whether a plan could be formulated to improve the understanding of the law by Aboriginal communities.

For this purpose, arrangements were made to detach him from his regular magisterial duties and an anthropologist from the Department for Community Welfare (Mr Mikael Capelle) was seconded to assist him.

It was regarded as important that Magistrate Syddall's inquiry should be essentially a practical, rather than a theoretical exercise and be particularly related to local communities and Aborigines in the Kimberley area.

It was thought that any decisions resulting from the inquiry could be extended later to other areas of the State, if necessary, and this principle is, in fact, embodied in the Bill now before the House. Essentially, however, the studies were directed to the Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley area.

As work progressed and discussions were held with the Aboriginal people, the idea began to develop that a way could be found to increase both the responsibility for and control over Aboriginal people by their own community leaders using the institutions and services which are presently available to all Western Australian residents.

The idea met with more than a passing interest and, consequently, meetings were held with various community groups in the Kimberley area to discuss the subject. From these meetings, two

points stood out quite clearly: the tribal Aborigines had very little understanding of the law which affected their lives and, secondly, many of them failed to distinguish between arrest and trial, charge and conviction. They also recognised that abuse of alcohol was a prime cause of many of the social problems which had developed in their communities in recent years.

It became quite clear to Magistrate Syddall and Mr Capelle that, by and large, the communities in the Kimberley favoured having the power to restrict, rather than prohibit, the use of alcohol within their communities. At present, there is no power for the communities to enforce either restriction or prohibition.

What is proposed in the Bill now before the House is that, if the community makes a voluntary resolution to restrict or prohibit the use of alcohol, provision can be made in the by-laws to enable their wish to be enforced. Whether they take that decision or not will be for the communities individually to decide and not the Government.

It is pointed out that the ordinary law of the land will continue to apply over the community areas; namely, the Criminal Code and the Police Act and other laws which govern the conduct of individuals towards one another.

These laws will, however, be supplemented so as to cover offences committed within the community area such as—

- the regulation of the bringing-in, sale and consumption and distribution of liquor;
- providing a punishment for drunkenness;
- the prohibition of disorderly conduct; and
- the regulation of the use of motor vehicles, and associated matters.

It is important also to note that all persons in the community area will be affected, not only Aborigines, but also any other people who reside there, including visitors and, of course, intruders.

The proposals contained in the Aboriginal Communities Bill will be introduced on an experimental basis in the two Aboriginal communities at La Grange Mission and One Arm Point.

If the experiment succeeds, and it is sincerely hoped it will, then the possibility of extending the operation of the Bill to other interested communities can be considered. In this connection, it is pleasing to note that interest has already been expressed by other communities in the northern part of our State.

In essence, the proposals in the Bill are as follows—

- (1) To permit the council of an incorporated community body to make by-laws relating to the community lands. There must, of course, be adequate provision for consultation with the members of the community.
- (2) To provide penalties for a breach of a by-law by a fine or a term of imprisonment, or both, but with a maximum in each case.
- (3) To enable a court to order a person to pay compensation for damage done to the property of the community or any person not exceeding \$250.
- (4) To provide that by-laws made by the council of a community will apply only within the defined boundaries of that community.

Members will note also that money received by way of fines will be paid into a community fund, rather than to the Crown. The reasoning behind this is that in these fairly "isolated" areas, persons who commit acts harmful to the community should make atonement to the community for their actions.

To implement successfully the proposals in the Bill, it has also been necessary to appoint certain members of the community as justices of the peace, bench clerks and honorary probation and parole officers. In addition, police aides will be stationed at Lombadina and La Grange. Legislation already exists to permit these appointments.

Over the past few months, those persons selected for appointment as justices of the peace have been undergoing a training programme conducted by Magistrate Syddall, during which time the magistrate has continued to preside in the normal way, but the justices have sat with him and gained experience.

In a similar manner, the bench clerks have had the opportunity to learn their duties. Honorary probation officers will be appointed and trained to assist in the process of ensuring the carrying out of community service orders or probation orders and in the rehabilitation of offenders.

It was mentioned earlier that Mr Syddall had found that many Kimberley Aboriginal people did not understand court proceedings and saw no distinction between arrest and trial, charge and conviction. To assist in their understanding of the court routine, Magistrate Syddall has produced a manual explaining the laying of a charge and court procedure; that is to say, what happens from the time an accused person is brought into the court until the trial is concluded.

This manual sets out, in the form of a story, what happens in the court and the parts played by justices and others, and was produced in a rather unusual way. Mr Syddall wrote the first draft himself, in simple English, and this was then translated by members of the Fitzroy Crossing Mission into the Walmadjeri language. This translation, which embodied the concepts from the point of view of the Aborigines, with emphasis on matters of significance for them, was then translated back into simple English.

The manual will be available in either the Walmadjeri language, which is felt to be the most commonly used language and the one which the majority of Kimberley Aborigines will understand, or in its simplified English translated form.

In conclusion, it is emphasised that this is an experiment in bringing an understanding of the law to the people in these two communities, and it is hoped that it will help them to help themselves in safeguarding the peace and harmony they desire in their communities.

It depends entirely on voluntary acceptance by the communities. The Attorney General has personally visited a number of the communities and is satisfied that it will be well received. He has promised the communities that he would place the legislation before Parliament to help their genuine efforts to secure order and good conduct in their community areas.

The experiment has attracted widespread interest in law reform circles throughout Australia and details of the proposals have been made available to the Commonwealth Law Reform Commission and the Northern Territory Government.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hodge.

EVAPORITES (LAKE MacLEOD) AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 12th April.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.37 p.m.]: The State Government has placed itself squarely behind the interests of Dampier Salt in its handling of this Bill. It has done that at the expense of the people of the town of Carnarvon. In its handling of the Bill, the Government has turned its back on the people of Carnarvon.

Having said that, I should like to state at this time that that does not constitute an attack on the

company. As the alternative Government of Western Australia in this place, we have a responsibility, which we take seriously, to aim criticism at the Government of this State when we believe it is not acting in the proper interests of all members of the communities that it represents. In this particular case, the community I refer to is that of Carnarvon.

The member for Gascoyne, of course, has identified himself publicly as an apologist for the company at the expense of the people he represents. He had a responsibility to make his position clear in the defence of Carnarvon, not in defence of a company. I should like to repeat that, when I make that statement, it is not an attack on a company.

Companies have responsibilities to shareholders; companies have a responsibility to make profits; and as a result of our economic system companies are inclined to be preoccupied with doing exactly that.

I am critical of the Government for failing to bring pressure to bear and for failing to exercise its influence in respect of this amending Bill in the best interests of the people of Carnarvon. I intend to indicate how and why I believe the Government has not measured up to that particular responsibility.

We are not particularly surprised that the Government has placed itself squarely behind the company; but it is more than a little surprising that the member for Gascoyne has done so. He represents a very isolated community. People have been turning to him at this time and they expected him to represent their interests.

The member for Gascoyne was not to be found—I do not mean in a physical sense, but rather in the sense that he did not meet his responsibilities. Very few members who sit in this House have any doubts as to why the member for Gascoyne took that stance. As the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet, it appears he has been happy to place his promotion into the Cabinet before the interests of the people of Carnarvon.

Sir Charles Court: What is your authority for saying that he did not make representations on behalf of the community?

Mr BRYCE: The member for Gascoyne had a responsibility to the community; but he has made some extraordinary public statements in defence of the company. He has alleged that people have been attacking the company. He had a responsibility on behalf of the people of Carnarvon to insist on a better deal from the company for that community when this agreement was drawn up.

Sir Charles Court: What is your authority for saying—

Mr BRYCE: The public statements I have read which were made by the member for Gascoyne and the statements he has made in this House.

Sir Charles Court: What is your authority for saying he did not make representations on behalf of the community, because you are quite wrong?

Mr O'Connor: He certainly did make representations.

Mr BRYCE: He has expressed his position quite clearly in this House.

Mr O'Connor: He made a number of representations.

Mr BRYCE: The representations which may have been made by the member for Gascoyne, but of which we are not aware, certainly would not tally with the statements he has made in this place, because he has presented himself here, and in the statements he has made in the town, as an apologist for the company.

We are interested in the community and we are critical of the actions taken by the member for Gascoyne in the town of Carnarvon. We have seen what happened to the previous secretary of the Cabinet. When he had the gumption and gall to stand up to the Premier on a question of principle, he found it was necessary to resign and he languished in the backwaters.

Mr O'Connor: Where is he now?

Mr BRYCE: He should have been in the Cabinet a hell of a lot earlier and perhaps before the Minister who has just interjected.

Mr O'Connor: You should have given him a recommendation.

Mr BRYCE: Since he has been a member of Parliament, the member for Gascoyne has identified himself as a very hard line, doctrinaire supporter of the Premier. That is why it does not come as a great surprise to members on this side of the House that he has been prepared to sell the people of Carnarvon very cheaply rather than sacrifice a little of his Liberal Party philosophy.

May I say that the "Liberal Party philosophy" I refer to here is an undying, unquestioned pledge to support large companies at the expense of practically anything else.

Mr Clarko: That is totally incorrect and you know it.

Mr BRYCE: That in itself is not an attack on companies; it is an attack on a Government and on a Government's attitude. We on this side of the House accept that, in a mixed economy, it is

absolutely essential to have a prosperous private sector and an effective public sector.

Mr Clarko: You agree with that very reluctantly, do you not?

Mr BRYCE: That is not right. We face the reality of living in a mixed economy.

Mr Grewar: That is rubbish!

Mr BRYCE: That is the position of the members of my party, and if members opposite wish to express their points of view as far as their own political parties are concerned, they will have plenty of time to do so during the course of this debate.

It is a great pity that neither the Government nor the member for Gascoyne, in respect of this particular matter which relates to Lake MacLeod, has been prepared to acknowledge publicly that when a large firm establishes a very significant enterprise in an isolated community, that that large firm, and particularly the Government of the day, has a responsibility—a particularly significant responsibility—to the very fragile nature of the economy in that region. It is an isolated economy and whenever a large—

Mr Shalders: How long has that company owned the installation?

Mr BRYCE: Why does not the member for Murray do his homework? I have read the Minister's second reading speech.

Mr Shalders: How long has it been the proprietor?

Mr BRYCE: It has probably been the proprietor from just prior to Christmas.

Mr Shalders: That is a great length of time, is it not?

Mr BRYCE: May I say for the benefit of members, and particularly for the information of the member for Murray, that this operation has been in that area since the agreement was signed in 1967. It is not a new phenomenon.

This company has a very significant impact on an isolated regional economy. When a company of this size, employing 180 people with a spin-off indirectly involving and affecting some 800 or 900 people, decides with the support of the Government that it may in the future put its operations on a care-and-maintenance basis, that cannot be taken lightly.

Sir Charles Court: But the prospects will be better than ever.

Mr BRYCE: That is what it will come to; that is really the point about which discussion on the amendment must hinge. The Minister has indicated publicly that he is quite prepared to

allow this to happen, and we believe this is an appropriate time and place to ask him to explain to us some of the implications.

We share the common concern of the people of Carnarvon; we share their anxiety. There is no question there are many anxious people in that town ranging from civic leaders and businessmen, to the ordinary citizens. Also, the anxiety is shared by the headmasters at the schools who see the enrolments of their schools and their staffing formulas being affected. Practically everybody in the town is concerned, and we share that concern after having visited the place.

Mr Clarko: Are you not trying to ingratiate yourself with the people because of the coming election?

Mr BRYCE: Not at all; it is a simple question of principle. The way this has been done has left the future of the town of Carnarvon precariously in the balance for some time. It is a knife-edge situation. The people of Carnarvon will not know for some considerable time what the future of their town will be, if this agreement goes through in this form.

Mr Clarko: Are you claiming you have a more genuine interest in the people of Carnarvon than has the member for Gascoyne?

Mr BRYCE: Yes, especially when the member for Gascoyne stood up and presented himself as an apologist for the company, whereas he had a basic responsibility to stand up and go in and fight for the people. He showed his true colours indeed.

Mr Clarko: He will win his seat by more than he did last time.

Mr BRYCE: It is our basic desire to see the salt operation at Lake MacLeod back in full production. It is our basic idea to see the 180 or more employees of the company back in employment.

I would like to emphasise that because of the procedures of this place it is impossible for us to amend the proposition now before the House, that we are forced into the position of either supporting or rejecting the Bill. We do, in fact, give the amended agreement now before the House our qualified support. However, I reiterate our support is only because we want to see the company back in operation and the people back at work. But, we do reserve the right to be highly critical of the Government over things which are missing from the agreement, and which should be in it.

If it were possible, under the procedures of this House, to amend the agreement we would propose

to do that. Perhaps this is the appropriate time for us to start to consider whether it is a valid way to conduct the affairs of the State for a Bill to be presented to Parliament as a *fait accompli* and to be told either to accept it or toss it out. Other forms of legislation are not presented on that basis.

We on this side of the House have studied very carefully the proposal to amend the agreement. There are several places where provisions should have been—and certainly could have been—written in to provide a form of assurance and a sense of security for the town of Carnarvon. However, those provisions have been left out and that is the basis of our criticism of the Government.

I suggest any Government of substance which did have a genuine concern for the town of Carnarvon would have included at least a couple of provisions in the amending agreement which are not there. The first provision would have been to commit the Dampier Salt company to take a fixed proportion of its total annual production of salt from Texada.

Members may or may not be aware of the situation that the Texada company in Carnarvon has been taken over by Dampier Salt, whose main operation is based some 300 miles further north. As a result of that, the parent company will now be in a position to juggle the operations of both plants to suit itself. I suggest that owing to the way the amending agreement has been presented to this Parliament it is possible for the parent company to juggle the outputs of the two different production plants which eventually could be at the expense of the town of Carnarvon.

In his second reading speech the Minister said that in the event of the total annual sales dropping below 2.6 million tonnes—and I believe he has since amended that figure to two million tonnes; perhaps he could indicate whether this is so—

Mr Mensaros: I will explain.

Mr BRYCE: If that is the case the Minister is quite happy to allow the parent company to place the Texada operations on a care-and-maintenance basis. That is the basic issue of concern to the people of Carnarvon. We have heard nothing publicly from the member for Gascoyne about this. He had an opportunity, as the representative of that town, to represent a specific issue which is of concern to the people. I might add that concern was shown by representatives of the shire, who certainly do not comprise a team of Laborites; they are probably anything but.

Another provision which should be in this agreement and which is not, and which would be in the interests of the people of Carnarvon and which I believe the member for Gascoyne should have been responsible for putting publicly to the Government—instead of standing up again as an apologist for the company—was a provision to allow a third party to come in and take over the production of common salt. In the event of Texada losing interest in the production of salt from Lake MacLeod, instead of the company placing the operation on a care-and-maintenance basis and putting it into moth-balls, as the Minister has indicated he is quite happy to accept, there should be a provision in the agreement to allow for a third party to produce salt.

How absurd it is to have a proposition before the House which will allow the Dampier Salt company to decide to put the Texada works at Lake MacLeod on a care-and-maintenance basis, and allow the company magnanimously to tell the people of Carnarvon that it will allow a third party to come in, if its wants to, to use the potash and langbeinite. Everyone is aware that a market has not been located to make it worth while to produce potash and langbeinite. We will now provide to release the company from that obligation. What a big deal for the Government—to say that a third party can come in and take over the production of potash and langbeinite, which nobody can sell.

As far as the townspeople of Carnarvon are concerned, in the event of the parent company at Dampier putting the Carnarvon works on a care-and-maintenance basis, and concentrating its efforts at Dampier, it would be in the interests of the people of Carnarvon if the Government had written into the agreement a provision to allow a third party to go on to the Lake MacLeod lease and actually begin to produce salt. Of course, that has not happened and in a sense, we are not surprised.

Those are two specific illustrations of how we believe the Government has a responsibility to an isolated town; to see that a company does the right thing by the town in that particular respect.

Now that the member for Gascoyne is again present in the Chamber I will repeat, for his benefit: I am not attacking the company. I am attacking the Government of which he is a supporter because it is the Government which is handling this resource on behalf of the people of Western Australia, and which is laying down the ground rules for the exploitation of that resource.

It seems that the problems which confront this particular industry have arisen as the result of

three principal reasons. The first one, we are told, is the effects of the cyclone. Now the strange thing about this, we learnt from this morning's Press, is the fact that the cyclone apparently was not particularly debilitating. Although the Carnarvon Shire Council made representations to the Federal Government and to the State Government seeking and imploring those Governments to come to the aid of the salt works because of the serious effects of the cyclone on the salt works and the employment prospects in the town, the State Government and the company did not make an approach for assistance to the national Government. The Prime Minister has indicated that position in a reply to the Federal member for Fremantle which was published in *The West Australian* today. So, one wonders just how seriously debilitating the effects of the cyclone were as far as the company's finances are concerned.

We are aware that during a previous cyclone the loader was put out of action, and it was repaired and back in operation within a period of 16 weeks. It is no wonder, therefore, that the people of Carnarvon register more than a little concern about the time it seems to be taking to get a guarantee from the Government or the company that work will commence again on a permanent basis at Lake MacLeod.

A second problem which has probably led to the difficulties, which the Minister touched on during his second reading speech, is the world demand for salt. However, whilst the Minister acknowledges that there have been problems in the past, he seems to be quite confident about the future, so that really cannot be the essence of the problem so far as the people of Carnarvon are concerned.

A third development which has led to the problem I think touches the very essence of it. I refer to the takeover of the Lake MacLeod project by the Dampier Salt company. As I have already said, it will now be possible for the parent company with its main operations nearly 300 miles away to make a decision to place the very important production site in Carnarvon on a care-and-maintenance basis. When it does that, of course, the job opportunities for many people will disappear. As many as 180 people were involved initially. The problem that faces the people of Carnarvon is that there has been a transfer of ownership.

Mr Mensaros: What is the answer to this? Would you not have agreed to the transfer?

Mr BRYCE: No, on the contrary. I said obviously, in commercial terms, the Government could do very little.

Mr Mensaros: A Government can disagree with a transfer, and that is the end of it. Then the whole company would go out of business.

Mr BRYCE: Might I say, if that were the only option available to salvage the operation—

Mr Mensaros: That is correct.

Mr BRYCE: That is the issue; the amendment should contain a provision requiring the company to take a minimum fixed tonnage.

Mr Mensaros: That is in the Bill.

Mr BRYCE: It is not in the Bill.

Mr Mensaros: That is contained in subclause (2) of clause 4 of the third schedule.

Mr BRYCE: I have also read page 42 of the original agreement. Clauses 22 and 23 provide that at any time the company can be relieved of its obligation. The Minister also indicated this in his second reading speech. Although the Minister laid down these requirements of 700 000 tonnes and 500 000 tonnes, if the total demand slips below 2.6 million tonnes, the Texada works can be placed on a care-and-maintenance basis.

Mr Mensaros: If you listen to me as I am listening to you, I will explain the whole thing to you. I am only sorry that you did not come to me in a spirit of co-operation and understanding. There was nothing to necessitate this type of comment unless you are doing it for political reasons. Such remarks are not justified.

Mr BRYCE: I am not the only member of this House who has been approached about this matter. Other political parties have been approached, and some members have received telegrams from the Carnarvon Shire Council. The council has expressed its concern; it is not just my concern. Practically everyone who has closely studied this amending agreement, together with the Minister's second reading speech, feels the same sense of concern about the statement made by the Minister. Unequivocally the Minister said he would agree to the Texada works being placed on a care-and-maintenance basis under certain conditions, and I was just discussing those certain conditions with him.

Mr Watt: Is it not just possible in the long run it may be better off because the two operations are owned by the one company?

Mr BRYCE: That is not the point. It is essential that the Government does every conceivable thing possible by way of agreement between itself and the company to ensure that

work continues on a permanent basis at Lake MacLeod.

Mr Mensaros: Agreed, and that is possibly what the Government has done.

Mr BRYCE: When the Minister then says in his second reading speech that under certain conditions and circumstances he will approve of the plant being placed in mothballs, it is natural that members in this place, the members of the Carnarvon Shire Council, and everyone else closely associated with this town, have a right to express their concern. Certainly the Minister did not elaborate any further in his second reading speech. Of course, this is the reason for the difficulty that has arisen. There is nothing in the agreement to give effect to the statement the Minister made towards the end of his speech. He said—

In reaching this agreement with Texada I have had to recognise the uncertainties inherent in the future marketing of salt. It is the intention of both parties that production of salt at Lake MacLeod will continue. However a provision was considered necessary should a serious fall in the demand for salt occur. It was agreed that if total annual sales of salt from the Dampier and Texada operations fall below 2.6 million tonnes the company would have the option to place the Texada operation on care and maintenance.

I would like to have the Minister's attention for a brief moment so that I may ask him a simple question. That does not appear as a provision in the amending Bill.

Mr Mensaros: That is correct.

Mr BRYCE: Was this arranged in letters exchanged between the company and the Government?

Mr Mensaros: It was an undertaking by the Government to the company putting an interpretation on the amending agreement which is much more serious because I think your interpretation of the amending agreement is not correct. I was going to explain that.

Mr BRYCE: That is why I believe this point is important. It is open to different interpretations.

Mr Jamieson: Pretty important.

Mr BRYCE: It is about the most important thing that can happen to the town of Carnarvon. Can the Minister suggest why it was not contained in the agreement, why it was not spelt out?

Mr Mensaros: Because the amending agreement, as it reads, is much more severe. If

you read the preamble to it, you must realise it is much more severe from the company's point of view, and that was conceded, otherwise it would not have been in here.

Mr BRYCE: Might I say that nobody but the Minister holds that opinion.

Mr Jamieson: But he is modifying it. He ought to have put it in irrespective of which way he is going.

Mr BRYCE: I would be neglecting my responsibility if I did not take this opportunity to refute some of the nonsense spoken in this House a very short time ago by the member for Gascoyne in another debate when he touched on this very same issue. The member for Gascoyne made the most absurd and palpably untrue statement ever, and it is reported on page 773 of *Hansard* of Thursday, the 26th April. The member said—

Before I was interrupted, I was referring to the attacks by the ALP on Government-initiated projects. The attack on the Dampier salt operation at Carnarvon is similar to all the other attacks on every project—

Let me put him right for the record. Obviously he was rather overheated when he said it, and suffering from an attack of wild "imaginitis". It is far from the truth, and I demonstrated to this House a very short while ago that the Australian Labor Party, from 1971-1974, brought in more Government-initiated projects a year to aid the development of country areas of this State than the present Government has ever done. Might I add that the vast majority of all Government-initiated projects brought to this place have been supported by the Labor Party. It is palpably untrue to say that we have knocked practically all these projects, or even that we supported very few of them. The member for Gascoyne went on to say—

Most of these development and resource projects take place in country areas and provide employment opportunities in these areas, yet not one has had the support of the Opposition.

That is an example of the absurd lengths to which the member for Gascoyne will go to exaggerate a situation and to stretch "an untruth". In reality the Labor Party has placed itself fairly and squarely behind development projects. Perhaps the honourable member has not been here long enough to appreciate properly that when someone stands up in this place to express an opinion on an agreement, or reservations about it, he is not necessarily knocking that agreement. Under the procedures of the House it is impossible to amend

these agreements, and if a member is not prepared to accept, lock stock and barrel, a 48-page agreement between a company and a Government—as the member for Gascoyne seems prepared to do as he sits behind the Premier—that does not mean he is against the principle contained in the agreement.

The member for Gascoyne ought to check his facts; he ought to find out how members of the Labor Party voted in the past. We take our responsibilities very seriously; we question the substance of agreements. The honourable member is neglecting his responsibilities if he sits back and accepts agreements presented to him as a member of this place and simply says, "These agreements are okay by me as long as Sir Charles or the Minister says so."

Just because we have raised questions and doubts about certain provisions in agreement Bills presented to this House, it does not mean, and it never has meant, that we oppose the projects which are the subjects of the agreements. The member for Gascoyne would be very hard put to find that the Labor Party has voted against a significant number of those agreements during the time he has been here.

In fairly typical fashion the member for Gascoyne screamed "sabotage" in his local newspaper, the *Northern Times*, on the 26th April. Somebody went into his constituency and had the gall to question the effectiveness of the way in which the Government, of which he is a supporter, was handling this particular situation. He totally twisted and contorted statements, and he construed the actions of myself to have been an attack upon the company. The honourable member screamed "sabotage" knowing full well that he may need a scapegoat; he would like desperately to be able to blame someone apart from himself or his Government if this operation is placed in mothballs and the town of Carnarvon suffers accordingly.

I repeat for the record: We on this side of the House have no quibble with the company; but we do have a quibble with the Government. The Government has the responsibility to see that the company fulfills its obligation to this particular country town.

If the town of Carnarvon is to have a sense of economic security, the Bill should contain other provisions. This is not just my point of view; my feelings are shared by members of the Carnarvon Shire Council. The Leader of the Opposition received a telegram yesterday from the Carnarvon Shire Council, and if the Minister, the Premier, and the member for Gascoyne believe that this

whole situation is a figment of our imagination, they should listen to the wording of the telegram. It reads—

The shire of Carnarvon objects most strongly to that part of the Evaporites (Lake McLeod) Agreement, which will enable the operating company, Dampier Salt, to place the Texada operation on a care and maintenance basis should the total annual sales of salt from the Dampier and Texada operations fall below two million tonnes a year in the first three years and below 2.6 million tonnes thereafter.

Does the member for Gascoyne wish to suggest now that the civic fathers of Carnarvon are scaremongers? He had a responsibility to support them in their endeavours. The telegram continues—

The shire contends that whatever joint annual sales are negotiated over 1.4 million tonnes the company should be required to produce 700 000 tonnes from the Lake McLeod operation. Thereafter if the sales decline below this figure the Government should have the option of permitting another company to operate from Lake McLeod. Indeed if on any occasion the Lake McLeod operation be placed on a care and maintenance basis the Government should have the option of permitting another company to operate from Lake McLeod. The shire requests your urgent attention to this matter.

It is signed by Mr A. J. Taylor, the shire clerk.

Mr Mensaros: That is very much your own interpretation; you didn't draft it, did you?

Mr BRYCE: I intend to convey to the Carnarvon Shire Council the comment made by the Minister.

Sir Charles Court: It will be.

Mr BRYCE: What an insult!

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr BRYCE: Prior to the suspension of the sitting for tea I read to the House a fairly lengthy telegram I had received from the Carnarvon Shire. I am sure that shire will not be very impressed to read the sarcastic remark of the Minister for Industrial Development suggesting I had drafted the telegram for the shire, simply because that particular shire council happened to agree with the point I am now putting to the House.

The substance of the telegram from the Carnarvon Shire evolves around two points and is

an expression of concern about the town's long-term economic future. The first point spells out the shire council's concern with any suggestion that the Government would agree to allow the Texada operation to be placed on a care-and-maintenance basis, or put into mothballs. There is a very good reason that the Carnarvon Shire Council should adopt that point of view. They realise that if that option is exercised by the company, the town stands to lose approximately 150 or 180 permanent jobs; it is as simple as that. If the Government were dinkum, it would be bringing an agreement to this place containing a provision which committed the company to take a fixed proportion of its total output from both the Dampier and Texada sites. That is the essence of our argument, and it just happens to be the substance of the argument from the Carnarvon Shire.

The second concern outlined in the telegram is one I would like to put to the Minister by way of question. He spells out in the amending agreement that the Government will be quite happy to allow another company, or a third party, to come on to the Lake MacLeod lease and commence the production of anything but common salt. I indicated to you, Mr Speaker, earlier in the debate that the two basic commodities being produced at Lake MacLeod are a vast tonnage of common salt and a fairly small amount of potash, which term includes langbeinite.

It is difficult to find a market for the langbeinite. In fact, initially it was difficult to find a market for the potash. So, nobody wants it. However, in this agreement the Minister is saying that if at any time in the future, another company or a third party wants to go into Lake MacLeod and take over the production of this commodity—for which it is very difficult to find a market—it may do so.

However, the point the Carnarvon community is concerned about is that if these works have been placed into mothballs because it suits Dampier Salt (Operations) Pty. Limited at any particular time to be taking the bulk of its production—or, for that matter, all of its production—from the site at Dampier—

Mr Mensaros: That is not so.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister indicated in his second reading speech that it is so.

Mr Mensaros: Only if total annual sales from both operations fall below a certain level.

Mr BRYCE: That is right; I am quite happy to concede the Minister said that if total annual sales of salt from the Dampier and Texada

operations fell below 2.6 million tonnes, the company would have the option to place the Texada operation on a care-and-maintenance basis.

What the Carnarvon community is asking the Minister, and what I would like to ask him now, is why he objects to allowing another company to come on to the Lake MacLeod lease to begin producing common salt.

Mr Mensaros: I do not interject. I will tell you in my reply; do not worry.

Mr BRYCE: Therein lies the basic concern of these people, whose regional and isolated economy is going to be adversely affected.

The Opposition finds nothing very objectionable about the actual agreement which has been brought before Parliament. But that is the whole point: It is what is not in the agreement to which we take exception. The agreement should contain provisions which give a sense of security to this town. After all, it is possible for the Government to say to this company, "You have two operations, one at Dampier and one at Texada. Irrespective of how low the demand for salt falls, out of a sense of social responsibility to both places, you must take a proportion of your production from each centre, instead of putting one of them on a care-and-maintenance basis, which obviously would have a fairly deleterious or debilitating effect on one of those communities." The Government should ensure any burden is shared by both communities.

Mr Speaker, I do not intend to refer in detail to the agreement contained on pages 3, 4, and 5 of the Bill. I have already indicated that the Opposition has no objection to the clause relating to the upgrading of the salt installations, or to the clause relating to shipment of common salt; nor do we object to the clause dealing with relieving the company from its potash obligations. In fact, when we were in Government we introduced an amendment in, I think, 1973 to include langbeinite in the definition of "potash" because of the obvious difficulties of selling potash at that time.

There could be no objection to the clause dealing with an investigation and report on the utilisation of the resource; nor do we object to the way the provision for third party participation is structured. We simply say it does not go far enough in the interests of the town. If the demand for salt falls below a certain level, and if it suits the best interests of Dampier Salt it could place the Texada operation on a care-and-maintenance basis. Therefore, naturally, it would be in the best interests of Carnarvon if the agreement contained

a provision allowing the Government to give some other company the opportunity to come in and produce common salt.

It is a fairly poor state of affairs when the leadership on an issue of this magnitude for the town of Carnarvon and on an issue of such importance to the Parliament must be given by the community leaders in Carnarvon, with the exception of their local member. It has been the Carvarvon Shire Council which has done a tremendous job in pushing the long-term economic interests of Carnarvon to the Government and to the rest of Western Australia generally.

From my reading of the Press and from statements which have been made in this House and in the other place, this matter has not been brought forward by the actions of members of Parliament who have a fundamental responsibility to represent the area.

I conclude by repeating a rebuttal of the very mischievous claim made by the member for Gascoyne that, somehow or other, the Labor Party has an interest in sabotaging the company.

Mr Clarko: How many days have you spent in Carnarvon in your lifetime? Would it be 10 or 20?

Mr BRYCE: I have spent plenty of time there, and I find it to be a fascinating community.

Mr Sodeman: It is a little like two bob each way, and double the administration costs.

Mr BRYCE: There goes the voice of the Pilbara; he is not the slightest bit concerned about having a sense of social responsibility towards any of these communities.

Mr Sodeman: I am just saying it is obvious you are having two bob each way. From the smile on your face, it is obvious you agree.

Mr BRYCE: We are not having two bob each way. The contortions with which the member for Gascoyne has applied himself to the statements I have made about this issue are extraordinary, to say the least. As I said at the outset of this debate, our criticism has been aimed at the Government, because it is the Government which is responsible for this situation. Yet the member for Gascoyne has screamed "sabotage!" because we dared to criticise what the Government was doing.

I repeat that we were not being critical of the company; we were being critical of the Government. The Government had a responsibility to bring an amending agreement to this place which would give the town of Carnarvon a greater sense of security than it has

with this agreement. It is a great pity that it has been the town's civic leaders who have had to scream in exactly the same way for precisely the same thing to be done and that this has not been done by the member for Gascoyne.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [7.42 p.m.]: In rising to support the agreement before the House, I wish to give a brief history of the operation at Lake MacLeod, known as the Texada salt operation. It commenced in the late 1960s under an agreement entered into by the Brand-Court Government and Texada Mines. Originally, the operation was to produce potash, with some salt being produced for sale as a by-product.

The history of the potash operation is one with which I was associated in the early 1960s, when the lake was first being investigated by an American geologist. I had the opportunity to traverse the lake with him on a specially designed vehicle developed to get over the soft terrain on the lake.

The original principal of Texada Mines was an American by the name of Allan Christensen. He worked very hard to develop salt sales. He was successful in selling salt, but not potash; in fact, it was doubtful right from the first whether he really believed he had the ability to develop potash sales. However, it was something the State Government of the day wanted to develop—probably even more than it wanted the salt works—as no potash was being produced in Australia at the time. It was seen as a very desirable operation to commence in this State.

As the potash side of the operation got into more and more difficulties, the company relied more and more on its production of salt to maintain any sort of operation. Mr Christensen then sold a major interest in Texada Mines to the Japanese company C. Itoh. Subsequently, C. Itoh approached the then Tonkin Labor Government and indicated it was unable to meet its contractual arrangements regarding potash, and wanted the definition of "potash" altered.

The Tonkin Labor Government allowed the company to withdraw from the agreement with the State to produce potash. It produced another product, a far less concentrated type of potash which was called langbeinite. Langbeinite is not produced anywhere else in the world. It occurs naturally in Mexico, and there are some sales of that langbeinite; but there are no sales of produced langbeinite. Nevertheless, the company built a langbeinite plant and produced 10 000 tonnes of it to satisfy the new agreement or the agreement as it was amended in 1972. The company was not able to find a market for that

langbeinite. In fact, the 10 000 tonnes of langbeinite still remains at Cape Cuvier. It is held inside the largest timber structure in the southern hemisphere. It is still lying there because it was not produced in a form that could be shipped. It was too fine. Besides that, there was no market for that particular product.

As a result of the difficulties with potash, C. Itoh lost between \$20 million and \$25 million. In 1976, because of these difficulties and the amount that had been lost by that company in a very marginal and difficult salt operation, and an impossible potash or langbeinite operation, the company came to the Government. By this stage, the Court Government was in power.

I just repeat that it was the Brand Liberal Government which had the project started. It was the Court Liberal Government that was able to make sure that the project did not close when C. Itoh, after losing the massive sum of \$20 million to \$25 million, was prepared to close the operation. I congratulate the present minister who was involved in the negotiations. The State Government enabled BHP to enter into the project.

BHP came into the project at the request of the State Government and at the request of the major partner, C. Itoh. BHP was encouraged to come in at no cost. In fact, any losses in the first three years of operation were guaranteed by C. Itoh; so BHP had absolutely nothing to lose. That company was not anxious to come into the project. It was encouraged into it, and was guaranteed against loss.

BHP was involved in the project from 1976 until late 1978. At that time, the company approached the Government and did not want to continue. In October or November last it was likely that, if BHP withdrew, the project would close once again.

That has proved not to be the case, purely through the efforts of the present State Liberal Government and the present Minister, who negotiated with BHP to sell the interest that it had acquired to CRA—Conzinc Rio Tinto of Australia—through its subsidiary, Dampier Salt. In October or November, 1978, the new corporation, which was a subsidiary of CRA, commenced operations. It began carrying out the terms of the agreement immediately. Within a short time that company had spent some \$500 000 on making the ponds more safe and able to withstand attacks from the elements.

I will explain that in a little more detail. Lake MacLeod can become a real lake with water. I have seen four feet of water on the end of the lake

where the ponds are situated. When there are cyclonic conditions, with that depth of water large waves are able to form. Large waves can have quite a disastrous effect on salt pans.

CRA spent approximately \$500 000 within the first few months of taking over the operation in trying to prevent damage to the ponds by cyclonic disturbances.

That brings my resume of the history of the operation to the time when cyclone "Hazel" struck. I would like to turn now to the events surrounding the closure which followed the destruction of the salt-loading jetty by cyclone "Hazel".

Cyclone "Hazel" was a natural disaster for my area. It was difficult to inform the public of Western Australia and across the nation generally of that message. I am not criticising the media for this; but the media tends to contact a place and say, "Who is injured? How many people are dead? What property damage has been done?" If one says, "There is no-one injured and no-one dead", then that is not a disaster in the way that the media sees it. It was very difficult for people in this State to be told because, for instance, telephone communication from the small township of Denham was cut for five days afterwards. The only communication was by way of the police radio.

The media was not told that many houses had been inundated by the storm surge and that people had several feet of sea water through their homes. They were not told that floors of houses were covered with seaweed, and so on. That was not reported.

I want to make it quite clear that the aggregate effect of that cyclone amounted to a disaster for my electorate. It caused massive damage to the plantation industry and personal damage to outlying settlements like Denham and Useless Loop.

It was much later when we found that perhaps the biggest blow of all had occurred to the salt-loading jetty at Cape Cuvier and the salt operation at Lake MacLeod. That was all part of the extremely difficult time we had to endure.

The area I represent is used to enduring periods like this. On average, the area suffers a major cyclone every four years. We know that when those cyclones come they will create great difficulties. We try to minimise them as far as possible. Through the efforts of grower organisations in the area and the previous Liberal Governments we have established a banana industry compensation trust fund, to which the growers and the Government subscribe. That

helps to compensate growers for the massive damage that they suffer from cyclones.

We try to minimise the effects of cyclones, but we still know that they are very serious and can do a lot of damage in the area.

The Cape Cuvier damage occurred to one of the biggest employers of labour in the area. It happened to the Texada operation. The company immediately informed the site union leaders; and the site union leaders and union leaders in Perth requested the company to discuss the problem with them before making public the news of the matter. The unions insisted that they should be the first people to know and to discuss the possible arrangements that could be made to overcome these difficulties. Therefore, the company approached the union leaders in Perth, to have discussions with the TLC here before making the matter public.

In the meantime, the union leaders had instructed the Government that this had occurred, and asked the Premier if he would withhold the information until such time as the union conference had taken place. Fortunately the Premier decided that the information should be made public prior to the conference with the unions.

The cyclone struck on the night of Tuesday, the 13th March. On the night of Thursday, the 15th March, the Premier released the announcement regarding the damage to the salt-loading jetty. The conference took place on the Friday morning.

I was approached by the union leaders and by the company. They said that they were disappointed that the Premier had seen fit to make this announcement to the State of Western Australia as the unions had specifically requested that no such statement be made until they had had a chance to have a conference with the company.

On the same day as the conference took place in Perth with State union leaders and their officials, the company officials flew to Carnarvon to inspect the damage. They requested a meeting with me. I gladly attended that meeting. The officials told me that the difficulties would be overcome, and that they would begin negotiating immediately to try to lessen the impact on their 150 employees. I said, as the local member representing those electors and constituents, that I believed that the first duty of the company was to try to ensure that the impact on those directly employed by the company was minimised.

I discussed the matter immediately with the Premier, the Minister for Labour and Industry, and the Minister for Industrial Development. The

Premier instructed me to meet with the Shire of Carnarvon and to request the shire to list its priorities for projects which could be put in train and which the Government could consider funding. The idea was to provide work and alternative employment whilst the company's difficulties were being overcome.

I met with the shire and I asked for a list of priorities. Unfortunately the shire tried to avoid, and did in fact avoid, giving me a list of projects that it believed the Government should consider or put in train in the interim period. The shire preferred to insist that the company should maintain its production, although that was clearly impossible. I approached the Government and said that I was unable to obtain a list of priorities from the Shire of Carnarvon. I provided the Premier with my own list of priorities. Within a matter of days, a project was announced by the State Government which would entail the expenditure of \$150 000. That project had nothing to do with the industry that was suffering the problems; but it was a project which could be got under way quickly.

Tenders were called almost immediately. This work will engender further employment in the fishing industry as an alternative, to try to minimise the impact of the closure of the salt operation.

The salt company spent the first seven days after the cyclone in trying to relocate its work force. It arranged satisfactory severance pay arrangements. As I have indicated in this House before, the State leaders of the Australian Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union asked me for a meeting. They told me that their members had been treated fairly by the company, and that they had accepted the conditions for severance pay unanimously.

The union leaders had told me the day earlier, with great honesty, that they had just come from a meeting, and they wanted to tell me that the meeting had been aborted. A meeting of the members of the AWU and the AMWSU had been aborted by members of the Seamen's Union and the Maritime Workers' Union. The result of the first meeting was that the severance pay arrangements were rejected. The local union leaders told me that the meeting had been taken over by members of the local ALP, the Seamen's Union, and the Maritime Workers' Union. They said they would call another meeting at which their own members would be present. That meeting was called the next day.

At that meeting, the men agreed to the severance pay conditions. They then told me that they had done so. Some of the 150 employees were employed at Lake MacLeod; in other words, they retained their jobs. Others were given the opportunity to go to Dampier to start a second shift. Some were offered jobs at the diamond project outside Derby. Hamersley Iron offered further jobs and so did Cliffs Robe River. In fact, the Commonwealth Employment Service officers who went to the town told me that, after the Cliffs Robe River people spent several days in interviews, they had fewer applicants than the number of jobs they had gone to Carnarvon to offer.

The officers of the Commonwealth Employment Service were in the town almost immediately. I congratulate them for their quick action. They wrote letters to 250 local employers to see if there was a possibility of local employment to help these people out.

In company with the local regional administrator, I visited all of the banks in the area and asked for sympathetic treatment for anybody who may have to move out of the town or who had to endure a period of unemployment. I asked for sympathetic treatment in relation to outstanding mortgages and loans. I approached all the building societies which held mortgages in the town. I asked them also to be sympathetic in their treatment of the people in Carnarvon who might be affected badly.

The local bus proprietor had the contract with the company to take workers to the site every day. I arranged a meeting for him in Perth which I attended to enable him to speak to Treasury officers in an endeavour to find a way to assist him to overcome a difficult period. At a meeting he arranged with the company he was told by Dampier Salt that he should retain his buses because they would be needed for future operations.

The Government immediately sent two engineers—one from the PWD and one from the Department of Industrial Development—to Cape Cuvier to make an assessment of the damage to the jetty. Negotiations have been continuing since that time between the company and the Government to ascertain how quickly production can be recommenced.

Apart from this, it is heartening to learn also that the company has been negotiating with the Government and the shire on two very important aspects for the whole project and for the future of Carnarvon. The first one is the provision of a sealed access road to the mine site which is a

distance of 60 kilometres. It is a rough road and has to be travelled daily by the employees who work on the site.

Since 1967 when the company first commenced operation, there was an agreement that the road be sealed with a one-third contribution from the company and a two-thirds contribution from the State. Because of the previous difficulties I outlined in my brief history of the project, the companies in control of the project at various times have not had the funds to enable them to make their contribution to the Government. Now Dampier Salt has come to the Government and has said it would like to negotiate for funds to be made available for commencement to be made on the sealing of the access road.

The second major thing which has been put into the pipeline at this difficult time is an approach by the Government to the company and the local shire to ascertain whether the Shire of Carnarvon, which provides power to the town, will do so on a 60 kilometre transmission line from the town of Carnarvon to the mine site. That project in itself would be well in excess of \$1 million in transmission lines and in additional generating capacity in the town of Carnarvon.

That is a project which could be funded by the local authority through its funding powers. We have made similar arrangements for the provision of power by the shire to Radio Australia which came to the town two or three years ago.

On behalf of my constituents I also raised this matter with the Prime Minister. I wrote to him expressing my concern, as I had already previously done with the Premier. I wrote to the Prime Minister and asked for assistance on behalf of the town and I received a reply to my letter on the 23rd April in which it states—

I note you have also approached the Premier and the State Government concerning this matter.

So the Prime Minister was aware that I had approached the State Government. A little further on, the letter states that on the 21st and 22nd March the Premier's Department contacted the Commonwealth in regard to assistance to overcome the effects of cyclone "Hazel" in this State.

That seems quite contrary to the information given by the Prime Minister's Department. I find it hard to understand that Mr Dawkins, the Federal member for Fremantle, could have been given information that special assistance had not been requested for the Dampier Salt operation in Carnarvon from the Prime Minister. Certainly

the State Government had made approaches to the Prime Minister—

Mr B. T. Burke: When are you going to get down to the part where you sold out the town? Does that come next?

Mr LAURANCE: —in relation to the effects of cyclone "Hazel" and of course this was a related effect of the cyclone.

Mr Jamieson: Have you a copy of the State Government's representations there?

Mr LAURANCE: The Prime Minister tells me in his letter that he was approached. The Federal Government received approaches from the State Government on the 21st and 22nd March.

Mr Jamieson: What sort of approaches—written approaches?

A Government member: What does it matter?

Mr Jamieson: It does matter.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about your selling the town? Is that next?

Mr LAURANCE: It is quite obvious that the Federal and State Governments have been working with the company to try to get production recommenced as quickly as possible.

Mr B. T. Burke: All you have tried to do is discredit the local authority.

Mr LAURANCE: I support the amendment before the House because when the agreement was negotiated—

Mr B. T. Burke: What amendment?

Mr LAURANCE: The Bill.

Mr O'Neil: It is an amendment to an agreement.

Mr LAURANCE: I must point out that when the agreement was negotiated last November the State indicated an intention to ratify the agreement in Parliament before the 30th June, and that is why the Bill is being dealt with by the House now. The debate had to be brought forward because in the original agreement there was an arrangement, as can be seen from the Bill, that the State Government would endeavour to introduce a Bill and have it passed and the agreement ratified by Parliament prior to the 30th June, 1979.

The agreement provides for a number of things, all of which we want because they will ensure that the company comes back bigger and better than ever.

Up to \$2.5 million additional expenditure is provided for. Immediately the company took over, before the agreement was ratified, the company

moved and, as I indicated previously, more than \$500 000 has already been spent.

The company must maintain the langbeinite plant. It has been mentioned that the agreement demanded that the company produce potash, but that provision has been deleted. Nevertheless, millions of dollars worth of plant still exists at Lake MacLeod and under the agreement the company must maintain the langbeinite plant. That is important. It must produce 700 000 tonnes of salt in the first three years. It is the intention of both parties that salt production will continue.

My contention is that if the salt production does not continue then the intention of those parties will not come to fruition and the situation must be looked at in that light. Under the agreement prior to 1972 the company contracted to produce potash, but when it could not do so, the agreement was amended to change the very definition of "potash" to enable langbeinite to be produced. The agreement could be amended in the House again if there were factors which were detrimental to the company or the town.

The State may introduce a third party to further utilise the resources, and I remind the House that it is a magnificent resource. I believe it to be the largest mining lease in Western Australia and the possibility is not only regarding potash, which to date has proved too difficult to produce; there is also quite a possibility concerning the production of magnesium salt from that resource.

So the State may introduce a third party under the agreement to further utilise the resource and I think that is a major point in the future of the agreement.

The whole spirit and intention of the agreement is to encourage the company to continue. If this Government had not gone out of its way to try to attract a major operator to take over the Lake MacLeod operation, then it is more than likely that the project would have closed down last October. We would not have had to wait for cyclone "Hazel". If the State Government had not taken the initiative and had the enterprise to attract a major operator, this difficulty would have been upon the town several months ago; in fact, late last year.

For a moment I want to take the Opposition's stance on this—a very negative stance—and reflect what would occur if the agreement did not proceed.

Mr Bryce: We are not opposing the agreement.

Mr LAURANCE: I am taking the ALP attitude for a moment.

Mr B. T. Burke: Why not stop telling lies.

Mr Bryce: Don't tell lies!

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who made his speech earlier tonight was heard in complete silence and I ask that the member for Gascoyne be given an opportunity to make his speech without interjection.

Mr Bryce: As long as he does not tell lies!

Mr LAURANCE: Only one operator has indicated he is prepared to take over what in previous times was a stricken operation. I have indicated that the biggest operator, a major Japanese company, lost between \$20 million and \$25 million.

The State encouraged and initiated this agreement so that another major salt producer has come to the area. If this agreement does not proceed then we will not have an operation. We will not have a Lake MacLeod project. That is the prospect which faces the town of Carnarvon.

Here we have an operator who has been prepared to come here and invest a great deal of money. It has acted honourably towards its employees and has indicated to the Government that it will negotiate to commence production again as soon as it can overcome the effects of the cyclone. The company is faced with spending probably \$6 million to repair the jetty at Cape Cuvier. If we place impossible demands upon the company and if the company believes that we have adopted an attitude which is unwelcoming—and certain sources have made it quite plain that the company is not welcome—we will have no operation at all and Lake MacLeod would definitely close. That is the prospect the ALP is putting forward to us.

Instead, let us be positive. It was a positive attitude on the part of the Government to attract a major operator into the agreement, and we have been able to attract a major salt producer—certainly one of Australia's largest mining concerns. Its subsidiary, Dampier Salt, is a major salt producer. If we look on the positive side and realise the intention and spirit of the agreement between this major company and the State Government which is trying to attract and encourage industry and employment to that area, as I am to ensure the prosperity of that area for my constituents, the project will come back bigger, better, and more secure than it has been ever since it commenced in 1967. That is the reality.

If we encourage this company and if we are reasonable in our demands, and we tell the company it is welcome in the area because we

want the jobs it will provide and we are prepared to assist it, the company will come back bigger and better than ever. It will provide more jobs, and establish a longer jetty which will be able to handle ships of 100 000 tonnes.

Mr Bryce: What evidence do you have?

Mr LAURANCE: The maximum sized ships it can handle today are ships of 65 000 tonnes. That is a magnificent increase. Sealed roads will be provided for the comfort of the employees who must travel over them daily.

Apparently I am the only one who wants to adopt a positive attitude and who wants the jobs to remain in Carnarvon. The chairman of CRA (Sir Roderick Carnegie) attended a shareholder's meeting yesterday in Melbourne. In answer to a question he said—

The group was actively exploring other businesses related to salt, such as magnesium extraction from the bitterns.

That was reported in today's issue of *The West Australian*. If we refer to the agreement, we will realise that this is where the third party can come in. However, CRA is already considering magnesium extraction from the bitterns. Further on, the article states—

Speaking after the meeting, Sir Roderick estimated that the cyclone damaged Lake MacLeod jetty would be rebuilt in about 18 months.

CRA was considering lengthening the jetty at the same time so that it could lift the size of ships loaded, from 65,000 tonnes to about 100,000 tonnes.

Earthworks representing about 40 per cent of the ponds were also being upgraded.

Then he went on to explain one difficulty of the project on which I have not touched to date. I quote—

But Sir Roderick indicated that the quality of Lake MacLeod salt was not meeting the higher requirements of chemical customers, and that it was below Dampier's product standard.

These are his own words—

"We are investigating how to upgrade the quality of the salt to the level demanded by the customers," he said. "That is the most important thing to do."

So, while we will see much improvement in the situation out at Lake MacLeod by way of a longer jetty and the strengthening of ponds, quality control is probably the key to the situation.

The company has signed an agreement with the State that it will be there for a minimum of three years, and in the uncertain economic climate of today that is a long time. The company is making a commitment only for that length of time. At the end of three years we hope, as the company and the State Government do, we will find a very buoyant market for salt—that the millions of dollars the company will spend between now and then on lengthening the jetty, increasing production, and improving the quality of its product will place the company in a very buoyant situation and it will be exporting as much salt as it can from a much better, bigger, and brighter operation.

Therefore, this major employer of the major part of the work force in Carnarvon—my home town—provides the best hope of continuing the project. We heard earlier that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had spent some 48 hours in the town. He is the typical—

Mr Davies: He spends more time in his electorate than you do in yours.

Mr LAURANCE: —two-day expert. My home is in that town and I have been living in the town on and off for the last 20 years.

Mr Davies: Mostly off.

Mr LAURANCE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition tells us he has been there for two days and has been able to size up the situation, determine the company would not be continuing, make his feelings public, and jeopardise the whole operation by criticising the company.

Mr Bryce: Not the company. I criticised the Government.

Mr LAURANCE: That criticism appeared in *The West Australian* on the very day the company had arranged for 22 representatives of all the major salt customers in Japan to come to Carnarvon so that it could acquaint them with the difficulties and arrange for future sales contracts. It could well be that this company, which has been given every indication by the ALP and, unfortunately, some members of the Carnarvon Shire that it is not welcome—

Mr B. T. Burke: Always attacking the shire.

Mr LAURANCE: I attended a meeting with the shire prior to the public meeting, following which I made an approach to the Prime Minister. At the meeting I held with the shire the unmitigated and unjustified attacks made on the company were such that in the presence of the Press I publicly dissociated myself from those remarks because at the time I believed them to be libellous. I wanted it recorded—and fortunately it

was recorded in the local Press—that I dissociated myself from those remarks.

The company has been accused of criminal negligence. It has been accused of allowing one of the buoys which tie down the ships when they berth at the jetty to break loose and purposely break the jetty. I believe that attack on the company was completely unjustified. The tugs and in fact the mooring buoys are operated by a contract company to the salt producer, anyway. They are not operated by the major company in the project. The ALP has sided with one or two members of the Carnarvon Shire Council.

Mr B. T. Burke: Downgrading the shire again! Why don't you work in co-operation with your local authority?

Mr LAURANCE: I am told it is widely rumoured that one member of the council, who obviously arranged for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to attend at the council a few days ago, will be an ALP candidate at the next State election; so it is obvious he was supporting the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when he visited Carnarvon. The ALP has come out with an unjustified attack on this company and has clearly asserted that the company will not honour its agreement and is not welcome in the town.

Mr Bryce: You should not tell lies.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am to be asked a question on notice tomorrow with respect to the use in this House of the words "lie" and "lies". I would ask that members refrain from making use of those words until such time as I have made the statement I have been requested to make. The member for Gascoyne.

Mr LAURANCE: I want to ask the ALP this question. If it drives the company from the area—

Mr Bryce: You mean the Government.

Mr LAURANCE: —whom does it have waiting in the wings to take over the operation?

Mr Bryce: A brand new Government.

Mr LAURANCE: The ALP will nationalise it?

Mr Bryce: We have no intention of nationalising it.

Mr LAURANCE: All the ALP can do is drive away the only company we can find. It does not have an alternative operator waiting in the wings, nor do those councillors who have attacked the company in an unjustified manner. The only operator who has shown any interest at all in the project and has the capacity to produce and market salt—

Several members interjected.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! I ask that the House come to order.

Mr LAURANCE: The only company that has the capacity both to produce and market salt is the one which is the subject of the agreement with the State Government now before us. It is patently obvious why the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would be in Carnarvon trying to stir up trouble in the town. He is very upset about the 70 per cent of the vote I received at the last election, and that is likely to be greatly increased after his efforts in the last few days.

The attack in the community has been spearheaded by one group consisting of people belonging to unions—the Seamen's Union and the Maritime Workers' Union. They have used every opportunity to vilify the company.

Mr Bryce: The ALP vilifies the Government.

Mr LAURANCE: The Government is not the operator; the company is. The Government will not be a salt producer.

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: It is the Government we are attacking, my friend.

Mr B. T. Burke: Even the Premier is not here tonight. That is how important he thinks the debate is.

Mr LAURANCE: Those unions have vilified the company, and suddenly they have found someone to support them. Who do we think would come in behind the Seamen's Union and the Maritime Workers' Union to jump on the bandwagon and jump on the company that holds so much promise for Carnarvon? The ALP has come in and supported those Communist unions.

Mr Bryce: The reds are under the bed again. You are pathetic.

Mr LAURANCE: Why would the Seaman's Union seek to vilify a company which provides its jobs? Because the company happens to be a subsidiary of CRA which is a multi-national company, the Seaman's Union and the ALP have their ideological blinkers on—it is one of those dirty multi-nationals. That is why the Seaman's Union and the ALP are attacking it: they do not like the multi-nationals. That multi-national is providing employment in my area and I want it to continue there. If the ALP has sabotaged future sales contracts with the Japanese as a result of its activities in vilifying the company, I will use every means at my disposal—

Mr B. T. Burke: To sell out your constituents.

MR LAURANCE: —to make it quite obvious that it is the ALP and the Seamen's Union which

have robbed my town of the possibility of this project going ahead, bigger and better than ever.

I want that company to continue. I welcome its investment in the area. I welcome the honourable way it has gone about meeting the terms of the agreement to date, and I look forward to the time that operation is back in production. I support the Bill.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [8.25 p.m.]: I, too, look forward to the time the company is back in production.

Mr Laurance: Unlike your colleague.

Mr Bryce: You were not here at the beginning of this debate.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! I called upon members of the Opposition to restrain themselves from interjecting while the member for Gascoyne was speaking. The member for Welshpool now has the call and I ask that he be given an opportunity to make his speech without interjection.

Mr JAMIESON: I was about to say we would welcome, as we always do, the setting up of industries in decentralised areas; and this one is no exception. The industry has been set up and has experienced many problems. I was about to say I thought, when the member for Gascoyne started his speech tonight, how different his approach was from the approach he adopted the last time he was on his feet raving and ranting. I realised after a while he was undoubtedly subject to some sort of tranquilisation, but after the tranquilisation wore off we saw a return to abuse and defamation of all sorts of people—the local authority, the Seamen's Union, and the Maritime Workers' Union.

Let me deal with them. They have houses and wives and children who live in the area. Many of them have lived in the area for much longer than the member who was on his feet, and of course they are worried about their position, as they are entitled to be.

Mr Laurance: I defy you to find me one.

Mr JAMIESON: They are entitled to worry about their position. The honourable member flits in and out of Carnarvon. Had it not been for certain circumstances, he would never have been there. He raced back when he received the endorsement, and he knows it. He should not be coy about that. That is exactly what happened. He received the endorsement and he was elected, and he now sets himself up to be such a mighty person.

When he started his speech he seemed to be using this force majeure happening and looking for an opportunity to get rid of some more constituents. He was rather pleased that arrangements had been made for people to move to Robe River in their employment. Whether or not those people had houses in Carnarvon did not seem to matter one iota to the honourable member. That was merely by the way; they could just be bundled off somewhere else.

Mr Laurance: Would you prefer they were unemployed?

Mr Bryce: Give them a job in Carnarvon.

Mr JAMIESON: For a long time the employment situation at Carnarvon has been very finely balanced.

Mr Laurance interjected.

Mr JAMIESON: I think somebody should find the honourable member a job in a library which has a sign saying "Silence please". We would all get on much better. Not having such a job available for him, we will have to put up with what he is saying across the Chamber.

Nevertheless, for some time I have appreciated the "gut" feeling, one might say, of the people of Carnarvon. With the very fine balance in the economy, any event that takes a few people out of employment in that general centre causes a great deal of concern, a shift in the profitability of businesses of all kinds, and a deterioration in the general functioning of the whole community.

The people of the area have had more than their fair share of problems in recent years. A satellite communications centre was established in Carnarvon, and then it was lost to the area; although subsequently some of it was put back. Rather strangely it was a cyclone which helped the town a little. Darwin's ill luck brought the Carnarvon district a few more employment opportunities in a Commonwealth communications venture near the town.

Referring to the main industries—and while this is outside the scope of the Bill, we must take due cognisance of it in order to appreciate the attitude of the local people—the Minister showed how much regard he has for the problem being experienced in Carnarvon when he said that the telegram from the shire clerk was connived with or dictated by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The people of Carnarvon are really

worried. The shire has always reacted rather violently on the local scene. Indeed, I have found myself on the end of a spear wielded by the shire often enough to be aware of that. I tried to do things for the shire when I was the Minister, and I had a reasonable amount of success.

There is not much going for the Carnarvon region apart from that which is already there. Therefore it is vital that the people insist on retaining a venture which is already there, such as the Lake MacLeod salt operation.

I would like to know from the Minister just where we are going with the new agreement. He has mentioned that an exchange of letters has taken place in respect of the amount of production. God knows what else was contained in that exchange of letters. Has some sort of secret agreement been made which will not be brought before the Parliament? Are we in the Parliament to ratify only part of an agreement made between the Government and the new company? Has another arrangement been entered into since cyclone "Hazel", or was this part of the original agreement?

We have not been clearly told these things. I have read in vain the Minister's introductory speech, and nowhere did he make these points clear. All he has made clear is that the other company is battling on and wants this concession so that it may continue. We must remember that whether it be CRA or some other group, multinational companies are in the game of salt production not simply for the benefit of Western Australia; they are in the game for the benefit of their shareholders. If something is not good for the shareholders and a way out can be found, I do not know of any company which would not take that way out. This company already is in salt production at Dampier, so one must wonder just how genuine it is.

Sure, the company will put the equipment back into operational condition. Money is expendable in that area; it goes against other investments and capital improvements and is written off against taxation. We know the wrangles and manipulations in which large companies indulge and still show equipment as an asset in their books. We know the company will not lose anything, but whether its intentions are honourable at this juncture—although they may have been at one time—is something I wonder about.

What the people in the area, the Shire of Carnarvon, the Seamen's Union, and the Maritime Workers' Union are worried about is getting back into the production of salt. We have

heard disparaging remarks made by people who say members of those unions are reds. I do not know whether they are reds; I have not met any that seemed to me to be reds. They all seem to be good local identities who spend their money well in the community. They seem to me to be good family people who like living in Carnarvon.

What will happen to these people if they are driven out of Carnarvon? Can the member for Gascoyne suggest any jobs suitable for men who have been working on boats? Perhaps a few men may be able to get jobs on the prawn trawlers, but there would be only limited opportunities. These men must consider the problems which would face them if they must uproot themselves from Carnarvon and go elsewhere.

The member for Gascoyne also said that the original company could not produce potash. That is not the situation as I understood it. The company could produce potash all right, but not at a marketable price. Had the member said that, he would have been stating the actual position. Potash can be produced at a price, but the price certainly was not acceptable to the company.

The company clearly told the Tonkin Government that if it had to meet the provisions of the agreement and produce potash it would have to close down. We readily agreed to a change in the agreement. Does that sound like the work of people who are against the production of salt in the Carnarvon area? Does it sound like the work of people who are against the production of langbeinite and other things derived from salt and the bitterns? It seems to me it is an indication that we agreed with the planning of the company.

Now, of course, the game has changed again and the principals have changed. I repeat that the new principals already have a major salt-producing venture on our coast.

It seems to me one of the problems with salt production can be likened to the problems experienced by market gardeners when the price of lettuce is very high one season, and so everyone plants lettuce in the next season and the price comes down. When salt production commenced in this State—I think it commenced in the Norseman area originally—it was on a high cost-of-production base and we were selling a great deal of salt because there was a world shortage. But then came Leslie Salt at Port Hedland, followed by the establishment of Dampier Salt.

Then we had the developments of Useless Loop, Lake MacLeod, and several other lesser ventures, all producing salt far in excess of world requirements. In addition, as the member for Gascoyne rightly said, Lake MacLeod has

difficulty in getting salt up to the purity that Leslie Salt and others are able to achieve of something like 98 or 99 per cent. There are reasons for this. One impurity is organic and is caused by brine shrimps breeding in profusion in the salt ponds. When the bitterns reach a certain stage of maturity the shrimps die, leaving a stain which must be washed out along with the ordinary residue that accumulates in the salt during the ponding, and which comes from mud, etc., which flows in with the salt water when the ponds are filled. The harvesting of salt is not an easy process, and each additional process which must be included creates an additional cost.

Therefore it would seem to be most unlikely—although I hope this is not so—that the company will engage in further salt production in this area if it can get away without it. I hope I am proven wrong on this. I have no doubt the company is rejuvenating the ponds and doing all the things we heard about tonight, because it is of no use the company indicating it will not do anything in the area. Of course, we might find a company which is prepared to come in and take over the venture if the new company walks out, and then we will have an additional competitor in the salt market. Probably that would be worse for the new company than rehabilitating the damage caused by cyclone "Hazel".

The Premier is not present at the moment; he is one who flares when we talk about guidelines and bases in respect of minerals. However, it was only a few years ago that he was pleading with the Commonwealth to set guidelines so that salt producers would not get into more trouble. He did that quite effectively, but now he wants guidelines to be abolished completely. He wants to forget about the approach he made to Mr Anthony and others to have guidelines established to assist in the viability of salt producers.

Mr Davies: I think Anthony interfered on his behalf.

Mr JAMIESON: Yes, I think he did so at the Premier's request. Yet on the other hand the Premier takes another tack in respect of some other mineral, and says there are plenty of markets for it at the right price.

I think we are virtually over-producing salt at this time. Probably salt is over-produced in the world. In Europe it is mined in Germany and Russia, and other places, where ponding is not necessary. In other countries ponding can be carried out because of the high evaporation rate, and considerably more salt seems to be produced than is necessary to meet the world demand.

If the world economic situation improves—and no doubt it will as the recession tapers off—the minerals that are required in many industries throughout the world will again be in demand. Then we will have a demand for salt, but whether it will be sufficient for all of our producers is something I doubt very much. I doubt that will happen within the next 20 years.

Perhaps in 20 years' time the demand for minerals will be such as to warrant all companies going into full production. Even if we have to hold the salt producers during that period on a care-and-maintenance basis, they will at least be ready to go and they will not have initial development costs. However, I doubt whether salt producers are capable of operating efficiently at the moment, let alone having to put additional capital into their operations.

I wish to deal with one other matter, because the member for Gascoyne made a great deal of comment in respect of the State making requests for assistance to pay for damage caused by cyclone "Hazel". It is not clear that any request was made in respect of this project. It has never been stated categorically that a request was made. Undoubtedly general assistance was requested; even the quotations of the member for Gascoyne were of a general nature. The only absolute fact we have is an answer given in the Federal Parliament to a question asked by the member for Fremantle. The Federal Minister said representations had not been made in respect of the Lake MacLeod salt project.

I have heard no denial of that, and we have had no indication of any letter sent by the Premier or any Minister to the Federal Government requesting assistance in this area. I doubt whether such a request was made. Had such a request been made the Premier would have produced it to the Press with much relish. However, it seems only a general approach was made in respect of the considerable damage caused by cyclone "Hazel".

I support the Bill, although I doubt whether we will see this venture in production again. I would not like to see any project this big taken away from the town of Carnarvon, which has had a hard struggle right from its establishment. It has had a struggle ever since the time somebody tried to start a meatworks there, and then went broke before a single beast had been slaughtered.

There was a time when the town developed slowly along the river. There was production of bananas, tropical fruits, and some early vegetable crops for the Perth market.

All sorts of problems are experienced when a shire tries to develop at a certain pace, but then it starts to lose ratepayers. The situation is harder for those who are left. Some people want to leave because they say, "What is the use? We are losing fast."

The company should be allowed the latitude that the Government is suggesting by this amendment to the agreement. We should ensure that the company can produce a sufficient quantity, otherwise the works will be placed on a care-and-maintenance basis, and only a small group of people will be retained on the site. That remains to be seen. I hope I am proved wrong; but from a practical point of view there is very little chance of going beyond this stage in the future.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [8.47 p.m.]: Whilst those of us in the National Party do support the agreement, we have some reservations about it. It would be appropriate if we made known our reservations.

It seems to us that the agreement itself has lost some of its value. There has been an agreement for an operating tonnage of 700 000 tonnes for the first three years of operation of the new agreement, and 500 000 tonnes after that. However, there has not been taken into account in the new agreement a tacit understanding between the Government, through the Minister for Industrial Development and the company, to produce an agreed tonnage.

In the Minister's statement dated the 24th April, he quoted that tonnage as being two million tonnes a year for the company at its two operations—the ones at Lake MacLeod and Dampier. If the production fell below 2.6 million tonnes, the production could be discontinued. There seems to be some discrepancy there. The Minister has mentioned two figures. I would like him to give us details of the discrepancy between those figures.

This is probably the most important aspect that we are debating tonight—the fact that the company, under the new agreement, is required to produce 700 000 tonnes—but there seems to be a tacit understanding that if the combined production does not reach an agreed level, the company can discontinue production and go into a situation of care and maintenance.

This is the area on which the local authority has expressed the major part of its concern. The local authority can see that CRA has taken a major shareholding in the Texada operation. The shire is worried that this may be a move to remove a competitor from the production of salt.

It would perhaps be ideal for CRA to discontinue the Texada operation completely.

Speakers who are far more eloquent than I have spoken previously. They know far more about the subject than I do. They have outlined the reasons for the production of salt at Texada or Lake MacLeod being more difficult than it is at Dampier. Obviously, a company which is profit-orientated is likely to make a decision to discontinue its less profitable operation. In this case, that appears to be the Texada operation.

Because the local authority has a responsibility to the people it represents, it has made a request by telegram to various political parties. Our party received such a telegram. Unlike the member for Gascoyne, I imagine that the telegram was not prompted by one or two members of the local authority. It would have to have been prompted by a majority decision. I think that fact should be borne in mind.

The authority is concerned at the effect of the discontinuance or the cessation of operations at the Lake MacLeod salt mine. The authority argues that the Government should take steps to ensure that, whatever the production is, the Texada operation should be responsible for producing half of it. The local authority sees that as a fairly equitable arrangement. That is the basis of the telegram, as I see it.

The situation boils down to two points: the agreement is fine provided we say that there should be a production of 700 000 tonnes in each of the first three years, and a production of 500 000 tonnes in the years thereafter. However, when one refers to section 22 of the original agreement—which I am sure is where the tacit understanding is to be found—that is the important factor. That is the tacit understanding about the level of combined tonnage at which the company can request to go into a care-and-maintenance situation. That is seen as being more important than the required tonnage that is written into this agreement. It is also seen as important that the Government has a responsibility to ensure that of the combined operations the Texada operation produces half of the output. The Government has a responsibility to ensure that this is the case. I hope that the terms of this agreement in relation to production are adhered to. I hope we do not see a situation in which the Government encourages or allows the principal shareholders to place this operation on a care-and-maintenance basis.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development) [8.53 p.m.]: Although I am disappointed at the approach of the

Opposition as it was expressed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I can say that it was not unexpected. In fact, it was anticipated.

As soon as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition heard the second reading speech, he went up to Carnarvon and, I would think, sowed the seeds of the theory which he adopted in the interpretation of this agreement. I am not suggesting that this is the result of a deliberate mischief. He probably did so out of ignorance.

Mr Davies: You are not suggesting he went up there for that purpose? It was planned long before you even brought the Bill into the House.

Mr MENSAROS: Mr Speaker, you mentioned, when the member for Gascoyne spoke, that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was not interrupted in his speech. I would think that if the Opposition is interested in an explanation, it might listen to me.

Mr Davies: Well, don't tell lies.

Mr MENSAROS: I would like to give the correct interpretation of the amending agreement and the undertaking which was given by the Government and expressed in my second reading speech.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has used this occasion to attack the member for Gascoyne, probably because he is not happy that the Labor Party's representation ceases north of the northern boundary of Geraldton. The ALP has nothing above that point. However, I am confident that the member for Gascoyne is going from strength to strength. His majority has increased every time. Therefore, there is no need for me to defend him from the accusations made against him. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not have any effect on the safety of the position of the member for Gascoyne.

It is easy to say that the Government has not looked after the interests of Carnarvon, and that the Government has allowed an agreement to be entered into which is against the interests of that community. In actual fact, the situation is entirely the opposite. The Government exercised the best stewardship it could have exercised. As the member for Gascoyne said, the Government prevented the Texada operation at Lake MacLeod from being discontinued on two different occasions. On this the third occasion we are dealing with a classical act of God—a *force majeure* came into the situation.

Mr Jamieson: You should have been a Scotsman, you are so good at blowing your own bags. You would make a good piper.

Mr MENSAROS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also said that there should have been a fixed proportion written into the agreement in relation to the salt produced at Carnarvon and Dampier. However, that does not take into consideration the different qualities of salt produced in these places, the different sales agents dealing with the two producers—and they are entirely different companies—and the different customers which buy the product.

One of the difficulties in negotiating the agreement was the existence in the equity of two sales-agent companies. It was necessary to bear in mind the small percentage holding of C. Itoh. C. Itoh has an active participation in the joint company in order to be able to market the Texada salt through their regular customers who were used to this type of salt and who could use it efficiently.

I would not disagree with the member for Welshpool when he says that the quality of the salt from Dampier is better. However, it is only better from the point of view of certain users. There are users who want only the quality which is produced at Lake MacLeod.

Mr Jamieson: Yes. They are the ones who use it to put on roads when there is snow. They will take anything!

Mr MENSAROS: That is the imagination of the member for Welshpool. He should talk to the members of the Soda Industry Association of Japan who were here in large numbers a week ago. As the member for Gascoyne said, they require the salt for many different purposes.

I come to the crux of the matter—the complete misunderstanding of the interpretation of the amending agreement. I do not blame anybody for this; but the matter should have been given some thorough study. I refer to clause 4 of the schedule to this Bill, which states, in part—

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the principal Agreement—

Then it goes on to say that the company has to upgrade the salt installations; and it has to produce 700 000 tonnes for the first three years at least, and 500 000 tonnes thereafter. Then I refer to clause 5, which reads as follows—

5. The provisions of the principal Agreement shall be read and construed subject to the provisions of this Agreement.

This has to be taken into consideration. If the amending and principal agreements are being read properly, I am sorry that I have no choice but to say that the Opposition either has no

comprehension of the agreements, or it is misinterpreting them maliciously.

There are these two choices only. If we take the two provisions in the amended agreement which I have cited into consideration, we should realise the provisions in the principal agreement do not apply, because they contradict the new provisions. The provisions in the principal agreement are not contained in clause 22. They are found in clause 17 which is the *force majeure* clause. Amongst other things, that *force majeure* clause describes not only an act of God as the first connotation of that expression, but it describes also as being *force majeure* economic conditions. It says that if the company cannot sell profitably—that is, the Texada Salt enterprise—it can cease production without default and it will not lose the mining lease; therefore, it does not lose the deposits. It is true clause 22 is related to this matter, but it refers to the termination of the agreement. It can be seen that clause does not disadvantage the State other than to the extent of the jobs which will be lost. However, if clause 22 of the original agreement is applied, the company is in default and the fixed improvements become the property of the State and the mining lease is lost to the company. If there are any takers, the whole matter may be started again.

I should like to come back to the proper interpretation. The agreement, as it is amended, does not weaken the situation of Carnarvon or the situation of Texada. In fact it strengthens the situation enormously. I challenge any alternative Government to say it could have done better. The new company which took over undertook to waive this *force majeure* provision so that, under all circumstances according to the provisions of this amending agreement, it would produce 700 000 tonnes for three years and 500 000 tonnes thereafter.

I should like to refer now to the history of the matter. The member for Gascoyne has mentioned it already, but I should like to highlight some relevant points. I should like to emphasise, as did the honourable member, that on two occasions this undertaking was on the brink of collapse. When C. Itoh took over it was very enthusiastic. I do not want to take any merit for this. It felt it had the scientific means to solve the problems with the potash and langbeinite production. This company took over and poured in money. As mentioned by the member for Welshpool, after three years the company had, to some extent, solved the problems in relation to the production of potash and langbeinite. However, production was not economic and there was no market for the product. The member for Welshpool stated

correctly that prior to this the Tonkin Government, in his words, very readily agreed that the potash production should be waived, because it was not economic. How can the Deputy Leader of the Opposition accuse the Government of failing to insert in the agreement a provision which could make it absolutely impossible for any company to produce economically?

Returning to the history of this matter, after three years the company had lost approximately \$25 million. It still felt it had a responsibility to the community and it sought my help to negotiate an agreement with BHP. Under that agreement it was decided that BHP should not buy out the company, but that all the losses should be written off and the operations should be taken over by BHP under the condition that it had an option to purchase in three years' time.

It is common knowledge from the amended agreement that during this time BHP was obliged to spend certain moneys to explore further the situation regarding potash which now included langbeinite production, according to the new definition. It was limited in salt production to an upper figure of 1.75 million tonnes. This provision was introduced originally by the Tonkin Government and for reasons well known to the member for Welshpool, the Opposition stated correctly that this was not originally a usual salt-producing project. Therefore, the ceiling imposed by the Tonkin Government for a limited time was extended in the case of BHP which was given a three-year period.

So, once again with the help and encouragement of the Government as happened in the first case, another agreement was drawn up. I was involved in the negotiations with BHP. I remember the place at which we met in Melbourne and the person with whom I spoke. We had to do a great deal of persuading in order that BHP would accept the three-year option which in fact secured the life of the project for a further three years in the interests of Carnarvon. What happened at the end of the three-year period? I do not believe BHP lost a great deal of money, but it was not interested in the project.

At the end of the three-year period, which was in December of last year, we had to arrive at an agreement between CRA and BHP. CRA was prepared to accept the serious obligations involved and we arrived at this amending agreement which, as I have mentioned, removed the *force majeure* clause as far as the 700 000 and 500 000 tonnes minimum production obligations were concerned. Why did I mention the figure of 2.5 million tonnes in my second reading speech? It is obvious I did so because, regardless of the legal

situation, the company said to us, "Under these conditions unless you give us some undertaking we cannot accept it."

The member for Welshpool will bear me out, because he said the Tonkin Government readily agreed to discontinue a losing proposition. We said to the company, "You take a risk. There is a responsibility to the community in respect of the enterprise you are taking over. There is a risk, but to make it a little easier we will not hold you to the letter of the agreement to continue production under uneconomical circumstances, but will only do so after the first three years." In the past the aggregate production of Texada and Dampier never went below 2.6 million tonnes despite the fact that the market virtually bottomed out two or three years ago. It has improved slowly since then. We arrived at a figure which represented a very low quantity and production had never dropped to that level previously.

We said to the company, "In this eventuality we will not kick you out and make you forfeit the deposit. We give you this security but you will be able to mothball the plant only for a time. If the production from Dampier increases above the amount stipulated, you have to resume production at Texada again. In any case, in five years' time if nothing happens and you do not recommence production you will lose your deposits." That was not a very great concession. It was not against the interests of the people of Carnarvon. In fact, it provided security for them, because that was the provision upon which we were able to come to an amending agreement which has been signed by CRA.

I do not want to sing the praises of CRA. We know it is the largest mining undertaking in Australia. It has the largest iron ore mine in Western Australia. It is carrying out a great deal of exploratory work. I do not believe anyone could claim CRA is not a solid or responsible company in regard to the attitude it adopts to its employees and the community associated with its work.

Indeed it is a poor interpretation of the matter to claim the Government arrived at a bad deal from the point of view of Texada, the local community, or the shire. My comment about the Deputy Leader of the Opposition drafting this telex was not illogical or mischievous in any sense.

Mr Davies: You are wrong.

Mr MENSAROS: The first interpretation given by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was rather interesting. I did not expect such an interpretation, because it was wrong legally, as I have explained. It resulted from a lack of adequate study of the provisions. Suddenly the

same incorrect interpretation came from another source. You, Sir, or anyone else would have come to the same logical conclusion without attempting to be mischievous. Two incorrect interpretations, approximately 1 000 miles away from each other, came to the same wrong conclusion.

Mr Laurance: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition visited the Carnarvon Shire and told them the same thing.

Mr Jamieson: You would be lowering your standard if you reckoned he could do that.

Mr MENSAROS: I have explained the situation in relation to the amending agreement. Far from being detrimental, it contains positive advantages.

I should like to deal briefly with another matter which was referred to during the debate. I do not know whether it comes within the ambit of the provisions of this Bill, but it has been referred to at length in the discussions and you, Sir, allowed it to be mentioned. I am referring to the damage caused by the recent cyclone. As it has been mentioned already, I believe I should be permitted to refer to it.

The Labor Party has referred to the fact that the State Government did not approach the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the company. In all sincerity I wonder what the Labor Party would have thought if the Government had gone to the Commonwealth and said, "There is this poor little company, CRA, which is lacking in money. They are insured and we must consider the poor insurers with all the underwriting behind them." These companies are international and Lloyds of London probably underwrite them. Did the Labor Party then expect this Government to go to the Commonwealth Government and say, "CRA should be given \$6 million or \$7 million of the taxpayers' money"? Do members opposite advocate that? If they do not advocate it, why do they say that we, the State Government, should have approached the Commonwealth on behalf of the company or their insurance underwriters in an endeavour to obtain finance for it?

The employees of the company are being offered alternative jobs wherever possible, as mentioned by the member for Gascoyne, and if the worst comes to the worst and they do not want the jobs, they can go on to unemployment benefits. Members opposite asked why did we not approach the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the company? We did not do so, because it would have been a stupid step to take.

More importantly, I should like to refer to a Press release which has not yet been published,

but which was prepared today. It is a coincidence that we happen to be dealing with this legislation at the same time. The Press release contains the information that the company definitely intends to repair the damage.

There was never any question that the company would not repair the damage; but I could not announce that fact—and no one could expect me to do so—before engineering studies had been conducted to determine the extent of the damage and the cost involved in remedying it and rebuilding the facility. It also had to be found out how much of the cost of restoration would be covered by insurance. We have ascertained that the rebuilding process will take approximately 17 months. The whole loading facility has to be rebuilt, because it was demolished completely. The structure which leads out to the loading facility has not been demolished completely and it can be repaired with a few replacement parts.

As I have mentioned, the repair work will take approximately 17 months, subject to the technicalities of obtaining the approval of the necessary authorities, such as the insurance companies. This work will create additional employment in lieu of the salt operation and, therefore, it will virtually restore the employment situation to its former level.

This is the most important aspect of the whole situation in addition to the agreement which ensures the long-term future of the whole operation.

I am in contact with many local authorities and many associations, and indeed I have a very good relationship with them; therefore I am sorry that the Shire of Carnarvon—whether it was the whole of the shire or just a couple of councillors—instead of coming to me as the Minister in charge and instead of saying that they had worries and asking for an answer, and asking me to explain—which would have been the normal situation to pursue if somebody is really interested—took the other step of seeking publicity and contacting all sorts of identities by telex. The shire was careful to make the telexes available for the day of the debate and even the National Party came into the discussion so that the shire received publicity.

Well, I can tell the Shire of Carnarvon, or any other local authority, that is not a businesslike way of going about it. If the shire were serious, and if it were interested, it would have come to me and to the Government and we could have explained the situation—the same as I have explained to the House—within a few minutes. If

the shire had been genuinely interested everything would have been settled in this way.

There is not much more for me to say, but I want to refer to the comments asking why we did not include in the agreement a provision that at any time another company can come in. First of all, there is the provision which has been explained already by the member for Gascoyne regarding other than salt production. Secondly, we had to take into consideration that if successful and heavy investments have occurred some security has to be given for an economic *force majeure* to happen outside the purview of the company. The company should have some security. In all practical ways, there is no other entity which would come in and offer to produce salt.

We went through the third largest Japanese trading house, C. Itoh, through the largest Australian company, BHP, and through the largest mining house, CRA, and if those companies cannot sustain the operation I challenge anybody—whether it is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or the member for Welshpool—to show who can take it up. We cannot be naive about this. We cannot follow the process suggested for Kalgoorlie—take the leases away from the existing companies and give them to the small prospectors. Let them scratch down to 2 000 feet and scrape together some gold! We do not want that. The same applies to Texada. If this large company, for economic reasons, is not able to produce salt against any market, nobody else would be able to do so.

The by-products, nevertheless, are important and because CRA did not express any immediate interest in these by-products, with the company's consent—as mentioned by the member for Gascoyne—we incorporated in the agreement opportunity that anyone who is interested can come in and busy himself with these by-products.

As far as the market is concerned, there seems to have been a difference of opinion which is quite understandable, because it happens between any forecasters, and between the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Welshpool. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was rather more optimistic from the point of view of the salt market. The member for Welshpool said a production problem could not be solved for 20 years. I would not speculate on a period of 20 years; that would be too outlandish and too daring. However, the signs at present are that the market is improving. There are indications that the situation will improve because China, which is a producer, will export less and less. The domestic

demand in that country has risen, and that will help us.

There is also the fact it is very difficult to establish solar evaporation salt works just anywhere, and we are lucky because our climate is such that the producers know when the rains will come, and they know when evaporation will occur. We have an opportunity to increase our capacity, and this undertaking by the Government, which I explained in my second reading speech, simply states that we will not be so strict as immediately to kick out a producer who cannot economically sell the product, but will give the producer an opportunity to put the operation into mothballs if production goes very low. In the case of Texada, it is quite understandable that we have done this.

If we are optimistic about the market, we have to realise that even this provision is fairly academic because it will never occur. I hope the market will improve in the foreseeable future.

On the same argument I want to show how political parties possibly may be more responsible in government than in opposition. The statement came from the Opposition that we should have secured some part of the production of Texada, no matter how low the market goes; even if production goes as low as 100 000 tonnes, something should be produced by Texada. Against that I put the argument that the agreement was amended during the time of the Labor Government. If members opposite felt so strongly about the matter, and if they were genuine, and if it were possible to have such arrangements with the producers, why did not the Labor Government negotiate at the time, and why did it not include such a provision in the agreement? It is impossible, in a practical sense, for me to do what has been requested from the benches of the Opposition now as it was impossible for them to do it when they were in Government.

I think I have dealt with all aspects of the Bill. I will be happy to answer any interjections if I have left something out. I believe I have explained the meaning of the amendment to the agreement, and I ask the House to support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

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

COLLIE COAL (WESTERN COLLIERIES) AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 24th April.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [9.25 p.m.]: This Bill is for an Act to ratify an agreement between the State of Western Australia and Western Collieries Ltd. with respect to the mining, development, and rehabilitation of certain coal reserves, and matters related thereto.

When the Minister explained the Bill he went to great lengths to indicate the provisions in the Bill and the requirements of the company. He mentioned the rehabilitation of certain coal reserves, but on looking at the Bill I cannot see where any complete rehabilitation will take place. It is true the company will have to meet certain requirements in relation to new mining methods. I would like to know where rehabilitation actually will be put into effect under the terms of the Bill. Perhaps the Minister will refer to that when he replies to my remarks.

The Bill will ratify, in fact, an agreement which was signed by the company and the Premier on the 17th January of this year. All we will do tonight is apply the rubber stamp to the legislation because it is already a fact. It is not as though the Government has brought the Bill to this place to allow us to debate the various clauses. All we will do is apply the rubber stamp to an agreement which has already been entered into between the Government and Western Collieries Ltd.

The Bill will provide a legislative working plan with one of the companies, Western Collieries Ltd, for the coalfields. I understand that in all probability we will have placed before us another Bill involving the other company operating on the coalfield, the Griffin Coalmining Company. The Bill will provide that what has been occurring previously will be written into the Act. There is very little which is new. It might be argued that the Bill will place extra requirements on the company. However, if one cares to examine the different clauses of the legislation, one will find that in essence they allow for what has been going on previously with the exception that the company is required to prepare an overall working plan for a 42-year period. The company will have to submit a working plan to the Minister for his

approval, or otherwise. I will refer to that matter again later.

The agreement provides that long-term coal contracts will be entered into between the State Energy Commission and the company involved. Members will be aware that the first coal contracts signed in Western Australia were initiated in 1957 by the then Hawke Labor Government. Those contracts were for a period of three years only, and provided initially that there would be a ratio of 70 per cent deep-mined coal to 30 per cent open-cut coal to fill the orders involved in the contracts.

Prior to this the industry had been in a hopeless mess, as the Minister would obviously know from his research. We were operating on an agreement with two companies, and on a cost-plus basis with the major company, Amalgamated Collieries of WA Ltd. This cost-plus system introduced very bad features to the industry. It granted a certain profit to Amalgamated Collieries of WA, but all sorts of malpractices occurred. Anyone interested in this period, may like to read Johnson's thesis which is on sale at the university. He refers to the alleged malpractices in the coalmining industry during the currency of this system introduced by the McLarty-Watts Government.

The contracts for the supply of coal for the Government instrumentalities—the railways and the State Electricity Commission, as it then was—were initiated by the Hawke Labor Government of Western Australia. When the three-year contract was entered into, the unions argued that the tenure was too short, as a period of three years would not allow the companies to obtain and invest the capital necessary to operate the field on the most efficient level. Of course, we argued this point right through to the time of the Tonkin Government and the period was extended to five years for one company.

The unions in Collie and the Opposition had been advocating contracts of 20 years or longer, the same as in the Eastern States. It is quite understandable that a company does not wish to invest a great deal of capital when it does not know where it is going beyond a three-year contractual period. Especially with deep mining, before any coal is produced, main tunnels must be sunk as well as other expanding tunnels. This is the correct mining procedure carried out in all coalmining operations throughout the world.

The Bill contains five major provisions. In his second reading speech the Minister said that the first major provision is an obligation on the company to reserve at all times 50 per cent of its extractable reserves of coal to satisfy the needs of

the State Energy Commission. With today's energy crisis, we feel it may be necessary to modify this provision very quickly. We should not allow the export of coal from Western Australia if the coal is required for power generation here.

Mr Mensaros: That is provided for.

Mr T. H. JONES: Well, it is provided for in that the company must obtain the approval of the Minister. However, I do not believe we should even consider the export of coal. Certainly the Bill contains a clause providing that any operating company which wishes to export coal overseas or out of Western Australia must have the authority of the Minister. As I proceed further with my speech I will indicate the reason for the Opposition's views.

The second major provision is a requirement for the company and the State Energy Commission to enter into coal supply arrangements commercially acceptable to both parties for the tenure of the agreement. We would like to see a programme introduced in Collie requiring both companies to initiate some deep-mining operations on the field. The Minister knows as well as I do that the open-cut coal reserves are very small, and it is necessary, in the interests of the quick development of the Collie mineral field, that both companies embark on a policy of some deep-mining operation during the tenure of the agreement. This same provision could apply to the other operating company if a similar agreement is entered into with it.

The third major provision in the Bill is an undertaking by the company to produce an overall scheme for the exploration and development of the coal resource over a 42-year period together with provision of detailed proposals for specific developments at nominated intervals within that period.

There is nothing wrong with that principle, as long as the conditions are applied and some experiments take place on the field to prove the amount of coal available.

The fourth major provision is a requirement for protection and management of the environment and for appropriate rehabilitation of mined areas. The environment is very important today, and there is certainly nothing wrong with this provision.

The fifth major provision relates to procedures whereby the company may secure title to substantial additional coal reserves. This certainly presents some difficulties in regard to boring programmes because it is true to say that at present the State is doing nothing about seeking additional coal reserves in Western Australia. Of

course, if it is left to the companies to initiate building programmes, this may present some difficulties to the State. I will have a little more to say about this at a later stage.

In his second reading speech the Minister said also—

Before commencing further on the specific provisions of the agreement it may be profitable for me to provide an overview of the coal reserves situation in the State together with an indication of future State Energy Commission coal requirement.

This is a complete change of attitude. In the 1960s, a State Government of the same political persuasion as the Court Government virtually sold Collie out. The Government said that there was no future for Collie and it became virtually a ghost town. Now the Minister, with a complete change of attitude, is saying just what the Opposition has been saying for years. It cannot be denied that in the 1960s the State Government showed very little interest in the Collie mineral field, and of course, in 1964, it is on record as saying that Collie coal would be finished in 30 years. The Government would not be writing a 42-year agreement today had it not been for the initiatives taken primarily by the Tonkin Labor Government.

The then Minister for Electricity (the Hon. Crawford Nalder) is on record as saying that the capacity of Muja could not be doubled, and that the Kwinana oil-burning station would have to be extended because Collie would have no more coal by the year 1994.

Mr Young: I will give you marks for consistency.

Mr T. H. JONES: We have roused the Government. Of course Government members cannot dispute facts. No-one on the Government side can deny that had it not been for John Tonkin, in co-operation with Peabody Coal and Western Collieries Ltd., we would not be debating this 42-year agreement tonight. Someone made a wrong assessment and the Government fell for it.

Mr Blaikie: You even have the Deputy Premier on your side tonight.

Mr T. H. JONES: He was on the subcommittee, and I think we probably had him on side. Had it not been for the Premier, we may not have got into the mess that we did, and the Deputy Premier knows what I am referring to. I am speaking of something that happened long before I became a member of this House. I do not think it was the fault of the Deputy Premier; far from it. It was the fault of one person, and Government members know this well.

Mr T. J. Burke: Do you know a good commissioner for water supplies?

Mr T. H. JONES: The present Deputy Premier was the Minister for Labour at the time I am referring to, and he knows the conference at which these decisions were made.

Mr Blaikie: With the acclaim you have given the Deputy Premier tonight, he will find it very difficult to get party endorsement at the next election.

Mr T. H. JONES: At least he would stand a much better chance than the member for Vasse in obtaining Labor Party endorsement.

The situation was quite clear to the Government at that time. It believed there would be no coal in Collie by 1994. The Government of the day had recourse to the best available knowledge, but it made a terrible mistake. Members here know the story, and I am not intending to repeat it tonight. However, it must be spelt out clearly that had it not been for the Labor Government this agreement would not be before Parliament today.

It is now history that the estimate of the proven extractable reserves of coal on the Collie coal field has been lifted from 87 million tonnes to 400 million tonnes. Even the Minister has indicated quite clearly in the booklet about his energy programme recently made available to members of this House that possibly additional boring will secure more than the present known reserves.

Mr Jamieson: Now they are taking pictures of it.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Government is very pleased with Collie now. Even the Premier went down there recently and he said what a great town it is, and what a great union it has. The Premier patted the union representatives on the back and said, "You have been good boys since 1960—only three days' work lost." The Premier wants to forget about what he did in 1961, and certainly if I were a Government member I would like to forget about this also.

Mr H. D. Evans: Tell us again—what happened?

Mr T. H. JONES: I will not go over this again because it is on record many times. I have it recorded in a book if members would like to look at it. It does not hurt to remind people now and again of their past actions. Members will be aware that when they arrive home late from the hotel their wives like to remind them of many things that they do not really wish to be reminded of. I am well aware that the member for Vasse may not like to be reminded of a certain matter.

Mr Blaikie: More importantly, wives usually remind us of what we haven't done.

Mr T. H. JONES: I could continue for some time about the member for Vasse, but I will not do so in this House. If he likes to see me outside the House, I can tell him a little more about himself.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! I think it would be a good idea if you confined your remarks to the Bill.

Mr T. H. JONES: An excellent suggestion, Mr Acting Speaker, and one which I will certainly follow if you stop Government members from interjecting. I cannot let the interjections go unanswered. I am certain, Sir, that if you were in my position you would follow a similar policy. I will endeavour to take your advice.

Mr McIver: Tell them about "Big Red"!

Mr T. H. JONES: It is very easy for Government members to laugh now, but it was certainly not easy for the 600 people thrown out of work in 1961. These people had to search for jobs in the Forests Department, and these jobs paid only the basic wage. None of the 26 businessmen who had to close down their businesses laughed, and neither did the 300 people thrown out of their homes. It is easy to laugh now, but do not forget that he who laughs last laughs best.

Members opposite can have the last laugh! We have clearly demonstrated what a fool the Government of the day made of itself, and how it led the Collie coalfield into tragedy. I repeat: had it not been for that great statesman (John Tonkin) this State would be in a great mess today, because the Liberal Government said we did not have sufficient coal to extend the Muja station instead of the Kwinana station. That Government said the capacity of Muja could not be doubled because there was insufficient coal to burn. It was the initiative of John Tonkin and Peabody Coal that saved the State.

It costs three times more to produce electricity from oil than it does to produce it from coal. The old East Perth power station—the oldest station in commission—was brought out of mothballs to burn coal. We all know the production costs per kilowatt hour at East Perth are lower than the production costs per kilowatt hour at the modern oil-burning station at Kwinana. That is the story.

The Government should not pat itself on the back. The Minister has been to the south-west, as has the Premier, telling people what a great job the Government has done in negotiating this long-term programme with Western Collieries. Of course, they do not want to talk about the past;

but we must be honest with ourselves and say this programme would not have been possible had it not been for the initiatives of the Labor Government of Western Australia at the time.

The Minister said—

Any assessment of recoverable coal reserves must have due regard for the anticipated sale price of the coal and the proposed methods of mining as well as the geological appraisal necessary to establish the quantity and quality of coal in any location.

Having regard for those criteria the currently assessed estimate of extractable reserves in the Collie field are approximately 350-400 million tonnes.

I think the Minister has horribly under estimated the Collie coalfield, because as I said recently when moving an amendment to the Address-in-Reply in respect of the nuclear energy programme, there are 87 million tonnes of coal in pillars in the mines, and that coal is now extractable. I spoke to a representative of the Australian Coal Authority who was in Western Australia about three weeks ago, and he agreed with me that due to changes in economic criteria the coal in the pillars can now be extracted economically.

Mining men say there would be another 13 million tonnes of coal in the roofs of the mines that are worked out. In our opinion this provides known reserves in excess of some 500 million tonnes, and that is without any additional boring. In a moment I will refer to the requirements of the State Energy Commission under the terms of this Bill.

There is also coal at Eneabba. I agree with the Minister that coal is very deep and would be difficult to mine. In addition we have the Wilga depression. It appears from the answer to a question asked in the House tonight that little is known about the reserves in the Wilga depression. The Minister and the Geological Survey Branch would know that large seams of coal exist there. When will we do something about proving those reserves, as the Government of New South Wales and other Governments are doing?

One of the problems with the Bill is that it places too much emphasis on the company and requires it to do too much.

The Minister went on to say—

At the present time production of coal at Collie is approximately 2.5 million tonnes per annum most of which is consumed by the State Energy Commission.

A little later he said—

Long-term forecasts of coal consumption indicate an annual requirement for some six million tonnes of coal per annum by the SEC alone around the turn of the century.

Even if we say that we would use 10 million tonnes per annum, we know now there is sufficient coal in Collie to meet the requirements of the State Energy Commission for about 50 years. That cannot be denied. However, that amount of coal will be available only if we do not export coal from Western Australia. The Minister said the maximum burn will be six million tonnes; but even estimating it at 10 million tonnes per annum we still have 50 years of guaranteed coal supplies to the SEC.

Mr Mensaros: I might meet you in between; it might be a little more than six million tonnes.

Mr T. H. JONES: Surely the Minister would agree with me, because I am quoting the figures he gave me.

Mr Mensaros: I simply based that on the optimum development; but it could be that the increase in the demand for power will be larger than I think it will be.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister told me that when the Muja extensions are completed and Kwinana is operating at full capacity, we will have generating capacity of 1 830 megawatts, and that by the year 1995 we will require a capacity of 5 000 megawatts. That is allowing for an increase in the annual demand of 7 per cent more than is the present case. I do not argue with those figures; all I say is that more coal exists in Western Australia than the SEC has indicated.

The Minister provided a plan of the leases already held by coalmining companies and he indicated the other leases that were available. The company is presently conducting a \$750 000 drilling programme to determine more clearly the size of the additional reserves. He went on to say—

In view of the importance of Collie coal to the future energy requirements of local industry as well as the Energy Commission, the Government has by clause 25 (1) prohibited export sales of coal without the consent of the Minister.

We do not argue with that; we think that is necessary. In fact, we think the matter of exporting coal should not even be considered at this stage as a result of the heavy demand that will be made on the Collie coalfield in our future generation policy.

Mr Jamieson: What happened to the SEC's leases?

Mr T. H. JONES: They were given to another company. That brings me to my next point. There is a problem in requiring coalmining companies to explore for coal. If a company obtains a lease to explore for coal and conducts a drilling operation, it is only reasonable to expect that it should be able to use whatever coal it finds.

If a company is prepared to spend \$1 million or \$2 million on a boring programme, surely it should receive some guarantee that if it discovered large deposits of previously unknown coal it will be granted access to that coal. This presents a problem because some companies in Western Australia may tie up the coalfields. The Minister would know this happened during the years Amalgamated Collieries were in operation. I am not taking a shot at the two existing companies because in my view they have been good for Collie; they have played the game in regard to the town, the industry and the union. However, there is a danger that if leases are given to the Griffin company and to Western Collieries, they could extend by 10 times the known extractable coal reserves in this State and, having found the coal, would naturally expect access to those reserves.

The Opposition believes the Government should be initiating drilling programmes. Does the Minister know how much coal there is in Western Australia?

Mr Mensaros: Of course I do not. Who does?

Mr T. H. JONES: Nobody can answer that question. What the Opposition is saying is that it is time we started proving how much coal we have in Western Australia. The other night the Prime Minister said he appreciated that Western Australia was embarking on a nuclear power programme because of our limited coal resources. Nobody knows how much coal we have in the State; no-one can argue with that statement.

I refer members to the operations of the Joint Coal Board in New South Wales, which I mentioned briefly last year. The board has been undertaking a thorough drilling programme. In 1973-74, some 42 000 metres were bored; in 1974-75, nearly 70 000 metres of bore were put down; in 1975-76, the figure had risen to 80 000 metres; and, in 1976-77, 131 430 metres of bore were put down. The result of that exploration programme initiated by the Joint Coal Board was the discovery of the Gunnedah Basin which is believed to rival the Hunter Valley deposit.

This is what we should be doing in Western Australia in order to prove how much coal is

available for our energy requirements. The Minister has stated there are 400 million tonnes of extractable coal proven, and I do not argue with him.

Mr Mensaros: I did not say "proven"; I said "estimated".

Mr T. H. JONES: They are the figures provided by the Mines Department, and we do not argue with them. However, the Joe Lord geological report estimates there are 5 000 million tonnes of coal at Collie. The Minister well knows this coal cannot be extracted by the open-cut or the tunnel methods. However, it can be extracted by the shaft method.

Some of the seams mentioned in the Kirkwood report are the Griffin seam, with a thickness of 2.3 metres at a depth of 382.2 metres; the Wyvern seam, with a thickness of 2.7 metres at a depth of 141.1 metres; the Neath seam, with a thickness of 2.1 metres at a depth of 160.4 metres; and, the Stockton seam, with a thickness of 3.3 metres at a depth of 238 metres. In addition, there is another underground seam with a thickness of 13 metres.

An exploration programme must be undertaken to ascertain whether it is possible to extract this coal by the shaft method. It is no good simply saying that in so many years, our coal reserves will be depleted. Joe Lord estimates—and his figures are available from the Geological Survey Department—that in addition to the probable 400 million tonnes of extractable coal there is another 5 000 million tonnes on the coalfields.

Doubtless the Minister has been down shafts in other parts of the world, as I have. In Britain, coal is extracted principally by the shaft method; they locate seams and bring the coal to the surface by shaft operation. This type of mining also takes place at Vale's Point and in other mines in Eastern Australia. It is nothing new. All I am saying is that the Mines Department or somebody else must say, "We are going to see whether it is humanly possible to extract some of this 5 000 million tonnes of coal lying underground at Collie." I do not think anyone could argue with that suggestion.

This matter probably will not affect me in my lifetime; nor will it affect the Minister. However, in the long term we must look to the proper development of the coalfield, especially in view of the spiralling costs of energy produced from both oil and nuclear power. I would like to hear the Minister's views on this proposal.

The Minister also referred in his second reading speech to the Government's policy towards the Collie coalfield. He mentioned the availability of coal in Western Australia, and went on to say—

After allowing for the consumption of coal by existing and yet to be built coal-fired power stations over their full economic life, the aggregate SEC consumption of coal would probably exceed 50 per cent of the presently known commercially recoverable resources of Collie coal. This leaves less than half of the reserves for industrial use.

I wonder what the Minister means by "industrial use"? It is true that Collie coal has its limitations. It can be coked, but the costs of such an operation are so prohibitive as to make it commercially uneconomic. There is the possibility that Alwest may use Collie coal. Already Cockburn Cement is using coal. However, it is likely that until some large industry is attracted to the south-west we will continue to rely principally on the State Energy Commission for the economic operation of the Collie coalfield.

Mr Mensaros: You do not have any trust in the Alwest project?

Mr T. H. JONES: I just mentioned Alwest.

This legislation is to be commended. However, I have reservations, and the people on the coalfields have reservations. The Labor Party had been advocating this approach when we were in Government, but unfortunately we were not in Government long enough to introduce a Bill. We would have gone further than this legislation. However, it is a start.

What concerns me is that the Minister spoke about the coal-fired power stations now and yet to be built. I am concerned that the East Perth power station will go by the board when the conversion at Kwinana is completed. The cost of the East Perth station would automatically put it out of operation. I may be wrong, but I do not think so. There is a possibility that the South Fremantle station will become an uneconomic station, as will be the Bunbury station in time.

We must make a decision. What extra power will be made available in Western Australia to take us through to 1995 if and when the nuclear station comes into operation?

The Minister mentioned our power generation policy. I hope I will be allowed to elaborate on the nuclear power question, as it is involved. Is it the Government's intention to continue with its policy on nuclear power generation? Members may not know that in *The Australian Financial Review* of last Friday the Premier of New South Wales announced a new \$450 million power station north of the existing power station at Liddell, just to the north of Newcastle. The first two 660-megawatt units are planned to go into service by 1985. I am dealing only with capital costs.

The two 660-megawatt units will supply 1 320 megawatts at a cost of \$450 million. We should consider the other side of the picture. This is why I am urging that more boring be undertaken by the State Government. More initiatives should be taken.

In *The West Australian* of the 30th April, Kevin Bligh of Bullcreek challenged the Minister on the assessments which he made that were 12 months old. He said that it would cost \$600 million to \$800 million to establish a 1 000-megawatt nuclear power station. He challenged the Minister in relation to those costs and said that they were out of date. In *The West Australian* of the 28th April Mr Peter Cook said—

It is surprising that Mr Mensaros still stands by an estimate which is several years out of date.

These days the capital cost of a single 1 000 megawatt nuclear station beginning construction now, is commonly estimated to be in the order of \$US1 500 million (more than \$A1 300 million) at 1978 prices, and the cost is escalating rapidly—

He goes on to say that the capital cost for a 1 000-megawatt reactor beginning construction in 1985 to 1990 could be as high as \$3 million to \$4 million per megawatt on US prices in 1976. This is an unfortunate situation.

There is an urgent need for the Government to initiate a drilling programme in relation to coal. If these costs can be proved, one can visualise the situation. If we make a comparison with a coal-fired plant, we will see what it would cost. A 1 300-megawatt coal-fired plant in New South Wales is to cost \$450 million. Even on those figures, a nuclear station would cost around \$800 million.

The Minister cannot deny these figures. They represent the difference in capital costs. Of course, there are other costs such as decommissioning, waste disposal, and other costs associated with nuclear power.

It is interesting to note that the Minister has not answered the figures quoted by Peter Cook in *The West Australian* of the 28th April. I may stand corrected. However, I can find nothing in the Parliamentary Library to indicate that the Minister refuted these figures put forward by Peter Cook. Those figures indicate that by the years 1985 to 1990, when it is intended to introduce the 1 000-megawatt nuclear power plant in Western Australia, the cost could be between \$3 million and \$4 million.

I would have assumed that if those figures were incorrect the Minister would have challenged them in the Press. However, he has not done so. Is that any wonder, on the figures supplied to the Prime Minister? He said he could understand the need to develop nuclear power. We on this side of the House cannot understand that. We have made a policy announcement, both federally and as a State Opposition, that on becoming the Government we will scrap the nuclear programme.

We have seen recently the problems encountered in Harrisburg. There have been other problems throughout the world where nuclear reactors are in existence. We should not consider a nuclear programme in view of the problems that are being encountered in other parts of the world. No-one can deny the existence of those problems.

There may be a time when we will have no alternative. However, at the moment there is no need for us to consider nuclear power. We have vast coal reserves available in Western Australia. We should not consider going into nuclear energy in 1990 or 1995.

Whilst this agreement calls on Western Collieries to enter into agreements, it is time for the Mines Department and the Government of this State to do something for the State by initiating a complete drilling programme in Western Australia. Members may be aware that the Minister has stated that the agreement now before the House provides for long-term coal contracts for the Griffin company to supply the SEC with 50 million tonnes of Muja coal over 25 years. That is all good business.

Before I came to this Parliament in 1968, I was the secretary of the union for some 17 years. During all that time, I advocated long-term programmes. No coalfield can operate without long-term programmes where the capital investment component is so high.

It will be seen that there is general agreement in relation to this matter so far as the Government and the Opposition are concerned.

In his second reading speech, the Minister stated—

Provision also is made for coal to be supplied from both open-cut and deep-mining methods as required under "mutually acceptable commercial arrangements", or in more specific words long-term coal supply contracts.

What does that mean? What do we read into that? How do we interpret those words? Does it mean that the Government of the day can say, "We will allow only open-cut mining for coal",

and that that will occur? This is what is worrying me as the member for the coalfield area. It is exercising the minds of the unions on the field.

The Minister would know that when Amalgamated Collieries were left out of the coal contracts in January, 1961, they were just developing new coalmines. For example, the Ewington mine had hardly started production when it was closed. There were vast deposits at Ewington which could be developed. Somebody should be saying, "We will open up the Ewington mine. We will have a look at the Stockton areas where large seams of deep-mine coal exist. We will also have a look at the Westralia mine."

In his second reading speech, the Minister also said—

The scheme will encompass developments over a 42-year time span and for the latter part of the period will of course be general in nature.

It is good to see the mention of 42 years. However, I repeat that a 42-year programme in this agreement would not have been possible if it had not been for the Tonkin Government. No-one can deny that. We on this side of the House consider that the actions and the initiatives that the Tonkin Government took laid the basis for this 42-year agreement which will bring stability to the coalfields.

The Minister went on to say that the remaining provisions in the agreement were standard, which they are. The agreement is acceptable to the coalmining unions. I have spoken to Western Collieries and it has indicated the terms of the agreement are acceptable.

Perhaps the laughable point of this matter is that this agreement is based on one of the several major initiatives the Government has in train to ensure the maximum long-term benefit to the State from work on the coal reserves at Collie.

This claim is quite remarkable when we consider the way the Government treated people in Collie in the 1960s, when it threw 1 600 men out of work, closed 26 shops and one hotel, and caused 330 homes to become vacant. In those days the Government did not want to have a bar of Collie. The Premier showed his hatred for the town; he did not want Collie at any price.

It was a Labor Government initiative that saw the extension to the Muja coal-burning power station before the oil crisis came about. The Minister is now trying to say this agreement is a Government initiative whereas it is really a Labor initiative. If the Minister is honest, as he should be, he would know that in 1961 his Government did not want a bar of coal. The Government

turned its back on the coalmining industry and turned to oil fuel for Kwinana, which was contrary to world trends. The Labor Party tried to prevent the Government doing this but it would not listen. The Premier of the day thought he knew what he was doing when, in fact, he led the State into a mess. No doubt Government members want to forget about the \$80 million they wasted because of their ill-conceived policies of the time. I do not want the Government saying it is a Liberal Government initiative that will be bringing the maximum benefit to the town of Collie.

I would like Government members to cast their minds back to the 1960s when I was secretary of the miners' union at Collie and had to tell 600 of the workers that they were to lose their jobs because of the Government's policies. However, the Government is now trying to take the credit for Labor initiatives.

It cannot be denied that on the 20th September, last year, I moved a motion for the establishment of a Collie coalfield authority. I knew the motion would not be accepted, but nonetheless I knew I should try. Many of the provisions contained in this agreement are those which I wanted to bring about, and the Minister cannot deny this. My motion was defeated because of the numbers the Government had, and not because of the merit of the case I presented. The Government did not want a bar of controls on coalfields.

I am sure the Minister will know that the coal authority in one State over east is now looking into the adoption of new coal development techniques and new coal extraction techniques as advocated in my motion.

I do not intend to deal with the clauses of the Bill at this stage; they will be dealt with during the Committee stage. With the reservations I have mentioned I indicate we support the Bill.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development) [10.14 p.m.]: I thank the honourable member for supporting the measure. I would like briefly to reflect on some of the comments he made, particularly those which might appear to be new comments from him.

The member for Collie mentioned that in his opinion the lack of rehabilitation conditions in the agreement was disappointing. I refer the member to clause 11 of the agreement which is the schedule to the Bill. It sets out approved proposals for rehabilitation, protection, and management of the environment. Generally speaking, this clause deals with environmental matters, including rehabilitation on which the company has to

submit proposals. It is the usual machinery contained in other agreements. The company's proposals will be judged by the respective officers and ultimately it will be up to the Minister's discretion as to whether or not he will accept the proposals.

Another comment by the member referred to the correctness or otherwise of the policy of reserving 50 per cent of the available and produced coal by the company for the State Energy Commission. We believe that industry generally could be and is equally important as power generation. In fact, the two will not compete with each other, because the SEC will be in the position always to calculate whether it would be a more economic method for it to use the coal to generate electricity if the demand is higher than anticipated and for industry in turn to use this electricity. The SEC will be able to determine whether there are cases which are more economical and feasible if industry were to use the coal, which is not only a heating agent but could be, in chemical terms, a stock feed in many industries.

A point repeatedly made by the member for Collie was in relation to coal reserves. The member made a rather long speech and kept coming back again and again to the idea that the reserves are much larger than the Government has indicated and that the Government does not do anything about proving up these reserves. Because the member brought up this topic, I will repeat that the Government's policy, which is perhaps contrary to other Governments' policies, is not to place the taxpayers' money into exploration projects.

We are proud of our policy, which I believe is the best in Australia and perhaps the world. It is a policy that covers royalties and how a Government should write long-term agreements with companies.

We have created an investment climate which is accepted as the best in the world. Some people might scoff at us about it, but we are proud of it. We are proud we have this agreement and can attract investment.

Only the other day there was a short article in the local Press which stated that according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics something like \$150 million-plus has been spent on on-shore mineral exploration in Australia over the past year. Nearly one-half of that amount was spent in Western Australia. Queensland fared second-best, yet the amount of investment in exploration in that State came to just a bit more than half of

ours. The latest figures prove the policy of this Government is successful.

Mr T. H. Jones: Are you referring to money for boring?

Mr MENSAROS: I am referring to exploration money, which includes boring and all modern methods of exploration, not necessarily drilling only. It was not just for coal but for all minerals.

In any event, our policy would not single out coal because, if the policy of the Government was to explore for coal and not to leave it to private enterprise, the same demand for State exploration could go for oil and other minerals which are also very important for the State, the economy of which is based on the development of our resources. Our policy is that the control should be available to give security to private enterprise to do the exploration. This is precisely what this agreement is about.

Mr Jamieson: You are mixing up your responsibilities.

Mr MENSAROS: We have given the company an incentive; we have given an incentive not merely to this company, but to other companies also. The contract of Griffin with the SEC will give that company the incentive and security to go ahead with exploration in order properly to prove the reserves.

Exploration activities are closely connected with the price of coal. One cannot simply assume that because past experience has been that the price of coal goes up all the time, it will continue to do so. It could be that other cheaper forms of energy will in the future depress the price of coal. Of course, that would be detrimental to exploration; but the agreement contains the incentive that once the company has proven up certain reserves and reported them to the State by way of the proposal machinery, the State then examines the report and gives the security by way of a lease to the company.

I want to touch very briefly on the balance between open-cut mining and deep mining. I know, and it has been repeated frequently enough, the anxiety of the member for Collie but I should like to refer to the words of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when he was speaking on the Bill which was debated prior to this matter. If I recollect his words correctly, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said the responsibility of the Government is to take into consideration the interests of the community at large. He referred only to a small community, but I take this as being a correct statement and I subscribe to it. The Government should take into consideration

the interests of the whole community. Therefore, the balance between deep mining and open-cut mining will not be decided in the interests of one small section of the community only. I know the Collie miners earn more from deep mining.

Mr T. H. Jones: I said, "in the interests of Western Australia."

Mr MENSAROS: We will make the decisions through the proposal machinery in the interests of the whole community of Western Australia and the whole community includes, of course, all the electricity consumers and—

Mr T. H. Jones: You did not do that very well in 1961.

Mr MENSAROS: —of course, the Collie coalminers, as well as everyone else. These interests have to be balanced.

In my second reading speech I said that the recoverable resources are estimated to be between 350 million tonnes and 400 million tonnes. I did this deliberately. The estimate of 400 million tonnes is based on the maximum underground recovery. That presupposes we achieve 60 per cent recovery underground. What sort of recovery rate do we have today? It scarcely reaches 40 per cent. When looking at that figure, we have to assume the underground resources will measure up to a recovery rate of 60 per cent. In an open-cut operation we recover up to 95 per cent. The logical course to follow is to proceed with open-cut mining and when the situation of getting larger and larger over burden has been arrived at, using the most efficient machinery and methods, deep mining is beginning at a stage where the recovery rate will be at the optimum. That is what we call a balance between open-cut mining and deep mining.

Mr T. H. Jones: You know what happened in the Hebe mine. There was a water problem as a result of which the Mines Department agreed to close it.

Mr MENSAROS: I am not saying accidents cannot happen, and that is an argument in favour of predominantly deep mining. That is not, however, the main argument. At the present time we have a contract with the Griffin company and another contract will be ratified soon with Western Collieries. A third company has been given equal incentive and, once it has proved up its reserves and shown that they can be recovered economically, a contract will be drawn up between that company and the SEC.

Because the debate was allowed to range widely and covered matters which are a little outside the parameters of this measure, I feel I am obliged to reply to the questions asked. I should like to refer

to the question of nuclear power generation. I have explained this already, but the member for Collie, as a result of my politeness, puts me in the situation where I have to repeat myself.

Mr T. H. Jones: I quoted what the paper said, but you did not answer it.

Mr MENSAROS: I have answered it already in this House.

Mr T. H. Jones: Why did you not answer it?

Mr MENSAROS: First of all, I do not speculate on how much the capital cost of a nuclear power station will be in time to come. However, I should like to repeat what I have said in the House in relation to the latest report of Burmott Australia Pty. Ltd. This company has the greatest knowledge of nuclear developments in the world. The report is dated February, 1979. The capital cost of a nuclear power generating plant of a reasonable size is still \$600 to \$700 per kilowatt.

Mr T. H. Jones: The American figures dispute that cost, do they not?

Mr MENSAROS: The honourable member can dispute it, but this is the best information the Government has been able to obtain and trust. The Government trusts this information much more than it trusts the guesswork of Mr Peter Cook, with all respect.

Mr T. H. Jones: Why do you not answer Peter Cook and tell him he is wrong?

Mr MENSAROS: I do not answer speculation.

Mr T. H. Jones: You do not know.

Mr MENSAROS: If the honourable member has not heard what I am saying, he can read it in *Hansard*. I am prepared to offer any sort of bet with very long odds to the member for Collie that he misunderstood completely the capital cost of the New South Wales power station. The member for Collie confused other members when he was talking about the matter. The member for Collie said the Premier of New South Wales was building a 1 350-megawatt—

Mr T. H. Jones: A 1 310-megawatt station.

Mr MENSAROS: —power station for \$450 million.

Mr T. H. Jones: It was \$480 million. He said it was the first two units.

Mr MENSAROS: But the honourable member was talking about 1 350 megawatts.

Mr T. H. Jones: Do not forget there are two 660-megawatt units.

Mr MENSAROS: That amounts to the same price as would be paid for a nuclear power generating plant. The implication of the remarks

made by the honourable member in his speech was that the total unit as it is planned will cost \$450 million.

Mr T. H. Jones: It is \$480 million.

Mr MENSAROS: That is very far from the truth.

Mr T. H. Jones: You have a look at the *The Australian Financial Review*.

Mr MENSAROS: The capital cost of a coal-fired plant is higher than that of any other type of conventional power generating plant. A nuclear plant is the next lowest and the capital cost of an oil-fired plant is lower than that of either a nuclear plant or a coal-fired plant.

Unless the honourable member reminds me that I have not replied to a point he made in his speech—he repeated his points so often—I believe I have covered all the matters he raised. I should like to emphasise, however, that besides giving incentives and security with the agreement, we had the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government along with that of the National Energy Research Development Council. We had the help also of the Australian Coal Industrial Research Laboratories which are maintained by the coalmines themselves. They conduct research of a rather theoretical nature in conjunction with coal processing matters. We do not consider that as an exploration or mining activity. According to our philosophy, which is a very practical one, we believe we should provide an incentive to the mining companies in this regard; therefore, the Government creates the type of climate which will encourage exploration and exploitation and which, in turn, will lift our economy.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Mensaros (Minister for Industrial Development) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Schedule—

Mr T. H. JONES: I would like your ruling, Sir. I wish to speak to paragraph (b) of the schedule and parts 7, 8, 18 and 21. I will not speak at length, but whether I speak to those parts all together or deal with them individually will be for you to determine.

The CHAIRMAN: In the past some latitude has been allowed with regard to schedules. To accommodate the member for Collie I will put parts 1 to 6, which will enable the honourable

member to speak to paragraph (b); then I will put parts 7 and 8; then I will put parts 9 to 20, which will enable him to speak to parts 18 and 20; and then I will deal with parts 21 to 47, to enable him to deal with part 21.

Clauses 1 to 6 of the schedule—

Mr T. H. JONES: With reference to paragraph (b) on page 2 of the Bill, in reply to the debate the Minister said that the Government supports private industry boring programmes. This is where he and the Opposition differ. It is the responsibility of the State to find out how much coal there is in Western Australia because it is in our interests.

What will be the position if a number of companies get together? They could tie up all the leases in Western Australia. It is a fair proposition that if a company is to expend millions of dollars on drilling for coal, it should be entitled to reserve a find. However, the end result could be that a number of companies could tie up all the coal reserves in Western Australia, and this would not be in the interests of the proper development of the coal reserves.

The Minister argued that it does not matter what was done in Queensland or by the Joint Coal Board in NSW. They have had significant coal finds. However, had it not been for the initiative of the JCB in NSW the large deposit which has been located in the Hunter Valley would not have been found.

The Minister has indicated that he cannot tell me how much coal there is in Western Australia. He has admitted this. With the energy crisis facing us, should not we as a State be doing something about ascertaining the extent of the coal reserves in the State, or should we continue to bury our heads in the sand and state that we have between 350 million and 400 million tonnes of extractable coal, and that is it? Is that to be the policy we adopt when we know of the crisis we are facing?

Mr Mensaros: I replied to this in my second reading speech.

Mr Coyne: He does not know what nickel there is in Western Australia, either.

Mr Jamieson: That is a different proposition. You confuse yourself.

Mr Coyne: It is the same thing.

Mr T. H. JONES: Iron ore or nickel is not as important to the State as is coal. It may be in dollars because it brings in revenue. However, we cannot compare the two. Anyone who is aware of the world situation would know there is a power crisis. The Minister knows the situation. It has

been stated that by Christmas time we could be paying \$2 a litre for petrol.

Mr Coyne: Do you really think that everyone should know the total reserves of coal in Western Australia?

Mr T. H. JONES: I do not know what will occur. The honourable member should know that already in New Zealand no-one is allowed to use a vehicle for private purposes on a Sunday afternoon. That is the policy which has been adopted in New Zealand. I do not know whether the same action will be necessary here. All I am saying is that we must ascertain the amount of the reserves available. If we do not know this, how can we initiate a proper programme?

It is obvious the Minister is hell-bent on private industry doing this. Private enterprise must play its part, but the Government must also play its part as has the Government in NSW.

Mr JAMIESON: Like the member for Collie I have become somewhat confused by the Minister's reply. In his funny way the Minister does not seem to be able to differentiate between a service industry and a commercial enterprise.

It is desirable that the Government should know the coal reserves in order that it might provide electricity for the people, the same as it must know the reserves of water so that it can provide the people with water. This situation is entirely different from the mining of bauxite or something like that for export for the purpose of obtaining royalties. The Minister knows that the population will require a certain amount of water and a certain amount of power in the future and he should make it his business to ascertain how much coal we have.

It seems more than passing strange there was reference in the Governor's Speech—which I assume the Minister would have helped to write—to an aerial survey of the Collie coal basin. If that is not taking an interest in the future development of our minerals, I do not know what is. The Minister says the Government should not be involved, but the reference is included in the Governor's Speech. The Minister cannot have it half way; the Government needs to know exactly what reserves are available for the people of Western Australia.

If the State runs out of bauxite or iron ore, which will not be in our time or in our children's time, it will get by somehow. Something else will be found to produce or sell. However, the people of the future must have water and electricity. I would be appalled if the Government of the day denied its responsibility to search for future water supplies, and we should all be appalled at the

Minister's attitude of not caring a damn about what happens in the future so far as our coal reserves are concerned.

Clauses 1 to 6 of the schedule put and passed.

Clauses 7 and 8 of the schedule—

Mr T. H. JONES: It is quite obvious the Minister does not intend to answer the Opposition. He has made up his mind it is a private enterprise Government. The matter of our coal reserves does not concern him, and he will not initiate any Government move. Surely we can expect an answer from the responsible Minister.

Mr Mensaros: I answered the question during my second reading speech.

Mr Jamieson: That was a nicely confused answer.

Mr T. H. JONES: I ask the Minister what is happening in the rest of Australia. The member for Welshpool said the Minister did not care a damn, and his actions clearly indicate his lack of concern on this issue.

Dealing with part 7 of the schedule, there is no mention of what the ratio shall be. The ratio will probably be found in the contract over which we have no control. We will not have any say in the orderly development of the coalfields. My objection is that the ratio should be specified in some manner. Ministers and Governments change and the ratio should be specified.

Part 8 of the schedule deals with the consideration of proposals. Part 8(4) sets out that the company may elect to refer to arbitration. There is no mention of the type of arbitration or what the machinery will be. Part 8(6) sets out that any detailed proposals of the company will be approved by the Minister or determined by arbitration. The two parties will get together and go to an arbitrator, but what will happen if the arbitrator is unacceptable to one party? That is not clearly set out. Will the arbitrator be a judge, or somebody with experience?

I asked the representatives of one company whether they could understand the provision and they said they did not know what it meant.

Mr Mensaros: Which company was that?

Mr T. H. JONES: I will not tell the Minister which company. Of course, I could not talk to a company, I was talking to a company employee. I mentioned the matter to him in passing and asked whether he could explain the clause. Could the Minister explain the two matters I have raised?

Mr MENSAROS: The first question mentioned by the member for Collie is, again, a repetition, which I fully explained during my second reading speech: namely, it is provided that

there should be a proper balance between open-cut and deep-mine operations. I do not intend to repeat what I have already said because I cannot say any more.

Regarding the second point raised by the member for Collie, I honestly do not believe he would have spoken to the company. If the member cares to look at clause 43 of the schedule he will find exactly the answer to his questions.

Clauses 7 and 8 of the schedule put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 20 of the schedule—

Mr T. H. JONES: I can see some problems here, and I am not raising these issues just for the sake of argument. Part 18 sets out that the company shall not carry out any operations so as to interfere with or endanger the water supply system supplying water to the Muja power station.

That is a heavy requirement on the company. The Minister will be aware that mining operations are taking place adjacent to the Muja power station. As the mining progresses, the water table drops. The Minister is aware that when the SEC commenced taking water from the Nepean mine for the Muja power station that had the effect of drying up the wells in the Cardiff townsite. As mining progresses in the Muja area, the water table could fall.

With the development of the deep mine the supply of water to the SEC could be interrupted due to the depth workings of the mine interfering with the water table. In my view, this clause will cause some problems in the long-term mining operation.

I refer briefly to paragraph (2) of clause 20, on page 15 of the Bill. I protest about the existing policy. As the Minister knows, it is very hard to obtain suitable areas of mining timber in the Collie district, and I can appreciate why this part has been inserted. However, large clearing operations are taking place in the south-west not very far from the mining centre. All the trees are felled. Some milling companies take off the milling timber and the rest of the timber is put into windrows and burnt.

As the availability of timber is mentioned in the Bill, better liaison should take place between the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Forests in connection with the use of suitable mine timber which is currently being burnt.

Mr MENSAROS: From the point of view of water supply, this is a necessary provision, even though the honourable member says it might be inconvenient for the mining company. A short time ago the Opposition was debating the relative

importance of electricity supplies versus iron ore and nickel, notwithstanding the fact that from those minerals the equipment which helps to mine coal is forged and alloyed. I submit under the same principle an existing power station which needs water for its operation is more important than the remote possibility that under a mined-out pit from which water is supplied to the Muja power station some coal seams might be found. If that happens, we will forgo those few tonnes in order to have the power station operating.

I wonder whether the member for Warren has listened to the debate. I would welcome his opinion on the other matter raised by the member for Collie. All we did was respect the statutory provisions in the Forests Act. If the member for Collie has an alliance with the member for Warren and other members of the Opposition, perhaps we could amend the Forests Act and put development and mining ahead.

Mr T. H. JONES: I cannot accept the proposition put forward by the Minister. He is saying if a deep mine interferes with the availability of water, mining should stop.

Mr Mensaros: I did not say that. I said the possibility is very remote that under a mined-out pit which serves Muja with water supply there would be a large tonnage of coal.

Mr T. H. JONES: That is not the point I was making. I was referring to mines adjacent to Muja power station. The Neath mine, for instance, is on top of the Cardiff seam.

Mr Mensaros: What I said still applies because we have \$400 million invested in Muja.

Mr T. H. JONES: That is right, but boring is now taking place in the Shotts area to obtain water for the power station. Mine development in and around old worked-out mines from which we are now obtaining water could lower the water table. That is the danger inherent in the clause.

Clauses 9 to 20 of the schedule put and passed.

Clauses 21 to 47 of the schedule put and passed.

Schedule put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

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

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 26th April.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [10.57 p.m.]: The Government has had our support, howsoever vocal and long, for the last two Bills; but I cannot promise the same support for this Bill. The Opposition will be opposing this measure.

We see no advantage in the proposition. If there is an advantage, the Government has certainly hidden it very thoroughly. The Government has merely indicated in a short introductory speech that the legislation is required to enable the commissioner to co-ordinate the board's overall operations. If that is not a slight on the ability of the general manager to oversee all the operations of the board, I do not know what is. It is a preposterous statement which lends nothing to the credibility of the Government in moving the way it has done to appoint a commissioner.

All the proposal seems to do is promote a person into a higher salary bracket. It does nothing to overcome any problems. I have not heard of any problems. Some reports have come forward but I take those with a grain of salt.

The Metropolitan Water Board seems to have operated fairly well. It has been subject to contrivance by the Government of the day at various times, more so by the present Government than by previous Governments. It was established as an autonomous body to run itself, and its chief executive officer up to now has been a general manager. I cannot see how the situation will be improved by changing his designation to "commissioner". He will still be subject to the board.

It is a strange set of circumstances. On looking at the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal's report of the 30th January this year, one finds the proposed salary range is \$38 715 a year plus expenses of \$1 200. Others in this category are the Commissioner of Public Health and Medical Services, the Co-ordinator of Industrial Development, the Director General of Education, the Director of Mental Health Services, the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Engineering of the Public Works Department, and the Under Treasurer.

The next list in the same category reads as follows—

Chairman of Commissioners of the Rural and Industries Bank

Chairman of the Metropolitan Transport Trust
 Chairman, Post Secondary Education Commission
 Chairman, Public Service Board
 Commissioner of Main Roads
 Commissioner, State Energy Commission
 Conservator of Forests
 Director General of Transport

The people holding these positions have authority over complete establishments; they are not subject to a board, and so one wonders at the Government putting this proposition forward. We are not given any reason for the alteration. The only reason I can suggest is that the amendment will put the chief administrative officer of the Metropolitan Water Board on a salary range ahead of the Chief Engineer of the Metropolitan Water Board who is now several thousand dollars per annum ahead of the general manager. However, I do not know whether that will improve the situation. Similar anomalies exist throughout the various Public Services. For instance, the salary of the Under Secretary for Works is a great deal lower than that of the Director of Engineering and the Principal Architect of the Public Works Department. No doubt some of the other personnel under his administration also receive more money than he does.

This amendment does not improve the overall situation. All it seems to do is to create a job capacity, and it will be interesting to see who receives the appointment. Mr Coonan has been the acting general manager for a long time, and until now such a position has always been filled by a civil servant. We have had some good ones, and I could mention Mr George Samuels and Mr Harry Hewitt who were excellent civil servants. Surely the Minister is not saying that these gentlemen did not co-ordinate the services within the Metropolitan Water Board quite successfully. If he is, it is to his discredit, and if he is not saying that, what is he saying?

We have only half the story now, and I believe that after a commissioner is appointed, there will be a further amendment to this Act to give the commissioner overall power in line with the other civil servants I referred to who are in full charge of their establishments. It is for this reason that a position carries with it the title of "commissioner".

If the person to be appointed to this position were to be in charge of an overall State authority for the preservation of water and all things associated with water, there could be some justification for the appointment of a

commissioner as well as some assistant commissioners.

The Main Roads Department is under the control of a commissioner and assistant commissioners. However, we already have a fully established board to control our water supplies, and I would like to remind members of the constitution of this board. It is important to remember that this board is composed of seven members: the Governor appoints the chairman whose term of office is for up to seven years. I am not sure how long the term of the present chairman has to run. The next member of the board is to be the general manager, who will now be the commissioner. One member of the board shall be an engineer who is a corporate member of either the Institution of Engineers of Australia or the Institution of Civil Engineers, London. One member shall be the Under Treasurer, or the Under Treasurer's nominee. One member shall be a person appointed on the nomination of the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the City of Perth; and two persons shall be appointed on the nomination of the Minister from a panel of names submitted by the Local Government Association. These last-named members will represent respectively the ratepayers of the City of Perth and the ratepayers of the outer areas served by the Metropolitan Water Board.

The board so comprised instructs the general manager—presumably now to be the commissioner—on his tasks. So he will not be a commissioner in the true sense.

Perhaps the Government considers that more socialist improvements are necessary. The member for Cottesloe, with his "Reds under the bed" complex will be saying that the next stage will be to appoint a commissar. We do not really suspect that at all. However, we believe we have sufficient commissioners in various capacities.

It appears to me that the commissioner to be appointed under this legislation will be in a fundamentally different position from that of the other commissioners to whom I have referred. Establishments such as the Main Roads Department and the State Energy Commission do not look to make a profit or to pay their own way and, therefore, they are not regarded as business undertakings. At present the General Manager of the Metropolitan Water Board is in a similar situation to the General Manager of the State Housing Commission. It seems to me that a chief administrative officer who is subject to instruction from a board should bear the title of general manager rather than that of commissioner. I cannot discover any sound reason for the amendment.

In his second reading speech the Minister said—

The commissioner will coordinate the board's overall operations. His appointment will recognise the growth of the metropolitan water board's operations in recent years.

We could apply that description to a dozen jobs. Surely the State Government Insurance Office is increasing its business all the time, but we do not call the chief administrative officer of that office a commissioner. Likewise we have not yet given the General Manager of the State Housing Commission the title of commissioner for the purpose of upgrading his salary, which seems to me to be the only real reason for the amendment.

If the amendment is simply a way of saying that the Government no longer wishes to appoint someone from the Civil Service, then that should be stated. Up to date appointments have been made from the Civil Service. It is interesting to note the provisions of section 12G of the Act which states—

For the purposes of enabling the Board to carry out its powers, functions, duties and liabilities under this Act, the Governor may, under the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1904, from time to time appoint—

- (a) a person to be General Manager of the Board, who shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Board;

This person will now be the commissioner of the board. To continue—

- (b) a person to be secretary of the Board;

It is very interesting that since the establishment of the board there has never been an appointment to this position. In fact, there has always been a supernumerary who has had the title of assistant general manager. So it appears that the provisions of the Act have not been carried out by any Government. Section 12G continues—

- (c) such other officers as the Governor thinks necessary for those purposes.

Of course, that simply is a way of appointing the staff of an establishment.

It seems to me that this amendment is to allow the Government to get rid of someone it does not want and to appoint someone else.

The Government must come clean and tell us very clearly what it is about. It does not seem to be bent on amending the rest of the legislation, but if it is we should know about it. If the Government wants somebody to take authority over the whole of the State, it should tell us that also. It would be a wise thing to do that so that

water supplies in this State will be co-ordinated. That would be a big task, and we would require a high executive to do it.

Nevertheless, we regard it as the rightful task of the Commissioner of the State Energy Commission, and the Commissioner of Main Roads to do that, and they have some deputy commissioners to carry out specific tasks under the direction of the commissioner from time to time.

In respect of the fees payable for inspecting the board's registers of debentures and stock which show details of loan subscriptions, and for copies and extracts of entries in these registers, it was customary for a long time to write such fees into Acts. Such fees used to be included in the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act, but they have been taken out of that Statute. The reason is that the escalation of costs makes it unreasonable to include in the Act a figure of, say, 10c. Usually people who wish to inspect the registers would be doing so for business purposes, and it is reasonable that a fair charge should be made. Of course, 10c would not cover the cost of a clerk going to a cupboard, getting out the register and bringing it to the counter. Therefore, that amendment is justified.

In the same way, it is right that the charge to be made for copies and extracts of entries should be the subject of regulation. Such regulations are subject to the usual scrutiny in that they are required to be laid on the Tables of the Houses of Parliament, and members have a chance to object to any move by the Government to increase the fees too heavily. We are quite happy with that part of the Bill.

However, we are lacking explanation for the other part of the Bill. Nobody can indicate if there is any further explanation apart from that given by the Minister. This Bill is being treated as an urgent measure under the motion to suspend Standing Orders introduced by the Premier recently. He said it is necessary to pass the Bill through the Parliament quickly. I cannot see why we are changing the present system when it seems to be working satisfactorily.

Have discussions been held with the Perth City Council, the Local Government Association, and all the other bodies concerned? I do not think so. If no discussions have occurred, why is it necessary to stir up this situation at all? The board is due to move into a new building soon, and perhaps the idea is that when that is done there should be a new commissioner.

The title of commissioner might sound a little more officious or frightening than the present title

of general manager, but I do not think it will do anything to improve the efficiency of the board, because the commissioner will be governed by the provisions which govern the present general manager. The only difference I can see in the change of name is that it allows for an increase in salary. That is no basis upon which to encourage support for the measure, and as a consequence the Opposition is opposed to it. We are opposed to it because we have not been sufficiently acquainted with the necessity for it. In the absence of such information we feel the Government is legislating for the sake of legislating, without justification for the measure.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [11.15 p.m.]: I wish briefly to support the member for Welshpool, who has wide experience in this field. I want to take members back to 1963 when this Act was amended to take the activities of the board away from the control of Parliament so that the electors and the public at large could not say that the Parliament had increased water rates or had done something else.

Last year we saw the complete reverse happening when the Government, on its own initiative, decided to introduce a new scheme; and despite the fact that in 1963 we set out the provisions which we are now seeking to alter, last year the Government completely ignored those provisions and its previous undertakings.

We wonder just why this amendment should be before the Parliament at a time when there is supposed to be restraint on the Public Service and when we can see that as a result of that restraint the Public Service is breaking down in some areas, and we are certainly not getting the service to which the public are entitled and which they deserve. Perhaps we know why it is before us at this stage; it is here because the Government has advertised a position, and the Public Service Board has said the appointment cannot be made because the position does not exist under the Act. That probably highlights the urgency in respect of the measure, but we wonder about the reason for it.

The member for Welshpool has pointed out that the amendment means an increase in salary of something like \$5 000 over the salary of the present general manager. Whoever the lucky person is will receive that increase in salary, and I place a question mark after the word "lucky" because the reorganisation does not begin and end there. One could bet London to a brick on that a number of other appointments will have to be made in the new set-up; and I have yet to see any initiative such as this taken by any Government which does not demand extra appointments. The

extra appointments will not have to be set up under the Act, but will be agreed to between the Public Service Board and the Minister.

I believe at the moment the Premier, in his capacity as Treasurer, decides which jobs shall be created and which jobs shall be deleted from the Public Service list. Therefore, we are not talking only about the initial \$5 000; and in a billion dollar-plus Budget that is a small amount of money to be concerned about, although I could give the Premier a dozen worthy areas in which that \$5 000 could be spent to some considerable advantage. This is not the time or the place to do that.

What really concerns us, and this has been very properly pointed out by the member for Welshpool—a former Minister for Works and Water Supplies—is that we do not know what it all means. I recall the Press release in which the Minister was fairly coy about giving away any details. He said, "We want the commissioner, but we cannot tell you much because we do not want you to know too much too soon." We cannot agree to an appointment made under conditions like that. The Parliament is entitled to know what will be the end result, or what the Government hopes will be the end result, after the appointment is made.

However, we are told to allow the appointment to be made and to trust the Government. I have said many times that I do not trust the Government; few on this side of the House trust it. That is a regrettable state of affairs, but the Government seems to go on its merry way showing complete disregard not only for the members of this Chamber but also for the public at large.

Therefore, I echo the concern expressed by the member for Welshpool. I hope the Minister understands that we cannot blindly support the Bill. We want to know what will be the end result and what will be the total cost to the Government. We want to know what the total savings will be.

As members know, the public are paying something like 50 per cent more for their water supplies now than they were paying under the old scheme. Next year, they are going to be paying much more as it appears that because insufficient water has been sold, due to the Government's apparently very successful campaign on water conservation, there will be a drop in revenue in the department, therefore the charge for water used in excess of the 150 kilolitre allowance will rise fairly dramatically to make up the shortfall and to cover up the Government's bungling.

That gives me little reason for joy. I forecast some time ago that hospital fees were going to rise by 50 per cent, and the Minister for Health said, "What rubbish!" or words to that effect. However, tomorrow morning's newspaper, which has just been delivered to Parliament House, reveals it is almost certain hospital fees will rise by 50 per cent.

The public just cannot go on meeting these imposts. Whilst this position will result in additional annual expenditure of only \$5 000, we want to know what it all means, and what the end result will be. We are conscious of the additional taxes and imposts being put upon the public; they have gone sky high, and there must be a stop somewhere. We hope that next year we will be able to bring a stop to those additional taxes.

Incidentally, talking of taxes, I hope the Premier will be able to give us an undertaking similar to the one Mr Hamer gave today; namely, that he will not introduce a State income tax. I suppose it was expedient that Mr Hamer should make such a statement a few days before an election. However, it was interesting to hear him confirm that yet another aspect of federalism has been rejected by his Government, as it has been rejected in other Eastern States, but has yet to be rejected in Western Australia.

We are entitled, not only as a matter of courtesy but also as a matter of real concern in regard to public expenditure to be provided with some details of the benefits likely to ensue if this appointment is made. I understand why the Bill is before the House at the moment: No such position exists, and I suppose the Public Service Board wants to make the appointment. We do not argue that point at any length. However, we do doubt the reasons for the appointment and the effect it is likely to have.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [11.23 p.m.]: I thank the member for Welshpool for his support of the two other issues covered by this Bill. I am rather surprised at the opposition which has been expressed to the appointment of a commissioner. In recent years we have experienced some very difficult times in Western Australia, particularly in the metropolitan area, where water was in short supply for an extended period. I would have thought that if there were a time to attract a top line person to this field, that time is now.

Mr Davies: He will not produce one extra drop of water.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Leader of the Opposition is worried because it will cost this State an additional \$3 000 a year. Quite frankly,

the right sort of person can save us more than that each day.

Mr Jamieson: In what way?

Mr O'CONNOR: Do not tell me the Opposition does not believe that a person with experience in this field, who has the knowledge, capacity and ability to institute new programmes can do more than other people have been doing in a managerial position.

Mr Jamieson: Not under a board, because the board will have final authority.

Mr O'CONNOR: The population of the Perth metropolitan area and of Western Australia generally virtually is exploding and I believe it is essential to have good management within these public utilities to ensure our expanding population is properly catered for.

Mr Jamieson: That is a nice reflection on the board!

Mr O'CONNOR: We have such things to worry about as the recycling of water. How many people in Western Australia can lay claim to a great deal of experience in that field?

Mr Jamieson: Who are the likely candidates for the job?

Mr O'CONNOR: I do not know how many applications have been received or, in fact, if any applications have been received. We must plan ahead and secure the services of the best people we possibly can because, quite frankly, the growth of the metropolitan area and of this State to a great extent depends on our water supplies, and whether we have the capacity to reticulate water to an expanding population and industry.

We have had problems in recent years with sewerage; look at Jervoise Bay, at the problems in Cockburn Sound, and at the problems experienced at Swanbourne and Wanneroo. These are all areas of concern, where the expenditure of an additional few thousand dollars a year means nothing if it means obtaining the right person to help overcome these problems. If we can appoint a commissioner of this calibre, whether from Western Australia, the Eastern States or elsewhere, it must be worth while, and to secure the services of that sort of person, we must pay the right sort of money.

The Government commissioned the Binnie report for which the Opposition indicated its general support. In fact, members from both sides went to the Public Works Department, where the details of the report were explained to them, after which they were given the opportunity to ask questions. Generally speaking, members supported the findings of that report. The Binnie

report recommended the appointment of a commissioner.

The Opposition claimed we had had good management within the board in recent years. However, over the last 18 months the board has been operating virtually without a full-time manager.

Mr Jamieson: You appointed some out of the way businessman as chairman, and he does not know one thing about it.

Mr O'CONNOR: We are very fortunate to have him because he is one of the people who has helped to keep things going.

Mr Jamieson: All he did was cut back on finance.

Mr O'CONNOR: I think Mr Batty has done an extremely good job.

Mr Jamieson: He has been easily the worst chairman we have ever had.

Mr O'CONNOR: He has worked extremely hard in an effort to keep things going in the best way he could. The Government commissioned a fairly costly report which apparently everyone thought was necessary. The report came down with certain recommendations and the Government now has the Bill before the House to carry out some of those recommendations. I believe the appointment of a commissioner is warranted, and I ask members to support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Blaikie) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 12G amended—

Mr JAMIESON: The Minister did not indicate whether the board would have full responsibility over the newly appointed commissioner. In all other similar cases, the commissioners have final responsibility; that is why they are paid so much. However, I presume that in this case we would still be paying the board to run the affairs of the Metropolitan Water Board; certainly, we have had no indication to the contrary. Therefore, this new commissioner, however good or bad he may be, will still be subject to the direction of the board—unless, of course, the Government is going to remove the board and replace it with something else. This is a ludicrous position; as it stands, the commissioner will do as he is told because he is

only one person of seven members on the board. Goodness only knows why we are having this sort of thing thrust at us. The Government is telling us it will improve the Metropolitan Water Board.

Mr DAVIES: I would also like to know some more about this. I was dissatisfied with the response from the Minister, I regret to say. He said that if we obtained the right man he would save us \$5 000 a year.

Mr O'Connor: I said he could save us \$5 000 a year.

Mr T. J. Burke: He said he could save us \$5 000 a day.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister did not deal with any of the other aspects. The point I did not like was that the Minister seemed to cast reflections on the whole of the Metropolitan Water Board. In the Public Service List one sees that there are engineers in the Metropolitan Water Board and in the sewerage department. There are lists of men who are capable. However, one commissioner will bring about vast changes, and we will obtain a cheaper and better water supply! If the Minister can guarantee that kind of thing, well and good.

In fact, the Minister ignored the Parliament when he said that things would be better if we had a commissioner. He has not answered the very pertinent questions put forward by my colleague. We are no closer to finding out what will happen when the commissioner is appointed than when we read the article in the newspaper. The Minister became coy and said that he could not tell us what would happen. I wonder whether he knows now what will happen. The Binnie report was released about 18 months ago—

Mr O'Connor: It would have been less than that.

Mr DAVIES: Opposition members who have read the report or heard the description of it agree with a lot of it. However, we are not wholeheartedly in favour of everything in the report. I do not think the Binnie report indicates how a commissioner can reorganise the MWB in such a way as to make it more efficient.

I do not support all of the recommendations in the Binnie report. One of the suggestions was that we should make the water saltier, and we would not use so much of it. That was the most amazing recommendation I have ever read in any report.

Mr O'Connor: They did not recommend that.

Mr DAVIES: They said that if the water was saltier people would not use it.

Mr O'Connor: It was a comment.

Mr DAVIES: It was one of the options that was open to the Government.

We are entitled to be completely dissatisfied with the performance of the Government on this matter. It has not told the public anything. We have given the Government the opportunity tonight to tell the Parliament, and hopefully the information will go to the public in due course. The Minister has said nothing but, "If we appoint the right man, things will be better." That is a slight on the administration of the Metropolitan Water Board.

The Government should adjourn this matter. We know that the Bill has to go through so that there is an official job to which to appoint a man. We would be happy to go along with that, if the Government gave an explanation of the benefits that would accrue. I do not want the kind of generalisation we have already heard.

The Minister should tell us why it has taken so long for the decision to appoint a commissioner to be made. A mess has been made of the water supply, especially as far as paying is concerned. The Government interfered with the operations of the MWB after it gave an undertaking in 1963 that it was taking the whole matter out of the hands of the Parliament. We have gone from disaster to disaster in relation to the water supply. I have listed some of the things that have concerned me on other occasions. Due to the lateness of the hour, I will not repeat them.

If the Government had left matters to the MWB, I am sure we would have had a much better and cheaper water supply.

Mr O'Connor: I am sure that if we had taken no notice of the Binnie report, we would have been criticised by the Opposition. Because we have taken notice of it, again we are criticised. We just cannot win against the people who want to knock everything.

Mr Jamieson: How many reports have you taken notice of?

Mr O'Connor: I listened to the Opposition and I did not interject.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr O'Connor: I have explained it all before. I will not go any further if members opposite do not want to listen.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister has abdicated. He does not know. He is incompetent. We are only asking—

Mr Young: It is a gang attack every time somebody rises to his feet.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr DAVIES: We are simply asking—

Mr O'Connor: If the Leader of the Opposition had sat down and listened, he would have heard.

Mr DAVIES: I never said a word. I was waiting for the explanation.

Mr O'Connor: You said you were going to keep your people under control. Just listen to them.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr O'Connor: You have lost control.

Mr DAVIES: We do not control our members. We do not tell them when they have to sit, and when they have to put their coats on, and when they are allowed to speak.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will keep order.

Mr DAVIES: Certainly.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition will—

Mr T. J. Burke: Genuflect!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Balcatta or the member for Perth wish to attract my attention? If so, the member for Balcatta will resume his appropriate seat. The member for Balcatta will keep order and recognise the Chair as is appropriate.

The Leader of the Opposition was referring to what I regarded as nefarious remarks not necessarily related to the clause under discussion. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to relate his remarks to the clause under discussion.

Mr DAVIES: I am not quite certain what that little homily was about, Mr Deputy Chairman. I will remind you that I was answering an interjection—several interjections which you had allowed regarding the control of the Chamber from this side. If you are going to allow interjections, I expect you would allow me to answer them. Whilst I have the opportunity, I will do precisely that. If you want to sit me down and gag me, or your leader wants to sit me down and gag me, you are welcome to do it.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr DAVIES: You should go ahead and do it.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition—

Mr DAVIES: That is better.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is better?

Mr DAVIES: The fact that you stood up so you could get my attention. I do not take interjections—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat while I am on my feet.

Mr Davies: I do not take any interjections from you or anybody else.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that, first of all, he will not take any interjections from me. Secondly, the Leader of the Opposition will relate his remarks to clause 5, or I will be obliged to continue and call for another speaker.

Mr DAVIES: Mr Deputy Chairman, I will now show you how I can relate it to clause 5. We asked for an explanation from the Government, not incompetent and irrelevant interjections. That is how I am trying to relate it to clause 5.

We asked for an explanation of the need for a commissioner, and how he will improve the position. The Minister stood to reply, but he was not able to reply because he did not know. A recommendation was handed to the Minister. The Government clapped its hands and said, "That's a good idea. We will do that. It will show that we are doing something." Obviously the Government does not know what the end result of this move will be. It is treating this Committee with contempt. We are entitled to a little better than that because the public at large want to know what the end result will be.

I say for the third time that the Minister did not or could not say in the Press what changes were likely to ensue from this appointment. He got very annoyed about it, just like a young bride who did not want to say what she hoped would go on. I do not believe the Government knows what is going to happen.

Mr O'Connor: Are you suggesting the Press asked me about it?

Mr DAVIES: If I remember correctly the Minister refused to indicate what other changes were likely to ensue once the commissioner was appointed. The Minister would not say what the benefit would be. I felt sure the Minister would tell the Parliament when he introduced the Bill, but he did not. When and if the Minister replies I will ask Opposition members not to interject so that he can tell us what the benefits will be.

An amount of \$5 000 is nothing in a billion dollar-plus Budget, but I could make suggestions as to where the money would be better spent.

I would like the Minister to say whether or not the board will have control over the commissioner or whether there is to be an amendment to the Act to get the appointment made. Once there is a position to which an appointment can be made will we see further amendments to the Act when Parliament resumes for the spring session, at which time we will see what the changes are going to be.

If that is to happen, let the Minister tell us; but we do not want him to keep us in the dark. We will have no quarrel if we can be convinced the appointment will bring about a better and cheaper water supply to the people.

The Government is asking for our blind agreement to this clause, but we would like an explanation.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am used to interjections and I have taken many of them in recent times. However, when a member is on his feet and cannot hear himself speak I believe there is no point in carrying on.

I pointed out earlier that the MWB appointed Binnie to compile a report. Among suggestions to improve the operation of the board was the appointment of a commissioner. The operations of the board in the future are of very great importance to Western Australia. The Government believes it should get the best person available to take up the appointment. The board will still continue to operate; the Opposition should make no mistake about that. With the appointment of a commissioner the board feels it would have someone with whom to liaise closely. The best person for the job would be able to supply a great deal of input.

There is no reason that a local person should not apply for the position; as far as I know there is no preferred person for the job. The Government wants the best person so that we will have the best chance of having an efficient department. It is thought that in this way it will be possible to improve the supply of water, whether it be by recycling or some other method. The water situation is very tight and there are not many areas in the hills from which we can obtain water.

The Government is abiding by a request from the board following the report by a competent group to appoint a person such as I have outlined. I do not believe this is an unreasonable request and I find it difficult to understand why the Opposition is complaining.

For the last 18 months we have had virtually no general manager of the board. Members will know that Mr Armstrong was ill for a long time and the board carried him through that period despite his illness. It is unfortunate that each time he was able to return to work the pressures were too great on his nerves and he was unable to continue.

I believe the Bill is a reasonable one. I believe that the fact we are requesting the appointment of a commissioner at a slightly higher salary than similar appointments in the past is not

unreasonable. The fact that we are trying to attract the best possible person is in the interests of the people of Western Australia. In the long term it will be for the benefit of the people.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It has always been my understanding that during debates of this nature the Opposition and the Government have a right and the responsibility to answer, if they can, those points raised by opposing speakers. Consistently with this Minister in particular the Opposition has been treated in a cavalier fashion, if not deliberately then certainly by the lack of knowledge the Minister consistently displays about the portfolios he handles. If we consider the contribution he has just made it is difficult, firstly, to relate it to the clause—

Mr O'Connor: I was answering questions.

Mr B. T. BURKE: —and, secondly, it related entirely to the maintenance of the proposition that the commissioner should be appointed simply because the Government felt this was necessary and that the request from the board appeared reasonable.

Of course, that is not even beginning to explain the situation or to justify the reasonableness of the board's request, which is consistently what the Opposition has asked the Minister to do.

It is idle for the Minister for Health to interject and talk about gang tactics and claim a fair go when the most unfair action has been the display of such a lack of knowledge by the Minister that the particular clause is to be passed with complete indignity.

The first part of the Minister's contribution dealt with interjections. The second part indicated that the board had appointed people to carry out what was known as the Binnie report and no-one argues with that. Everyone knows the report was carried out and was followed by recommendations following the report's publication.

That does not mean that every recommendation is a good recommendation and that every suggestion made in the report should be implemented. The belief that this Government does not agree that every recommendation should be implemented is justified by the fact that it is not attempting to implement every recommendation. In this case it is implementing one of the recommendations and we want to know why.

The Opposition is not satisfied with vague explanations about feelings or reasonable requests. The Minister referred to the higher salary range and said it would attract a better man, or the best man, to the position, but of course he is hoist on his own petard when he says

there is no general manager at the moment. Why do not we increase the salary of the general manager and attract the same best man into that position?

Mr O'Connor: What is the difference if you call him the commissioner?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Once again the Minister is hoist on his own petard. Why is the Minister doing something that is so unnecessary?

Mr O'Connor: You are complaining about a problem that does not exist.

Mr B. T. BURKE: One of the problems in government is to avoid taking actions which are unnecessary. The action is being taken by the Government of which the Minister is a member. He is saying himself that it is not necessary.

Mr O'Connor: I did not say that. I said, "What is the difference?"

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister is incredible. If there is no difference, why appoint a commissioner? The Government is appointing the commissioner. Why is it doing so when the Minister feels it is not necessary?

Mr Clarko: He did not say that.

Mr Tonkin: He said there was no difference.

Mr B. T. BURKE: These are the very points on which the Opposition takes issue. Consistently we are treated to this sort of unintelligent contribution and that is why there is such a farrago of interjections when the Minister stands up to speak on matters relating to consumer affairs, labour and industry, water supplies, and immigration.

Mr Tonkin: He just does not know his job.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Apart from that, we were told also by the Minister in his reply that there was no preferred person; that there was nobody who was perfect for the job, but that the best person would come forward. That is in no way an answer to what the Opposition has put forward. The Opposition wants to know why a commissioner is necessary and why the present arrangement ceases to be the best one under which this particular aspect of government can be carried on.

The main point I wished to emphasise was this: If the Opposition is treated consistently to unintelligent explanations of Government plans, then it cannot be expected to digest, accept, and agree with what is put forward.

The final point I wanted to make is this: I wanted to refer to the crass insult this Government has offered its own employees and the Parliament of this State. Before even putting

this measure through Parliament it has advertised the position this legislation creates. Then the Premier complains when we say this place is a rubber stamp. If the Premier does not regard Parliament as a rubber stamp, why is his Government advertising positions prior to their establishment by the passage of legislation? If the Minister wants to maintain morale within his own department, why is he saying there is no best man who is readily known now for the job, while he has an acting general manager and has had one for such a period of time, in the face of his failure to explain why the person in that position cannot do what a commissioner is expected to do?

Mr JAMIESON: The Minister by way of interjection proved what I thought, which is that a rose by any other name is still a rose. This is the situation with the commissioner, general manager, or whatever one has. However, I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the only salient feature in the advertisement for the commissioner was that preferably he should have had tertiary education. It might be of some advantage if he possessed certain other qualities, but he did not need those. Preferably he should have a standard of tertiary education.

I do not know whether the fact that the commissioner has had tertiary education will get us one drop of water out of the Darling Range. Probably if this man comes from outside Western Australia it will be some time before he finds his way around the various aquifers which supply water around Perth.

Mr Davies: And around the building.

Mr JAMIESON: It will take him some time to find his way around the building also. The senior officers of the department already know about the backlog of sewerage, but it will take a new man some time to find out about it. This is the amazing point about the legislation. What will the commissioner give us? Will he create more rain? Where will he get more water?

The commissioner will be an administrative head. We will still have the multitude of engineers which my leader referred to a moment ago. The names of these engineers take up many pages in the Public Service List. The commissioner will not take over their positions. He will be an administrator tied up primarily with balancing the financial position. The two previous general managers, Mr Hewitt and Mr George Samuels, both had extensive Treasury experience. This is what we should be looking for now. There is a representative of the Under Treasurer on the board already.

It is not a matter of expertise, because the expertise is there at the moment. To verify that statement we can look at the latest dam which was constructed and supervised. I am referring to the Wungong dam which I was looking at a few days ago. It is a very well constructed dam. We have never had a failure in this type of construction. All the construction work has been well supervised by the officers of the board.

There has been a lack of finance in relation to sewerage, but when the money has been available a very efficient and well designed sewerage system has been installed. The member for Subiaco might not agree with that, because there is a problem at Shenton Park. Perhaps this commissioner will have the answer to that problem. Except for that particular matter, we already have all the experts necessary to perform the jobs required.

The board itself must give the direction and if it is incapable of giving the direction at present, regardless of the Binnie report, the matter should be rectified. The stirring should not occur with the top line management, because they seem to be carrying out their duties in the correct manner. If they are not it is the board's responsibility to remedy the matter.

Mr DAVIES: I thank the Minister for his explanation. As we see the situation now, everything will remain the same in this particular instance except that the general manager will be called "the commissioner".

We will watch developments with interest and we will watch the amendments to the Act which are brought into Parliament during the spring session. We are still unconvinced that the change of name is necessary and we will vote against it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 10 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry), and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 11.59 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

STATE FORESTS

Rainfall

593. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What percentage of the rainfall in an average season would be transpired/evaporated by—
 - (a) a eucalypt forest;
 - (b) an annual pasture;
 - (c) a good perennial pasture;
 - (d) a parkland cleared annual pasture;
 - (e) an agro forestry system;

in the

- (i) 500 mm;
- (ii) 800 mm;
- (iii) 1 200 mm,

rainfall areas of the lower south-west?

- (2) What is the minimum transpiration level that would be tolerable in each rainfall zone to avoid translocation of sodium chloride through the soil profile and eventually into the now fresh south-west rivers?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) These statistics are not available for the range of situations listed.

Approximately can be made by interpretation of streamflow records where available. Based on these figures it is calculated that the evapotranspiration from eucalypt forest with an average stocking would be—

- (a) (i) 98-99 per cent.
- (ii) 95 per cent.
- (iii) 85-90 per cent.

Unpublished data from work in the Dwellingup area reveals evapotranspiration on a mainly pastured catchment in the 1200 mm rainfall zone to be in the order of 60-65 per cent.

In the Bakers Hill area with a rainfall of 600 mm per annum, it has been determined that evapotranspiration from the afforested area before clearing averages about 99.7 per cent. After clearing the figure is about 96 per cent. These figures, however, do not tell the whole story because investigations reveal that the salt flow before clearing averages approximately 1 kg. per ha. per annum and after clearing approximately 20 kg. per ha. per annum, i.e., the salt flow increases many times.

- (2) The framing of this question does not permit a precise answer.

It can be said, however, that the extent of the effect of the reduction of transpiration on the salinity of rivers in the south-west is much more marked in the areas of low rainfall than in the areas of higher rainfall.

JOONDALUP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: LAND

Transfer

596. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Has he received from me a copy of a certificate of title which shows that, on the 15th August, 1978, the Joondalup Development Corporation became the registered proprietor of land in the Joondalup area?
- (2) Remembering that in reply to a question from the Member for Moore in November last, the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning said the said land had not been transferred to the corporation, will the Premier please undertake to investigate this action and subsequent statement by the Minister?
- (3) If "Yes" will he also undertake to inform the House of the result of any such inquiry?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) and (3) I have investigated the matter and confirm that the answers given by the Minister are correct.

The procedure on the issue of a Crown grant is as follows—

The grant is forwarded to the Titles Office by the Lands Department and is registered as a title in the name of the grantee. However, until such time as the relevant fees are paid, the title is not issued to the grantee, and he is unable to deal on the title.

In the particular case payment of fees was delayed pending an interpretation of section 50 of the Joondalup Centre Act 1976. As shown on the copy of the Crown grant those fees were paid on 27th February, 1979, and on 20th March, 1979, the title was available for issue and posted the following day.

EDUCATION

School of Mines Technical Education College

597. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has a decision been made to appoint an administrative officer to the council of the joint School of Mines Technical Education College in Kalgoorlie?
- (2) When was the decision made?
- (3) Who made the decision?
- (4) (a) Has the decision been implemented; and
(b) if not, why not?

- (5) When will it be implemented?
- (6) Who will provide the finance for the new position?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) March, 1979.
- (3) The Minister, on the recommendation of the council of the federation.
- (4) No—awaiting advice from the Public Service Board and Treasury.
- (5) As soon as possible.
- (6) State Government.

give immediate consideration to alleviating the problem that has not changed since I last raised this matter with the Minister by either:

- (a) providing adequate office space at the existing office; or
- (b) shifting the office to more suitable accommodation that would provide shelter to paying customers?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Use of this service is seasonal. The answer lies in quicker throughput, which is being implemented.

WATER SKIING

Navigable Waters

598. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

Further to my letter to the Minister under date 15th December, 1978, would he now advise:

- (1) Is water skiing an authorised activity on the pools at Millstream?
- (2) If "No" who is authorised to police this activity and obtain details from offenders with the view to possible prosecution?
- (3) (a) Before water skiing areas are declared on navigable waters in reserves, under the navigable waters regulations, is the relevant reserve management authority consulted;
- (b) before regulations and changes to regulations are declared on specified portions of navigable waters under the jurisdiction of the Waterways Commission, is the commission consulted?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The Harbour and Light Department.
- (3) (a) and (b) Yes.

WATER SUPPLIES: METROPOLITAN WATER BOARD

Midland Office

599. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

Further to my question 829 of 1978, wherein I complained about people paying accounts at the Water Board office in Midland having to queue along the footpath in the rain and other inclement weather, would the Minister

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

North City Holden

600. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Adverting to question 218 of 5th April, 1979, what action is being taken against North City Holden?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The Bureau of Consumer Affairs will be taking proceedings against North City Holden in respect of a breach of the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS

Lockridge

601. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Adverting to question 2594 of 28th November, 1978, has the upgrading of the supply of bore water to the Lockridge primary and junior primary schools been investigated?
- (2) If so, what has been the result of that investigation?
- (3) When can actual operations on the site be expected?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) Upgrading of water supplies for the Lockridge primary and junior primary schools was completed several weeks ago and the system is working satisfactorily.

SEWERAGE

Embleton

602. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

When will deep sewerage reticulation be provided to the residents in the vicinity of house numbers 211, 213 and 215 Broun Avenue, Embleton?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Deep sewerage facilities for houses numbers 211, 213 and 215 Broun Avenue, Embleton, would require the construction of a pumping station and rising main and connecting gravity sewers. This work is not included in the current five-year development programme.

TRAFFIC: ACCIDENTS

Rear-end Collisions

603. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Considering the high incidence of rear-end motor vehicle collisions as indicated in his answer to question 575 of 1979:

- (1) Is it a fact that the practice of tail-gating which gives rise to this type of collision will not be readily detected by the most common mode of Road Traffic Authority operation, but needs instead the use of unmarked cars?
- (2) If so, what action is being taken to remedy the matter?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is in the negative, what is the reason for this very high figure of 30 per cent and what action is being done to reduce it?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Road Traffic Code Regulation 509 (4) reads—

"Except when overtaking and passing, the driver of any vehicle shall, when following another vehicle, keep such distance behind it, as will enable him to stop his vehicle in an emergency with safety and without running into the vehicle in front of him."

- (1) and (3) The difficulty lies in proving an offence to the satisfaction of the court. The use of unmarked cars does not greatly assist.
- (2) When sufficient evidence is available, offenders are prosecuted. The infringement fine for the offence of following too closely was recently increased from \$20 to \$30 and demerit points from two to three. The dangers of following too closely are also emphasised in publicity activities and educational lectures.

CREDIT UNIONS

Legislation

604. Mr TONKIN, to the Chief Secretary:

When does he expect that legislation will be introduced to control credit unions?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

It is hoped that a draft may be ready for consideration later in the year.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Landlords: Interest on Bond Money

605. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

What has been the result of the inquiry that was made by his officers into the suggestion made by the Small Claims Tribunal referee that landlords be required to credit tenants with interest on bond money?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The senior referee of the Small Claims Tribunal and the Bureau of Consumer Affairs are examining the practicability of providing for this.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Speed Seeder (WA)

606. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

What were the results of the investigation into complaints against Speed Seeder (W.A.) which it was stated would be made into the company in answer to question 590 of 1978?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The investigation referred to by the member, which had commenced at the time of his previous question, concluded on the following day when it was discovered that the principals of the firm had left the State. Nothing further has been heard of them.

No complaints against the firm were received by the bureau.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Power Station: East Perth

607. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is his department satisfied, as apparently was his immediate predecessor's, that the East Perth power station is being operated in compliance with the Inspection of Machinery Act?
- (2) Is there a satisfactory safety record at the power station?
- (3) Are the operators working under safe conditions?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The department is satisfied that the East Perth power station is being operated in accordance with the provisions of the Machinery Safety Act.
- (2) and (3) The department has received no recent reports of accidents at the East Perth power station and inspections have not indicated a reason for concern with the safety record or conditions of work for the operators.

PUBLIC SERVICE: PUBLIC SERVANTS

Personal Records

608. Mr TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Public Service Board or its agents required to inform the person concerned of any remarks made on his or her personal records if that person requests that the information be made available to him?
- (2) Is it Government policy to review these matters so that the rights of the individual will be protected?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) An officer may, at any time, be permitted to examine his, or her, personal file. If the permanent head refuses permission, the officer may apply in writing through the permanent head to the Public Service Board who may confirm or reverse the refusal of permission.

In addition, when it becomes necessary for the permanent head to submit an adverse report to the board in relation to the efficiency, diligence and conduct of an officer, the following provisions apply—

- (a) before the report is recorded on the personal file of the officer, the report shall be brought to the notice of the officer and shall be initialled by the officer; and—
- (b) if the officer desires to give any explanation in respect of the report, or give any reasons for disagreeing with the report, the officer shall put the explanation or reasons in writing and this shall be attached to the report prior to its submission to the Board.
- (2) An extensive review of Public Service legislation with a completely new Act passed by Parliament last year, coming into operation on 16th May 1979, has been undertaken by this government. Its review included a detailed examination of the rights of individuals employed in the Public Service.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Household Cleaning Agents

609. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Adverting to question 219 of 1979, has the report on household cleaning agents referred to in the advertisement in *The West Australian* of 15th February, 1979 been made?
- (2) If not, when is it expected that report will be made?
- (3) Will the report be made public?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) No formal report was necessary.

The matter of household cleaning agents sold in clear plastic containers was referred to the consumer products safety committee following a complaint that the appearance of a container and contents was dangerously deceptive in that it had the appearance of fruit juice cordial. The committee subsequently ascertained that the labelling and packaging of the product came within the ambit of the Food and Drug Regulations and therefore not within the jurisdiction of the committee.

The matter was therefore referred to the Public Health Department which then issued a formal notice to the manufacturer requiring the product to be withdrawn or relabelled within two weeks of the date of the notice.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Noranda

610. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Education:

What is the site of the Noranda primary school?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The proposed Noranda primary school is in the locality of Noranda bounded on the north and east by Walmsley Drive and on the west by McCarthy Place.

HOUSING

Koondoola

611. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 2392 of 1978, can he say whether the State Housing Commission has considered changes in the plans for the proposed medium density development on 22 lots in Koondoola as a result of studying letters of objection from local residents forwarded to it by the local authority?

- (2) If "Yes" what changes are proposed?
- (3) What account has been taken of problems which have arisen in other areas as a result of locating medium density rental accommodation in cul-de-sacs and other situations of restricted access in any such considerations?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (i) Single storey construction only;
(ii) Measures to ensure the privacy of adjoining residents;
(iii) Reduction of densities;
(iv) Increased pensioner unit component.
- (3) It is standard procedure to examine any problem that might arise from possible over concentration and in this case, densities have been reduced.

TOWN PLANNING

Ballajura Pty. Ltd.

612. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Further to her answer to question 2454 of 1978, can she say what progress has been made to date in the consideration being given to the application by Ballajura Pty. Ltd. for the re-assessment of the metropolitan region scheme zonings as reflected on metropolitan region scheme map No. 10 and improvement plan No. 8 by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, the Town Planning Department and the Main Roads Department?
- (2) In particular, can she say what stage has been reached in the consideration being given to the proposals for a new Weir Road alignment and its southward extension and an alternative alignment for Beach Road extensions to Marshall Road?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) A report about the Ballajura proposal was considered on 26th April by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority which is seeking further comment on the matter from Governmental instrumentalities and the Shire of Wanneroo.
- (2) I understand departmental officers, representatives of the Shires of Swan and Wanneroo, and the subdivider's consultants, have met and developed modifications to the alignments of the primary and local feeder roads—including Weir Road, in the Ballajura-Malaga localities. Copies of the map depicting the modified road proposals will be despatched this week for comment.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Nollamara

613. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware of a violent disturbance which took place at a State Housing Commission property at 27 Robertsbridge Road, Nollamara on 14th April, last which resulted in substantial damage to the house concerned?
- (2) Is he also aware that the house has been left now with all of its windows broken and other extensive damage, with articles of furniture and three damaged cars scattered around the exterior for over two weeks?
- (3) Can he say why the commission has allowed this property to remain unattended in this state for such a protracted period?
- (4) What assurance can he give to residents in the vicinity that immediate action will be taken to effect necessary maintenance and that consideration will be given in re-allocating the property to bringing relief to neighbouring residents from the several years of continuous disturbance emanating from the occupants of this commission property?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) At date of disturbance the property was the subject of a tenancy. Information since received is that the tenant has passed away and action is in hand to secure the dwelling.
- (4) Necessary maintenance will be attended as early as possible. As to future tenancy the property is a Commonwealth grant-funded house which is exclusively for Aboriginal occupancy. Every endeavour will be made to select a tenant able to maintain an acceptable standard of property care and social behaviour.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Motor Vehicles

614. Mr WILSON, to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) Can he say how many of the 13 Ford cars allocated specifically for ministerial use are LTD's?
- (2) What is the year of each LTD?
- (3) To which particular Ministers are the Ford LTD's allocated?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

(1) Eleven.

(2) Since the previous question on 24th April, one 1977 vehicle has been replaced with 1979 model.

The situation now is—

1977—5 vehicles;

1978—4 vehicles;

1979—2 vehicles.

(3) Hon. D. H. O'Neil;
Hon. R. C. Old;
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon;
Hon. R. J. O'Connor;
Hon. I. G. Medcalf;
Hon. P. V. Jones;
Hon. A. Mensaros;
Hon. E. C. Rushton;
Hon. K. A. Ridge;
Hon. D. J. Wordsworth;
Hon. M. J. Craig.

HEALTH: NOISE

Control: Regulations

615. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

Can he say, at this stage, when the proposed new regulations governing noise control measures described as imminent in answers given to previous questions last year will be introduced?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The Noise Abatement (Neighbourhood Annoyance) Regulations are in the final stages of drafting for submission to myself. The hearing conservation of employed persons regulations will be introduced subsequent to amendments to the Noise Abatement Act which will be considered by Cabinet shortly.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Murex Welding Equipment

616. Mr HODGE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it a fact that the Public Works Department recently caused the Government stores to place an embargo on the purchase of Murex welding equipment?

(2) Why was the ban imposed on this brand of welding equipment?

(3) Is it a fact that the ban on the purchase of this equipment caused considerable inconvenience to a number of departments and also caused unnecessary delays in completing various projects?

(4) Has the ban now been lifted, and if so, why?

(5) If the answers to questions (1) and (3) are "Yes" has action been taken to ensure that in future the Public Works Department does not act precipitously and offer possibly uninformed advice to the Government stores on the purchase of technical equipment?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) No.

(2) to (5) Not applicable.

PRISON

Inmate: R. S. Spice

617. Mr DAVIES, to the Chief Secretary:

(1) Will any special arrangements be made in prison to cater for the disabilities of deaf and blind pensioner, Mr Ronald Stanley Spice, who was gaoled on Thursday, 26th April for two years, with a minimum non-parole period of nine months for selling 40 pounds of cannabis?

(2) If so, will he detail these arrangements?

(3) If "No" to (1), is it expected that Mr Spice will be able to cope adequately with prison conditions?

(4) To which institution will he be sent?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (4) He is being detained in the Fremantle Prison health service where he is being encouraged to learn braille and is taking part in the occupational therapy programme. A better class of prisoner has been detailed to act as his assistant. He has been seen twice by representatives of the Braille Society who have provided him with what are known as "talking books".

(3) Not applicable.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

O. Russ and T. Bevan

618. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Does the State Energy Commission have any plans to dismiss:

(a) Mr Otto Russ, powerhand engine driver of Wittenoom;

(b) Mr Tom Bevan, fitter at Redbank power station,

both of whom are currently obtaining workers' compensation?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

No.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Power Station: Redbank

619. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has he or Commissioner Kirkwood received complaints from Australian Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union members at Redbank power station who state that workers at the station must take afternoon tea breaks whilst on the job and not in a mess room?
- (2) Is any action to be taken on this matter?
- (3) If "No" to (2) why not?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The SEC advise me that they have received a claim which includes, amongst other things, reference to an afternoon tea break of 15 minutes.
- (2) The matter will be dealt with as a normal industrial matter, and given full consideration by the SEC.
- (3) Not applicable.

ENERGY: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Power Stations: North-west

620. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) In view of the recent resignations at State Energy Commission power stations in the north-west, will he visit these stations at the first appropriate opportunity so he can obtain on-the-spot knowledge and thus take suitable action to reduce possible friction and hence prevent a worsening of industrial relations in this area?
- (2) If "No" why not?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) It has been and is my policy to visit SEC power stations and/or offices whenever I am in the respective area. I am not prepared, however to make a special visit for the purpose indicated in the question, as the State Energy Commission has the complaints recently made by the FEDFU and AMWSU in relation to north-west power stations well in hand, and I am being kept informed of matters of policy.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:
DEPARTMENT*Townsite Committee: Dampier/Karratha
Accommodation Plan Report*

621. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Referring to question 520 of 1979, will he advise whether there has been consultation between the department's town

sites development committee for Karratha and the following bodies on the Dampier/Karratha accommodation plan:

- (a) Roebourne Shire Council;
- (b) Community Welfare Department and Commonwealth Government social workers and others in Dampier and Karratha;
- (c) trade unions in the area;
- (d) representatives of church groups;
- (e) citizens organisations;
- (f) Education Department;
- (g) representatives of each of the mining companies;
- (h) community groups;
- (i) the State Housing Commission?
- (2) If so, what was the nature of discussions with each of these bodies?
- (3) What other organisations have been consulted?
- (4) Will he make a copy of the report public when it is completed?
- (5) If "No" to (4), will he state his reasons?
- (6) When will the final report be completed?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) State and Commonwealth Departments, Local Government and company representatives on the townsites development committee, as detailed in my answer to question 515, were consulted in the compiling of the Dampier/Karratha accommodation planning study performed in anticipation of the North West Shelf Gas project proceeding. The views of local bodies were represented on the study group by the Roebourne Shire Council and the Regional Administrator.
- (2) Through regular meetings of the study group and briefing of the townsites development committee.
- (3) Organisations with existing and future projects in the area were consulted, as were appropriate State Government Departments not represented on the committee.
- (4) A decision on this will be made at the appropriate time. That is, when the intentions of the North West Shelf Gas project joint venturers are known.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) When firm proposals and details are finalised by the North West Shelf Gas project joint venturers.

622. *This question was postponed.*

**POLICE
Computers**

623. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Further to question 517 of 1979, what were the total costs involved in the contract for the police computer:

- (a) at the time the contract was signed;
- (b) now?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (a) Answered by (4) (b) (1) of question 517.
- (b) Answered by (10) of question 517.

**GOVERNMENT REPORTS
Release**

624. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

Further to question 521 of 1979, when was a copy of the report on the development of sport in Western Australia made available to *The West Australian*?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

A journalist from *The West Australian* collected a copy of the report from the public relations section of the Premier's Department after the closure of normal business on Wednesday, 11th April, 1979.

TOWN PLANNING: SUBDIVISIONS

Traffic Noise

625. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Does the Town Planning Board take traffic noise pollution associated with busy suburban roads into account before granting approval for new residential subdivisions in the metropolitan area?
- (2) Why was approval granted for home sites to be sold which are located adjacent to Leach Highway, Melville, between Norma Road and Riseley Street when the Government is possibly aware that traffic noise levels emanating from that road are extremely high?
- (3) Will the Town Planning Board ensure that all future subdivisions of residential land situated on Leach Highway or other busy roads will contain traffic noise buffer zones or other measures designed to protect home buyers from the detrimental effects of excessively high traffic noise?
- (4) If changes are needed to the Town Planning and Development Act to give the Town Planning Board authority to impose conditions related to traffic noise on subdivisions, will she give this matter a high priority?
- (5) Has she studied a report prepared by Dr J. Spickett of the Western Aus-

tralian Institute of Technology entitled "An investigation of the community reaction to road traffic noise in a suburban area of Western Australia"?

- (6) If "Yes" to (5), what action does she propose taking as a result of the findings of the report?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I would like to preface the answer to the question by indicating to the House that the substance of the question was previously directed to the Town Planning Board, and the member received a letter in reply on the 18th April. That letter fully documented the matters he raised. Therefore, the answer to the question is necessarily brief as the member already has the information.

- (1) Yes, the Town Planning Board does appreciate that there may well be problems and endeavours to take these into account.
- (2) Approval to the subdivision of this land has been given in a number of stages. It is presently in an advanced stage of development and no conditions were imposed relating to traffic noise or buffer areas.
- (3) There are considerable problems in relying on the subdivision control process to secure noise buffer areas and there appears little alternative to the present situation where property buyers must make their own decision regarding location.
- (5) A summary of the report has been sighted.
- (4) and (6) The subject of motor vehicle noise and associated problems of control is currently under investigation by an inter-departmental committee. I will await the findings and recommendations that will be made to my colleague, the Minister for Health, before deciding a course of action.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Safety Bay

626. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

Would the Minister please provide details of the works to be done on stage 3 of the Safety Bay High School?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Stage 3 of Safety Bay High School will consist of the following—

- (a) A teaching block for years 9 and 10;
- (b) Additions to arts and crafts block;
- (c) Addition to the pre-vocational centre;
- (d) Two rooms to be added to the performing arts centre;
- (e) External paving and landscaping.

RAILWAYS

Rockingham

627. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

What effect will the routing of a major railway line through Rockingham have on the urban area to the north and north-west of the line?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

As the reserve for the railway line has been defined for the past 10 years, the subsequently planned road and subdivision pattern has been designed to take account of the reserve, so the effect of the line on the urban areas to the north and north-west should be no greater than is apparent now.

MANGLES BAY

Reclamation

628. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Referring to the Rockingham sub-regional centre study, it says with regard to the proposed port for Mangles Bay "an area of approximately 70 hectares much of which will be as infilling of Mangles Bay". Would she please advise the precise hectareage of Mangles Bay that will be filled in this section?
- (2) The same report goes on to say "Later stages show further large-scale filling of the bay between Point Peron and Garden Island for the creation of further berths". Would she please advise the precise hectareage that will be filled in this section?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) As advised in my answer to question No. 197 there is no immediate need for the facility but the present concept for Mangles Bay envisages filling of the order of 24 ha.
- (2) The need for development of the subsequent parts is seen as a long-term option, and, consequently, the preparation of detailed proposals are not warranted.

EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY

Hillman

629. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Education:

Could he please advise me when the demountable building presently being used by Hillman pre-primary school is to be replaced with a brick building?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

There are no definite plans for Hillman at present, but it is policy to replace transportable pre-primary centres at large schools with a permanent structure as funds become available.

COCKBURN SOUND: JERVOISE BAY

Back-up Industrial Estate

630. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) With respect to the Jervoise Bay proposals and specifically the back-up industrial estate, was the area owned by the Industrial Lands Development Authority and bounded by Mandurah, Dixon and Patterson Roads, considered for a back-up industrial estate?
- (2) If "Yes" why was it rejected?
- (3) If "No" why was it not considered?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) This area was rejected as a suitable site because of its lack of proximity and access to a suitable shoreside construction and load-out site and because of high development costs as a result of severe ground water problems.

COCKBURN SOUND: JERVOISE BAY

Platform Modules Site

631. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) In respect of the Jervoise Bay proposals and specifically the shoreline site for development of platform modules, was the area between Alcoa and the State Energy Commission power house Kwinana, considered as an alternative site?
- (2) (a) If "Yes" why was it rejected;
(b) if "No" why not?
- (3) What other alternative sites were looked at?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) There are no available sites between Alcoa and the SEC power station.
- (3) As advised in my answer to question 100, at various times consideration has been given to potential sites on the west coast, including Wilbinga, Owen Anchorage, Rockingham and Bunbury.

ALUMINA REFINERY: ALCOA

Pinjarra: Leakage from Mud Lakes

632. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is there any record of the mud lakes at Alcoa's Pinjarra plant having leaked since their construction?
- (2) (a) If "Yes" on what dates; and
(b) what amounts leaked?
- (3) What efforts were made to contain such leaks, and were they successful?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) No.

DRINK CANS

Recycling

633. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

If, as he said on 4th April last, drink cans are made of recyclable material, why are they not recycled in this State?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Some cans are collected in this State for possible recycling elsewhere, but at present local recycling is not economically viable.

TRAFFIC: ACCIDENT

Boyanup-Donnybrook Area

634. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is there any record of an accident occurring in the Boyanup-Donnybrook area in the past 20 years which involved circus vans containing animals being overturned?
- (2) If "Yes" what are the details of any such accident?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) No.

FUEL: PETROL

Fee for Filling Drums

635. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is a fee for the filling of drums of petrol being charged, or is such a fee intended, by oil companies in this State?
- (2) If "Yes" then—
 - (a) what is the amount of such fee;
 - (b) from what date has it been, or will it be charged;
 - (c) for what reason is it being charged;
 - (d) will/does it apply to primary producers?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) (b) Yes, as the result of a submission to the Prices Justification Tribunal which granted authorisation effective 30th April, 1979.
- (2) (a) 2.5 cents per litre on aviation fuel; 2.0 cents per litre on all other fuels covering fuels packed in 200 litre containers.
- (c) To cover costs associated with reconditioning, handling and filling of drums.
- (d) Yes.

ABATTOIRS: PIGS

Weekly Kill and Killing Capacity

636. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What has been the average weekly kill of pigs in Western Australia over the past 12 months?
- (2) What is the pig killing capacity of Western Australian abattoirs?
- (3) What is the pig killing capacity of Midland abattoir?
- (4) With the closure of Midland abattoir how is it proposed that pigs weighing over 150 kg and/or boars, will be killed and processed?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 5 900 per week for the period January to December, 1978.
- (2) 12 250 per week excluding Midland Abattoir.
- (3) 4 500 per week.
- (4) I am informed that certain abattoirs can process pigs of this weight.

ABATTOIR: ROBB JETTY

Effluent Treatment Plant

637. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is it intended that an effluent treatment plant will be constructed at Robb Jetty?
- (2) When is it intended to commence construction of such a plant?
- (3) By when will it need to be completed?
- (4) What is the estimated cost of such a plant at Robb Jetty?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) A key float effluent system is already operational at Robb Jetty.
- (2) to (4) Not applicable.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Nannup District

638. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it intended to alter the Lewana and Scott River bus runs which serve the Nannup District High School?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what changes are proposed in each instance;
 - (b) from when will any such changes apply?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Nannup-Lewana service—No.
Nannup-Scott River service—Yes.
- (2) (a) A spur of 2.9 km will be included on the Nannup-Scott River service to cater for the Fraser children who reside at Location 1201.
- (b) 28th May, 1979.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Deposit

639. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What premises attract a deposit from the proprietors thereof for supply of electricity by the State Energy Commission?
- (2) On what basis are the deposits calculated?
- (3) What are the various rates of deposit?
- (4) Why are such deposits necessary, and what motivates the State Energy Commission to require such deposits?
- (5) Can the deposits be waived in any instances, and if so, on what criteria?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The security deposits are not payable by proprietors of premises but by customers of the State Energy Commission wishing to receive power supply irrespective whether they are owners or tenants or have any other form of occupancy. The deposit is payable by all customers other than domestic.
- (2) and (3)—
 - (a) Monthly accounts—twice the average amount of the monthly account taken over the three preceding monthly accounting periods.
 - (b) Quarterly accounts—one and one half times the average amount of the quarterly account taken over the three preceding quarterly accounting periods.
 - (c) New accounts—such amount as the commission determines based on estimated consumption in accordance with the above formulae.

- (4) To protect the revenue of the commission against escalating bad debts. This is in line with the policy of other State utilities in Australia.

(5) No.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Norseman Buildings

640. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What has been the fate of the old Norseman school building since it was vacated in favour of the school's new premises?
- (2) Who presently owns the old school buildings and the land upon which they are situated, and when did the department divest itself of same?
- (3) What are the present plans for the buildings and the old teachers residence nearby?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The old Norseman site and school buildings have been vested in the Youth Hostels Association since March, 1977, and that body is responsible for their use.
- (3) Future use of the old school is the responsibility of the Youth Hostels Association. The teacher's residence is the property of the Government Employees' Housing Authority and is still in use for accommodating teachers.

EDUCATION

Western Australian Post Secondary Education Commission

641. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Was the Chairman of the WA Post Secondary Education Commission, Dr Neal, a signatory to the Williams Report which recommended, *inter alia*, the integration of Murdoch University and the University of WA?
- (2) If so, was it for this reason that a special committee was set up to investigate the proposal to integrate Murdoch and UWA instead of the proposal being referred to WAPSEC?
- (3) If it was for some other reason, what was the reason?
- (4) In light of the Government's failure to refer this matter to WAPSEC and the Government's earlier rejection of WAPSEC's recommendation that the Technical Education Division should

be separated from the Education Department, does the Government still have confidence in WAPSEC and/or Dr Neal?

- (5) Has any decision been made with regard to the future of WAPSEC and/or Dr Neal?
- (6) Is Dr Neal an applicant for the post of Director of the Western Australian Institute of Technology?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes, but it should be noted that the Williams report recommends an investigation of possible integration of the activities of the two universities and not of the institutions themselves.
- (2) No.
- (3) It was considered that a special committee would be more appropriate for this issue. However, the chairman of WAPSEC will be a member and WAPSEC staff will provide research and support services.
- (4) Yes, in both.
- (5) The question does not arise.
- (6) That is none of the member's business nor of mine. However, Dr Neal is prepared to give an answer and the answer is "No".

HEALTH

Asbestos Mining

642. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health: When was the earliest date that the Health Department advised the mining company operating at Wittenoom of the health risks of asbestos mining?

Mr YOUNG replied:
1959.

SHOPPING: NIGHT

Metropolitan Area

643. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has he caused any investigation or survey to be made to evaluate all aspects of night trading in the metropolitan area?
- (2) If so, will he table the report?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) All aspects of night trade in the metropolitan area have been regularly monitored since its introduction.
- (2) No.
- (3) No specific report has been prepared.

MINING

Asbestos

644. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Mines: Adverting to Question 1070 of 1978, will he advise the earliest date that the Department of Mines advised the company operating at Wittenoom of the health risks of asbestos mining?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Not known. The files pertaining to this action have been destroyed in accordance with normal destruction procedures for closed files.

ABORIGINES

Conflicts between Rival Gangs

645. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

What action has he taken either through his Department of Community Welfare or any other agency or person to resolve the known conflicts between rival gangs of Aborigines both in the metropolitan and country regions?

Mr YOUNG replied:

Long standing family feuds amongst Aboriginal groups are known to exist and officers of the department have attempted to assist in the resolution of these conflicts. Recently there have been meetings between Aboriginal people and organisations such as the National Aboriginal Conference, the Aboriginal Legal Service and Mr Baker, Aboriginal Progress Association. Some 37 families were represented at these meetings.

I understand that further meetings are planned under Aboriginal Legal Service sponsorship. I and my department welcome these initiatives and will be offering every support to ensure the continuing success of such moves.

TRANSPORT

Surfboards

646. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Transport:

Following the closure of the Perth/Fremantle rail service, what facility will be available for passengers wishing to take surf boards en route, and for what cost?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

It is intended that on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer months, a bus specially adapted to carry surf boards will run from central bus station.

The service will be approximately hourly and will run along the beaches from North Street to Port Beach. The usual fare will be charged for the passenger with no charge for the surf board.

MINING: COAL

Wilga Basin and Sue Coal Measures

647. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What are the proven coal reserves in the Wilga basin?
- (2) Have any coal discoveries known as the Sue Coal Measures been reported to the Mines Department?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No proven coal reserves delineated to date.
- (2) Yes, in Sue No. 1. oil well in 1966; but this and later intersections have been too deep to be of economic importance.

HOUSING

Collie

648. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Will he advise, excluding pensioner flats and Aboriginal housing, what was the commission's building programme at Collie for the last ten years?
- (2) In view of the possibly urgent demand for State Energy Commission accommodation at Collie, will he give the matter priority attention?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Five units.
- (2) The matter of accommodation for State Energy Commission employees has been and still is the subject of ongoing discussions between the State Energy Commission and State Housing Commission.

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Country Postings

649. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Education:

With regard to Education Department employees appointed to country postings:

- (1) Is there any requirement for superintendents to reside in their appointed regions?
- (2) Do increased promotional opportunities result from country service?

- (3) Are principals of country schools required to reside in the country town to which they are appointed?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes, some recent appointments of superintendents were conditional upon residence in an appointed region. Further expansion of residential requirement is being considered.
- (2) Strictly speaking, no; but it is easier to gain promotion to country schools than to city schools. With considerable staff increases in recent years, and a general decline in the growth of pupil numbers, there will be less promotional opportunities becoming available, which could mean that teachers appointed to non-metropolitan positions may be unable to return to metropolitan appointments as quickly as was previously the case.
- (3) Not at present. Conditions of service relate only to the discharge of a principal's duties and do not relate to any residential requirement. However, the unfortunate aspects of commuting to and from the metropolitan area are a source of some concern to the Education Department, and this aspect is being considered.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION: ACT

Amendment

650. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is it the Government's intention to introduce legislation to amend the Workers' Compensation Act during the present session?
- (2) If "Yes" can he say which sections of the Act will be affected?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Consideration is being given to the Dunn report. It is not possible at this time to indicate whether any amending legislation will be introduced during the present session.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Dunn Report

651. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Premier:

- (1) Has his Government yet considered the Dunn report into workers' compensation?
- (2) If "Yes" what is the result of any such consideration?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) The Dunn report is still receiving consideration.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Introduction, Rate, and Increases

652. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) When was pay-roll tax introduced in Western Australia?
- (2) What was the initial rate of the tax?
- (3) What incremental increases have occurred in the rate of this tax since its inception?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) If the member is referring to the date of the introduction of State pay-roll tax to replace the then existing Commonwealth pay-roll tax, the date is 1st September, 1971.
- (2) 3½ per cent under the State legislation replacing the Commonwealth rate of 2½ per cent.
- (3) (a) One per cent (1st September, 1973).
(b) Half per cent (1st September, 1974).

PAY-ROLL TAX

Exemption: System

653. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

When was the exemption system on pay-roll tax introduced in Western Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Exemption applied back to 1st July, 1941, and was progressively increased under the Commonwealth pay-roll tax on 1st October, 1953, 1st September, 1954, and 1st September, 1957. When the State took over the tax in 1971 it continued the then Commonwealth exemption level of \$20 800.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Exemption: Ceiling

654. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

When was the current exemption ceiling applicable to pay-roll tax last adjusted?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

1st December, 1977 when it was increased to \$60 000, when it was estimated an additional 9 800 businesses became eligible for exemption.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Businesses: Country

655. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) How many country based businesses currently contribute to pay-roll tax?
- (2) What amount of money was contributed by businesses in country towns to pay-roll tax during each of the last three financial years?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) No appropriate statistics are available—especially in view of intra-state and interstate branch activities, etc., in many cases.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Businesses: Small

656. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

How many small businesses in Western Australia are currently exempt from paying pay-roll tax?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Not known.

Only those businesses paying wages in excess of the prescribed amount are required to register.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Total Amount

657. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

What was the total sum contributed as pay-roll tax during each of the last five financial years?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

		\$
1973-74	.....	58 578 964
1974-75	.....	90 060 688
1975-76	.....	110 341 319
1976-77	.....	127 912 521
1977-78	.....	142 127 344

LOAN GUARANTEES

Businesses

658. Mr BRYCE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) How many applications were received by the State Government during each of the last three financial years for loan guarantees by—
 - (a) small business; and
 - (b) businesses generally?
- (2) During the above period how many applications for guarantees were approved?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78
(1) (a) Small business	17	11	13
(b) Businesses generally	7	10	6
Total	24	21	19
(2) Approvals	10	12	9

Note—

- (1) Farming businesses have been excluded from these figures.
- (2) "Businesses generally" has been assumed to mean businesses other than those coming within the classification of "small business".
- (3) In view of the wording of the question, cash loans, such as to country businesses in drought and cyclone affected areas, have not been included.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Geraldton Offices

659. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Why has the SEC closed its office in Durlacher Street, Geraldton, when it does not have any other office in the urban area of Geraldton?
- (2) At which banks can accounts be paid?
- (3) Does the Commission acknowledge the difficulty faced by people who wish to query accounts in person and who therefore must go to the office in Woorree?
- (4) Does the Commission recognise the concern felt by many pensioners when asked to part with their pension card by mailing it to the Commission?
- (5) Will the Commission consider reopening the Durlacher Street office?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The decision was made on economic grounds based upon the low level of business transacted at the Durlacher Street office.
- (2) In Geraldton payment can be made at any branch of—
The Rural & Industries Bank of Western Australia
The National Bank of Australasia Ltd.
The Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd.
Bank of New South Wales
A.N.Z. Bank.
- (3) The situation which applies in Geraldton is common throughout the State. Customer account queries can be effectively dealt with through the State Energy Commission's telephone service.

- (4) When pensioner cards are forwarded through the mail the cards are returned immediately after sighting.
- (5) Not at this time.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Furniture and Floor Coverings

660. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What preference, if any, is given to a local supplier of furniture and floor coverings when tendering for PWD contracts in country locations?
- (2) Is there a limit on the value of the items to which any such preference applies?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No preference is available to a supplier of goods to the Government unless that supplier is also the manufacturer of the goods.

In decentralised regions a manufacturer situated in the region is entitled to up to 10 per cent preference for sales to Government offices situated within that region.

- (2) These preference allowances are based on percentage rather than value limits.

HERBICIDE 2,4-D

Geraldton

661. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is it not a fact that at a public meeting in Geraldton on February 5 this year, senior officers of the Agriculture Department advised that one of the reasons for not banning 2,4-D ester for the 1979 year was that supplies were already in stock?
- (2) How does he relate this advice in February with his letter to the President of the Geraldton Tomato Growers Association, dated April 24, in which he stated—
"Most of the season's requirements of 2,4-D ester will be manufactured in the next six weeks"?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Departmental officers outlined a number of reasons at the February meeting at Geraldton why it was not proposed that 2,4-D volatile ester should be banned including the need to establish whether alternative economic herbicides were available. The need for agricultural service industries to have some forewarning of major changes was one reason mentioned.

- (2) Although 2,4-D formulation is taking place in Western Australia now the chemical raw materials for this manufacture would have been ordered a considerable time ago.

ance, either at Easter or other holiday periods. The question of any further extension of the existing concessions is continually kept under review.

EDUCATION

Living-away-from-home Allowance

662. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the present level of the State boarding away from home allowance?
- (2) For how long has it remained at this level?
- (3) What plans does the Government have to increase this allowance?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Up to \$150 to ensure a combined minimum payment of \$650 per annum from State and Commonwealth sources.
- (2) From 1976.
- (3) All forms of Government assistance will be examined when the 1979-80 Budget is being framed.

EDUCATION

Boarders and Air Transport

663. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Government acknowledge the desirability of enabling boarding students to return home at Easter, especially now that the Easter break has been extended to 5 days?
- (2) Will the Government consider granting an extra return air fare subsidy to children from northern and other remote areas to facilitate returning home at Easter?
- (3) If "No" to (2), why not?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) The Government acknowledges the desirability of enabling boarding students to return home during the school year and already provides two free single and two free return air trips to school children in remote areas to return to their homes. In 1975 the assistance was increased from one free return air trip and two free single air trips to the present level. Recently, the Government further extended the scheme to include a travel subsidy for parents living more than 80 kilometers from the nearest air service centre in order to assist them to pick up their school children. The cost of the scheme is estimated to be \$250 000 in 1978 and 1979. Under the scheme, students may already elect to receive the assist-

POPULATION

Metropolitan and Country

664. Mr CARR, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) What is the latest estimated population of Western Australia?
- (2) What is the latest estimated population of the area covered by the Metropolitan Region Planning Scheme?
- (3) What is the latest estimated population of the areas of Western Australia outside the scheme area?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

As at the 30th June, 1978:

- (1) 1 222 300.
- (2) 864 900.
- (3) 357 400.

WATER SUPPLIES: CATCHMENT AREAS

Land Clearing: Warren, Kent, and Denmark Rivers

665. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) How many applications for licences to clear virgin land on each of the zones of the Warren, Kent and Denmark catchment areas have been received?
- (2) (a) How many licences have been granted in each zone;
(b) what area of land is involved?
- (3) How many applications for compensation in each of these zones have there been—
(a) received;
(b) granted?
- (4) How much by way of compensation is involved in these claims?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The department's records of catchment clearing have not been kept in relation to zones prior to the recent introduction of this concept with the release of the new clearing guidelines. Consequently, the detailed information is not readily available, and the following answers have been given only in respect of total catchment areas.

- (1) Warren River water reserve—29.
Kent River water reserve—24.
Denmark River catchment area—6.

- (2) Warren River water reserve
 (a) 114.
 (b) 3147 ha
 Kent River water reserve
 (a) 63.
 (b) 2 464 ha.
 Denmark River catchment
 (a) 24.
 (b) 736 ha.
- (3) (a) Warren River—7;
 Kent River—5;
 Denmark River—Nil.
 (b) Warren River—1;
 Kent River—2;
 Denmark River—Nil.

The above figures refer to claims received and handled to date by Public Works Department property and valuations officer in Perth.

- (4) Total value of the three claims under 3 (b)—\$160 750. Other claims are still being negotiated.

RAPE CASES

Names of Victims and Offenders

666. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

As it is automatic that names of females are withheld in rape cases before the courts, will the Government give consideration to requiring the name of the male involved in these cases to be withheld and such name only to be released if the said male is found guilty?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

No. The considerations are quite different. Accused persons are no more vulnerable, or in any different position, with respect to their public identification, in rape cases than in any other type of case. Many persons acquitted of rape seek publication from the press as part of the process of clearing their names.

SEWERAGE

Glendalough

667. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is it a fact that all or part of the area bounded by Brady-Purslowe Streets-Jugan Crescent and Scarborough Beach Road is still not serviced by main sewerage?

- (2) If "Yes"—

- (a) is it the whole or part, and if so, which part;
 (b) how much longer will it be before main sewerage is supplied?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) (a) The whole.
 (b) No provision has been made for sewerage in this area on the current five year development plan.

TRAFFIC

Mitchell Freeway

668. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of the possibly serious inconvenience being caused by the pile-up of traffic on the Mitchell Freeway which at times extends from Hutton Street to the bridge over Scarborough Beach Road and beyond?
 (2) How much longer is this situation going to be allowed to continue?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Some queuing can be expected at peak periods where a freeway terminates with a local road system as now occurs at Hutton Street.
 (2) The situation will continue until the freeway can be extended to Karrinyup Road. Because of funding limitations, it is unlikely that major construction on this extension to Karrinyup Road can commence until the Kwinana Freeway extension project is nearing completion. In the meantime, the Main Roads Department will continue to monitor the situation and implement any traffic management changes that will lessen the problem.

BANKCARD

Centralisation of System in Eastern States

669. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware that banks in this State have their bank card systems centralised in the Eastern States?
 (2) If "Yes" since when and what has he done to have discontinued this procedure and the apparent rush by industry to centralise its activities in the Eastern States thereby possibly causing serious detriment to and even greater unemployment of Western Australians?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Bankcard accounting is centrally processed in Sydney by Charge Card Services Ltd. This firm and the banks

maintain offices in Western Australia to process applications, for marketing and services to merchants and for debt recovery purposes.

- (2) (a) Since inception of bankcard in Western Australia in September 1976.
- (b) I am not aware of any transfer of industry to the Eastern States as a result of the bankcard system. In any case, I assume the procedures for Western Australia apply equally in all States, except New South Wales.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Hainsworth

670. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the planning section of the Education Department consider that student numbers at Hainsworth primary school have yet reached their peak?
- (2) If "No" when is it anticipated that this will occur?
- (3) In any decision to replace the existing four single and one double transportable classrooms with a new cluster, what account will be taken of the high proportion of State Housing Commission units in the school area, and the effect these units will possibly have in maintaining numbers at their present level over a longer period than is normally the case?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) 1980-1981.
- (3) Enrolments from the Hainsworth catchment area are expected to decline after 1981 and the temporary rooms will be removed progressively. In the long term permanent teaching areas and ancillary facilities now on site will be sufficient.

DIVIDING FENCES ACT

Amendment

671. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Has her department received a recent approach from the City of Stirling urging early action to amend the Dividing Fences Act?
- (2) Has any decision yet been made whether new legislation, such as that recommended in the Law Reform Commission's report of 1975, will be introduced?

- (3) If "Yes" to (2), when is it anticipated that such legislation will be introduced?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) The City of Stirling has written to me along those lines.
- (2) and (3) No.

HOUSING: LAND

Marangaroo

672. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he say whether any consideration is being given to the development of State Housing Commission land in Marangaroo?
- (2) If "Yes" what stage has been reached in these considerations?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes, but only preliminary outline planning.

HOUSING

Dianella

673. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

Can he say what stage has been reached in consideration being given by the State Housing Commission, to the extension of Northwood Drive south of Yirrigan Drive, to link up with Grand Promenade in Dianella?

Mr RIDGE replied:

An application is with the Town Planning Board to create the said road, and construction of one carriageway will be commenced as soon as all formalities are satisfied.

HEALTH: MENTAL

Treatment and Deaths

674. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many psychiatric patients in public and private hospitals in Western Australia have had electro-convulsive therapy treatment administered in each of the past five years?
- (2) What percentage of these patients during each of these years has been cured to the point that they no longer require treatment through the mental health services?
- (3) What is the number of patients who have undergone any form of psychosurgery or lobotomy operations in Western Australia during each of the past five years?

- (4) What is the number of psychiatric patients in Western Australia who have died while confined to an institution or while undergoing treatment from mental health services in each of the past five years?
- (5) How many people have been treated for mental disorders in Western Australian private and public hospitals, institutions and hostels in each of the past five years?

	Private hospitals	Public hospitals
1974	1238	4092
1975	1322	4680
1976	987	5174
1977	862	6394
1978	N/A	N/A

The above figures include readmissions.

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) This information is not readily available. As separate statistics by treatment are not maintained the answer to this question would involve examination of the case histories of all patients under treatment during the last five years.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Lobotomy operations performed in Western Australia in each of the past five years were:
- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1974 | 4 |
| 1975 | 1 |
| 1976 | 4 |
| 1977 | nil |
| 1978 | not available. |

Figures for other psychosurgery operations in Western Australia are not readily available.

No patients in Mental Health Services hospitals have undergone any form of psychosurgery during the last five years.

- (4) The numbers of psychiatric patients who died while confined to Mental Health Services institutions or while on after-care during each of the past five years are:

	Died in Hospital	After-Care
1973-74	80	Not available
1974-75	71	
1975-76	64	
1976-77	65	
1977-78	60	38

The number of deaths of persons attending outpatient clinics is not recorded.

- (5) The total numbers of persons treated for mental disorders in Mental Health Services hospitals, institutions and hostels in each of the past five fiscal years are:—

	Approved hospitals	Hostels	Training centres
1973-74	4994	653	600
1974-75	4695	649	648
1975-76	4351	700	599
1976-77	4138	1181	765
1977-78	3666	1648	713

The total numbers of persons treated for mental disorders in Western Australian private and public hospitals in each of the past five calendar years are:—

HOUSING: RENTAL

Koondoola

675. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he confirm that the State Housing Commission has let a single detached rental property at 49 Koondoola Avenue, Koondoola, lie vacant for three months?
- (2) Is the commission aware that in the interim, the house concerned has been vandalised?
- (3) How can the commission justify allowing this house to remain unoccupied for such an extended period in view of the long waiting list for accommodation and the loss incurred on non-return of rent?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) The dwelling has been vacant for three months.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The extended period was occasioned by the extra maintenance period due to the vandalism and declines of assistance made to two applicants. The property is currently subject to a further offer.

WATER SUPPLIES: WASTE WATER

Treatment Plant

676. Mr WILSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is the Minister's department aware of the possible discomfort being suffered by residents in Koondoola and surrounding districts as a result of the unpleasant smell emanating from the Mirrabooka waste water treatment plant?
- (2) Will the Minister arrange for the problem to be investigated with a view to alleviating the possible discomfort being caused to people in areas surrounding the plant?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

It is assumed that the Member is referring to the Mirrabooka water treatment plant, as there are no waste water treatment plants in this area.

- (1) and (2) As with many private wells used for sprinkler irrigation, the water delivered to the Mirrabooka water treatment plant contains

hydrogen sulphide. Appropriate chemical treatment has been introduced to alleviate nuisance. The water board was unaware of any recent complaints. It will now re-examine the position.

HOE GRASS

Price and Stocks

677. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the current recommended retail price of "hoe grass" chemical?
- (2) Who are the suppliers?
- (3) Are there sufficient stocks on hand for 1979 needs?
- (4) Is it fact that one major supplier is withholding supplies in anticipation of shortages developing?
- (5) If so, and the price rises dramatically, would there be a case for prices justification?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The manufacturer does not make public its recommended retail price. Retail suppliers are able to set their own price. Actual prices quoted range from \$270 to \$350 per 20 litres.
- (2) Terra Trading
Atlas Agencies
Elders GM
Roche Maag.
- (3) Three retail suppliers have sold out available stocks but the fourth supplier has stocks available for sale.
- (4) I have no information to this effect.
- (5) The questions raised refer to commercial issues and should properly be directed to the companies concerned. The Farmers' Union of Western Australia has taken the matter up with me and I am currently making investigations.

RIVER: KENT

Flow, Dam, and Salinity

678. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

With regard to the Kent River:

- (1) What is the annual average flow?
- (2) What is the proposed capacity of the dam or dams?
- (3) What is the estimated evaporation from the dam(s)?
- (4) What is the estimated annual increase in total dissolved solids for the next 20 years:
 - (a) under present policy and guidelines;
 - (b) with no controls?

- (5) What is the monthly reading of dissolved solid at respective testing points for each of the previous 24 months?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 84 million cubic metres.
- (2) Investigations and designs have not been carried out to ascertain the capacity of possible dam sites.
- (3) This information is not available, as it depends on the final design of the dams.
- (4) (a) This information is not available as the annual increase depends on many factors, such as seasonal conditions and the location and time that clearing took place. It is anticipated, however, that the total dissolved salts will ultimately increase to 1 500 mg/litre.
(b) The annual increase depends on many factors as mentioned, together with the rate of clearing. However, it is anticipated that the total dissolved salts would ultimately increase to 2 500 mg/litre if all the alienated land was cleared.
- (5) The average salinity figures from the Kent River gauging station No. 604053 in mg/litre total dissolved salts are:—

1977	April	1 050
	May	570
	June	1 860
	July	1 780
	August	760
	September	810
	October	820
	November	820
	December	1 140
1978	January	1 240
	February	1 100
	March	1 010
	April	770
	May	1 060
	June	2 230
	July	620
	August	970
	September	610
	October	990
	November	1 060
	December	810
1979	January	830
	February	770
	March	770

This is the only gauging station with long term continuous records on the Kent River over the period covered by the question.

TRAFFIC

Fines

679. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

For each of the preceding three years to 30th June, 1978 and for the period from 1st July, 1978 to 30th April, 1979, what has been the total amount of traffic fines imposed by—

- (a) infringement notices;
- (b) convictions through the courts?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (a) and (b) Statistics relating to the value of traffic infringement notices issued or traffic fines imposed by courts are not maintained. For the value of infringements paid for the three years to 30th June, 1978, see the answer to question No. 1872 of 5th October, 1978. The value of infringements paid for the period ended 30th April, 1979, is not yet available. The value of traffic infringements paid for the period 1st July, 1978, to 31st March, 1979, is \$2 093 004.

FUEL: SUBSIDY

Farmers

680. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Transport:

Is it State Government policy to endorse a fuel subsidy scheme for fares as proposed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Anthony, or the Prime Minister's policy that it is difficult to justify special fuel subsidies to farmers because the rural sector is picking up significantly?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I ascertained from the member that the word "fares" in the second line of the question should have been "farmers". Under the present Commonwealth Government fuel transportation cost subsidy scheme, all fuel users in country areas are subsidised including farmers. The scheme has only been in operation for a short time.

I am unaware of any policy difference at Commonwealth Government level.

I can assure the member I will keep the whole matter under surveillance having regard to the interests of the farmers, within the constitutional powers of the State Government.